

Whitehorse, Yukon**Wednesday, April 9, 2008 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES**In recognition of Ramesh Ferris**

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Ramesh Ferris was born in December of 1969 in Coimbatore, India, located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. He contracted polio at the age of six months and his legs were left paralyzed for life. Ramesh's mother had no access to the rehabilitative supports that he needed in order to live a healthy life, so she placed him in the care of a Canadian-founded orphanage. Shortly thereafter Ron Ferris, the Anglican Bishop of Yukon, and his wife Jan began the lengthy process of adopting Ramesh to their Canadian family.

With the support of his new family, several surgeries and mobility aids, Ramesh learned to walk with crutches for the first time at the age of four. He grew up in Whitehorse but finished high school in Sault Ste. Marie after a family move and attended Thunder Bay's Confederation College. While in college he exercised his leadership capabilities working as a resident advisory and president of the student union. Upon completion of the college's social work program, Ramesh returned to Whitehorse to work with at-risk youth, social welfare recipients and people of varying social and physical abilities.

He is an accomplished athlete and has represented Yukon nationally through the Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Association, Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, and others. In his capacity as president of the Yukon Society towards Accessible Recreation and Sport he was instrumental in bringing wheelchair basketball, hand-cycling and inclusive dance to Yukon's sport community.

He has spent the last five years teaching wheelchair basketball to high school students and in doing so has helped young people better understand and respect individuals with long-term mobility loss.

In a 2002 visit, Ramesh returned to India to meet his biological mother for the first time — and to visit the Families for Children orphanage where he once lived. It was there he spoke with and witnessed the reality for polio survivors who were not as fortunate as he had been. He learned of polio survivors just like him who, without the necessary medical attention and support, were forced to crawl on the ground and pad their knees with cut-up pieces of tire. After much reflection about his visit to India, Ramesh determined to raise money in order to make a difference in the lives of polio survivors and to prevent polio from claiming new victims. The project "Cycle to Walk" was born.

On April 12, 2008, which is the anniversary of the release of Salk's polio vaccine, Ramesh will begin to handcycle 7,200 kilometres from Victoria, B.C., to Cape Spear, Newfoundland, to raise money. He will cover 400 kilometres every 10 days for six months on a 27-speed handcycle. He will consume 5,000 calories worth of food per day, and 75 percent of the money raised will go toward Rotary International's PolioPlus immunization program, 20 percent will go toward rehabilitating polio victims, and five percent to educate people about the ongoing need for immunizations.

The Yukon government, through the Department of Health and Social Services, has contributed \$65,000 to this campaign.

Those of us of the younger persuasion don't remember polio in our youth but, in my own case, I remember being blocked from going to school by my parents at times because of the number of polio cases in the school. I have lost a number of friends to this terrible disease. It can cause paralysis within hours. It attacks motor neurons in the brain stem and may affect breathing.

More than 10 million children will be paralyzed in the next 40 years if the world fails to capitalize on its investment in eradication, much of that from Rotary clubs around the world.

Polio has been the world's greatest cause of disability, and a dose of vaccine costs about 60 cents. Eleven percent of Canadians have not been immunized from polio and, according to the World Health Organization, this puts Canada at an extremely high risk for return of the virus. It remains endemic in only four countries in the world: Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, it has re-infected the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 41 new cases in 2007. A total of 95 instances of polio infection occurred in non-endemic parts of the world. This leaves Canadian children, who are not immunized, at a high risk in this global world.

I ask this Assembly to help me in wishing Ramesh all the best on his journey and to welcome him to the House today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I would like to recognize Mr. Chris Madden, who is communications liaison for Ramesh for the duration of the trip, who has joined us from Winnipeg for this project.

Applause

Mr. Hardy: I would also like to add my congratulations and thank you for Ramesh and his support staff who will be working with him in helping him to raise this money. Ramesh, we're all with you and you are really an inspiration for many of us. Thank you very much.

Applause

Mr. Mitchell: I too, on behalf of the Official Opposition, would like to lend my voice to the recognition and support of the incredible task that Ramesh Ferris has undertaken on behalf of children all over the world. The Cycle to Walk campaign, as the minister said, will take Ramesh some 7,200 kilometres from coast to coast. This campaign, which began as a dream of Ramesh's after visiting his birth country and seeing

the continued struggles of children who are facing this crippling disease — which should not even exist in this day and age — is an incredible journey.

Ramesh has already been on this journey for several years, as he trained and planned and inspired others to help him in this undertaking.

I would also like to note that Dr. Allon Reddoch has been very instrumental in helping to organize Cycle to Walk within Whitehorse and Yukon, and across the country, first through the Whitehorse Rotary Club and then through rotary clubs across this nation. There is a local office in the optometrist building that is staffed daily, and I would encourage people to go by that office and follow Ramesh on his journey.

There will also be a Web site, and people will be able to track Ramesh and see where he is on a daily, if not hourly, basis.

We have all been inspired by what Ramesh has undertaken and the training that he has been involved in. I think he has just completed an uninterrupted swim of some 105 laps in an Olympic pool. I think it works out to be some five and a half kilometres. That was an incredible task, and it shows the dedication he has brought to this journey.

I have already told Ramesh that he is my hero. He will soon be a Canadian hero and indeed an international hero for what he is undertaking on behalf of children — both those who are existing today in several countries where the disease is endemic and unborn children yet to come. This disease is 100 percent preventable; the vaccines have existed since the early 1950s and, with Ramesh's help, we will move closer to eradicating this scourge from the face of the earth so that no other children have to grow up with any sort of disability.

We thank you, Ramesh, and we wish you Godspeed.

In recognition of Patrice Berrel, outstanding principal of the year

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise today in this House to pay tribute to school principals, and this year, one in particular who has received the outstanding principals award. The outstanding principals award is given to principals who have made a measurable difference in the lives of their students and their communities by their forming successful community partnerships or by increasing student achievement in their schools.

Mr. Pat Berrel, who is with us in the gallery today, is from Whitehorse Elementary School, and he has been recognized for excellence in leadership through the learning partnerships outstanding principals award.

Patrice Berrel was selected as one of 33 principals from across Canada to receive the 2008 award. He was nominated for his work on the whole child project, which is a great example of how a school in the community can work together to build an exceptional educational environment for children. Now in its fourth year, Canada's outstanding principals program was developed between The Learning Partnership and the Canadian Association of Principals, in collaboration with the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

Since being launched, four exceptional principals from the territory have been selected as Canada's outstanding principals award recipients. In other years, John Wright from Elijah Smith

Elementary School, Thomas Jirousek from the Ross River School, and Kerry Huff from Porter Creek Secondary School have received the award.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr. Berrel, who is also known for his epicurean and opimian pursuits, on his 2008 award, and thank him and all school administrators for their hard work and commitment to the Yukon education system.

Applause

In recognition of National Wildlife Week

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I rise on behalf of the government to pay tribute to National Wildlife Week. National Wildlife Week, this year, pays homage to the age-old process of pollination and to the pollinators: the insects, the birds and other wildlife that make it all happen. National Wildlife Week is celebrated each year during the week surrounding April 10, the birthday of Jack Miner, one of the founders of Canada's conservation movement. Proclaimed by an act of Parliament in 1947, National Wildlife Week is a time to celebrate Canada's national heritage and play an active role in conservation.

Pollination is one of the most important ecological processes on our planet. The basic transfer of pollen from the male parts of a plant to the female parts is vital for reproduction for about 90 percent of the seed-producing plant species in the world. Without pollination the world as we know it would be a different place.

In Yukon, we have expanded upon the work of National Wildlife Week by coordinating and holding dozens of events throughout April that recognize and celebrate biodiversity. Mr. Speaker, pollinators are a keystone species, without them our ecosystems would collapse. Honeybees, for example, are a well-known pollinator species. Here in Yukon about half a dozen Yukoners keep honeybees in order to sell the honey. As well, some people keep a hive in their backyard just to enjoy the honey. Last year the Yukon government organized a workshop on honeybee diseases and sponsored a second event that served as an introduction to beekeeping. Honeybees are just one species that are vital to pollination.

Did you also know that we have more than 100 native bee species here in Yukon? Mosquitoes are also an important pollinator for our orchards. Beetles help strong-smelling flowers like skunkweed — and I think this example speaks for itself — bloom year after year. We are fortunate that so many of our farmers choose to grow organically. Wise use of agricultural chemicals is essential if a diverse range of pollinators is to be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, National Wildlife Week is a partnership led by the Canadian Wildlife Federation along with the federal, provincial and territorial governments, the Canadian Museum of Nature and Scouts Canada. I appreciate the opportunity it provides us to remind all Yukoners of the importance of all creatures great and small.

Mr. Elias: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Wildlife Week. National Wildlife Week has been celebrated in the Yukon for many years, and in Canada since the late 1940s. Upon the death of Jack

Miner in 1944, Canada had the desire to create a perpetual memorial to honour Jack Miner for his pioneer work in wildlife conservation.

There was a proposal for a national wildlife day to be held each year on Jack Miner's birthday, which was April 10. A bill called the *National Wildlife Week Act* was introduced in the House of Commons on April 18, 1947, and passed without one dissenting vote.

This year's National Wildlife Week theme is "Pollinators — from flowers to food to our future." Pollination is one of the most important ecological processes on the planet. Pollination is a fundamental function of the ecosystem and pollinators are often referred to as "keystone species" because many other species in their ecosystem depend on them.

Indeed, without pollination, plants could not reproduce and ecosystems would collapse. We would quickly run out of food, medicine, wood products, almost everything we need to survive on this green planet. The value of these busy pollinators is immeasurable, affecting our food, forests, fresh air, sparkling water and biodiversity. Pollination and its products keep our economy healthy. Without pollination, the world as we know it would not exist.

It's hard to imagine a world without seed-bearing plants. For centuries, wind, water, hummingbirds, bees, flies and a host of other tiny creatures have performed their duties faithfully and with little fanfare. The effectiveness of pollinating agents and, in fact, the survival of many biotic pollinators, is put at risk every day by our daily activities.

With climate change, pollution, toxic chemicals, imported parasites and diseases, and loss of habitat, pollinators are struggling to perform their duties. National Wildlife Week is one way to educate and inspire individuals and organizations to conserve wildlife and other natural resources and to protect the earth's environment in order to achieve a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future.

Let us all become better stewards of our environment.

Mahsi' cho, merci beaucoup, thank you.

Mr. Hardy: I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to pay tribute to National Wildlife Week. National Wildlife Week, like the members before me have said, began in 1947 to recognize the birthday of a Canadian pioneer in the work of conservation, Jack Miner. The theme this year is "Pollinators — from flowers, to food, to our future."

That is very appropriate for two reasons. The complex relationship between insects like bees and pollinating plants is one of the wonders of our natural world. Evolutionary historians are at a bit of a loss as to which came first: the ability of plants to reproduce via pollination or the evolution of nectar-gathering insects whose foraging helps to propagate such plants.

What can be said is that these organisms grew together very successfully. Ninety percent of the seed-producing plant species of the world reproduce via pollination.

Humans have grown and populated every inch of the globe, due in part to our ability to grow a stable and steady supply of food. Agriculture is dependent on this interplay be-

tween insects like bees and pollinating plants, but there are grim warnings. Bees and other pollinator populations around the world are in decline. A quote that is often attributed to Albert Einstein goes like this: "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination...no more man." I would have to add "woman" as well.

Some bee researchers have weighed in on possible causes such as cellphone tower disruptions, the introduction of genetically modified organisms, monoculture crops and the widespread use of pesticides. Some believe it is a further consequence of climate change as well. There can be no doubt that our ecosystems are feeling great pressure from human activity. Degradation of habitat is a major cause of species going extinct.

In the federal species at risk registry, the list of Canadian endangered species includes 16 species of mammal, 25 bird species, eight reptile species, six amphibian species, 20 fish species, 14 anthropoid species, 12 species of mollusc, about 80 vascular plant species, six species of mosses and two species of lichens.

In the north, the decline in caribou herds is continuing. After the first observation of the decline of the Porcupine caribou herd, the 2007 Arctic Report Card talked of herd declines by as much as 80 percent, in the central barrens of N.W.T. and Nunavut.

The preservation of wildlife — of all life for that matter, including our own — and ecosystems they are part of requires that we shift our societies, find a greater balance and lighten our footprint.

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

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling a report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly on the complaint of Mr. Don Inverarity, MLA, about Minister Archie Lang, MLA. The report is dated April 8, 2008.

Are there any further documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 104: Reprinted version tabled

Mr. Hardy: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 6, I have for tabling a reprinted version of Bill No. 104, *Smoke-free Places Act*. The reprinted version is in both English and French, and incorporates the amendments agreed to in Committee of the Whole.

This bill contains what I believe to be a true translation into French of the English text of Bill No. 104, *Smoke-free Places Act*, as amended.

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Standing Committee on Rules Elections and Privileges to establish guidelines that will define the use, purpose, powers and functionality for all-party select committees.

Mr. Hardy: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct a comprehensive review of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* and the operations of the Conflict of Interest Commission, and that the review include:

- (1) a full consideration of recommendations made by the current and former conflicts commissioners;
- (2) recent recommendations by conflict of interest commissioners and former commissioners in other jurisdictions; and
- (3) a survey of best practices across Canada and elsewhere with regard to matters of conflict of interest, ethics and integrity involving elected officials and their immediate families, members of political staff and senior public servants.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Affordable housing

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. The minister recently promised a new 30-unit apartment complex to meet the needs of single women and their children who need affordable housing. There is no doubt that this is a real and pressing need for many women in our territory.

This issue goes back to 2006 when the minister had access to the northern housing trust money, and many women have been waiting for years now for affordable housing.

My question is this: what are the criteria for the selection of who gets to move into the new units and who has to go on yet another waiting list?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you to the member opposite for the question he has raised. Housing security is strongly linked to advancing women's equality in the north, and that which I have articulated on the floor of this Legislature on numerous occasions. It's also a priority of our government.

Access to secure and affordable housing also helps to reduce the incidence of violence against women, which is also a priority of this government and mine, as minister responsible for the Women's Directorate.

