

Whitehorse, Yukon**Wednesday, April 23, 2008 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they relate to the *Child and Family Services Act* which has passed this House: Motion No. 26, Motion No. 189, Motion No. 329 and Motion 347, standing in the name of the Member for McIntyre-Takhini; Motion No. 37, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; Motion No. 345, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; and Motion No. 375 and Motion No. 387, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The following motion has also been removed from the Order Paper because it relates to the *Smoke-free Places Act*, which has also passed this House: Motion No. 300, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES**In recognition of Administrative Professionals Week**

Hon. Mr. Hart: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

As the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I rise today to acknowledge Administrative Professionals Week and to pay tribute to public servants who work in administrative capacities.

As the public face of so many government services, Yukoners who are working with the government rely on the program expertise, the guidance in manoeuvring through application processes and the corporate knowledge of these professionals. Their central and coordinating role within the office environment provides a hub for information flow and demands a broad range of skills and resourcefulness. There are many different hats that are worn by administrative professionals and a spectrum of roles and responsibilities within the territorial public service.

Au nom de mes collègues, je suis heureux de rendre hommage aux professionnels de l'administration et au rôle essentiel qu'ils jouent dans le travail quotidien des employés de la fonction publique.

On behalf of my colleagues, I am pleased to pay tribute to the administrative professionals and to the integral role that they play in the day-to-day work of the public service.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

In recognition of Canada Book Day

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today on behalf of all members to pay tribute to Canada Book Day.

Canada Book Day is celebrated on the same day as World Book and Copyright Day, a yearly event organized by UNESCO to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright.

Here in the Yukon, schools will be celebrating libraries and reading, and the diverse pleasures to be gained from books. Students will be participating in literacy games, taking in displays and listening to guest speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a happy Canada Book Day and thank all the organizers, volunteers and educational professionals for all of their hard work.

In recognition of Tammy Beese

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, each day women's work in our respective communities contributes to the economic, social, legal and political fabric of our territory.

Today, on behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to pay tribute to a young woman whose professional work has indeed made a difference in the lives of Yukoners and has earned recognition at both the local and the international level.

Tammy Beese is the founder and publisher of the bi-weekly arts and entertainment magazine, *What's Up Yukon*. This is a concept which originated from the desire to provide northerners one place to learn of fun activities and events about northerners themselves.

In February 2005, this dream was fully realized with the first issue of *What's Up Yukon* hitting the Yukon streets.

The promise of "All Northern. All Fun" has and continues to be the company's recipe for success — the writers being the most important ingredient.

Whatever the field of expertise, chances are readers are likely familiar with one, some or all of the 75 writers who today contribute 100 percent of the content covered in the publication.

Since the inception of Beese Entertainment Publishing, Tammy's vision of bringing northern entertainment and northern expertise to northerners by northerners has grown by leaps and bounds, with no end in sight.

In addition to *What's Up Yukon*, Beese Entertainment Publishing now includes *How's Business Yukon*, a quarterly introduced to show the personal side of business, and the newest semi-annual publication, *How Ya Feeling Yukon*, showcasing what is available to northerners in the caring arts.

From an initial complement of 12 writers, Beese Entertainment Publishing now has 75 writers among the three publications.

Readership has grown as have advertising sales. Likewise, the company has also grown, employing seven individuals today.

In 2007, the Business Development Bank of Canada named Tammy winner of the Young Entrepreneur Award for Yukon.

Last year, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce also awarded Tammy for her contribution to the community.

In this year's May edition of *Chatelaine* magazine, Tammy was chosen as one of 80 amazing Canadian women to watch as newsmakers of tomorrow. Among those selected, Tammy was one of six women in Canada chosen in the business category, in recognition of her success and doing what some would say, "the impossible" — that is, making an independent magazine profitable, and doing so within less than two years.

It is fitting that we pay tribute to Tammy Beese for what she has accomplished. As a long-time resident of the Yukon, a mother of two, and a successful businesswoman, she is to be congratulated for helping build Yukon's economy, enriching the lives of Yukoners and inspiring others to do the same.

On behalf of the Yukon Legislature, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Tammy, her husband, Mark Beese, and their children, Ben and Emily Beese, who have joined us here in the gallery today. Congratulations.

Applause

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

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. McRobb: I have for tabling a document dated April 22, 2008, entitled "Bioenergy".

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?
Reports of committees.
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Before the House proceeds to notices of motion, the Chair will rule on Motion No. 410, notice of which was given yesterday by the Member for Klondike. According to annotation 565 of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, "A motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of a speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words."

Motion No. 410 was argumentative and written in the style of a speech. However, of particular concern to the Chair is the motion's wording. Specifically, the Chair is concerned by the suggestion in Motion No. 410 that the Member for McIntyre-Takhini should retract a statement made in this House or resign his seat. This is a concern because the House does have the power, by resolution, to declare a member's seat vacant. As such, the mere suggestion by motion that a member should resign should not be made lightly.

Historically, legislative assemblies have been reluctant to use this power — and for good reason. There is perhaps no more serious a decision that an assembly can make than to remove a member who has been duly elected. To suggest that a member resign for statements made in this House falls below the historic standard used in Canada. Therefore, Motion No. 410 is not in order and was not placed on today's Notice Paper.

Motion No. 410 is the latest example of an unwelcome pattern that the Chair has observed during this sitting. Since the beginning of this sitting, members have given notice of a number of motions that single out other members, urging that member to explain some statement made or action taken in this House or in a committee. While these motions have been in order, members might wish to rethink this approach. These notices of motion have added to the personalization of proceedings in this House. The Chair recognizes that there are important public issues raised in motions, and the Chair would only suggest that the wording of motions focus on those issues, not other members.

We will now proceed to notices of motion. Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to encourage the development of bioenergy in our territory, with the goal of making our entire forest industry the first Canadian jurisdiction to be classified as carbon-neutral, by taking immediate action that includes the issuance of a request for proposals for such projects to make practical use of beetle-killed forest, as the Government of British Columbia has already done.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Public Service Act* to apply the conflict-of-interest guidelines for deputy ministers to the heads of Crown corporations and agencies, including both the positions of chair and president.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

(1) some First Nations and the Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools have raised concerns that recent deaths in First Nation communities may be related to the residential school settlement payments;

(2) the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have called for a moment of silence and prayer on April 30 in response to the pain and loss in their community;

(3) recalling past abuses without counselling or other supports can leave victims of the residential school experience re-traumatized and vulnerable; and

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to work with the federal government to allocate emergency funds to provide counselling and other support services, such as financial planning advice, to claimants going through the residential school compensation process.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Economic Development to work closely with the Town of Faro, as well as with representatives of industry, labour, First Nation governments, the Government of Canada, Yukon College, the receiver for the former Anvil Range Mining Corporation properties and other interested parties, in order to assist the people of Faro to

achieve their goal of sustainable economic development through such initiatives as a centre of excellence for mining reclamation and an integrated industrial training centre to make the best use of the abandoned mine sites in the Faro area.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop and implement a public education campaign about comprehensive land use planning and how it works, so that people in all areas of Yukon are able to participate knowledgeably in the process of defining how Yukon lands and resources can best be used for the benefit of current and future generations.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PAPERS

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

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of the engineering report done by the Department of Community Services on the Fry Recreation Centre in Dawson City.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Finance minister about the \$36 million of Yukoners' money that he misplaced sometime last summer. The investments didn't follow our *Financial Administration Act*. A couple of weeks ago in Ottawa, a committee of the House of Commons held a public hearing on this matter. What a novel idea: answer questions in a public forum about what has happened to the people's money. We have a committee here that could do the same thing; it is called the Public Accounts Committee.

Last year, members of both opposition parties who sit on the committee asked for a public hearing to be held. The Yukon Party has a majority on that committee and it voted as a bloc to stop those hearings from going ahead.

\$36 million is at stake. Will the government side agree to support these public hearings?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We have heard all this before, and I think it is important that we note that the member opposite, in claiming there was a cover-up, quit the Public Accounts Committee of his own volition. I see no validity or merit in his question whatsoever.

Mr. Mitchell: What a surprise; personal attacks from the Premier. The Public Accounts Committee can't function properly if it only debates topics the government wants to talk about. It must be free from political interference. Currently it is not. I resigned over that principle; I won't be a rubber stamp for this government.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon is stuck with \$36 million in these bad investments. A couple of weeks ago one of

the players who sold this stuff announced a plan to buy it back. They in turn are selling it to third parties for 60 cents on the dollar.

This confirms what we have been saying for months. The stuff has lost considerable value since the Premier bought it.

Will the Premier admit that the investments he made last summer are worth considerably less today than they were when he bought them?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: No, because the simple fact is they are not. The government, and all involved with this issue, recognize that fact. We have not come to the final end of that process in reaching agreement on how this is going to go forward. For the member to suggest that there is political interference in the Public Accounts Committee is absolutely ridiculous. It is the member opposite who claimed that there was a cover-up. He publicly claimed that there was a cover-up involved in the Public Accounts Committee and he quit of his own accord. I challenge the member to provide to the public the evidence of such nonsense, when even the Auditor General's Office itself said they see no purpose in a public review of this issue. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has to explain his actions; the government side certainly doesn't have to explain its side.