Following consultations undertaken with numerous women's organizations, women on the social housing wait-list and those currently in social housing, it was deemed that this is the target area and the area in which we wish to meet the most pressing need. We are proceeding with this initiative: an up to 30-unit affordable, secure housing initiative in the City of

Whitehorse to meet the most clearly defined need, which is for lone-parent families — of which women and children comprise the largest percentage of those on the social housing wait-list.

Mr. Elias: The minister has indicated the project will take three years to complete. That's a very long time. Given this government's dismal record of completing projects on budget and on time, the wait time may be much longer. Mr. Speaker, this lag time is really not acceptable. It's not acceptable to the women and their families and it's not acceptable to those women who may have to endure three or more years in an abusive and sometimes violent relationship.

The concept is a good one, but building such a complex is not rocket science. The minister has been sitting on this money since 2006. Now the minister wants to delay the building for another three years. For some women, every month of waiting can be an eternity. Why the long wait?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the first time in almost 20 years — if not over 20 years — it is this Government of Yukon that is responding to the social housing needs of women and children in this territory. Housed within the Yukon Housing Corporation, we have identified \$960,000 to go toward the planning and site selection of this particular housing initiative, a housing initiative that will take up almost half of those on the social housing wait-list, the large majority of whom are women and children in need, as well as victims of violence.

This government takes addressing violence in our communities very seriously, and it certainly is working to address the many needs of women in the north, whether it's violence prevention, whether it's meeting the housing needs of this territory, whether it's meeting economic interdependence. Advancing all forms of women's equality in the north is a priority of mine and it certainly remains a priority of this government.

Mr. Elias: I would have hoped that the Deputy Premier would have been a little more careful as to what she says in this House, because until I actually see the single mothers and their children moving into this building and the program objectives being met, then, and only then, will this be a success story. There is no room for any confusion or any delay with regard to this project, because it's too important. The expression "time is of the essence" is certainly applicable here. It would be most prudent of this minister to get this project moved from the slow lane and made a priority.

Will the minister undertake to move the time frame up so that women and their families can benefit from the program objectives more quickly?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, we have received accolades from the women's community here in this territory for moving so expeditiously on this particular project. I take great pride in the fact that this government has identified up to \$11 million toward the advancement of this project — a housing initiative of up to 30 dwelling units that will meet the most pressing need that remains on the social housing waiting list, that which comprises women and children, and lone-parent families in this territory.

We are working expeditiously. We are working on a site selection; we are working on the planning. We are going to move forward quickly, but we are also going to be moving

thoughtfully and in response to those women's organizations, those on the social housing wait-list, and those who remain in social housing, to specifically define what their priorities are — whether those are multi-use areas, childcare and so forth.

I take great pride in the level of commitment and certainly the degree of speed in which this project is moving.

Question re: Affordable housing

Mr. Inverarity: My question is for the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation.

Although the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate seems to be all over the announced project for housing for women, single parents and their families, this project is, in reality, a Yukon Housing Corporation project.

The quoted figures, and we heard them just recently in the last reply, are between \$9 million and \$11 million, and there are over 30 units involved in this project. The price per unit is going to be set, tentatively, between \$300,000 and \$360,000 per unit at cost.

Given this government's record on cost overruns, one would have to be a true believer to think that these units are going to come in at under \$400,000.

Can the minister explain why these units are so expensive?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite's information, the low end of his figure is approximately the cost of construction, including land acquisition and everything else. Again, as the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate has mentioned, there will also be other things built into this depending on the consultations, such as daycare, play areas for the children, et cetera. But that will come out of the consultations. It makes no sense to build anything without knowing what we're building. We could build it very quickly but we probably wouldn't get what the women and single fathers would want in that project.

Mr. Inverarity: The minister's numbers are perplexing. The spot check this morning on the current housing market indicates sobering facts. For example, I found units across the street at the high end development on Hawkins Street going for about \$299,000 a unit. There is a new unit over at Parkside Place listed at \$259,000, and there is a new construction over on 6th Avenue listing units at around \$254,000. These are retail prices, Mr. Speaker, not the cost of building. Considering the high-end — and these units are going to be quite plush — I just see no reason why these other units are going to cost \$300,000 or more.

If you consider that the retail units include the cost of land and YTG owns the land already, these prices could be reduced by at least \$35,000 to \$50,000, making them even more effective.

My point is, why are the prices so high?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, he seems to be getting lost in Liberal arithmetic here. We have dealt with other issues on a daily basis, where the members of the Official Opposition have come up with values all over the map, from extremely high to extremely low, and everywhere in between.

This is why we're doing consultations to determine what will go in for these single-family clients that will move into this

rent-gear-to-income facility, which could include daycare, enclosed and secure play areas — it could include a wide variety of things. On this side of the House we like to know what we're going to build before we build it; otherwise, as we've seen — in the Mayo transmission line, for instance — what happens when you start building and hope you hit the right target.

Mr. Inverarity: We on this side of the House haven't lost \$36.5 million. I think he should check his math with the Minister of Education over there.

There's a development on 7th Avenue and it just sold out. The units aren't particularly high-end, but they're new and they're very nice accommodation. A two-bedroom unit there just sold for \$199,000, and that includes the price of the land. These projects are being completed in a year, not two and a half years or three years down the road. This foot-dragging is plain, simple and not acceptable.

Single parents need to know that they can get affordable housing now. Will the minister revisit the cost estimate — and particularly the timelines — and report back to this House?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What I find most astounding is the Liberal Party's position on affordable, secure housing for those most in need — that is, that side of the House does not want to see this project get off the ground.

Unlike the members opposite, this government is committed and has actually committed \$960,000 in this year's budget for the planning, securing the site and moving forward in consultation with the community to determine exactly the specific functions and dynamics of this particular creative and progressive housing initiative.

I am very proud of this government's commitment toward meeting and advancing women's equality in the territory, but meeting the housing needs of those most in need, and that is lone-parent families in this territory.

We will move quickly, we will move thoughtfully, but we will certainly be moving forward on this particular initiative.

Question re: Child and Family Services Act

Mr. Edzerza: Yesterday the Premier insisted that First Nations have been involved in all aspects of the consultation and drafting of the new act. He said that First Nations jointly chaired the process.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we all know the joint chair was established only after attempts to have the director of family and children's services as the sole chair were finally abandoned, and after at least one resignation from First Nations' representation on the process.

First Nations proposed a co-governance model as their main objective in consultations. That was rejected outright by the Premier.

Yesterday the Premier went on to state unequivocally that the drafting of this legislation was informed jointly.

Will the Premier give us an outline of how he sees the process for jointly informing the drafting of a bill?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is incorrect in his assertions. It is unfortunate that the members have not been a little more thorough in their homework.

The Member for McIntyre-Takhini, when this process was launched, was a member of the government side. The member participated in discussions. The member should know that some of the comments he just made do not accurately reflect the facts of this process.

Mr. Speaker, this government embarked upon a process that no other government had done in the Yukon before, involving First Nations in a partnership to go out and jointly consult with the public, jointly develop the policy, and jointly inform the legal drafting. We have followed that process, and while we recognize there are some First Nations who have expressed concern with the bill, there are others who have come forward and have encouraged us to move forward to table this legislation. I would encourage the member to read the legislation. The member cannot help but come to the conclusion that this legislation is a significant improvement over the old *Children's Act*.

Mr. Edzerza: I hate to burst this minister's bubble, but there are other people who have read the act besides himself. More than once, the Premier said yesterday that this government structured a partnership that ensured First Nations were informed of the process every step of the way. Apparently that did not include the most important step, the drafting of the bill. Now First Nation chiefs are saying that their presentations to the consultation have been ignored in the bill. They say there is no real role for First Nation governments, that they are not a part of key decisions in the process of protecting their children.

In consultations, First Nations and many others have advocated for alternatives to the court system for support for grandparents and extended family in caring for children.

Will the Premier now acknowledge that these progressive positions and protocols signed by him were ignored in drafting this bill?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, the member is wrong in his assertions. Some of the issues he brought up and indicated were not in the legislation are in the bill. I can't say it enough, Mr. Speaker. The only solution to end this unproductive exchange and debate is for the members opposite to pick up the legislation and read it and compare it to the *Children's Act*. They will see that the new *Child and Family Services Act* is a significant improvement and a significant step forward as a result of the process the government followed, going to First Nations, jointly hearing from the public, jointly developing the policy and jointly informing the legal drafting. That is what we've done, and this has led to a bill that is leading-edge in the country and provides for far more inclusion of First Nations and extended family — probably more than any other legislation anywhere in any jurisdiction in Canada.

Mr. Edzerza: I hope that the minister is not saying that First Nation chiefs are not representing their people, because there are 14 First Nations and I only saw two in here.

Leadership of the First Nations asked for the bill to be delayed by only a few months — only a few months, Mr. Speaker. Consultations on the bill were carried out across the Yukon over five or six weeks. That's not nearly enough time for a thorough examination of such a substantial bill. First Nations have proposed a symposium to discuss the draft first,

which is a good idea. Instead of treating this request with respect, the Premier has gone ahead and tabled draft legislation.

Will the Premier reconsider the request from various First Nations and defer this bill to the fall sitting to give everyone a reasonable chance to review it?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The only person here who has reversed their position is the Member for McIntyre-Takhini.

The Member for McIntyre-Takhini indicated to the media — on February 15, he encouraged the government to move forward by bringing forward the legislation. Let me look for his words — he says that the consultation has been going on for five years. The member acknowledged on that date that it was a five-year process, not a six-week process, as the member just indicated now.

Let me quote the member again — he said that the longer it's delayed, the more negative impact it has on the citizens who really needed something in place 20 years ago.

We acted in this area. I thank the member for his comments of February 15, encouraging us to do what we have done: tabling the legislation and moving forward with a bill that is one of the best in Canada.

Question re: *Child and Family Services Act*

Mr. Edzerza: In the past two sittings our caucus has tabled several motions urging the government to reinstate the practice of having members of the public appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to put forward their concerns.

On March 27 I read a motion in the House to invite witnesses to appear before Committee of the Whole while debating the proposed *Child and Family Services Act*. Now several chiefs have formally requested in a letter to the Premier that they be able to come to this House as witnesses when MLAs are debating this act.

Will the Premier direct the Government House Leader to reply to the request from the chiefs in a positive way and set down a time for First Nation witnesses, and possibly other interested parties, to bring forward their concerns regarding this bill?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: It is unfortunate that now both opposition parties have chosen to try to find a way to diminish the role that First Nations have played in the development of this very leading-edge legislation in dealing with children in care.

To suggest that First Nations have not had an opportunity to participate is ridiculous. This began with an agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations to create co-chairs. It started with the co-chairs in an agreed-to process. It was a major consultation across the territory. There were policy forums, there were elder forums, and there was a process to jointly inform the drafting of the bill. There has been a tremendous involvement here and a partnership that ensured that First Nations along with public government were the architects of this bill.

We are going to proceed with this because it is in the best interests of children and families, and the more incorrect information the members put on the floor, the more — when we debate this bill — it will demonstrate how far out of touch those members really are.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, we're just giving the Premier an opportunity to shine and not be like a burned out light bulb.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: As humorous as the honourable member is on occasion, please remember where you are. You are in the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and those types of terminology are not appropriate.

The Member for McIntyre-Takhini has the floor.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that my opinion is that the *Child and Family Services Act* does not supersede requests from several First Nation chiefs. By tabling this bill this sitting the Premier has refused First Nations and others the opportunity of spending adequate time on the bill. His action is forcing some First Nations to develop their own systems for child welfare. Whether he intends to or not, he is promoting a dual system for protection of Yukon children that is not only confusing but expensive, and they could be very divergent. The content of this bill is extremely important to First Nation families.

Will the Premier commit to making the proceedings of the Assembly more accessible, accountable and relevant to all Yukon people by allowing the public to appear as witnesses?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the first thing that we've got to clear up when it comes to brightness is the issue of changing one's position. Publicly stated, this member was in full support of proceeding now with the bill in the interest of children. I can't imagine what has changed his mind.

Furthermore, to state that this is a dual process for dealing with children in care — surely the member recognizes the merits and the position that First Nations have negotiated under their land claims. They have the right to occupy this authority, and any time a First Nation formally requests that we begin those negotiations of a program service transfer agreement, this government and the federal government are obligated to conduct those negotiations and transfer this authority to said First Nations. That is what the system of governance in this territory is all about. We took it a step further; we involved First Nation every step of the way on amending the *Children's Act*, including — and I want to emphasize this for the Member for McIntyre-Takhini — jointly informing the drafting. That process is throughout the new bill. Every one of those joint informing sessions, policy sessions and elders forums have all found themselves in the content of this new bill.

Mr. Edzerza: For the record, I could maybe help the Premier. I changed my position because I choose to listen to those who elected me. That's why. This is just the latest example of so-called government-to-government relations and broken protocols with First Nations.

By numerous motions in this House, our caucus has urged the government to open the doors and windows of this Assembly and invite delegates from the public. As a first step toward meeting our democratic responsibilities to listen to the Yukon people, including First Nations, we have suggested going back to a system of holding evening meetings.

This week and last, Committee of the Whole did have witnesses present while members were discussing our new *Workers' Compensation Act*. This is good precedence. Will the Premier show that he is flexible, that he really wants to consult in a productive way, and will respond immediately to the request of First Nations to address this House on the *Child and Family Services Act*?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The government has been extremely forthcoming, accountable and cooperative with First Nations for five years on this project, this initiative. Now, in the best interests of children, we've moving ahead.

If the member wants to speak about being accountable, the member should refer to his own comments. If the member wants to be accountable, then stand up and correct the record. He did not mean to say that the consultations have gone on long enough; he did not mean that; that wasn't what he meant to say. He did not mean that those consultations have been on-going for five years; he did not mean that when he said that publicly; and he said this should have been done 20 years ago. He did not mean that. He should stand up and correct the record and let the public then determine if he has been accountable or not.

Question re: Land development within City of Whitehorse

Mr. McRobb: I want to follow up on an issue with the minister responsible for lands. It would be no understatement to say that city officials are not very happy with this government's unilateral approach to the disposal of raw commercial land within city boundaries. There have been several examples where individuals have been given access to Crown land within the city, yet the Yukon government hasn't even bothered to inform members of city council, who understandably want to end this top-down approach.

There's an easy way to fix this problem. The government should ensure there's an open and transparent process for obtaining commercial land within city boundaries. Land it owns and decides to sell should be publicly tendered.

The process should be changed to include city officials in the process. Will the minister agree to make these changes and, if not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That's what the protocol between our two governments is all about.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Mr. Mitchell: I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. This particular minister is very quick to accuse others of not, as he says, "accurately representing the facts". When asked about the true cost of the Watson Lake health centre, he told members that the cost of the project was \$4 million. Well, we need look no further than the budget tabled in this House to see that the true cost is approximately \$11 million.

I know the member will stand and roll his eyes and feign exasperation and say, "Mr. Speaker" — but when you spend over \$4 million and state in the budget that you intend to spend another \$6.9 million, then "Mr. Speaker" is just not going to cut it.

Will the minister now confirm what we all know, that the facility will cost \$11 million?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am waiting to see if the Official Opposition is listening, or are they going to continue giggling and chortling, Mr. Speaker. Apparently they are probably now listening. We will see.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has now changed his party's position. They previously stated that it was \$12 million that had been spent in Watson Lake. Now they are saying it is \$11 million budgeted.

The other day, I gave the actual amount spent to date, which at that point in time was \$4.1 million. In fact, I can provide the member with an update of expenditures to date — \$4.4 million is expended to date — actual cost of the Watson Lake multi-level care facility. The member can read the budget. The member is not accurately reflecting it.

The member's colleague, the Member for Kluane, was misrepresenting the Auditor General's remarks earlier in this Assembly. I suspect that is where the Leader of the Official Opposition will be going, but I hope he will reconsider that approach.

Mr. Mitchell: When the doors finally open, I guess we will do the calculation of the costs.

There is also the not-so-little matter of Copper Ridge Place. The minister was asked about the 12 new beds. He has gone on with indignation in his voice. He has pontificated and pointed the finger. He has done everything but tell this House that, notwithstanding all his previous fanfare, the beds are still closed.

Will the minister now set the record straight and tell the House that the beds are closed and that he doesn't even know when they will reopen?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, we can see that when the Official Opposition engages on this type of personal attacks, they have clearly lost the ability to engage in a meaningful debate on the policies and programs and initiatives this government has implemented.

The member knows full well that I explained the challenges we faced at Copper Ridge Place. We funded the opening of the additional 12-bed wing, we experienced staffing challenges and saw our staffing numbers go down, after it had been opened. As I previously indicated, steps have been taken internally to enhance the recruitment and retention, and initiatives and bonuses that are within the structure of that provided to staff. As well, through initiatives that we have undertaken, there is the nurse mentoring program, the nurse education bursary, the health profession education bursary, and the new program being established at Yukon College this fall to train licensed practical nurses here in the Yukon.

We are taking a number of steps specific to nurses to address these areas. This, of course, is part of our comprehensive health human resources strategy. This government, as the member knows, is the first government to put in place a health human resources strategy. We have done so and we will continue to work to address the challenges that we and every other jurisdiction are facing in the number of health care professionals in today's Canada.

Mr. Mitchell: If this minister's idea of ministerial responsibility is that it is personal attacks, it's pretty personal for the people on the wait-list for those beds.

I am sure you remember the Thomson Centre — yes, another telling moment in the political life of this minister. First, there were the announcements which were repeated and repeated. There followed a period of quiet, while we believed that something was actually being done. Next, there was the excuses stage. Now we have reached the final stage: the Thomson Centre is still closed and will remain so for some time to come. There is no money to fix it in this year's capital budget.

This minister appears to be in denial. The fact is, even if he did manage to reopen it, by his own admission there are no nurses to staff it, and there won't be until this government stops treating nurses like second-class employees.

Will the minister now admit that this project is not going to be completed in the current fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Official Opposition's personal attacks, the petty insults — this is not productive and constructive debate. The member ought to know by now the facts of the matter. As the member knows, in 2006 we announced a target date of when we expected to be able to reopen the Thomson Centre. Following that point there was the discovery of mould, and there was further review of that matter by Theodor Sterling Associates Ltd.

As I articulated earlier, we have enhanced the recruitment and retention initiatives specific to nurse staffing. The member knows full well that we sincerely appreciate the work of all our health care professionals, and we are the first government to address the need for future recruitment and retention by developing a comprehensive health human resources strategy, which we are continuing to work on expanding right now with the staff, with the professionals and staff of the department and of the Hospital Corporation. The member knows that we've been very proactive in this area, and if the member looks around the country the member will see that these types of challenges are occurring in every jurisdiction. The Yukon, in fact, has had fewer challenges in those areas.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 374

Clerk: Motion No. 374, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Member for Klondike

THAT this House establish an all-party Select Committee on Human Rights,

THAT Hon. Marian Horne be the chair of the Committee,

THAT the honourable members Don Inverarity and Steve Cardiff be appointed to the Committee,

THAT Bill No. 102 entitled An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act be referred to the Committee,

THAT the Committee hold hearings for receiving the views and opinions of the Yukon Human Rights Commission, Yukon citizens and interested groups on legislative amendments to the *Human Rights Act*,

THAT decisions by the Committee require unanimous agreement by members of the Committee;

THAT the Committee report to the Legislative Assembly no later than the 15th sitting day of the next regular sitting of the Legislative Assembly:

(1) its findings, if any, relating to public opinion for legislative change,

(2) its recommendations, if any, regarding what form legislation implementing changes recommended by the Committee should take,

THAT in the event the Legislative Assembly is not sitting at the time the Committee is prepared to report, the Chair of the Committee forward copies of the report to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, thereafter make the report public, and subsequently present the report to the Legislative Assembly at the next regular sitting of the Legislative Assembly,

THAT during its review of public opinion on legislative options for amending the *Human Rights Act*, the Committee be empowered:

(1) to invite the members of the Yukon Human Rights Commission to appear as witnesses,

(2) to invite officials from the Government of Yukon to appear as witnesses on technical matters,

(3) to engage a technical expert who is not a Member of the Legislative Assembly or an employee of the Government of Yukon to act as a facilitator in providing information at the public hearings,

(4) to invite such other persons as it deems necessary to appear as witnesses on technical matters,

(5) to hold public hearings,

(6) to print such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the Committee.

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak to this motion today. I am pleased to speak to the importance of every Canadian and every Yukoner being afforded freedom, equality, dignity and human rights.

The *Human Rights Act* was enacted in 1987. This act was to:

(1) further in the Yukon the public policy that every individual is free and equal in dignity and rights;

(2) to discourage and eliminate discrimination;

(3) to promote the recognition of inherent dignity and worth and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, these being principles underlying the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

In 1988 the human rights regulations covering technical aspects of the statutes implementation were established. The

act was also amended in 1998 to add sources of income as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

The act sets out what discrimination is, allows for investigations and settlements of complaints and provides for educational efforts to promote human rights. That protects Yukon residents against discrimination in several areas of public life: in providing goods and services to the public; employment and applications for employment; memberships in trade unions or other work-related associations; tenancy or sale of property; and public contracts. Treating individuals or groups differently in any of these areas is discrimination under one of the prohibited grounds.

The act makes it illegal to carry out any activity that results in discrimination as described above.

Systemic discrimination is discrimination. That is part of the operational procedures of organizations, whether a business, service organization or social institution such as government, school, hospitals, law courts, et cetera. It has the effect of denying whole groups of people their rights or excluding them from participation as a result of established policies and procedures of organizations that have developed over time, often unconscious and not intended to be discriminatory.

Examples of systemic discrimination include former height restrictions for applicants to firefighting services and where jobs are advertised and how selections, if done, and the availability of services or equipment for people with disabilities.

Under some limited circumstances, what would otherwise be discrimination is allowed under the act. It is not discrimination:

(1) for religious, charitable, educational, social, cultural or athletic organizations to give preference to its members or to people the organization exists to serve;

(2) for individuals to give preference to members of their family;

(3) for an organization to offer special programs and affirmative action programs that are designed to prevent or reduce disadvantages resulting from discrimination.

The section of prohibited areas does not apply to:

(1) the employment of a person to provide services in a private home or any exclusive religious, charitable, educational, social, cultural or athletic organization; and

(2) choice by an occupant of a private home, or a boarder or a tenant to occupy part of the home.

It is not discrimination if treatment is based on:

(1) reasonable requirement of qualifications for the employment;

(2) a criminal record or criminal charges relevant to the employment;

(3) sex so as to respect the privacy of the people to whom accommodations or service of the facility is offered; and

(4) other factors establishing reasonable cause for discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the important work the Human Rights Commission does in protecting and promoting free and equal rights for all Yukoners.

The Yukon Party government respects the value of human rights and the importance of the *Human Rights Act*. That is why

we want to review, improve and update this act to make it an act we're all proud of for the protection of all.

As times change, we want to make sure our act reflects those changes. The Yukon Party government is committed to a meaningful public consultation with Yukoners and stakeholders, and that is why we want to establish an all-party select committee on human rights, a committee that will refer to Bill No. 102, entitled *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act*.

The Yukon Party government values the views of all Yukoners on the review, and that is why, in our motion, we ask the committee to hold hearings for receiving the views and opinions of the Human Rights Commission, Yukon citizens and interest groups on legislative amendments to the *Human Rights Act*.

We value the importance of all Yukoners' input and we need this valuable input, and that is why the decision by this committee requires the unanimous agreement of members of the committee. We want this legislation to reflect the values of all parties, and most of all, all Yukon citizens.

When this work is done, involving all stakeholders, we will have a piece of legislation that all parties can support and be proud of, and I look forward to the support of all members for this motion.

Thank you.

Mr. Inverarity: I rise today to speak to this motion to strengthen the all-party select committee, which will in essence consult with all Yukoners on updating the *Human Rights Act*. I have to say that I am very pleased that this particular issue is coming on the legislative agenda.

Quite frankly, I thought that I would never actually receive an opportunity to develop a piece of legislation as important as the *Human Rights Act*. For me, Mr. Speaker, it is actually a dream come true, to be able to sit on this side of the House and be able to participate on a select committee on such an important piece of legislation.

I never thought that I would have had this much interest in human rights, but over the last few years, and particularly since I've been a member of this Assembly, I've noticed a change in my thought process. I've always been a little, I wouldn't say *laissez-faire* about it — it's an issue I have been aware of but I haven't spent a lot of time on. I think it's important before I move on in my discussion today to actually look again at the bill of rights from the current *Human Rights Act*, and I am going to focus on the four points that make up the bill of rights.

The first of course is the right to freedom of religion and the freedom of conscience. The second one is the right of freedom of expression. The third is the right to freedom of assembly and of association, and the fourth is the right to enjoyment and the disposition of property.

I think at this point in time I am going to focus on the third one, which is the right to freedom of assembly and association. I think it is a timely thing, and I think it leads us to further discussion of the particular issues, not only because they are current in the day. We look at issues that are going on around the world, and human rights are really a national and international event.

What comes to mind are the monks in Tibet who are currently fighting over issues of human rights. We see issues in Darfur and around the world where people are starving. I know Canada does its share with grain aid, and things along those lines, but fundamentally the issue there is one of human rights.

This reminds me of a story, or actually it was a time in my life — if I can digress a little regarding how I came to be more aware of what human rights are all about and how they have affected me personally. In order to do this, Mr. Speaker, I have to go back a few years in my life when I was a little bit younger — I was about 20 at the time, and I've made mention that earlier in my career I had spent some time in South Africa. I lived there at a time when apartheid was the rule of law.

Apartheid was unique to me; I had never been exposed to that. I grew up in Vancouver, which as you know is a multicultural community, and I was exposed to all types of individuals — all colours, all races. When I arrived in Durban, South Africa, in the spring of 1972, I was really amazed and confronted by what I was seeing around the community.

Initially I stayed at the YMCA; we thought that the YMCA was a good place to live. Much to my surprise, when I went down for breakfast in the morning, I was expecting to see a buffet of food and I'd go help myself — I mean, this was the Y. Lo and behold, when I walked into the cafeteria, a black man greeted me and said, "Good morning, sir. Let me seat you." I went and sat down at a table. The cutlery before me was amazing — there must have been nine pieces of silverware sitting on the table before me for breakfast. The waiter came to me and said, "Sir, what would you like for breakfast?" I had my whole breakfast served before me at the YMCA. I thought, well, this is quite unique and I thought it was really something special.

When I went out and around the community, the first thing that struck me was the sign to the public washroom that said, "Whites Only." How effective and how stark that was, that it brought to me the simple fact that this individual who served me breakfast this morning was in fact the servant. The initial effect — I didn't think of it as human rights at the time, but that is what it was. These people had these jobs and they were there because of their colour. I was quite amazed that it would have that effect on me.

As I wandered around it became even more apparent because I couldn't get on a bus because it said, "Blacks Only." I thought, how do people live like this? How do they have these changes in standards? Are we not all created equal? That is what I grew up learning; that is what I was taught in school, that we were all equal — but no, obviously not.

I have other experiences along the same lines. While I was staying at the Y, I had the opportunity to have a job. I was a longshoreman for a few months in South Africa. You have to appreciate that a longshoreman's job — really what I was is a forklift operator on the docks, but that was the lowest class of job that a white man could have in South Africa in 1972. Every other job below me was for blacks or "coloureds", as they called them, which was basically what we refer to as East Indian descent today.

I went down to the docks and there I was, basically a forklift operator running around the shipyards there. We loaded

cane, bales of jute and all kinds of things along those lines. It was interesting because, although I had the lowest job that a white man could have, the people who ran the place were what they called “coloureds” or the East Indians at the time. I took all my direction from this individual and, in fact, the people that were the stevedores — those who were actually off-loading the trains — were generally another class of people they had in South Africa during that time, and they were the blacks. It was a real education for me to see this class structure when we’re longshoreman. We’re all basically doing the same thing: moving goods and services from one location to the other. To this day, the impact on me is astounding.

What was unique about this is that I got really friendly with the coloured man who directed me where I went on my forklift, where I had to haul the bales of jute or the sugar, or whatever it was that I was loading. All day long I felt, well, I was working for this individual. I looked at that and I thought, okay, I can deal with this; I understand that this is not my country, this is not my world, but this is the culture, and this is what I’m trying to live within.