Mr. Mitchell: The government side can't explain their actions, is what the Premier means.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier's plan is a shaky one at best. He has bad investments that are now worth perhaps 60 cents on the dollar. He hopes they will get back up to their original value in five or perhaps eight years. If he were to try to sell them today, they would be worth around \$21.9 million. There would be a loss of \$14.6 million.

Across this country, public governments and private companies who hold similar investments have recorded this loss on their books. In Alberta and Ontario, both governments have admitted the obvious and written off millions of dollars. Just this week, CP Rail increased its writedown on its investments in ABCP to 30 percent of the total. Everyone is writing this stuff off, except the Yukon, because this Premier is unwilling to admit the obvious. Why is the Premier refusing to acknowledge what everyone else in the country already knows: we have lost money on these bad investments?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The facts are we haven't lost money at all. The government has made money on its investments and continues to make money on its investments.

Secondly, I will not accept the member opposite's arithmetic. We all know how incorrect the display of numbers really are that the Official Opposition bring into this House.

The facts are we are not required at this time to take any writedown. We, along with others, are in the process of working through a solution to this matter. Furthermore, it is this member who makes this constant claim that the government officials in the Department of Finance, in making investments as far back as 1990, are careless, overzealous and misinformed. This is an attack on officials. It is certainly not an attack on the government side. This is a display of what the Official Opposition really thinks of our officials in departments such as the Department of Finance.

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, this Premier has achieved new records. He is the first Premier ever to lose \$36 million. Mr. Speaker, on Friday of this week everyone who holds non-bank ABCP will be casting their vote on a restructuring plan. The Government of Yukon will be voting because the Premier went outside the *Financial Administration Act* and invested \$36.5 million of taxpayers' money in these junk bonds. This is the \$36.5 million that the Deputy Premier said was guaranteed. Of course, it was not guaranteed and the Auditor General of Canada said so.

The Premier has tried to blame the banks for his poor decisions on these investments. When you sign on to the agreements, you give up your right to sue the banks involved. The Premier is going to support the plan and his officials have confirmed that. If the banks are really to blame, as the Premier suggests, why is he giving up Yukoners right to sue?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again the member opposite really doesn't understand the process that has been underway for some time regarding this. I want to remind the member there was a guarantee — it was a guarantee of liquidity, by the banks. No matter what the member may say, that guarantee was certainly in place.

Secondly, that guarantee was the creation of the federal regulator on these matters — OSFI, Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions — allowing for conditional guarantees of liquidity. So the member opposite, again, is searching desperately for something to give some sort of public creditability to the Official Opposition considering the debate that they have conducted over the last number of weeks in this sitting.

I say again, Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to debate the issue of investment and stands on the floor and says that we've lost money, how does he explain the fact that in actual numbers the government has made approximately \$20 million in investments. This is not a loss; I call that significant earnings.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, the member opposite, the Finance minister, should do the math. He says we've made \$20 million, but he's misplaced \$36 million. It sounds like a net loss of \$16 million.

Yukoners know who is responsible for losing this money. It's the Premier; it's not officials. The buck stops at the Premier's desk. He should stop blaming others — banks, officials, and everybody else.

Under the proposed restructuring, we're getting new bonds that are worth about 60 cents of their original value. And we know that because some of them have been sold recently, and that's the going rate. The new bonds are only guaranteed by one rating agency; they're not guaranteed by Canada or a province, and they're not guaranteed by a bank.

In other words, the new bonds we're going to get as part of the restructuring process appear to be illegal under our *Financial Administration Act*. Do the new bonds meet the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act*? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Once again, the process we've embarked on with other governments and all involved here is underway. We're not going to make any presumptuous decisions, as the member opposite continues to do, in suggesting that there are losses, in suggesting that the Premier sat at a computer making investments — you know, tickling the keys of the keyboard. All of these things — the member then tries to say that we're blaming others. We're merely stating the facts on the floor of the Legislature so that the public understands what's really going on. They can't accept the information coming from the Official Opposition; it's incorrect.

How does the member explain, when he uses an example of something completely disconnected from the situation the government is in with the investments, a deal made for the small investors through Canaccord Capital. There is no relationship to our investment and the process we're in. It was an attempt by those involved to find solutions to deal with those smaller investors.

Mr. Mitchell: The point that seems to have gone right over the Premier's head is that, when Canaccord sold some of the ABCP to pay those small investors; they got 60 cents on the dollar.

Last summer the Premier went out and gambled with \$36.5 million of our money. Now we are seeing the bonds that he bought last summer are only worth about 60 cents on the dollar. That is what they sold for.

The bonds the Premier bought last summer were outside our *Financial Administration Act*. That was confirmed by the Auditor General of Canada.

Despite the Premier's attempt to discredit her, I know that Yukoners take her word over that of the Premier when it comes to financial matters. I recall her officials, since he likes to refer to them, saying, "If there is no loss, then show us the money."

The Premier won't answer a direct question about where these new bonds are within the law. If the Premier thinks the bonds are okay, he should provide some proof that they are.

I will ask him this question. Will the Premier refer the question to the Auditor General? Will he ask her if the new bonds meet the requirements of our *Financial Administration Act*?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Actually, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance is, on an ongoing basis, working with the Auditor General.

By the way, to suggest that we were discrediting the Auditor General's Office is absolutely absurd. There is no such thing. This is coming from the member opposite. It is pure conjecture, and frankly has no place in this Assembly. It is another attempt to try to create a misconception in the Yukon public.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will fully disclose the end result of the process we are in when we get to the end of that process. What we are working on is a resolution to this matter along with other jurisdictions like Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, Canada Post and all others involved.

This is a significant exercise we are in and we intend to see it through to ensure that we continue to earn money on our investments as we have to date.

Question re: Faro as an industrial training centre

Mr. Edzerza: A couple of days ago, I asked the Education minister some questions about the idea of creating an integrated industrial training centre at the abandoned mine site in Faro. I'd like to follow up on that idea with the Minister of Economic Development.

The Town of Faro has a proud history of contributing to the Yukon's economy. Even in hard times, since the mine shut down, the people of Faro have never lost hope.

The proposal I brought forward earlier this week could provide a real economic stimulus for that community and for the whole central Yukon region.

Is the minister willing to commit some seed money to explore the feasibility of creating an integrated industrial training centre in Faro?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: We certainly concur with members in this Assembly that it's important to have training opportunities here in the Yukon. We need to train Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

In fact, if you just look at this budget right now, you'll see there's about \$18 million in it for Yukon College and about another \$8 million for labour market programming. We're committing over \$26 million to training Yukoners for Yukon opportunities, and that includes training people for the licensed practical nurse program.

We'll also continue to work with our community training trust funds. These are programs we have in place to work with specific industries and the companies involved to ensure that people in that industry have the right kind of skills.

We're also working very closely with the Yukon Mine Training Association. This is an industry-led organization that's working with Yukon First Nations to provide training in the Yukon, in conjunction with Yukon College and other partners, on what the member opposite is asking for.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage him to work with folks in the Yukon Mine Training Association. They are the people who work in the mining companies and are working with people looking at continuing with their education. They'll make some of the best decisions about what training to offer and where to provide it.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, the minister dodged that question; he wouldn't commit to putting any money into the Town of Faro.

I have discussed the idea with some very knowledgeable and committed people in Faro. Let me say that the response so far has been terrific. I'm sure the minister is aware that the Town of Faro has been exploring the possibility of another major initiative related to the mine site. In fact, the town recently received the results of a pre-feasibility study into the idea of creating a centre of excellence for mining reclamation.

I also understand there will be a meeting soon with the minister's officials to discuss this concept. In my mind, these two ideas could be a perfect match.

If the people of Faro are agreeable, will the minister encourage his officials to broaden that discussion to include the idea of an integrated, industrial training centre that would be compatible with a mining reclamation centre of excellence?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, his claim that this government has not put any money into Faro is bordering on humorous. Just simply looking at one of our funds, over the past while we have put over \$454,224 into the Town of Faro.

When we look specifically at the mine reclamation at Faro, regional economic development branch has provided financial assistance to the Ross River Dena Council and Selkirk First Nation. It has assisted them to be in a position to partner with a major corporation and to respond to the opportunities arising from the Faro mine closure.