But he had a really interesting colloquialism. Every time he wanted my attention, he would go: “Bossman, bossman, come on over here. I want you to move this over here.” I have to say that, after a period of time, I was getting a little frustrated, because I did not consider myself to be his boss, but it was a colloquialism that he used. One day I stopped him and I said to him, “I am not your bossman any more. If anybody, I report to you. You are the one who has directed me around here.”

He looked at me and he said, “You know, Don, for 25 years I have been working on this dock; we see these forklift drivers, the white guys, coming and going every day. But you know, if I were to call you anything other than bossman, I’d lose my job.”

I thought about it. From that day on, I did not say one word to that individual or criticize him for the type of life that he lived.

We became quite good friends over the period of time, regarding our way of life and his way of life. Over lunch hour, we would discuss the different types of culture that we were experiencing within South Africa. In fact, he did come from India, and I came from Canada, obviously. We started talking about things and we became good friends.

One day I said, “I understand you can’t come down to the YMCA where I am staying because of your colour, right? I understand that, if we walk down the street together, that there is an issue there that we cannot do that. I know where you live, so maybe I can come over and visit you on Saturday and visit your place.”

He looked at me and this was another one of my educational experiences, if you want to call it that, but he said to me, “You know, Don, you can do that. You can come over to my house. Because you are white, you have that ability. You can get on the bus and go down to the market, take this bus over to this town and you can come over to my house. But you know what you are going to do? First of all, you are going to probably cost me my job. Because there are people out there who

look and follow people. They see where they are going and, if a white man goes down into my community, they are going to know that you have come to my house and I am going to lose my job.”

I thought about this a little bit. But he didn’t stop there, Mr. Speaker, he went on. What he said after that was even more unique. He said, “You know, I don’t mind losing the job; I can understand that, if you really want to come down to visit me. The problem is that you’re probably going to put my life at risk too. I have to feed my family, I have to feed my people, and I have to look after them, and if I am found dead lying in the ditch next week because you came over and wanted to visit me on a Saturday afternoon, I can’t accept that. I can’t condone that, and I would ask that you respect me and not come down to visit me. We can continue our conversations here.”

The right to freedom of assembly and association wasn’t only disrespected in South Africa at the time, it wasn’t culturally and socially accepted. It actually encouraged people to perpetuate an environment of cruelty and human abuse.

Mr. Speaker, we all share this planet. As human beings, we are all created equal. We must struggle against prejudice, our own as well as others. When we think that we are better than the next individual, we perpetuate human injustice.

We see it all through time; we see it all through our cultures. If we look around even our community today, we see it again. We see injustice as we walk down the street. Wheelchair access is an example. While minor in some people’s view, it is a social injustice.

I heard on the radio this morning that the city is going to crack down on people who park in the disabled parking lots around town. We look at that and we say, “Well, have I ever been criticized for doing that? Have I ever done that?”

There is a really nice handy one right in front of the post office downtown, and I have to admit that I’ve probably been caught parked in that one. I know if I go around the corner and park in the taxi one that the taxi guy is going to get real mad. We all need to consider our points of view and how we treat social injustice.

When we look at the motion before us regarding the all-party committee, I have to say that I’m very excited that we’re now moving down a road. It has been a year since I introduced Bill No. 102, entitled *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act*. The amendment I proposed was simple enough. It was just to extend the time frame in which people could actually apply.

Here we have a situation where the proposed amendment was correcting a flaw in the current legislation, which, in effect, imposed the equivalent of a judicially created limitation time period for a criminal offence. So we were restricting people from saying, “I’ve been wronged, just for the sake of doing it.” It didn’t seem reasonable to me.

We are who we are, and we want to be accepted the way we are. This holds true for everyone, for each individual. If we want to be accepted for who we are and treated with respect, we need to accept others in the same spirit of equality.

The members opposite may now recall how I was offended when it became clear that we would not be working together to resolve the issue of the amendment I brought forward last year.

A year has come and gone, and this issue remains unchanged. In that time, I've had cause to wonder how many Yukoners have experienced an abuse of their human rights, only to find themselves further victimized when their complaint was rejected by an arbitrary time period or time restriction.

I have other stories that I could relate to you about experiences I had working under apartheid. Some of them were stark, some of them were real, some of them were just downright wrong. You know, when I came back from Africa and continued on in my career and my life, I have to say that, while I really appreciated the time I spent there, I never really fully appreciated what exactly human rights were.

I have to say that I have to thank this House, for in the last two years that I've been standing here and speaking and questioning the Minister of Justice across the way as to why we can't move forward with human rights legislation, I find myself being galvanized by this inability to make a simple change or to reopen a particular act that hasn't been looked at in 20 years. So I felt frustrated — angry at times — over it. When the debate was closed on the particular amendment that I had, I was very, very upset about it.

I think that what we need to do here is to look at this all-party committee with fresh eyes. I challenge the Member for Klondike: perhaps he would even like to sit on the committee — I noticed his name wasn't there. Perhaps we could take this opportunity and work together to try to rebuild some of the conflicts that have happened over the past few months. I would like to do that, if I could. I would like to see us go around to the communities and solicit input. I challenge the minister to send over everything that is currently available, in terms of the work that has been done in the last year and half, so that we on this side of the House can be better prepared for these hearings and community meetings that we're going to have. I don't know when we are going to start them. I assume that we'll get together at some point soon, and I look forward to an agenda over the summer months.

I find it a little disconcerting that we have not been presented with a white paper or a current act that is maybe in a draft stage that we could work from. I think the people who we're probably going to be talking to would like to see a starting point. Perhaps the minister is looking to the old act to be that starting point. I look forward to discussions and the meetings that we're going to have to see if this is what the minister means to be the starting point. I would like to see something a little bit more current. It has been almost 21 years now since there have been any revisions to this act. I understand that the last time we looked at this particular act, 1988 —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Inverarity: — well, I looked at it, and it said 1988 to me.

It would be nice if we had some additional time or some additional papers that we could look at from a starting point. Maybe that will be part of the committee as we go through it; it wasn't really addressed in the motion.

I feel the issues that we are dealing with in this regard are significant. I felt it particularly important for the other members of the committee who will be meeting on this particular act to

be as serious about the objective of this. This is probably one of the toughest pieces of legislation that we will have to deal with. Certainly I believe — and perhaps the minister can correct me if I am wrong on this point — that one of the very first, if not the first, all-party select committee that was ever created in this Legislative Assembly was to discuss the *Human Rights Act*.

It is only fitting that we look at another opportunity years later to do exactly the same thing: go around and solicit the communities, to listen to people, to understand what it is that they want to see for Yukon human rights. Perhaps the result might be that, like a lot of other legislation we promote here, it could be leading-edge. This was certainly leading-edge when it came out. It was the talk of the country. Today we need to look at it again.

If I have been harsh on the minister over the year about trying to be motivated and trying to get something done with regard to this, I would apologize. I've looked forward to the opportunity to speak. We must recognize the weaknesses in ourselves and strive to overcome them. If we are to create a better world for our children, I look forward to sitting on this committee and contributing to the development of modern and effective human rights legislation.

My commitment to this committee is to ensure that it stays on topic and on time. Expect me — and I will say it in this House — to be vocal on this committee. Expect harsh criticism from me for any unreasonable delay or petty politics. Hold me to the principles of any fairness and reasoned debate because I will expect nothing less from the rest of this committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to speak to this motion for a few minutes. I would echo the comments of my colleague, the Member for Klondike. I will begin by making some comments in general and then address the elements of this motion.

One of the hallmarks of Canada is that we have a sophisticated and modern human rights regime. It is part of what makes Canada a great place to live. I think that the liberties and freedoms that are enshrined in our legislation reflect the ideals that we as Canadians hold. These freedoms are also what allow us to achieve our personal success.

Sadly, as the member opposite noted, there are parts of the world where people do not enjoy the benefits of basic human rights. I can think of examples where people are discriminated against because of their gender or their skin colour. In places like Afghanistan, for example, I am given to understand that women have very few rights.

I applaud the work of women like Mavis Leno, who has consistently called for more to be done to restore women's human rights in the post-Taliban Afghanistan. I am pleased that Canada has taken a stand against that discrimination. I applaud those Canadians who are in Afghanistan participating in efforts to bring the Canadian ideals of peace, order and good government to that country.

As members of this Assembly know, Canadians and Yukoners have been at the forefront of promoting and addressing human rights. I have spoken with Canada's Foreign Affairs

minister with respect to Canada's role in the promotion of human rights on the global stage.

Canada was and is known as a place of safety for those fleeing persecution in other countries. Our rich legacy as a place of refuge, a place of safety, has garnered Canada a worldwide reputation of being one of the best countries in which to live.

Recently, I also wrote to my federal counterpart, Minister Verner, expressing my support for a federal-provincial-territorial meeting to be held in 2008 for ministers responsible for human rights. I understand that it has been some time since the last FPT meeting was held.

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss human rights — here in the Yukon, not in foreign countries. This government is very proud of our record on human rights.

As members of this Assembly know, the Yukon *Human Rights Act* sets out some compelling objectives. It calls for Yukon to further in the Yukon the public policy that every individual is free and equal in dignity and rights, to discourage and eliminate discrimination, to promote recognition of the inherent dignity and worth and of the equal rights of all members of the human family — these being principles underlying the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other solemn undertakings, international and national, which Canada honours. It also affirms the rights and freedoms that underpin our social structure. It declares that every individual and every group shall, in accordance with the law, enjoy the right to freedom of religion, conscience, opinion and belief. Every individual and every group shall, in accordance with the law, enjoy the right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication. Every individual and every group shall, in accordance with the law, enjoy the right to peaceful assembly with others and the right to form other associations of any character. Every individual has the right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of their property to the extent provided by law. And no one shall be deprived of that right except with just compensation.

These rights and freedoms are what make Yukon such a great and wonderful place to live. Each one of us approaches the question of human rights guided and shaped by our personal context. Each of us has a role to play. I think that it is wonderful that we live in a society where every individual is free and equal in dignity and rights.

I can remember a time when not all Canadians enjoyed the same human rights. There was a time when women and First Nations were not entitled to vote or to hold office. I have seen discrimination against First Nations so many times during my life where we were treated as second-class citizens because of our skin colour. I could give lots of examples, but I'll just mention a couple of areas.

When I was 18, I travelled to Hull, Quebec. I remember seeing a sign that said, "No dogs or Indians allowed." I can think of examples where First Nation people were not allowed to make our full contribution to Canada simply because we were First Nation. Sometimes when we were able to participate as Canadian citizens, we were treated differently. I think of

returning First Nations — people who served in the army — who did not receive the same benefits as other veterans who returned.

I lived in residential school where we were totally degraded because of our skin colour. We were told that we were "red savages" on a daily basis. We were degraded to the point we actually believed that we were subservient and just accepted our lot in life — to be seen but not heard. Our culture, our religion, our heritage was degraded.

The good news is that we have come a very long way. I think my presence and those of my colleagues from Whitehorse West, Vuntut Gwitchin, Mayo-Tatchun, and McIntyre-Takhini in this Assembly proves very clearly that neither gender nor ethnic background are barriers any more. We are contributing to Yukon, to Canada.

Indeed, I note that the Yukon Party has always been a leader in the promotion of equality and dignity. In 1978, Hilda Watson was the first leader of the Yukon Territorial Progressive Conservative Party. I am pleased that the Yukon Party has such a rich legacy of equality and dignity for all. These values have always been a part of this party.

This government is committed to addressing the human rights in the Yukon and we back up our words with action. Where there has been a demonstrated need, we have stepped forward. For example, the base funding of the Yukon Human Rights Commission has increased from \$252,000 in 2000-01 to \$478,000 in 2007-08. Over that time, the core funding of the commission was increased by \$117,300 in 2001-02, by \$80,000 in 2004-05, and by \$27,000 in last year's budget. This is in addition to the one-time contribution of \$265,700.

Let me put this in perspective. Since 2000-01, the commission has received almost \$1,434,000.

This is above what they would have received if they continued to be funded at the 2000-01 levels. My point is that we have worked with the commission and are continuing to work with them to address their financial concerns because of our commitment to addressing human rights.

As a government, we value and cherish human rights. We support the *Human Rights Act*. I think it is clear that we support the organization that the act created. It is clear that other members in this House also value and support human rights.

The members opposite have at various times brought related issues forward. For example, the Member for Porter Creek South, as he stated earlier, presented a bill before the Assembly for our consideration. The appropriate action, of course, with regard to the bill the Member for Porter Creek South brought forward, is to include that proposal as part of this extensive review. It is just part of the broader act review.

I understand that representatives of both the board of adjudication and the commission have spoken about the area of timelines as something to look at as well.

As I said previously, because human rights are so integral to who we are as Yukoners, my colleagues and I believe that Yukoners need to be consulted. It would be a mistake to make changes to the act without consulting Yukoners first.

I also think it is important, especially on issues such as human rights, that whatever is brought forward to this Assem-

bly be something that each of the parties represented can support. To do that, I believe we need the committee to be comprised of a member from each party and that the decisions be unanimous.

We will go out to the people of Yukon, listen to their advice, and bring that back to this Assembly. We will report on the public opinion for legislative change and what recommendations, if any, regarding what form legislation implementing changes recommended by the committee should take.

We want to ensure that concerned citizens and interested groups have the ability to make their concerns known. This means groups like the Yukon Human Rights Commission will be able to appear as witnesses. It will also mean that officials from Government of Yukon will appear as witnesses on technical matters.

I am also pleased that, to help us, we will be able to engage a technical expert who is not a Member of the Legislative Assembly or an employee of the Government of Yukon, to act as a facilitator in providing information at the public hearings.

We will hold public hearings to ensure that all Yukoners are given the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. Of course, we will publish our findings, and I appreciate this motion's authorization to do that.

Given the success we have had in working together to do better with respect to the smoking issue, I think this model will work well in addressing the concerns that we have in this Chamber in ensuring Yukoners' rights are respected and upheld.

I look forward to working with the members opposite to address these concerns.

Günilschish, merci, thank you.

Motion No. 374 agreed to

Motion No. 234

Clerk: Motion No. 234, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Member for Klondike

THAT this House urges Fisheries and Oceans Canada in conjunction with the Government of Yukon to support the implementation of the new regime for managing placer mining activity through operation of the Yukon Placer Secretariat that will:

- (1) provide ongoing oversight to the new placing mining regulatory regime,
- (2) resolve disputes,
- (3) coordinate the adaptive management process; and
- (4) provide a means for stakeholders and interested parties to continue to participate in habitat management decisions related to placer mining.

Mr. Nordick: I rise today to speak to this motion. As everybody knows, placer mining in my riding is very important to me, to my family, to my family's friends and all of my friends in Yukon in general.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way from December 16, 2002, when the Fisheries and Oceans minister Robert Thibault announced the Yukon placer authorization and that nego-

tiated management structure would be phased out. This action would have resulted in the extinction of at least 50 percent of all the placer operations in Yukon. Of course, my riding of Klondike would have experienced the most severe impacts of this decision.

Mr. Speaker, mining is still one of the major backbones of Yukon's economy and especially the Klondike's economy. Last year alone, approximately 88 percent of Yukon's placer gold was produced in the Dawson area.

With the support of our then senator, Ione Christensen, Klondike Placer Miners Association, the Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources minister, and numerous business and government representatives, there was an alliance formed. This alliance resulted in the establishment of the Yukon Placer Secretariat. A record agreement was entered into in May 2003. This agreement established a process for replacing the Yukon placer authorization with a management system that recognized the importance of the conservation and protection of fish habitat and sustainable placer mining industry in Yukon.

The extensive consultation and intense research undertaken by the secretariat in association with Fisheries and Oceans Canada has resulted in a clear set of guidelines under which Yukon placer miners can operate with the certainty they need to do long-range planning needed for successful operations.

Mr. Speaker, I will give some background. A record agreement was established in May of 2003. It established two management objectives: a sustainable placer industry in the Yukon and conservation and protection of fish and fish-habitat-supporting fisheries.

Its outcome was to include a clear set of guidelines responsive to the topographical differences, guidelines which are achievable and science based — guidelines which incorporate experience and traditional knowledge, and a harmonized, efficient and timely approach to regulations of the placer mining industry, licensing, applications, inspections and monitoring.

Mr. Speaker, components of the regime would include water-based authorization that replaces the Yukon placer authorization, a watershed sensitivity and habitat sustainability classification, and methodology and fish habitat sustainability classification maps. It would also include an adaptive management framework, aquatic health monitoring protocol, economic health monitoring protocol and a water quality objective monitoring protocol, and a guidebook of mitigation measures.

The Yukon placer secretariat followed a comprehensive consultation plan. Phase 1 provides information on general concepts of the regime. Phase 2 provides detailed information in beginning to receive input and gathering traditional knowledge. Phase 3 shows how input was given full and fair consideration when the regime was finalized.

The secretariat and Fisheries and Oceans Canada consultation report will be published within the next few weeks and distributed as the final phase of consultation. There is \$329,000 in the 2008-09 budget, which is before this House at the moment, to bring this process to a conclusion.

As MLA for the Klondike, I would like to thank the Klondike Placer Miners Association for all their time and hard work

to ensure that the new management system would accomplish the intent of a sustainable placer mining industry in the Yukon.

Needless to say, Yukon placer miners are pleased to see a sensible process developed. Placer miners from my constituency are very confident they will have a continuing operation long into the future.

I am happy to support a motion that improves our ability to conserve and protect fish habitat and secure the future of Yukon placer mining, and I would encourage all members to speak on this motion to show their support of the mining industry.

Mr. McRobb: Off the top, I rather doubt that all members will be speaking on this motion. It seems to be just a matter-of-fact statement, because I believe all members in here do support the Yukon placer regime, which is still moving forward and, as I understand, has yet to be completed.

It was only about a week ago that I met with officials from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for a briefing on the budget. I did ask a question about where this was at. An official told me that it would be implemented sometime this spring, probably after this sitting is over.

I'm wondering a bit about the purpose of even discussing a motion like this today, when the final recommendations have yet to be made and the final documents need to be finalized.

That said, I suppose we can make some statements for the record about how we feel about placer mining in the territory. In my perspective, placer mining is the family farm of the north. The importance of maintaining this industry has been recognized previously by members of this House, both here today and those no longer here. It has been compared to family farms on the prairies as a way to sustain families and provide opportunities for income in the north.

We all recall the great gold rush of 1898 and the boom that brought to the territory.

There was a bit of a mini-boom about 25 years ago, when the price of gold hit a record high of some \$800 per ounce — U.S. dollars, I believe it was. Just on that, I read recently in some news coverage, when gold finally penetrated the \$1,000 U.S. per ounce barrier, that if you factor inflation to the previous record value of \$800 an ounce, it would be equivalent to \$2,200 an ounce today.

We know it's less than half that so, by today's standards, if we go way back to about the 1980 era, by today's prices, that would mean a price back then of about \$350 an ounce instead of \$800 an ounce. Gold has in fact dropped in value and has not maintained an inflationary price pegged to that previous high some 25 to 30 years ago.

That has made it more difficult for placer miners to make a living. It has made it more difficult for the larger operations to keep their employees, maintain their equipment, purchase new equipment if required, and to meet increasing government regulations. That's what brought on the whole placer regime in the first place.

I do recall the debate from about five years ago and the role — it should be mentioned — of our Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell, and former senator, Ione Christensen, and

how they went to bat for Yukoners and lobbied the federal government to revisit its position with respect to the implementation of the new rules that would seriously affect placer mining in the Yukon Territory.

On behalf of Yukoners I would like to express our appreciation to those people.

I really don't know how much more I can say on this. Perhaps I could recognize the several placer miners who are in my riding. I know there are other MLAs, such as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, perhaps the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, who also have a number of placer miners in their ridings, as does the Member for Klondike whom we have already heard from.

I think I will wrap this up by saying we look forward to seeing the results coming out of this process, and hopefully it is something that will balance the industry requirements with our desire to protect the environment.

Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I am pleased today to endorse my colleague, the Member for Klondike, and this motion here in the Assembly to move forward on the implementation of the new placer regime.

To give a little history on the background, it has been more than 100 years since the discovery of gold in the Yukon, but placer mining is still an important sector in the Yukon's economy.

Royalty records, which represent the minimum amount of gold production, show that over 16.6 million crude ounces, 518 tonnes, of placer gold have been produced to date in the Yukon. At today's price that would be worth more than \$9.8 billion.

In 2007, there were 107 active placer mining operations employing approximately 350 people directly. Although the total number of operations was only one more than in 2006, the industry saw a fair amount of transition — 10 operations moved to new drainage, four operations closed, nine operations were sold and five new mines began operation.

Although most placer operations are still small and family-run, with an average of three to four employees, there has been a recent trend to small, relatively inactive properties being sold to new owners and reactivated. In addition, several mine owners now own more than one active property. There appears to be a shift toward larger operators.

Last year, approximately 88 percent of Yukon placer gold was produced in the Dawson area. The remaining gold came from the Whitehorse and Mayo mining districts. The total Yukon placer gold production in the year 2007 was 63,929 crude ounces, with a value in Canadian dollars of \$38.13 million.

As you can see, the placer mining industry continues to make a significant contribution to Dawson City and Yukon's economy. The new placer regime will ensure that this contribution continues. The new regime applies modern environmental standards to this historic and important industry, and promises the legal certainty and regulatory stability placer miners need to thrive in the future.

When the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced in December 2002 that the Yukon placer authorization would be phased out, the industry's future appeared very dismal. This government opposed the decision and crafted an alliance that included the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, several individual First Nation governments, the Yukon's Member of Parliament, our senator and, of course, the Klondike Placer Miners Association.

Together, we persuaded the minister of the day to reconsider a decision that would have had a devastating effect on this very historic Yukon industry.

In May 2003, we entered into a record of agreement which established a process for replacing the Yukon placer authorization with a management system that recognizes the importance of the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat, and a sustainable placer mining industry in Yukon.

In May 2005 a framework for the new regime was endorsed by the leadership of the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon government, the Klondike Placer Miners Association and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Yukon Placer Secretariat was established to continue development of the new management system and to carry out a comprehensive consultation program. The Yukon Placer Secretariat will continue its role as a coordinating body that troubleshoots the implementation process, guides the adaptive process and provides a mechanism for third-party involvement and habitat management decisions related to Yukon placer mining.

This government has committed a total of \$329,000 to support the ongoing operation of the Yukon Placer Secretariat. Fisheries and Oceans Canada is also providing \$100,000 to help offset the cost of the secretariat and we will also staff a new position in its regional office to support the regime.

I am pleased to announce that, following several years of development and consultation, the Yukon placer authorization will be replaced in 15 Yukon watersheds on Friday, April 11. The new standards will be phased in gradually and the secretariat will conclude the consultation program and focus on ensuring that assessors, regulators and placer miners fully understand the new rules.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, for the hard work and steadfast support of his department while this new regime has been developing and finalized. In addition, I would also like to thank the Council of Yukon First Nations for its tremendous support for the new regime. The traditional knowledge shared by the individual First Nations has helped to improve the regime and make it a truly Yukon product.

Finally, I would like to thank the leadership of the Klondike Placer Miners Association for their dedication and patience in working to ensure that the new management system would achieve the objectives of a sustainable placer mining industry for Yukon.

I urge you to support this motion for implementation of the new placer regime, which improves our ability to conserve and protect fish and fish habitat and secure the future of the Yukon placer mining industry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: If the member speaks, he'll close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Nordick: I'd like to thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for speaking to this motion and supporting my fellow Yukon citizens in achieving what will be a benefit for the Yukon as a whole.

The Member for Kluane asked why — he actually asked, "Why is this motion important?" I would suggest that he should ask all Yukon citizens that question, since he does not know the answer to this. Mr. Speaker, I know the answer. It is clear to me. The answer is that this industry is extremely important to the territory, to Canada and to all Yukon citizens.

I'd like to remind all individuals in the Yukon of the history of this issue because, if we forget and ignore the issue, it would be extremely difficult for it to succeed. So, once again, here's a brief history to ensure that all Yukon citizens know how important this issue is.

The proposed placer regime will replace the existing placer authorization. In 1993, the YPA was implemented by a process guided by the Yukon Placer Committee. Prior to 2001, the committee was also responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of the YPA, which involved an extensive public consultation.

In June 2002, the Yukon Placer Committee issued a report containing a unanimous recommendation.

On December 16, 2002, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced his decision to phase out the YPA. This decision was not well received by many individuals and stakeholder groups in the Yukon. That's part of the reason why this motion is important — to remind people how important this is.

In May 2003, a record agreement was signed. The record agreement required a new regime for regulating placer mining under the *Fisheries Act*, developed and implemented in 2001 with two management objectives. One was a sustainable placer mining industry in the Yukon, which is another reason this is very important.

I hope the Member for Kluane is listening — a sustainable placer mining industry in the Yukon. That is why this motion is important. The conservation and protection of fish and fish-habitat-supporting fisheries is another reason why this motion is important. I hope the Member for Kluane is actually listening this time.

The ROA also establishes an implementation steering committee and a technical working committee. In May 2004, these committees submitted a preliminary report to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. By May 2005, a report entitled "An Integrated Regulatory Regime for Yukon Placer Mining" was prepared. In order to facilitate the consultation phase and the implementation of the regime, in September 2005, the Joint Placer Implementation Committee was formed to replace the Implementation Steering Committee. In 2005, the Yukon Placer Secretariat was established.

Once again, some chronology of the dates of how this all transpired: in December 2002, the Fisheries and Oceans minister announced his decision to phase out the Yukon placer au-

thorization. In May 2003, the record agreement was signed. In May 2005, a framework for the new regime was approved by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In 2005, the Yukon Placer Secretariat was established. In April 2006, the secretariat travelled throughout the Yukon to hold introductory meetings with First Nations.

In March 2006, the secretariat hosted a workshop on adaptive management, a key principle guiding the proposed regime. In June 2006, the secretariat began its year-long, three-phase consultation process.

In closing, thanks to all members for supporting this motion, and I encourage all Yukoners to become more informed on this issue. More details can be found on the Yukon Placer Secretariat Web site, and I encourage the Member for Kluane to realize why this motion is important. It is important to me; it is important to all members here, so the question why should not even be asked.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Hardy: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 15 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 234 agreed to

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: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. Is it the wish of the members to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 9 — *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08* — continued

Department of Education

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, the Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's an honour and pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to discuss and to debate the Department of Education's supplementary budget.

I think we all recognize the priority that this government has placed on education — the importance it has to this government and indeed to all Yukon people.

It's a pleasure to engage with members opposite on education. I have noticed in recent days that Question Period has been rather quiet regarding the Department of Education, and I will take that as silent support for what we're doing in the department. Otherwise, there would have been many issues or many questions raised over the course of the last three weeks. And as we have not seen that, I would see that as a concrete demonstration of the support for the Department of Education.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, the members opposite are encouraging me to provide them with the information, and I will certainly do so.

The Department of Education includes several different branches including the public schools division and advanced education. It is our goal in the Department of Education to prepare Yukoners to lead healthy and rewarding lives in our community. We do that with the work in the public schools branch, also in post-secondary and with our training programs. We do that in partnership with parents, teachers, school councils, First Nation governments, teachers, school administrators, and our many other partners in education. We work together with our partners to ensure that we're meeting the needs of the students and the needs of the community.

Mr. Chair, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Department of Education supplementary budget for 2007-08. The 2007-08 supplementary budget for the Department of Education is going to continue the good work that we started in our first mandate and will support new initiatives introduced during our second mandate. Under the 2007-08 supplementary budget there will be a slight increase to accommodate a number of one-time funding initiatives. The total operation and maintenance supplementary budget is \$2,594,000.

Mr. Chair, \$279,000 is requested as a one-time increase for heating fuel costs to March 31, 2008, and the department will

continue to monitor the heating costs of our schools on an on-going basis.

Also, Mr. Chair, and I hope I can have the support of all members on this point, \$147,000 is requested for 10 additional educational assistants to the end of the school year. These educational assistants were distributed to schools on a priority basis to ensure the needs of students and staff, and to assist students in their ability to access educational programs offered.

The 2008-09 funding required for these educational assistants for April to June, 2008, will be reflected in our 2008-09 operation and maintenance budget.

Under this year's supplementary budget the Department of Education is also asking for \$1.375 million as one-time funding for experience increases for our teachers and to accommodate the one-time increase for teacher accrual. The department will continue to monitor the experience increases for all Yukon Teachers Association staff over the 2008-09 school year.