Regional economic development branch is working closely with that closure office and has assisted by ensuring First Nations were able to respond to the recently released interim care and maintenance contract.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, we're just offering some help in creating excellent ideas to go forward. One thing I learned from my discussions with people in Faro is that there is a considerable amount of equipment at Grum deposit, which a receiver may be turning over to the federal government fairly shortly. There are also buildings at the Grum site that could be used for classrooms and practical training. In the Town of Faro itself there are vacant residential buildings that are in good condition. There are many other services in Faro and the nearby communities of Ross River and Carmacks that could be enhanced by having such a major economic generator in this area.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus believes very strongly in regional economic development that will keep rural Yukon communities strong and vital. Here is a golden opportunity in central Yukon. Will the minister go to bat for rural Yukon by working with all the players involved, including industry and labour, First Nations, the federal and municipal governments, Yukon College — and especially his own colleagues — to help the people of Faro achieve their goal?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Regional economic development branch has facilitated meetings between the Ross River Dena Council and Selkirk First Nation regarding the Faro mine closure. These meetings have resulted in both First Nations agreeing to work together to maximize benefits from the mine closure. We have funded the Selkirk First Nation, who acts as the administrative agent for both First Nations, to create the proper corporate vehicle to participate in opportunities arising from that mine closure.

Regional economic development branch is actively working with Energy, Mines and Resources through the Faro mine closure. I do appreciate the member opposite's enthusiasm and zealotness at the end there though, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly an honour for it to be the first question on economic development from any member opposite since last year.

Question re: Liquor Act amendments

Mr. Cardiff: The minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation said the amendments to the *Liquor Act*, "provide several practical improvements to the act that reflect the wishes of Yukoners as expressed through the 2001 public consultation process and as reflected in the recommendations made by the *Liquor Act* Review Committee."

The problem with that statement is that there are changes the public wanted that haven't made the cut. There were also amendments that made the cut that the public never asked for, like allowing Yukon businesses to manufacture wines and spirits.

Can the minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation enlighten the House as to how he determined which of the 49 recommendations in the *Liquor Act* review actually made it into the amendments to the act?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The government carefully reviewed all of those recommendations, and 28 of the 49 recommendations had actually already been implemented before this act. We've addressed key economic recommendations to allow the production of wines and spirits, which the member specifically mentions, and I would refer him to — I believe it is number 25 in the recommendations, which recommended that we look at this.

So we have dealt with the things we can do. We dealt with them in regulations before we opened the act; we dealt with them in this new act, and there are a few outstanding ones, which really didn't appear to make any sense. I leave that with the member opposite.

Mr. Cardiff: Sometimes we wonder whether the minister makes sense.

We're pleased to see fines and penalties for liquor offences increased. We think that's a good thing. In spite of these changes, though, the current amendments proposed basically amount to the further liberalization of liquor laws.

The minister said the changes will reduce red tape for businesses involved in industry. He said that they'll provide restaurant operators with more flexibility in providing food and liquor services to Yukoners. He said they would give employers greater flexibility in hiring servers and kitchen staff.

The problem I have is that this business-oriented approach to liquor is light on the social responsibility side of the ledger. Why has the minister chosen to ignore virtually all of the recommendations from the 2001 consultation that speak to social responsibility?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the minister answers, I'd just like to remind the Member for Mount Lorne — a request rather than a reminder — to not personalize the debate.

You have the floor, minister.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite who in the past has taken an attitude of almost supporting prohibition, one of our concerns — and our primary concern —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Yes, I was just coming to that. Same warning: please do not personalize the debate. One side starts it, the other side answers. This is call and response, folks. If this is how you want it to carry on, this is exactly what's going to happen.

Members, we're all responsible for our own conduct here. Minister of Economic Development, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For members on this side, we appreciate the interjections.

One of the things we did in looking at this act — the substance abuse action plan had to be in place first. Safer communities legislation and all these things had to be in place before we went to look at this act. That is one of the reasons for the delays in implementing that.

The things that were mentioned in the review that are outside of what we did at this point in time involved a number of things. For instance, number 9 is that the government should produce a multi-purpose identification card. Community Services is looking at this in conjunction with the driver's licence and the possibility of an enhanced driver's licence. A liquor card will be in there, a general identification card for those who don't drive, for use on airlines, et cetera. This is all underway.

This is an example of one of the recommendations that were not addressed in that, and there are very good reasons for all of these.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister ignored the recommendation that servers should be able to refuse service to a pregnant woman. Given the persistent problem of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder — FASD — in the Yukon, the *Liquor Act* could be strengthened to address this.

The minister ignored the recommendation that a liquor licence be contingent upon the licensee and all servers completing the Be a Responsible Server — BARS — training. He also ignored the recommendation that the BARS program be reviewed, evaluated and strengthened.

He ignored the recommendation that the Liquor Corporation profit should be directed either wholly or in significant part toward socially responsible alcohol education and/or treatment programs.

When the bill comes forward before the Committee, is the minister willing to entertain amendments that would address the glaring gaps around social responsibility?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I would like to pick a couple of the member opposite's favourites on that. By directing the profits into social treatment, for instance, of alcoholism, that could actually end up — since this government spends way more money on these programs than is made by the Liquor Corporation, it could be interpreted as actually a reduction.

For the member opposite, in terms of serving liquor to pregnant women, I remind him that any woman of childbearing age could effectively be pregnant long before that pregnancy is detected or diagnosed. Therefore, the logical information that would come out of most of the social responsibility is that no woman of child-bearing age should consume alcohol. While perhaps on a scientific basis it's a good thing, I suspect that most women would not be appreciative of that. I would remind the member opposite that the legal problems that could come out of that are enormous.

Question re: Patient navigation program

Mr. Mitchell: I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Last fall we asked the minister questions regarding a medical advocate in Edmonton, Vancouver and Calgary. The minister's response was that Yukon had

entered into a contract with Capital Health Authority in Edmonton to provide a patient navigation program, but the program was not up and running yet.

As we pointed out before in this House, many seniors and elders are very intimidated by being dropped off in a large city that they have never been to before. Will the minister confirm that the program is now up and running and Yukoners will have that service available to them in these cities, should they have to travel Outside for medical care?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: We have had some challenges with this, recognizing of course — as the member has not in his comments — we are contracting a service in another jurisdiction through Capital Health Authority. We have had more challenges than were anticipated in actually getting that program up and running, recognizing again that they are the ones who will be running the program through the funding we give them.

I anticipate it will be in place very shortly. We have been working with Capital Health on that program arrangement and, contrary to the member's words — the member is referring to it inaccurately as a "patient advocate" or some such term; I am not quite sure what he is getting at. The program is for a patient navigator who will assist people in accessing those services. This is in addition to the services we currently provide. Those who need to have an escort — when it is deemed medically necessary for them to have an escort travel with them — the government will of course pay for that escort's travel as well.

Mr. Mitchell: The minister's colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, used that terminology in his budget speech, so we thought that the government had changed its description.

We are still getting calls from Yukoners. Vancouver and Calgary have problems; there appears to be no service for Yukoners in those cities.

On December 6, 2007, the minister said that we have already signed an agreement with the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton to provide a patient navigation program. Agreements are pending in Vancouver and Calgary.

It is very frustrating for members on this side of the House when they get calls from Yukoners complaining about this government's inaction and this minister's inability to get the job done.

When will there be a patient navigation program in place in Vancouver and Calgary?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is unfortunate the member is choosing to use rhetoric and spin. Mr. Speaker, as you have ruled and reminded members about the increasing personalization of debate, I would —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The Chair is in a quandary. If the Chair would find anything out of order, it would be terminologies like "rhetoric" and "spin" as opposed to personalizing debate. So honourable minister, please keep that in mind while you are giving your response, please.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The type of language being used is unfortunate. The member should recognize the fact that we are entering into a contract or we

have in fact entered into it — we have been having challenges with the Capital Health Authority getting the program up and running.

If the member pays any attention to the news, he would note the challenges being faced in Alberta in their health care system are much larger than ours, and that Capital Health — as an example — had tents erected during this winter to try to deal with the backlog of patients that they were trying to serve in hospital. They have been having some significant operational problems at the Capital Health Authority. They have taken significant steps to address those, and we appreciate the working relationship with them. Once it is up and running, we will be very happy to announce that.

Question re: Energy conservation program

Mr. McRobb: I would like to follow up with the Energy minister about his lack of performance with respect to energy conservation programs in the territory.

He declared on Monday he was looking at energy conservation and added that he has yet to actually produce any product. Finally, Mr. Speaker, that's something we can agree on.

Well, I checked the Web site for both his department and the Crown corporation for which he is responsible and found no available energy conservation programs. Obviously, this minister is satisfied to just keep looking and talking while doing nothing to provide programs or incentives for consumers.

Why hasn't he produced energy conservation programs for Yukon consumers?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, this side of the House — the government of the day — certainly is looking at conservation in many of our departments. The Energy Solutions Centre is moving ahead with conservation programs. Yukon Housing Corporation has many, many programs to help the consumer conserve energy.

This side of the House is doing the job that was assigned to them and we are working. But there is more than one department in this government and this government works in unison with all departments to resolve issues like this.

Mr. McRobb: Unfortunately for Yukoners, the minister has been asleep at the switch again. He should have had programs in place to help consumers reduce their electrical consumption before he hiked up power bills 30 percent —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. Personalizing debate — just keep that in mind, please, Member for Kluane. You're doing a good job but just keep the personalizing debate issue in mind, please.

Mr. McRobb: Thank you.