\$450,000 is also requested under this year's supplementary budget for one-time funding to accommodate the increased substitute teacher costs.

The Department of Education is requesting a further \$369,000 in northern strategy funding to be transferred from the Executive Council Office.

This funding will cover \$95,000 for training to develop municipal and First Nation government capacity, \$49,000 for boards and committees leadership training services, \$75,000 for revitalization of culture through story and technology, and \$150,000 for a program entitled "Walking Together to Revitalize and Perpetuate Yukon First Nation Languages".

Clearly, you can see that we are working with our partners to satisfy many of the needs and concerns in our community. We are working to develop the capacity of municipal and First Nation governments. We are working to increase the capacity of boards and committees. We are working to revitalize and ensure continuation of First Nation languages.

The total capital supplementary budget for 2007-08 is a reduction of \$33,000. As you can see, Mr. Chair, we are being very strong and prudent financial managers.

Funding that was approved for the renovations of the F.H. Collins Secondary School and the completion of the Canada Games lower bench upgrades were not required, and the funds have been returned.

The department's focus on a responsive education system enhancing transitions and developing and maintaining partnerships is well supported by this year's supplementary budget.

As I'm sure we will all agree, education is key to creating and maintaining the kind of economy and communities we value as Yukoners. The government's investment in education in this supplementary budget is proof of our commitment to improving the quality of life for all Yukoners.

If members have questions about the area of education, I would certainly welcome them now. Or, if they would prefer to get into specific discussions about line items, I would be prepared to discuss those as well.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm going to be extremely brief. I'd like to thank the minister for his explanation of the budget. I don't have any specific questions for this minister at this time.

We look forward to debating with the minister when we get to Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, about the direction of the Department of Education and the direction of all of the departments in government — when we get to actually debate Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*.

In the interest of time, so that we can actually get to Bill No. 11, and possibly make some time for witnesses to appear here to speak to the Legislative Assembly about the *Child and Family Services Act*, Bill No. 50, I would request unanimous consent to have all clauses, schedules and title of Bill No. 9 deemed read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and title of Bill No. 9 read and agreed to

Chair: Unanimous consent has been requested to deem all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, to be read and agreed to. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Member: Disagreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been denied.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, members opposite have been quite critical and quite vocal of this government about issues such as education. In the past there have been questions raised on this Assembly's floor about educational assistants. Could I get some indication from members opposite if they are in support of these initiatives?

Mr. Cardiff: In the interest of speeding along so that we can get to Bill No. 11, the big thick document on the minister's desk there somewhere, we are requesting unanimous consent to move the process along and get to debate where all the substance is, which is in Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*.

The Government House Leader saw fit to disagree with the opportunity to move this debate along, to provide time for us here in the Legislative Assembly to actually get to some of the substantive legislation, which is Bill No. 11 and Bill No. 50, *Child and Family Services Act*, and maybe even have an opportunity in this sitting for witnesses to appear in this Legislative Assembly so that we can hear from them.

In the interest of time, that was what we were trying to do. The Government House Leader saw fit to disagree with the request for unanimous consent to move this bill through speedily so that we can get on with some of the other business. I would hope that we could move this along a little quicker.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is unfortunate to see this approach from the opposition. The Member for Mount Lorne suggests that what members opposite are doing in requesting that this be cleared without any debate is just in the interest of getting to substantive business.

Mr. Chair, we are talking about millions of dollars of the public's money. The government, through ministers and departments and Cabinet, has invested this and brought forward the supplementary in a manner we believe appropriate. When are the members going to stand up here on behalf of the people who elected them and debate this matter?

The Department of Education alone within this budget has significant increases to such areas as educational assistants.

Where is the debate? The members do not seem to be interested in doing their jobs in debating the supplementary. Certainly we on the government side stand ready, willing and able to debate the budget and all pieces of legislation and look forward doing so. For the members to suggest clearing the supplementary without any debate is very disappointing, and I would encourage them to pick the document up, do their jobs and to actually engage in discussion with members of the government side on the issue of the expenditures proposed therein.

Mr. McRobb: Thank you for the opportunity to put on the record exactly what has happened here.

The House leader for the third party, the Member for Mount Lorne, requested unanimous consent to deem all lines read and carried in Bill No. 9 in the interests of time of this Assembly.

The only party to oppose unanimous consent was the Yukon Party on the government side of the House, and in particular, the Government House Leader, the Member for Lake Laberge. We in Official Opposition supported the request. Let us draw a few conclusions, Mr. Chair. This is in stark contrast to what we have heard the Premier claim many times previously.

He has said that the opposition sets the agenda in the House. At the conclusion of sittings, if the business is not all done, he points the finger at the opposition for delaying progress and not getting to all the departments in the budget, or not getting completely through all the clauses in some bill or legislation. Well, let this be a golden example for the record. The government side is dragging its heels on progress and that is shameful.

Now, as the Member for Mount Lorne indicated, there is substantial business before this House that has yet to be even touched on. Already, we are closing in on the halfway mark of this 32-day sitting. We have a record budget of some \$900 million. None of the departments have been debated. General debate hasn't even started yet, and general debate alone could take a few days.

The *Child and Family Services Act* has not yet been debated. This is substantial legislation for Yukoners. As mentioned, we support witnesses coming before this House. If this is granted by the Yukon Party, which is the only party that objects to it, that will take some extra time. There are amendments to the *Liquor Act* and other legislation. Mr. Chair, I would submit that there isn't enough time to adequately address all of the important business before the House. That is without even considering wasting any time and money that has already been spent.

This supplementary is about money that was spent last fiscal year. We are more interested in what is happening now and about money that will be spent in the future, and legislation that will affect all Yukoners in the future.

One more point I'd like to make is that only yesterday afternoon, in general debate on this Bill No. 9, the Premier refused to stand up and answer questions from the Leader of the Official Opposition. He remained in his chair and would only say, "Clear." He did not want to engage in debate.

So I would suggest that the Premier and Government House Leader had maybe better have a conference, so their stories are a little more consistent. You know, everyone in here is supposed to be representing Yukoners.

There is substantial business before the House, and I'm sorry, but you've heard from both opposition parties, and we do not consider this bill for money already spent to be substantial business. We want to clear this. We do not want to spend another minute debating this bill. We want to get on to the important public business. Please let us do that.

Chair: Order please. A request was made, requesting unanimous consent. The request was denied. We are now proceeding with the Department of Education, Vote 3.

Mr. McRobb: That was a request some time ago from the Member for Mount Lorne. Since that motion was made —

Chair: Order please. Mr. McRobb, are you on a point of order, or are you standing up to debate the Department of Education?

Mr. McRobb: I'm on a point of order.

Point of order

Chair: Mr. McRobb, state the point of order, please.

Mr. McRobb: On the point of order, I would like to state for the record that —

Chair: I'm actually asking you to clarify what the point of order is.

Mr. McRobb: I want to make a motion.

Chair: That is not a point of order.

Mr. McRobb: Then I'd like to rise on a motion.

Chair: If you want to move a motion, go ahead.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses of Bill No. 9 read and agreed to

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Chair, I would like to request unanimous consent to have all clauses, schedule and title of Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08* deemed read and carried.

Chair: That issue has already been decided and was defeated. We will now proceed with Vote 3, Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate your ruling and think, of course, the business at hand —

Chair: Order please. Mr. Cathers, are you standing on a point of order or are you debating the Department of Education?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to debate the vote in front of us, the Department of Education. Do I have the floor?

Chair: Yes, you do.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate that members seem somewhat reluctant to debate the matters at hand in the Department of Education, but there are significant increases in this area.

The *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* — earlier in debate the members suggested that there is nothing here to discuss. We are dealing with a supplementary that deals with in excess of \$8.8 million in increased spending, yet the members have no appetite to debate it.

Perhaps the members see this as a minor issue, but a key part of the job of every elected member of this Assembly is to be involved in the discussions and debate of the spending of Government of Yukon, particularly for opposition members. They have claimed on numerous occasions — they stand up and say they are here to critique government spending, yet they don't even want to discuss the *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*; they want to clear it.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to the continued debate on the Department of Education and other departments within this supplementary estimate.

I would encourage members to recover their zeal for doing their job and debating this budget, doing what their constituents expect of them, rather than focusing on an attempt to get on to other issues. They should recognize that this is government private members' day. We are continuing with debate on Education and other departments and I look forward to hearing the Minister of Education further articulate the effect of some of the many good investments proposed in this supplementary estimate in front of us. I look forward, I hope, to members opposite engaging in a productive discussion of this matter.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: This is a little disturbing. Let me try to articulate why to all members of the House in a very respectful way. There has been great criticism over the last number of days in this Assembly directed at the government and we accept that fact. However, in the context of that criticism —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Mitchell on a point of order.

Mr. Mitchell: I believe that what is before us, Mr. Chair, is the Department of Education and I would ask if the member opposite is now engaging in debate on the Department of Education or on a previous motion?

Chair: Mr. Fentie on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Just for the member's benefit, I'm actually engaging in debate on the Department of Education —

Chair's ruling

Chair: Order please. On the point of order, the Chair has given a lot of latitude today with regard to debate on the Department of Education, but I would like to remind all members to focus their debate on the Department of Education. Mr. Fentie has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: So with respect to that very point — and let us use the Department of Education as an example — there is good reason for the member opposite to go on the public record with their views on the Department of Education supplementary spending requirements because it includes — and I'm sure the minister would be more than willing to provide significant detail — an enhancement to education.

A serious issue here relates to what position the Official Opposition and the third party in this House will take with respect to the expenditure. That begins with the Official Opposition and the third party putting on the public record their views, what they stand for, and what they think about this expenditure

versus where they might have spent or invested the money, as an alternative.

That's what the debate is intended to do. There are significant investments in this supplementary budget that require debate. There are also lapses that directly relate to comments made in this House that provide evidence that those comments were, in fact, incorrect.

There is also in this budget a substantial investment required because of MLA wage increases. It is our duty to debate this supplementary.

Mr. Fairclough: We accept the minister's explanation on the line items in the Department of Education, and we would like to move on.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is unfortunate that the members are not engaging in debate, particularly with regard to those comments that members from the opposition, and some of their party members, have made with regard to certain areas, such as investment in the area of public schools. We have here in the supplementary estimate an increase in funding of \$2.499 million in the area of public schools. I think it would benefit the House if we had some debate on that, if we had some debate on whether the members are prepared to retract their statements and comments made in and outside the House on this matter, whether the members are prepared to correct the record and recognize this investment in public schools, and also answer the question: do they support that investment? Yes or no?

I'm certainly looking forward to hearing from my colleague, the Minister of Education. I hope that he will provide further information to the House on how some of this investment will be used and perhaps recap a number of areas of past increases under his and this government's watch in the area of education — public schools, in particular.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I see what is happening here and it is truly unfortunate. We will, however, continue trying to engage the Official Opposition and the third party on the matter. In many instances, they have made much of holding government accountable. Here is a perfect opportunity to do just that.

I heard the passionate display from the Member for Kluane about time and who sets the agenda in this House. Let me remind the members opposite that we the government have brought forward the public's business as tabled in this Assembly. It is now the opposition's duty and responsibility to debate the public's business and provide their position, their view and their response on how the government is managing, in the public's interest, things like education.

There is good reason for us to debate this, given all the recent rhetoric coming from Liberal ranks about the de-prioritization of education in the Yukon. I can understand why the Official Opposition specifically does not want to debate this. It demonstrates clearly and is in direct contradiction of the position that the Liberal Party is taking. If we, for example, look at the budget and reflect on what it's doing, it's actually increasing the investment in this fiscal year. We would like to debate and discuss this issue of de-prioritization of education in the Yukon.

And that is something that the Official Opposition bears responsibility to the public for, so that they can clearly express why they say there is a de-prioritization of education in the Yukon. They have to explain themselves — at least they should, if they want to live up to the code of conduct and all these other things that they have made much about over the last number of years, which they all signed on to. It is time to demonstrate it. Here is an opportunity.

All the technical wrangling and the rest of it that comes from the Official Opposition's House Leader is not relevant to the fact that education in the Yukon Territory today is of the highest priority, and it is a major plank in building a better quality of life for Yukoners. The government wants to engage with the opposition on what they would have done with education in the Yukon, especially in this time of rhetoric about de-prioritization. We would like to talk to them about that and understand better why they have taken that position, and we may be able to help them change their ways and see the light.

Of course, this is all about cooperation. Of course, this is about ensuring the Assembly, this institution, operates as it should. I know the members opposite, especially on the Official Opposition benches, are quitting things and shirking their duty to the public. Here is a chance for them to resurrect their position in the public eye and debate constructively with the government side and the minister as to the content of this supplementary request for the Department of Education.

This is a prior situation that the members opposite have gotten themselves into. If they say that education in this territory is being diminished, they should stand up and demonstrate that and look at the evidence here in the supplementary and explain themselves. That is what we are suggesting they do, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: I will try to restore some semblance of order and sense to the debate, which is currently a debate between members of the governing party.

As recently as yesterday, the Premier indicated to us that there would be vast opportunities to debate all departments in great detail, when we came to the main estimates for 2008-09.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Mitchell: Oh, that was yesterday, was it? We agree with him. We know that there is a very large spending bill in front of us, Bill No. 11, the main estimates for the year that just began a short week ago. We're quite keen and eager to have ample time to debate all departments, including the Department of Education. There is some \$113.7 million, I believe, in operation and maintenance spending, as well as some capital funds for that department, as opposed to \$2,499,000 here.

As a result, both the Official Opposition and the third party have accepted the minister's explanations for his budget in the supplementary before us which is, as has been pointed out, and is frequently pointed out by the Premier, about money already spent.

I know that if we look back through last year, we'll see many instances when the Premier has said, "This is really all about money that's already spent, and there will be another opportunity to really delve into things in detail when we get to the money about to be spent" — which is really the only thing

we might have a say as to how things should be done, not how they have been done.