Instead of taking this more responsible approach to assist Yukoners as Energy minister, he has decided to rate-shock consumers into conserving power. That's the reality of it, Mr. Speaker. That's the Energy minister's approach: rate-shock consumers into using less rather than ensuring they first have an opportunity to access energy conservation programs.

Why didn't the Energy minister provide the necessary programs for consumers before rate-shocking them?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Unfortunately, the member opposite seems to have missed a few issues here. In July of 2007 the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Energy Solutions Centre introduced six new energy efficiency initiatives designed to assist existing homeowners and those looking at building new homes and owners of rental suites. They are designed to provide property owners with valuable technical information and affordable financing.

Interest-free loans — one-time grants for Yukoners with access to affordable funding streams to build or repair their homes to enhance energy efficiency. Loans of up to \$30,000 are available for alternative energy systems with the interest rate set at zero percent for the first 10 years — one percent less than the posted home repair program. There are zero percent interest rates available to owners of rental properties who undertake energy efficiency. A grant of \$400 is available to offset the cost of energy evaluation, which then leads into federal programs — information of which I would be happy to send over to the member opposite if he missed that. We also have a grant of up to \$1,750 for homeowners accessing the home repair program who upgrade their homes to meet YHC's green home standards. These programs were all put in place for these purposes, and the member opposite completely missed them.

Mr. McRobb: Why must the Yukon be the last Canadian jurisdiction to have programs in place like Power Smart? Look at BC Hydro — it offers a suite of energy conservation programs and has launched a new initiative called the “smart metering and infrastructure program” that will deliver about 1.7 million smart meters to its customers. These smart meters are automated and replace the old manually read meters. This new technology provides customers with real-time consumption and billing data, enabling them to make smarter decisions about their energy use.

Yukoners aren't so fortunate. Their Energy minister doesn't believe in smart metering and, for more than three hours during debate on our net metering bill, argued reasons why Yukoners don't deserve them. Why has the Energy minister decided that Yukoners must do without?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I feel it necessary to enter into debate and let the member opposite know that all government departments are working on many of the initiatives he's bringing up. For example, the Yukon government strongly supports the green building movement in general and is already involved in the leadership in energy and environmental design — or LEED — program. In fact, up to 10 kindergarten-to-grade-12 schools built since 1980 will be selected for the project. LEED for schools recognizes the unique nature of design and construction of the kindergarten-to-grade-12 schools and will be addressing existing as well as new buildings, incorporating real building performance into the rating system.

The Department of Education will continue to take a leadership role in ensuring our schools are becoming more and more energy efficient and that we're using our resources wisely. Not only will we teach our children about that, but we'll also practice that in our schools.

Other departments are also offering grants up to \$4,500 for the construction of new certified green homes, up to \$750 to

offset design and inspections, and up to \$450 from the Energy Solutions Centre for the purchase of Energy Star appliances.

There are programs going on throughout the entire government, including the Department of Education, Energy, Mines and Resources, and Yukon Housing Corporation, to address the issues the member is bringing up.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 276

Clerk: Motion No. 276, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue expanding education and training programs in areas of particular relevance to the north, such as First Nation governance, mining, tourism, resource management, construction north of 60, health care professionals, care providers and teachers.

Mr. Nordick: I am pleased to speak to this motion. I am also proud of our government's record on education and training. This speaks to our government's commitment to achieve a better quality of life for Yukoners.

I will start with First Nation governance. One of our commitments was to work with First Nations, Yukon College and its community campuses and the private sector to provide training for Yukon First Nations for land claim implementation, especially in relation to capacity development for First Nation governance.

In meeting this commitment, our government established the governance liaison capacity development branch of the Executive Council Office. This branch is committed to implementing capacity development strategies in cooperation with First Nations to support and strengthen cooperative governance in the Yukon.

A few examples of capacity development projects are approved under the northern strategy. One of them is \$150,000 to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation to provide training to develop community peacekeepers, mediators and negotiators.

Another example is \$1.05 million to Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to develop Yukon First Nation executive leadership and management programming.

Another example is \$950,000 to the Kwanlin-Dun First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Carcross-Tagish First Nation to assess First Nation capacity in areas of land and resource development, develop strategies for improving capacity and develop long-term capacity strategy through education and training.

Another example is \$400,000 to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Council of Yukon First Nations to develop and

deliver training for members of boards and committees and other enhancements, such as one-on-one consulting.

A further example is \$500,000 to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to develop comprehensive training, certification and capacity building programs for water and waste-water system operators Yukon-wide.

Mr. Speaker, Energy, Mines and Resources has finalized a multi-year contribution agreement with the Yukon Mine Training Association. I'm sure the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will speak on later today, so I won't spend a lot of time on that portion.

The Yukon Mine Training Association, a partnership between the Yukon mining industry and First Nations, is currently working with Yukon College, NAIT and Aurora College to develop and deliver a mineral process technician course at the Minto mine. It is also working with Pelly Construction and ek pass to develop a certified heavy equipment operator pilot project.

It is working with the Mines and Aggregates Safety and Health Association to deliver a localized safety program for the front-line supervisors in the mining industry. It is also working with Yukon College, Rem Ricks and Aurora College to deliver the Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources Environmental Monitoring program this spring.

It is also working to deliver the School of Exploration and Mining's reclamation and prospecting program targeting First Nation youth.

It is also working to deliver Comprehensive Mineral Exploration Association certification for the spring and summer.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our Yukon apprenticeship and trades qualification programs, which provide Yukoners the ability to develop work skills through on-the-job experience and in-school technical training, as they train for well-paid jobs in trades and careers.

The Yukon trades qualification program is available to those who hold trades certification from other countries or from other jurisdictions in Canada and to individuals who have gained the required trade experience, but have not been able to access certification through a formal apprenticeship program.

Apprenticeship numbers vary month to month, depending on the availability of work and the number of graduate apprentices.

Our government is committed to supporting, as an option of choice, apprenticeship training for high school students transitioning to the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, another initiative is the skilled worker/critical impact worker program. The intent of the Yukon nominee program is designed to attract business expertise, investment capital and to fill critical labour shortages in the territory. The skilled worker/critical impact worker program are employer driven, designed to assist Yukon employers, sectors or governments to identify and nominate potential, qualified immigrants to fill positions that cannot be filled by the territorial or national labour markets.

Mr. Speaker, I will now speak with regard to occupations that we certify in the Yukon. There are 48 occupations desig-

nated in the Yukon and under the *Apprentice Training Act* for which apprenticeship and training and certifications are available. For most of these trades which I will list later, Yukon uses interprovincial standards red seal examinations at the completion of their apprenticeship and for certification.

To list these trades: automotive painter, automotive service technician, baker, barber, bricklayer, cabinet maker, carpenter, communication electrician, communication electrician in regard to switching and in construction, communication electrician in total, construction electrician, cook, communication antennae television technician, electric motor system technician, electronic technician with consumer products, floor covering installer, gas fitter — first and second classes, glazier, hairstylist, heavy-duty equipment technician, heavy equipment and truck transport technician, industrial electrician, industrial and instrument mechanic, industrial mechanic millwright, industrial warehouse worker, insulator — heat and frost, machinist, motor vehicle body prepper, motor vehicle body repair — metal and paint, oil burner mechanic, outdoor power equipment technician, painter and decorator, parts person, plumber, power system electrician and power line technician.

Mr. Speaker, I could continue with the entire list, but I would be here quite some time, so I will stop with that.

Apprenticeship is a training program combining both on-the-job and in-school technical training. Employers provide employee apprenticeships with hands-on trade experiences under the supervision of a certified tradesperson.

Advanced education branch provides for the registration, monitoring, arranging of in-school technical training and coordination of individual apprentice training in any of their apprenticeship occupations in the Yukon.

Many Yukon employers will be eligible for the Government of Canada's apprenticeship job creation tax credit for registering new apprenticeships. Mr. Speaker, many Yukon apprentices completing the first and second year of their program may be eligible for the Government of Canada apprenticeship incentive grant. Also, apprentice mechanics may also be eligible for the Government of Canada tax deduction for tools purchased.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon government apprenticeship program is a flow-through apprentice training program. Apprentices under this program are trained in the government workshops throughout the Yukon. The program duration varies between three to four years depending on the individual's experience and training and the requirements of the particular occupation.

All applicants must meet the education entrance requirement for particular occupations as prescribed by the apprentice training regulations. Other requirements for individual positions are stated in the advertisement for the position.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon apprentices do not pay for tuition during the in-class component of their training. Apprentices are usually required to pay for student association fees, material fees and books required by the institution they attend. A \$200 book allowance is available for apprentices for each in-class session they attend during their apprenticeship training.

The following support may be available from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for their apprenticeship during the in-class component of their training: dependant care — support may be available to assist with the cost of supervised care; for commuting — all apprenticeships are eligible for \$20 a week commuting allowance for actual weeks of training only; if an apprentice has to travel more than a total of 40 kilometres daily to get to and from school, the rate of mileage is 24.5 cents per kilometre. This support is not available if apprentices are living away from their home.

Living away from home — if an apprentice is maintaining a permanent residence and is paying for a second residence while on the course, they may qualify for \$200 a week if the second residence is in the Yukon or \$170 a week if the second residence is in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, there is travel support available to help with transportation costs between home and school. This support is based on mileage of 24.5 cents per kilometre. If you are driving to the location where you will receive your training, you may claim up to three overnight stays at \$72 per night.

There is also weekly income support. Yukon registered apprentices will normally qualify for employment insurance while away from work completing the in-class component of training.

No apprentice will receive less than the EI rate determined to the average amount currently paid to the apprentice on the claim.

The Yukon secondary school apprenticeship training program is open to Yukon secondary school students who would like to explore a skills trade and complete high school at the same time. Many secondary school students work part-time while attending school or during the summer break period. Some of those students are working in trades designated in the Yukon for apprentice training. Those students working in a trade can be registered as apprentices with their employer and receive credit for their trade experience, even if the work is on a part-time or short-term basis.

Once they have completed high school — defined as “not returning to high school for the following semester” — their apprenticeship agreements convert to regular apprentice training schedules. They then can continue their on-the-job training and access in-school technical training as regular apprentices.

Secondary school students should contact the apprenticeship office and their school counsellor to discuss options available for them to work in a trade and gain credit for their trades training while attending and completing high school.

The Yukon tradesperson qualification program provides trade certification and in most cases, interprovincial standards recognition, for trade workers in occupations designated in the Yukon. The program is available to individuals who have gained the required trade experience, but have not been able to access certification through a formal apprenticeship program.

It also provides to those individuals who hold trade certification from other jurisdictions in Canada or other countries an avenue to gain Yukon certification.

Applicants must submit completed application forms, accompanied by verification of work experience in the trade and

any applicable training and qualification certificates. Requirements for the various occupations are outlined in the specific trade regulation schedule.

We are accomplishing so much with these initiatives and are working to accomplish more. I've spoken about First Nation governance, mining, Yukon apprenticeship and trades program, skilled work and critical work programs, which I spoke in greater detail.

I will touch briefly on tourism. Our 2007-08 budget allocates monies to community training funds to promote our tourism and cultural industry. Some examples are \$50,000 to the heritage training fund, which provides limited-term training for independent heritage workers, groups and sectors to enhance skill development for employment; \$75,000 to cultural industry training fund, administered by MusicYukon, is training for individuals employed by or are working in Yukon cultural industries.

We have a hospitality co-op program — advanced education branch is working with the public schools branch on exploring the nature and availability of program pathways for secondary students who wish to gain experience and enter the tourism field.

Tourism Industry Association provides training in the tourism industry. Preliminary steps will be to explore the types of programs available to high school students in order to allow them to move from high school to post-secondary tourism education programs. Education will work in partnership with TIA on this initiative.

Construction north of 60: our government is seeking federal government support to develop the climate change research centre of excellence at Yukon College and the cold climate technology and innovation cluster. This cluster would provide valuable training and business opportunities.

As well, the University of Alberta will offer the first instalment of the construction administration program, administration control systems, from June 16 to 20, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, regarding health care professionals, our Education minister and our Health and Social Services minister recently announced that a licensed practical nurse program will be offered in September at our Yukon College campuses, brokered through Bow Valley College. This two-year program will not only allow and encourage Yukoners to remain in the Yukon; it will also speak to Yukon's demand for health care professionals. Students will be eligible for the health profession education bursary available through the Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, regarding care providers, in cooperation with Yukon First Nations, our Yukon College offers a four-year bachelor of social work program. In this program, attention is given to the social needs, values and aspirations of Yukon First Nations.

With teachers, the Yukon College offers the Yukon native teacher education program, which is a four-year bachelor of education degree. This program focuses on elementary education, specializing in Yukon and cross-cultural content. This program is offered to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

I am proud to be part of a government that offers so many educational and training programs. The Department of Education is doing great work to make a more reactive education system that enables all who desire to learn to succeed.

I have only touched on some of the educational and training opportunities that our government offers. I look forward to continuing to expand these programs in areas of particular relevance to the north.

I will now leave the floor to my colleagues and the members opposite to discuss this motion. I look forward to a unanimous support for this motion.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to speak to this motion very briefly also. I do want to be brief on it because I am a bit surprised that the Member for Klondike would bring a motion like this to the floor of this Legislative Assembly.

Why would that member bring a motion like this to the floor for debate?

When you read it, Mr. Speaker, it asks that government continue doing what they are doing. This is not the first motion that that member has brought to the floor for debate on motion day. It's not the first one like this.

We've had other debates urging government to continue on doing what he feels that they are doing. I have a problem with this, Mr. Speaker. This motion coming from the Member for Klondike is a back-patting motion; that is what it is; it pats the government on the back. It is not giving new direction, or urging government to go in a new direction or explore something; it is asking them to continue and a lot of these points are argumentative, if we get into it.

For example, what are they expanding when it comes to First Nation governance? If they are going to educate the First Nations on this — and the member went on and on about this — what about doing it themselves within their own caucus?

A week ago, the Official Opposition brought two bills forward to the floor of this Legislature for debate — good bills that should have been talked about. What happened to those bills, Mr. Speaker? The members opposite adjourned debate on them with no good reason. It was opposition motion day; we should be able to bring these for full debate in this House, and it didn't happen.

An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act debate was adjourned debate by the Member for Lake Laberge. The *Apology Act* debate was adjourned by the Premier. *An Act to Amend the Cooperation in Governance Act* was brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition; that debate was adjourned by the mover of this motion.

What about the *Net Metering Act*? That debate was adjourned by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Not once, but twice, we've brought it to the floor here for all members to debate. It was adjourned twice by that minister. He went on and on for hours, filibustering this bill.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. The Member for Klondike, on a point of order.

Mr. Nordick: I am having trouble seeing any relevance to the motion that is presently in debate. I think that has been ruled out of order in the past, if you are not on topic to the motion.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I don't think there is a point of order. I think the Member for Mayo-Tatchun is bringing himself right on to the motion that we are discussing today, and it is only a matter of moments before he is right on it.

Mr. Fairclough: I've been right on it all the time and that's why we on this side of the House are not going to have a whole lot of debate on Motion No. 276 that was brought forward by the member opposite.

Why would they do it? Why would they urge government to continue to do what they think that they're doing? Why? There are only two reasons. Either the Member for Klondike is bringing forward this motion because he knows things that his caucus may not know or that we may not know on this side of the House, or his government may be going in a different direction and he has to bring forward a motion to urge them to continue. Isn't that something? Or it's back-patting. I think it's the latter; it's back-patting. It's nothing more than that. The member is going to bring out numbers that they have in their budget, and if they really want to hear debate on the budget, they would have brought it forward a long time ago.

That member is not bringing anything substantial to the floor for debate through this motion. It's great that we have initiatives in the Department of Education, and we're going to be debating that soon. I know we're going to have some good debates, because I've asked the Minister of Education questions in the past and he has given me some pretty good answers. I'm hoping that others can look to him as an example of how to maybe get things done, not through a motion like this. I think the members opposite should be ashamed this has been read into the record and debated here on Wednesday.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's an honour and a pleasure to rise today in the Assembly to debate — what I'm sure all members would agree is one of the most important responsibilities a government has, that being the education of Yukoners.

I am very proud to be a member of a government that has recognized education as such a priority. This goes back to the days of the election campaign. The first three pages of the platform were dedicated to education.

When the Assembly opened a couple of weeks ago for this sitting, the first five or six pages of the Premier's budget speech were dedicated to education in our territory. Clearly, this government has made education a priority, not only with our programming but with our expenditures.

We only have to look at the spending of governments and how it has grown. When we first took office, \$100 million a year was being spent on education in this territory and now it tops \$130 million.

Mr. Speaker, I will move specifically to advanced education. This is the area that looks at post-secondary education

training and continuing education for people. We've seen that grow, Mr. Speaker, from annual investments of \$20 million to over \$26 million in recent years. These substantial increases in investments demonstrate the commitment that the government has to education and to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for highlighting education in this motion. It has been said in this Assembly by more than one person, "If we can't debate the budget, we'll have to ask questions in Question Period." Well, Mr. Speaker, if members opposite don't want to hear the budget or refuse to debate the Education budget, as members opposite did during the supplementary debate, we'll need to find some avenue to bring forward some of the information about the direction in which the government is going.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite refused to debate the Department of Education in the supplementary budget where questions about Education could have been answered, and that is one of the reasons for bringing forward this motion in debate today, to provide more information to members of this House so that they can support the government and the direction in which the government is going.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that learning does not end once one has graduated from high school. Lifelong learning is something that each and every one of us is committed to doing. We must continue to grow not only as a human being but also in our career and employment opportunities.

We in the government recognize the importance of providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all Yukoners. We will continue to work with our advanced education branch in order to do this.