As recently as late yesterday afternoon, at 5:10 or 5:15, the Premier, during general debate, when we made reference to various departments — the Department of Health and Social Services and others — simply sat in his chair and mumbled, "Clear," which I believe came out as "Inaudible" in *Hansard*. But he said it was clear — it should be cleared. He had no interest or stomach for debating *Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, Bill No. 9, yesterday.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Mitchell: What's gone, as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin says, is the —

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. A little bit earlier, members rose on a point of order referring to the Department of Education and whether things were on topic. The Chair feels a little unclear as to how this debate is focusing around the Department of Education. I would like to encourage members to actually focus on the Department of Education. The Member for Copperbelt has the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: Let me bring my point back to make the point that you're looking for more, "Clear." I am sure that every member on this side of the House is eager to debate the Department of Education budget — more particularly, the Department of Education budget and the main estimates for next year. Knowing how limited our time is here today, I think there was an attempt by all parties to move expeditiously through motions earlier today and support those motions. We're trying to be cooperative again here in terms of time management, as has been requested frequently by members opposite.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the silent support from the opposition.

The Department of Education is a very large priority for the government. Preparing our youth, preparing people in our community for the opportunities before them, preparing them for the opportunities of life, preparing them to live, to know, to be and to live together is a high priority of the Department of Education.

In the past, opposition critics have been very critical of the Department of Education's projects, programs and some expenditures. What we have here is an opportunity to fully discuss and review what is going on in the Department of Education. There is no stop and start to the Department of Education; it is always a continuation. Next year's budget, the 2008-09 budget, will build upon what was initiated in previous budgets. It will build upon the good work going on in this supplementary budget.

We will build upon our commitment to our students and our commitment to our community. We will continue to work with all our partners and will continue to meet the needs of the community.

Mr. Chair, we have recognized that many of the criticisms that come out, especially by the Department of Education, often come out because of a lack of knowledge about what is really going on. We publish an annual report that puts forward

many of the highlights and accountability measures of the Department of Education. We recognize that is one tool to use but we have also, very recently, sent out a householder to all Yukon communities to apprise them of what is going on in education. We want to give them more information about what is going on with the students in our schools, the number of teachers that we have, the number of educational assistants that we have and with the expenditures that we are investing in Yukon students and Yukon's future.

Mr. Chair, we have also put forward information about what we are doing with regard to early childhood programs, specifically about full-day kindergarten, which is a major initiative of this government designed to increase literacy levels and to help to prepare all students for their school future.

We put forward programs such as the Wilson Reading program or the Reading Recovery program and enhanced those programs, which are designed to assist with early literacy and to prepare people to learn to read at a very early age.

We are also doing a lot of work in our high school system, and members should be aware of the high school programming study that is well underway right now.

We need to look to the future and ensure that we have the programming in place to meet the needs of the students and our community. It is important to take a look at how that will fit with the facilities that we will need. We all know about the state of F.H. Collins Secondary School and the need to make preparations for the future. This government is taking steps to do so, and we are working with our partners in education to do an appropriate analysis and to take a look at the different changes and trends.

One of the interesting things that we are finding out is that more than half of the students coming to F.H. Collins next year will be toward the French immersion stream of things.

That is a significant change in the Department of Education and a significant trend we need to prepare for.

We are looking to our situations now. We are looking at alternative teaching styles, experiential education, building on programs, such as the ACES program or the MAD program, and recognizing how people learn. We are looking at all those kinds of programs. I shouldn't put words in his mouth, but the previous government started the independent learning centre, which is a significant initiative to re-engage high school students who have left our system. This is a tremendous program to re-engage people and help them to complete their high school diploma.

Our work doesn't end there. The public schools branch is just one arm of the Department of Education. We also have the advanced education branch, which looks after post-secondary training and education. That includes initiatives such as support for university programs and includes our investment in the Yukon College and college programs. It includes our work with trades and apprentices. It also includes training that we offer to other sectors of society.

It is important to look at the investment that the Yukon is making in preparing people for university degrees. I believe we have over 1,000 students right now receiving the post-secondary grant that they use to invest in their education at

over 130 different educational institutions around the planet. We are preparing our Yukon students to meet Yukon opportunities. Also, we are working very closely with the Yukon College campus here and in the other communities throughout the territory.

Our work certainly does not stop there. This supplementary budget is looking at how we can provide some other programming to assist in other sectors of the community.

As we are all aware, education does not stop when one receives a certificate, or when one receives a diploma, but education and learning is lifelong. There is always more information that we can gain to learn and grow.

We recognize that there are needs in the community in developing capacity and skills, and that is why this supplementary budget is seeking to have \$95,000 transferred from the northern strategy funding to help develop municipal and First Nation government capacity. This is very worthwhile program and I hope that the members opposite support it. It is a new initiative and I would like to hear if they support it.

Also, there is an investment of \$49,000 for boards and committees leadership training services. Again, we are recognizing that in Yukon, in our variety of different governance structures and with our advisory groups that we have, boards and committees play a very important role — whether it is renewable resource councils, municipal governments, or the many different boards and committees that support government, that help government in decision-making, and, indeed, make decisions on their own.

We need to work with all Yukoners to improve capacity in leadership training, and we are doing that with some of the investments from this budget.

We also recognize that it is important to work on the cultural fabric in our community. We will be doing that with \$75,000 for a program entitled "revitalizing culture through story and technology".

Also, a very important aspect for many First Nation people in this community is the issue of First Nation language. I know that members opposite have raised this on numerous occasions: what is the government doing to help to ensure that people are learning and using indigenous languages?

Mr. Chair, there is a \$150,000 in this budget that will go to support a program titled, "walking together to revitalize and perpetuate Yukon First Nation languages". Mr. Chair, there are an awful lot of good things going on in the Department of Education. The budget discussion is an opportunity to bring forward some of the programs, services and solutions that we are developing and presenting for Yukoners.

We are often criticized that we aren't doing anything and this is an opportunity to come forward and correct that record — or at least to make people aware of the programs, initiatives, policies and hard work that is underway that will satisfy and address many of the needs in the community.

As I mentioned earlier, lifelong learning is one of those things that will continue on and on and on. We will never have enough skills or enough knowledge. I recall that my grandfather had a grade 8 education and he received his leaving-school diploma from grade 8. That was certainly not the end of his

learning. He was a very successful farmer and businessman, which meant that he had to learn the mechanics, learn the plumbing, learn the animal husbandry, learn the economics of life on a farm, and he had to develop and increase his skills in many other areas — he continued to learn.

What we teach in our public schools is a very good foundation that, with our high schools, people have an opportunity to be prepared for many different options and to see many different avenues before them. We then support post-secondary education and then we will continue to support Yukoners with additional opportunities for lifelong learning. These will include programs run through Yukon College or other programs that we offer through work with other partners. It is very important that we continue to prepare people for life in Yukon.

I see my role as Minister of Education as being one of ensuring that Yukoners have the opportunities to access accessible and quality education so that learners of all ages can become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of society. It is a role that I take very seriously, and I know the Department of Education does too.

We will continue to work with all our partners in education to make wise, careful choices about the allocations of resources throughout all sectors of education so that we can accomplish this goal. It is very important that we continue to work with all of our partners to do so, and I look forward to the ongoing support from the opposition for the Department of Education so that we can continue to educate Yukoners so they can be prepared to lead happy, healthy, productive, responsible lives in our community.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I certainly found it interesting listening to the Minister of Education talk about the goals and objectives of the department. Again, I find it very puzzling that with the significant increases in this area and a section of the budget that brings the revised vote to \$121,270,000 that the members don't wish to enter into any debate, and do not wish to dignify these important expenditures by discussing them.

The questions that were posed as a suggestion that the members might consider answering — are the Official Opposition Liberals going to correct their inaccurate statements around the expenditures around education and in particular, public schools? The math clearly shows their statements to be inaccurate. The facts do not support their assertions.

When the members stood earlier, some were attempting to draw conclusions about the government's desire to debate this department. I have to ask why they don't want to debate it? Why are the Liberal Party members afraid to stand on their feet and debate this area of the budget?

Well, Mr. Chair, I can't help but come to the conclusion that their inaccurate statements made regarding this funding are something that they don't want to delve into. How can they claim priority-decreased funding when, in fact, it clearly shows the funding has increased?

I'd be very interested in hearing from the Minister of Education. As I look at the revised vote, I see that the total expenditures — as I indicated — in excess of \$121 million, public schools in excess of \$80 million, and advanced education in excess of \$25 million. It is certainly a significant investment of

government funding — of taxpayers' money — in supporting this important area.

I'd be interested to hear from the Minister of Education about some of the many areas that he and staff of the department have been working on. The member particularly referred to the Individual Learning Centre, which is a new program. I believe it has been very successful, but I'd be appreciative of comments the minister might have on that, as well as the recent home tutoring program, which has been up and running for — I can't recall the number of years, but I believe it's a fairly recent program. I'd been interested in hearing comments about that and hearing if the Official Opposition or the third party have any interest in discussing these numbers and the future of Yukon children.

As well, I know there has been an increase in the funding for these areas and that education funding per child certainly compares extremely well to other jurisdictions. Perhaps the minister would care to share with us the dollars per child expended through the Department of Education and provide some explanation of how this has increased in past years, as I know it has.

Mr. Fairclough: I am surprised that the Minister of Health and Social Services doesn't know this. I thought that they communicated among themselves.

We said here that we agreed with the minister's explanation on the line items. We want to move on. I know that the minister and the department deal with this whole issue. What is happening right here is a classic case of bullying. The government side is preventing us from moving on.

Chair: Order please.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Order please. Mr. Fairclough, if you do have a comment about the Chair, please feel free to stand up and say it on the record, please.

Unparliamentary language

Chair: The word "bullying" is not in order. I would like to remind members that we are in the Legislative Assembly and to respect each other.

Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, there have been significant increases in the Department of Education budget over recent years. We have gone from approximately \$101 million in the year ending 2003 to our significant situation right now. There have been substantial increases in expenditures for education; as well, at the same time, we have seen a reduction in the number of students in our school system. We have seen a reduction of almost 1,000 students in our system. At the same time as seeing this reduction in students, we have seen an increase in the number of teachers and a significant number of education assistants.

The Department of Education continues to be a priority of this government. We will work hard with all of our partners in education to ensure that the needs of the students in our community are being met.

Chair: Is there any further debate? Seeing none, we will proceed line by line on Vote 3.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures*On Public Schools**Public Schools in the amount of \$2,499,000 agreed to**On Advanced Education**Advanced Education in the amount of \$95,000 agreed to****Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,594,000 agreed to******On Capital Expenditures****On Public Schools**On Facility Construction and Maintenance**On F.H. Collins Secondary School – Canada Games Lower Bench Upgrade**F.H. Collins Secondary School – Canada Games Lower Bench Upgrade underexpenditure in the amount of \$33,000 cleared****Total Capital Expenditures underexpenditures in the amount of \$33,000 cleared******Department of Education agreed to***

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with Community Services, Vote 51. Do members wish to take a brief recess for officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

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

Department of Community Services

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 9, Vote No. 51, Department of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I am pleased to share with members of this House the ongoing work of the Department of Community Services within the supplementary budget debate. It has been a very busy year for the Department of Community Services. This afternoon I will be keeping my opening remarks on the short side and, if members wish, we can discuss particulars in the budget during the debate period.

Community Services, as I indicated, has had a very busy year. Our supplementary budget requests are mainly related to the emergency medical services and community infrastructure projects such as the Carcross downtown core, the Burwash sewage lagoon, flood erosion and control and municipal-type services.

We have an increase related to the Yukon water and waste water operator training program under the northern strategy and Old Crow Street and drainage control as well.

Another important development for Whitehorse is the Hamilton Boulevard extension project. This project officially began last September, and those of us living in Whitehorse are, from time to time, reminded of this activity on a regular basis as a result of the dynamite explosions that happen there.

This transportation project will improve public safety by providing a reduction in traffic congestion and by creating an

alternative access and egress route for emergency vehicles and for Copper Ridge residents who will have a choice to go either north or south on the way down.

With regard to traffic congestion, I think that it is very important to recognize that it takes a substantial amount of time to get from the far side of Copper Ridge to the centre of town. We believe this will be a very important egress and will enable those from some of the farthest reaches of Copper Ridge to have an alternative access rather than taking Range Road.

We are looking at \$1.5 million in the rural infrastructure fund. That was money set aside and determined by our community tours, where we provided funding for municipalities to address their immediate needs. We provided funding to Faro, Teslin, Haines Junction and Watson Lake.

The department is also responsible for ensuring the safety of our citizens and their communities from crisis situations such as forest fires, floods and other international disasters. We work with them to ensure that emergency planning and training activities are up to date and meet the needs of our community.

It was announced last fall that the EMS is being transferred to the protective services branch of Community Services. We are undertaking a structural change to enhance the development of the shared services relationship within the organization to build capacity, reducing the burden of volunteers while improving our overall emergency response capabilities.

Adding EMS to the protective services structure, which already houses volunteer fire departments, the Emergency Measures Organization and wildland fire management provide numerous opportunities to enhance Yukon's overall emergency response system capabilities and augment the regular day-to-day service duties for the communities.

The addition of EMS to the protective service emergency response structure allows new opportunities for all of the agencies to train and work together as a coordinated team. Our emergency responders perform their jobs with pride and dedication. We are grateful to their commitment to keeping Yukoners, our communities and our environment safe.

With regard to that, under EMS, we have currently — as I indicated earlier in the House — hired two permanent primary care paramedics for the Town of Watson Lake. We have also hired one permanent primary care worker in Dawson and are in the process of hiring a second to facilitate the services in Dawson City.

Under protective services, as I said, we are working with our volunteer department and wildland fire management team. We are dealing with all the issues regarding volunteerism throughout the Yukon and assisting with reducing the stress on the volunteers with regard to the requirements of their duties. We have a team that is going around — or has gone around — to all of the Yukon. We are in the process of finalizing that information and bringing forward a Management Board submission later on this year to accommodate all the needs and facilities.

With regard to working with our EMS people, I've had an opportunity to go to Watson Lake and look at the facilities there. We also recently hired a consultant to look at facilities for Dawson City — and that is in progress — in addition to

looking at our entire fleet for volunteer fire, EMS, and EMO for the Yukon. That is currently underway — assessing where the equipment is, the status of the condition of that equipment, the needs for that particular community and whether it meets their needs, and what we need to do to either enhance it and/or keep it current. That process is well underway, and we look forward to working with our new branch, the EMS people.

To date, I would have to say that things are going along quite well. In that regard, we are also looking under protective services to develop a relationship with Highways and Public Works to initiate a comprehensive equipment repair program for all our volunteer facilities throughout the Yukon. Again, that process is also underway, and we anticipate finalizing that in the near future.

EMS is initiating work with the rural volunteer representatives and communities, such as awards and recognition and education bursary committees to determine how EMS can structure both fiscal program support and to achieve overall goals of increased recruitment and retention in all of our Yukon communities.

EMS in Whitehorse is undergoing an organizational and structural analysis. We are working with the medevac services to keep them sustained at their current staffing levels. We are also looking at spatial population distribution around the City of Whitehorse to ensure that we have adequate service throughout the City of Whitehorse.

We also initiated a clinical operations program that will work with the individual and rural Whitehorse EMS responders to ensure that their technical and medical skills and knowledge are kept current. Appropriate training plans will be developed to address any skill development requirements. This program will also ensure that the Yukon EMS program meets all the national medical protocol standards, and we will initiate a research program to help address EMS-specific challenges in the Yukon.

With that, I am very happy to say that the assimilation of EMS into our department is moving along and we seem to be working quite well with them. We hope to have one of the better first-responding positions throughout all of the jurisdictions in Canada.

The community development branch is also responsible for a wide range of programs and services for both the public and local governments. The community development staff are kept busy meeting our collective goals and objectives. Some examples include offering bilingual customer services to the public, Yukon government employees and other client groups who require government services and information. We are also looking at developing and implementing local area land use plans and providing support services for community planning and zoning, promoting health and safety through community infrastructure including priority water and sewage projects, and related projects for unincorporated communities throughout the Yukon.

We're also looking at providing advice and assistance to municipalities and Yukon First Nations upon request; undertaking orderly development of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational lands to meet the needs of Yukoners; provid-

ing all Yukon taxing authorities with current, accurate and equitable property assessments; and establishing general property tax rates for all areas outside of municipalities.

With the responsibility for Yukon library services, Community Services takes great pride in a seldom-promoted activity that benefits the people living in the communities and that is ensuring that our library services can be accessed for all of the positive things that an individual looks for in pursuing their lifelong learning.

Later this month is Yukon Writers Festival week. There are scheduled readings from nationally known authors that will surely inspire the imagination of folks who go out for a listen to the readings. In addition to the operations of the Whitehorse Public Library as a central library, it provides financial support, advice and training to 14 community libraries and their staff, including a brand new library in the new school in Carmacks. I can speak to the fine facility, as I was able to attend the grand opening of that library late last fall.

Yukon public libraries provide high-speed Internet access to all 14 community libraries. This service, together with the interlibrary loan system, connects Yukoners to information and literature worldwide. It brings to life the theme of this year's library week: "Libraries: The World at your Fingertips."

Also within the Department of Community Services is the consumer and safety services branch, which is responsible for Community Services regulation and enforcement and support of a fair and effective marketplace within Yukon. We promote compliance with the labour standards, such as minimum wage and other employment standards, and provide inspection services to enhance building safety.

The branch also supports the independent driver control board toward the balance of public safety and individual rights and responsibilities. The board hears and makes decisions on appeals for driver's licence restrictions and cancellations under the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Consumer Services also helps tenants and landlords to resolve the issues related to renting accommodation. They also recently posted a series of new tip sheets to the government Web site designed to assist people with the most commonly-asked questions related to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

The Department of Community Services takes great pride in the work that we do in partnership with the communities and First Nations. For the past few years, we utilized the CSIF and MRIF funding, in conjunction with Canada, to meet many of the goals and objectives of our rural communities.

Now, Mr. Chair, I will be pleased to answer any questions that the members opposite have with regard to the budget.

Mr. Fairclough: It is evident that we, on this side of the House, have all kinds of questions in Community Services. We have asked a lot, and we have seen the minister meet some of those over the years, and we appreciate it. This is a supplementary budget. It is money that is already spent and we understand that and we accept the minister's explanations for the line items. We would like to move on. Thank you.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Here we go again. Why is there no debate from the opposition on the supplementary? This harkens

back to previous years and previous assemblies where we have gone through millions of dollars in debate, some of it on the last day — or millions of expenditure rather — with no debate from the opposition. No questions, they simply say they accept it, and then go back to the personal attacks and the petty games in this Assembly that do not serve the public interest.

Chair: Order please. I would like to remind members that we are on Vote 51, and we are proceeding with general debate. Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I see the Member for McIntyre-Takhini appears to be interested. Perhaps we'll see some comments and questions to the Minister of Community Services in this area.

Mr. Fairclough: We would like to move on. To speed things up, I request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Fairclough has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: There is not unanimous consent. Is there any further general debate on Vote 51?

Seeing none, we will proceed with line-by-line in Vote 51.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

Corporate Services in the amount of \$24,000 agreed to

On Protective Services

Protective Services in the amount of \$5,996,000 agreed to

On Community Development

Community Development underexpenditure in the amount of \$195,000 cleared

On Consumer and Safety Services

Consumer and Safety Services in the amount of \$34,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$5,859,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space underexpenditure in the amount of \$273,000 cleared

On Protective Services

On Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$472,000 agreed to

On Fire Marshal

On Major Facility Maintenance — Golden Horn Fire Hall

Major Facility Maintenance — Golden Horn Fire Hall underexpenditure in the amount of \$880,000 cleared

On Community Development

On Property Assessment and Taxation

On Rural Electrification and Telephone

Rural Electrification and Telephone in the amount of \$50,000 agreed to

On Domestic Well Program

Domestic Well Program underexpenditure in the amount of \$50,000 cleared

On Community Infrastructure

On Planning and Pre-Engineering

Planning and Pre-Engineering in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Burwash Sewage Lagoon

Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Burwash Sewage Lagoon in the amount of \$10,000 agreed to

On Flood/Erosion Control

Flood/Erosion Control underexpenditure in the amount of \$30,000 cleared

On Road/Streets Upgrades

Road/Streets Upgrades in the amount of \$180,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects

On Selkirk First Nation: Small Diameter Piped Water

Selkirk First Nation: Small Diameter Piped Water underexpenditure in the amount of \$530,000 cleared

On Takhini North Infrastructure Replacement

Takhini North Infrastructure Replacement underexpenditure in the amount of \$1,400,000 cleared

On Whitehorse: Hamilton Boulevard Extension

Whitehorse: Hamilton Boulevard Extension underexpenditure in the amount of \$180,000 cleared

On Northern Strategy Projects

On Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building

Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building in the amount of \$85,000 agreed to

On Old Crow Roadway and Drainage Upgrading

Old Crow Roadway and Drainage Upgrading in the amount of \$120,000 agreed to

On Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated Communities Infrastructure Projects

Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated Communities Infrastructure Projects in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

On Land Development

On Industrial

Industrial underexpenditure in the amount of \$950,000 cleared

On Residential

Residential underexpenditure in the amount of \$9,052,000 cleared

On Recreational

Recreational underexpenditure in the amount of \$500,000 cleared

Total Capital Expenditures underexpenditure in the amount of \$12,658,000 cleared

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

On Recoveries

Recoveries cleared

Department of Community Services agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now debate Vote 1, Legislative Assembly. Do members wish to recess for five minutes to await the officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Recess

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

Yukon Legislative Assembly

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 9, *Supplementary Estimates No. 2*; Vote 1, Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Staffen: Operation and maintenance expenditures: legislative services are \$446,000; retirement allowance and death benefits are \$109,000. The total O&M expenditures are \$555,000.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Mitchell: No, I thank the Speaker for the explanation and we think it is clear.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we will proceed line by line through Vote 1, Yukon Legislative Assembly.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Legislative Services

Legislative Services in the amount of \$446,000 agreed to

On Retirement Allowances and Death Benefits

Retirement Allowances and Death Benefits in the amount of \$109,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$555,000 agreed to

Yukon Legislative Assembly agreed to

Chair: Should we take a five-minute break to wait for the officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will take a five-minute break.

Recess

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

Executive Council Office

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 9, Vote 2, Executive Council Office.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I am pleased to provide an overview of this supplementary to help the opposition with debate.

There is a decrease in O&M spending of \$3,263,000 and an increase in O&M recoveries of \$108,000. On the capital side of the ledger, the request includes an increase of \$62,000 and an offsetting recovery of the same amount. These funds are

being provided by Canada to develop a Web portal in order to provide access to social economic indicators data, as required under YESAA, the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

This supplementary budget request deals with new project money from Canada under the target investment program, transfers between ECO programs and transfer of funds under the northern strategy program.

The changes in O&M consist of several key items as follows: an increase of \$108,000 to fund — as I said — the indicators for YESAA. The decrease under land claims and implementation secretariat primarily reflects an internal transfer of funds to the development assessment branch for YESAA projects. This realignment now corresponds with the corporate leadership provided by the development assessment branch.

In addition, \$120,000 of unspent salary funds due to vacancies were transferred to the Youth Directorate to fund phase 2 of the public education campaign related to substance abuse action.

The governance liaison and capacity development program budget reflects an increase of \$400,000, again through an internal transfer from the northern strategy program. This funding is associated with the two projects approved by the Yukon Forum that are being administered by this branch.

The northern strategy line reflects a decrease of \$3,771,000, of which \$2,402,000 was transferred to departments that are overseeing approved projects, and \$1,369,000 that is not required this fiscal year, based on the cash flow requirements of approved projects. These funds will be available in future years to implement project activities.

These estimates also reflect an increase in the O&M recoveries, as I said, of \$108,000. It's to reflect the funds received from Canada under the target investment program for the Yukon business survey.

These are my comments, and I now look forward to a line-by-line debate.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister for his comments. They were succinct and to the point. I accept the explanations he has provided.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line through Vote 2.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

Corporate Services in the amount of \$108,000 agreed to

On Land Claims and Implementation Secretariat

Land Claims and Implementation Secretariat underexpenditure in the amount of \$817,000 cleared

On Governance Liaison and Capacity Development

Governance Liaison and Capacity Development in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to

On Development Assessment

Development Assessment in the amount of \$697,000 agreed to

On Youth Directorate

Youth Directorate in the amount of \$120,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy

Northern Strategy underexpenditure in the amount of \$3,771,000 cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures under-expenditure in the amount of \$3,263,000 cleared

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Targeted Investment Program – Socio-economic Indicators

Targeted Investment Program – Socio-economic Indicators in the amount of \$42,000 agreed to

On GEO-Connections – Web-portal Socio-economic Indicators

GEO-Connections – Web-portal Socio-economic Indicators in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$62,000 agreed to

Executive Council Office agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Does the Committee wish to recess for five minutes to await officials?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

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

Department of Economic Development

Chair: The matter before Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: It is indeed a privilege to speak today about the supplementary budget for the Department of Economic Development.

The work of the Department of Economic Development supports this government's key commitment, which is to develop a prosperous and diversified economy that benefits all Yukon people. In support of the government's priority to promote a strong, diversified private sector economy, the department is undertaking — or will undertake — work in three key areas.

First of all, we will continue to help enable the wealth-generating strategic economic projects and activities. Second, we will strive to increase the benefits derived from those projects and activities to Yukoners, First Nations and communities. Third, we will improve Yukon's business environment in order to be able to attract increased investment nationally and internationally.

The Department of Economic Development acts with very specific roles. It is our role to develop a sustainable and competitive economy that will enrich the quality of life for all Yukoners. It is also our role to forge partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of the territory and also to pursue

economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovation.

Within our goals to facilitate the development of strategic projects for a sustainable economy are a number of different key priorities and initiatives. We assist the advancement of responsible resource development and strategic tourism product development, with an investment attraction program that includes Asia-focused investment missions and workshops.

It is critical to growth that we attract new investment. Capital enables Yukon businesses to expand operations, to pursue new opportunities and to explore all sorts of potential. We are committed to encouraging private sector growth through the capture of external investment that supports wealth-generating activities in the natural resources, tourism and emerging industry sectors. We work to support business' growth and expansion into new and exciting markets.

To encourage this growth, we work to build a strong working relationship with Yukon's business community to ensure benefits from the work that we are doing. The department has developed an investment attraction strategy to guide the development of a diversified private sector economy while focusing on key areas of opportunity.

Today, the supplementary budget is comprised of northern strategy projects that have been approved through the Yukon Forum. Through partnerships with First Nations, we're involved in three projects. The first project is in partnership with the Selkirk First Nation and is focused on developing research governance models, improving organizational structures and seeking efficiencies in governance. Selkirk First Nation will establish governance education and training programs targeted toward youth, as well as relating to traditional economies in support of a healthy workforce. The \$262,000 allocated for this supplementary budget is for year one of a four-year project.

The second project, in the amount of \$203,000, is funding to the Council of Yukon First Nations to assist businesses in pursuing outside markets by use of the Internet. Direct benefits include an increase in Yukon's exports, reduced dependency on primary industries and the growth of rural Yukon's small businesses.

Secondary benefits include building capacity and knowledge among the e-Commerce Yukon project facilitators and the Web-development industry. This knowledge and experience is a marketable asset to large jurisdictions with large rural and remote populations.

The third project focuses on the commercialization of applied research. It has been undertaken through the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the education, industry, First Nations and government. The project will improve capacity in the north to acquire knowledge and to develop for commercial purposes innovative products and services that solve cold climate challenges. It is being done within the context of the broader climate change research centre of excellence.

The last item referred to in the supplementary budget is the mine training program. The Department of Economic Development established a framework for the mine training program and devolved this project to the Department of Energy, Mines

and Resources to work with the industry association to implement.

If members of this Assembly have any questions, I would be pleased to respond to them at this time.

Mr. Inverarity: First, I would just like to thank the officials for coming in this late in the afternoon. Your attendance is very appreciated.

Mr. Chair, perhaps we could finish up here so the officials can return to their offices. Therefore, I would like to request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Inverarity has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried, as required.

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$321,000 agreed to

Department of Economic Development agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Seeing the time, I move that we report progress on Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that we report progress on Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*.
Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 9, *Third Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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 stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled April 9, 2008:

08-1-69

Conflict of Interest, re complaint by Mr. Don Inverarity, MLA about Minister Archie Lang, MLA: Report (dated April 8, 2008) of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, David P. Jones, to the Hon. Ted Staffen, Speaker (Speaker Staffen)

08-1-70

Smoke-free Places Act (Bill No. 104): reprinted Bill including amendments in English and French (Hardy)