We in the government also recognize that education plays two roles. One is to develop the individual so he or she can be all that he or she can be, to grow up to lead a happy, satisfying life. But we also recognize that education plays a very important role for our community. It's very important for our communities to train people to provide those necessary services and functions that we rely on in our community. We need to educate people who can provide our services, such as nursing, teaching, carpentry, trades, or plumbing. There are certain needs we have in our civilized society and we need to work to train our citizens in order to fill the needs in our community.

Simply said, Mr. Speaker, it means training Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

We're committed to doing that. We're committed to working with all our partners in education, all the stakeholders affected, all the non-government organizations and various other orders of government in order to accomplish this.

One of the things that we'll be doing to ensure we continue to be on the right track is to undertake a number of initiatives to address the labour situation here in the territory. The Department of Education is taking a lead role on an interdepartmental steering committee to oversee the development of a labour market framework to address labour market shortages over the next 10 years.

As I said, this will be an interdepartmental approach. As we discussed during Question Period today, when the government looks at energy savings, for example, it looks at it on an

interdepartmental level and will continue to look at working with the different departments in government to ensure we are addressing the needs in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, the labour market framework will be based on four pillars. This will include national and international recruitment efforts to attract more workers to live in the Yukon; retention initiatives to make Yukon an attractive and welcoming place to live and work; training and development to promote lifelong learning, foster partnerships and expand training and employment opportunities; and a collection of relevant labour market information that will assist public policy, education training, business planning and personal career decision-making.

We will take a holistic approach on this within government, involving external partners and stakeholders and other orders of government, and will continue to use all of the tools that government has at its disposal.

This will include our post-secondary education opportunities. I am proud to say that over 770 Yukoners currently receive the student grant to attend post-secondary institutions. I believe the average amount is close to \$5,000 — I might be off by a couple of dollars — which is a significant investment that the Yukon government is making in the lives and the future of these individuals, and an investment we are making in them so they will come back and share their new skills, knowledge and abilities with all Yukoners.

We are continuing to work on that. Also, members will see in this budget that there is an indexing of the student grant, and that means we will be increasing it on a regular basis to ensure that the student grant continues to meet the needs of students as they study.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to note that the students receiving the student grant attend over 100 different post-secondary institutions across North America. I am very proud to say that Yukon students attend universities, colleges and training institutions from coast to coast to coast, and they often take advantage of centres of excellence throughout North America for their training.

As I've said, this government in this budget will be indexing the student grant to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students.

With the work that we're doing here in the territory on apprentices, we now have a record number of registered apprentices here in the territory. We now have 382 registered apprentices in a variety of different programs — again, training Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. We will continue to work with the federal government on this and with other training institutions, as well as Yukon College, in order to provide this necessary training — to provide the necessary skills and trade-specific information that Yukoners need to receive.

We will continue to work very closely with Yukon College. I believe this budget contributes approximately \$18 million for Yukon College to continue to put forward the programs they deliver that are indeed responsive to the needs of Yukoners. These include programs such as the Yukon native teacher education program, the social work program and other established programs that Yukon College has been offering. I am

also very gratified to see that Yukon College is being responsive to the needs in the territory — the needs of employers, the needs of consumers and the needs of students — by increasing the programs they are offering.

With the assistance of the territorial government and our additional support this year, they will be offering a licensed practical nurse program, a survey technician program and a housing maintenance — or a housing maintainer — program.

It's great to see that we, as a territory, are recognizing that we have the need here in our community for these types of skills, for people with these characteristics and attributes, and that we are working to train Yukoners to provide these very necessary services in the territory.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'm very gratified to see that Yukon College is working very closely with other post-secondary institutions such as the University of Regina, the University of Alberta, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Royal Roads University and many others in order to facilitate Yukoners accessing additional post-secondary and university level education.

It is great to see that they are doing that in partnership with our local Yukon College and that they are providing assistance so that people can access some of these programs from a distance. These programs are not just available to people here in Whitehorse, but people in the communities also have access to it.

Also, Mr. Speaker, another approach that the Government of Yukon is using to address many of these issues of expanding education and training programs is through the use of the community training funds. Mr. Speaker, the current budget of \$1.5 million for this will work with several different organizations, whether they be trade specific or community specific. That will allow, Mr. Speaker, people throughout the Yukon to access a variety of different training programs. Some of these are in the area of the tourism industry, the heritage industry, cultural industries and hospitality. Some of the community-based ones, Mr. Speaker, include communities of Carmacks, the Campbell region, Haines Junction, the Klondike region and the Silver Trail region that have access to specific community-based funds as well as the economic sector-based areas.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen these funds be used, for example, to provide additional assistance to people in Pelly Crossing to develop skills to allow them to seek employment on the Pelly transmission line program. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a great example of recognizing a need and identifying the training required so people can take advantage of work opportunities in the community.

There are also examples of programs, such as working with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation on a roadwork program that happened on the Atlin Road.

We'll also work with the northern strategy, which means involving the federal government and First Nation orders of government in order to provide additional training for Yukoners.

There are programs in there that do speak to building board and committee capacity, to working with culture and heritage, and there is quite a wide-ranging list of programs and initiatives that are available under the northern strategy pro-

gram. I trust that another member who has more time available will address those in greater detail.

As well, we'll work with the federal government on our labour market development agreements and our labour market programs to ensure they serve the needs of Yukoners and allow Yukoners to develop the skills they need to take advantage of Yukon opportunities.

We'll work with the various orders of government as well — First Nation governments and municipal governments — to ensure that the educational training we are providing is meeting the needs of their organizations.

We'll also continue to work with many of the not-for-profit organizations that exist in the Yukon that are dedicated to training. These can include organizations such as the Yukon Mine Training Association, which I spoke of earlier. This organization will be working with First Nation governments and the mining community in order to identify training needs and training programs. I expect they will see a wide range of programs at a variety of levels to ensure that Yukoners are being trained at the appropriate level necessary to them, so that they can take advantage of many of the new opportunities that are coming available.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are other organizations, such as the Yukon Tourism Education Council, which continues to work with the hospitality and tourism industry. There are other organizations out there, such as Yukon Learn; I was pleased to increase funding for them. By working with my colleagues in government, we were able to increase funding for Yukon Learn in order for them to cover some of their rising costs.

Mr. Speaker, I really support this motion. It certainly clarifies the direction that the government is heading in. We recognize that it is important to provide access to post-secondary education. We recognize a need for students to have the opportunities that they need to succeed, and we also recognize that we have needs and opportunities in our community and we need people to be trained to fill those needs.

Mr. Speaker, we need to train Yukoners for Yukon opportunities and, by working with all of our partners, we will continue to recognize the very urgent and pressing needs in our community.

I recognize that we could add to this list of what people should be training for and preparing for. Indeed, when you open up any college or university calendar, there is a wide variety of programs that are available out there.

These are some of the very pressing needs in our community now, and some of the very good opportunities, so these are the priorities, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

I recognize that, in the past, when we've talked about priorities in here, members have come forward and put forward amendments to motions to increase the list of priorities from five to 25. I think we can all agree that that kind of approach does not work. What we need to do is to sit down and to take a look at what is needed in the community and then identify training programs that will provide those opportunities for Yukoners to be responsive to the opportunities that are available to them.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward this motion. It is important that we have an opportunity to discuss education and post-secondary education here on the floor of the Assembly. I would seek the support of this motion from all members in the Assembly. I believe then we can send a very loud and consistent message that members of the Assembly believe in post-secondary education, in addressing the priorities and the needs of Yukon, and that we need to go forward and continue to work with all of our partners in education in order to best satisfy the needs of Yukon students and Yukon employers.

Mr. Edzerza: This motion brought forward by the Member for Klondike is a very good motion. I think that any time one gets to expand on training and education, or training in a profession or trade, it is always a good thing. It helps to build the self-esteem of the individual. There is a lot of good in it. I believe it is one of the tools that can be used to address poverty or social problems. Whenever a person has an opportunity to improve their contributions to society, it is always a good thing.

Quite often, government appears to get into a tunnel and it is always the same old repetitious kind of approach to education. A lot of governments can't seem to think outside of the box. They've got a blueprint and a pattern that they stick to and that's unfortunate.

A good example of thinking outside the box is when I was the Education minister, we developed the Individual Learning Centre. That is something that was really needed in the Yukon.

That's being creative. That's thinking outside of the blueprint a little bit. And, lo and behold, it turns out to be quite a success, and it's good to see that.

When we talk about improving our education, what does that mean? What does it mean to improve your education? Well, the government of the day has to start looking at a whole bunch of initiatives, right from young people who are living in rural communities and having to come to Whitehorse for high school. We have to look at that and see what kind of impact it has on the young person, having to move from a small community to a place like Whitehorse. There is a real impact; it's a social impact. We have to start looking at those issues.

One area that I believe would really be worth looking at is developing a dorm in one of the rural communities with a high school that's not filled to capacity. A lot of high schools in the rural communities are running at a very low capacity. We need to start looking at putting infrastructure in the community that would support a person going into post-secondary or high school. They shouldn't always have to move to Whitehorse.

I believe in my heart that this does contribute a lot to the dropout rate in high school — young people not being able to cope with the change. People coming from Old Crow, for example, into Whitehorse to go to high school might do a lot better if they were to go to the high school in Dawson, for example, if there were living accommodations and dorms in Dawson to assist those young people from Old Crow to complete high school.

Or it could be that there would be a high school developed in Faro, for example, that would accommodate students from small communities. Rather than having to come to Whitehorse, they would have the opportunity to go to a smaller community that is more similar to their style of living.

I want to also talk about some of the experiences that I have had in my life when it came to education. When I went to the vocational school, for example, and took welding in 1967, I had a very difficult time getting a job after I completed the course. It was always due to the fact that I had no experience in the mining field; I had no experience working in the shops; I had no experience, period, except for what I had done in the classroom. This is part of why I have been bringing these issues to the floor for the last couple of days. I feel they are very legitimate and they're worth looking at.

I don't believe everything should be happening in Whitehorse. The NDP caucus is very very community minded. We think a lot about the people in the communities and how difficult it is to find work and how difficult it is to earn a living in a small community; therefore, I strongly believe that any government that is in power — it doesn't matter which party it is — has to be aware of the fact that everything shouldn't be centered in Whitehorse, and it doesn't have to be. I worked in Faro for approximately six years. My children spent a lot of their elementary school years in Faro.

The town basically has everything it needs to sustain an education training program. As I stated earlier, it is very difficult to go from a classroom on to a job anywhere. Having said that — and as recently as today, having had lengthy discussions with some of the people in Faro — they are very excited and believe this is exactly what would help their community. It would bring it back to life. They would be delivering a service that could benefit people right across Canada, not only in the Yukon.

I don't know of any other place in Canada that would have a set-up like they could have in Faro. They have all the land and space needed. It has already been disturbed. You don't have to disturb new ground, cut down new trees or dig up new ground to be able to put a training plan in place like our caucus is talking about.

I have worked in the mines. I know how big the equipment is and I know how much room you need to be able to, for example, move a 40-yard drill around that would drill an 8-inch hole for blasting. Where else could you get experience in actually doing some blasting? There are several benches in the pit where the Anvil mine operated and dug the ore out that would serve that purpose. The ground is there and it is all prepared; it is just sitting there waiting to be used.

I believe that the whole reclamation process would be somewhere around \$200 million. What we are suggesting is that we put money into the Town of Faro and do the reclamation through the training program.

When I was the Minister of Education, I did mention this to an individual from Ottawa whom we were questioning about reclamation. I put this idea past him four years ago. The individual thought it was really something worth looking into, because you not only do the reclamation but you also would have

the opportunity to train people from right across Canada on the big equipment.

I know from experience that there are programs that provide on-the-job training, but that would be very very different from being able to go into the Town of Faro and take all the practicum that you need and get all the classroom knowledge that you need to be able to get on to a D10-Cat or whatever and learn all the safety involved in being able to work in an environment where there is a lot of heavy equipment moving around. It would give the individual the practical experience and awareness. When I worked in Faro, you were in the mine pit where there were a lot of safety precautions that you had to be aware of. You always had to be aware of where all the big ore trucks were. You had to be aware of where someone was working with the big shovel or a loader. That is the kind of practical experience that you don't get in the college.

One of the things that could be included in this is on-the-job training for welders, mechanics, electricians and first-aid people. This could be almost like an international training ground for the mining industry.

Now, the Yukon and the Yukon Party government are adamantly looking at opening mines daily and, if they could open one a day, they probably would.

Again, there is a shortage of operators, welders, electricians and carpenters right across Canada. In fact, I hear stories about speeding up immigration so that we can attract working people. Well, I have to say — and put on record — that we have a lot of people in Canada who are unemployed, and we need to start training those people so the number of people on welfare will be minimized.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is sort of a vision that would be developed outside of the box of government. Government has to start thinking along these lines. I don't believe that there is another place in the Yukon that is set up so perfectly for training people on the size of the equipment that is used in open-pit mining.

As a matter of fact, there is even an area within the Faro mine site that could also produce and develop underground miners. They have the geological location that's perfect. They do have living accommodations. Like I said earlier today in Question Period, there is an opportunity coming up very shortly to get a lot of equipment from the government. The federal government can do wonders here alongside the Yukon government and the municipal governments, if they all put their heads together, work together and really made this vision become a reality.

Some of the people I talked to in Faro today were very excited about this. They stated they have been thinking along these lines for several years, have tried a couple of times to have something capitalized along these lines and have been unsuccessful.

I would encourage the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin to really have discussions with people in the Town of Faro, just to see, and they can confirm everything I said is true. They do want something of this nature to take place in Faro. I don't blame them, because it will sustain the town for generations to come. It will help the town to grow and it will help the businesses in

Faro. It's about time the smaller communities started to be recognized and given more opportunities to contribute to the sustainability of the Yukon Territory.

Without government assistance, a lot of things don't get started. If the government doesn't buy into it, it won't happen, unless there's a government like the NDP that certainly would look at these issues and work hard to see them capitalized. There is always that possibility; there's an election in four years — who knows?

I also want to talk a little bit about the arts institute in Dawson. That's another example of thinking outside the box and getting something established in a rural community that benefits that community. I was somewhat instrumental in helping with that project, as was the Minister of Tourism and Culture and other ministers at the time. There were a number of people who worked on that initiative. That's what it takes: commitment. If there hadn't been commitment from some of the MLAs, it would never have happened. It would probably still be a project that is just being discussed, but it took interest to be able to do it.

So today I ask the members in government and the other MLAs in government to really look seriously at this initiative that we are proposing for the Town of Faro. I had a hard time getting a job as a welder when I left college. No experience in the mine; no experience in the shop. This is an opportunity where you can get all that experience. When you finish your course there, you are going to be able to work just about any place where a tradesperson would work as a mechanic, welder, electrician, carpenter, first-aid person or driller — there is just so much to this.

I have about four more items I would really have liked to talk about but I realize I have run out of time. I certainly hope that the government will start considering the smaller communities as a base for training.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would like to thank the member opposite for his insight on this motion brought forward by the Member for Klondike.

It is an interesting motion in the sense that the expansion of education and training programs in areas of particular relevance to the north are very important because, at the end of the day, we need a trained workforce at every level. As we know from a Canada-wide perspective, the workforce is becoming more and more in demand, and of course we have to compete Canada-wide. This government has worked over the last six years.

One of the first things we as government did in 2003 was put money into the hands of the Minister of Education, the Member for McIntyre-Takhini, so he could go out to our schools and provide whatever resources they required for their physical operation, to bring them up to a workable, better standard. We did that immediately upon taking office.

Of course, at that point, the Minister of Education had the support of caucus, because without the support of the government caucus, we certainly wouldn't be seeing what we're seeing today. The Individual Learning Centre is a prime example, and the member brought that up. That was one of the projects

brought forward by the Premier. It was worked on by the Minister of Education and our caucus to make sure that our youth, who don't work well in a structured education situation, had an opportunity to go back and get an education so they could move on with their lives. That program is oversubscribed today and is a success story that bodes well for the decision made by the Premier to provide the resources for it.

The Member for McIntyre-Takhini was looking at the Dawson City success story. That was led by individuals in Dawson City, but over the last six years, this government has provided resources for it, to the point where it's at today. Without our government's support — financial, moral and directional — it wouldn't be in the position it is today. So this government takes that kind of thing very, very seriously.

The arts, and all that comes with the art programs in Dawson — the fine arts programs that are going on there — are very important for Yukon, because that is a very important part of our community.

The member brings up the Faro situation and the opportunities in Faro. This government and Energy, Mines and Resources have taken the task of bringing the receivership to a closure and moving forward with the closure plans. That is all being done in due course, and it will be done in the next six months. Certainly, an education component with the closure plan is one of the many opportunities the territory will have when we get our closure plan and there will be an opportunity to work on that closure plan in Faro.

As far as this government is concerned, we'll look at all opportunities for the community of Faro to make sure that Faro is a success story. If it is part of an education program to work on equipment throughout the closure plan — the many things that the member opposite talked about this afternoon — those are all opportunities for Faro. This government is committed to working with Faro to make sure they can take advantage of all the advantages that the closure plan will present to the community and also to the First Nations in Ross River, Pelly and Liard. All of southeast Yukon will benefit from that closure plan. Education is always part and parcel of whatever programs we put forward.

If had listened in Question Period this afternoon about our energy programs and what we're doing as a government, what you would know of the many departments that work on energy conservation. It's not just the Energy Solutions Centre or just Energy, Mines and Resources; it is not restricted to one department. We're working as a team here on this side to make sure that we keep abreast of opportunities for energy conservation, but education is not the sole responsibility of the Department of Education.

We can certainly have the Minister of Education up here today talking about the many programs that they are doing and I compliment them. The Department of Highways and Public Works has opened up opportunities to train individuals in the communities outside of Whitehorse so that they can participate in the opportunities the Highways department presented to the communities. This has been very successful.

Our government believes that if we can train people who are already living in the communities, and bring them on-line

as intricate parts of our Highways department, we will have happy, satisfied employees who enjoy living in the community.

We certainly benefit from training people in the communities to work in the communities. That has been proven in the past. The Department of Highways and Public Works is in the training program as well.

Look at the Department of Tourism of Culture and all the opportunities offered there. What do they do in educating? They work with our communities, with Yukon as a whole, to educate and train individuals in the tourism industry.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has responsibility for regulation of oil and gas, mining and forestry components. Of course, land and other issues are the responsibility of Energy, Mines and Resources.

What do we do as a department? As the mosaic of a government, we have responsibilities for oil and gas — which we have training programs for. In the past, we have provided resources for individuals to go out for training so they could have hands-on training in the oil and gas industry. When we move forward with potential pipelines or oil and gas development in southeast Yukon, we will have trained Yukoners who can fill some of the jobs that will be created.

Mining is an issue that has been highly active over the last couple of years. The members opposite ask what we do for education in mining. We set up an organization in partnership with First Nations and industry for the Yukon mine training program. What does that do?

That trains individual Yukoners in Whitehorse but also in the areas outside of Whitehorse. It is working with Sherwood Copper in the Selkirk First Nation traditional territory and with other First Nations and stakeholders to train individuals to an education standard that will give them the skills to work on this mine site.

What is our success rate with the program? The program was provided with approximately \$1 million, and we have been working to acquire some financial contribution from the federal government. We are looking forward in the near future to some announcements about providing resources and opportunities for Yukoners, from an education point of view, in our expanding mining industry in the coming years.

I am very pleased to say that 25 percent of the workforce at Sherwood Copper comes from the community of Pelly. That in itself shows that the money spent on training and the money put forward through this training program has resulted in a positive outcome.

Look at all the communities that have been talked about this afternoon. For example, there is the program in Dawson City that the Member for McIntyre-Takhini brought up, which provides opportunities for Yukoners, as well as individuals from Outside, to take courses and transfer those credits to other schools across Canada.

Those opportunities are there. The courses themselves are very successful; they do have individuals in all the courses. Again, that's part of Yukon's education foundation. Of course, in a sense, this is the first couple of years that it has been moving forward, and it looks like it's going to be highly successful, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank all the individuals in Dawson City

who had the dream many years ago, and actually went to work and came out with what they have today. Without the individuals in Dawson City with that interest and foresight, we wouldn't have what we have in Dawson City today.

As a government, we were receptive to their business plan and we provided resources so they could have the support they needed to move forward with the program — and the program, as I said, has proven to be successful.

Dawson City is a prime example of how I can see our education diversifying itself throughout the Yukon.

I agree with the Member for McIntyre-Takhini that it would be nice to see things in Faro that would complement Faro — but also work with the closure plan as we move out of receivership — and put an education component into it. In turn, that would certainly benefit the community of Faro; anything this government can do to benefit the community of Faro, we will certainly look at very favourably.

In the community of Carmacks, we have the Employment Training Society training fund, and that's the kind of thing we encourage and fund in our communities, to make sure they have the resources for employment opportunities.

The Campbell region training fund is another that enhances the employment and training opportunities for Ross River and Faro area residents. Those are the kinds of things that we have funded up until now.

The Haines Junction Champagne-Aishihik training fund enhances employment and training opportunities for Haines Junction and the Champagne-Aishihik area which is a large area of the Yukon and a very important part of the Yukon. The Klondike regional training fund offers employment training for residents of the Klondike region. We funded that last year to the tune of \$75,000. We also provide the Silver Trail training fund.

So there is a mosaic of opportunities for training individuals in all areas of the territory. We work with the Watson Lake community and the Liard First Nation and when opportunities arise, this government is open to being partners with those communities to bring training to a reality.

There is a lot to be said for what we've done over the last six years. This government has put an emphasis on the trades. Six years ago, the opportunities weren't there for new apprentices that are here today. The Member for McIntyre-Takhini was talking about opportunities when he was in trade school. When you went to a trade school, was there any opportunity at the end of the day to get a job?

I think that without the opportunity for work, it is very discouraging to go through a three- or four-year apprenticeship program and then find out at that at the end of the day that your opportunities are not here but are in other jurisdictions. We first had to put an economy together and then we had to structure our Yukon College vocational programs around the opportunities that are here in the community.

Another part of this puzzle that we worked on was involving women in our trades? There is a growing demand out there because of the changing mosaic of what people do in the workforce.

We as a government have had great success working with women in trades. Here is an example of what we have. In the women in trades apprenticeship program, which we have been funding and working with, we have one auto painter, seven apprentice carpenters, five electricians, seven cooks, seven hairstylists, two painters and decorators, one parts person, two plumbers and three sheet metal workers. That is a total of 35 women in the program as of February 29, 2008.

That was not happening in the territory six years ago. That is one small success story. There are industries out there, and I would imagine that these individuals will be picked up very quickly after they get through their apprenticeship, if not by the companies where they are working on their apprenticeship.

I see now, after six years in government, when I read the want ads in the newspaper, all these individuals are in demand here in the territory. That speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I think this is very important for any government. I am very proud to be part of a government that did this. The road map ahead of us looks very positive and I am looking forward to the expanding education opportunities for all Yukoners, and I am looking forward to working with Energy, Mines and Resources and the Department of Highways and Public Works to train those people. I compliment the department of Education, Tourism and Culture, Economic Development and all other departments that are partnered in educating Yukoners to participate in our economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to thank the mover of the motion for bringing this motion forward.

I would have to agree to some extent with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun about the motion. But, at the same time, we have a motion in front of us that urges the Government of Yukon to continue expanding education and training programs.

I don't believe there has ever been a government that hasn't needed that urging. But I think we also need to recognize that we need to give credit where credit is due. Some of the programs that have been talked about — whether it's the Bachelor of Social Work program, the Yukon native teacher education program, the renewable resource management program — have been in place for many, many years and were initiatives that were part of the vision of not just government, but others involved in education — namely, people who worked at the college and people who were on the Yukon College Board of Governors at the time. Actually, it was even before my time on that board that a lot of those programs came forward and happened under other administrations. I think we need to recognize that every government has made progress in training.

One of the ones mentioned — I believe it was mentioned by the mover of the motion — was apprenticeship training in high school that transfers into the workplace. I can recall — I guess it was about 10, maybe 12, years ago, when I was still working in the trades — having a young apprentice come in from the high school and work in the shop where I was working, through that exact program. That happened 10 or 12 years ago.

That individual is now basically a floor supervisor in that shop. Things like that have been happening for a long time; they've gained momentum.

The previous speaker wanted to talk about women in trades. That has been happening for quite some time. I think it's incumbent on us here to recognize just where the leadership for getting women involved in trades really lies. It doesn't lie with the previous speaker; it doesn't lie with the Minister of Education; it doesn't lie with me; it doesn't lie with the previous Minister of Education or the Minister of Education before that.

It lies with a very dedicated individual who saw the need because she was involved in trades. I believe I'm okay to name other people — I just can't name members of the Legislature. I think we need to pay tribute to Betty Irwin for her contribution to that. She's the one who deserves credit for the statistics that the previous speaker spoke about.

It's unfortunate — I wish I had the luxury of the time that has been afforded to the first two speakers of this motion — because we could have been here for quite some time. I'm going to try to move this along.

I think I can support the intent of the motion. I think there is nothing wrong with urging governments to expand education and training programs, especially programs and training that is relevant to where we are.

As was mentioned, it's important that it be relevant in every community of the Yukon, and to recognize that, once again, we're all in this together and we're really one community here in the Yukon. Education needs to be relevant to everyone here in the north.

I'd like to touch on a few of the initiatives or areas that were mentioned by the mover of the motion. There's no doubt in my mind that First Nation governance has been a need for many years — and it's not just about First Nation governance. It's about building capacity for the ability to take control of your destiny, to be able to respond as a First Nation government to the needs of your citizens, and to work on a government-to-government basis. There's no doubt in my mind that needs to happen. There has been progress over the years, and we need to continue to work in that area.

The mover of the motion mentions mining. I'm not going to delve into it too deeply, but my colleague, the Member for McIntyre-Takhini, proposed an idea today. That's what motion debate should be about: proposing ideas. It shouldn't be about talking about all the good things you've done, or all the good things you'd like to do, or all the good things you think you're doing. It should be an exchange of ideas. That's what we're here for today in this Legislature, to exchange good ideas about the subject we're talking about.

There was a lot of mention of trades training, and I am going to dwell on that for a little bit, because I think there has been some great progress made — as I mentioned, Betty Irwin and women exploring trades.

The Skills Canada Yukon program and all the skills clubs: I recall actually debating a motion in this Legislature a few years ago about ensuring that funding was increased and that there was bridge funding, because there was a gap in that fund-

ing. Today, Skills Canada Yukon is still functioning and there are skills clubs and young people out there participating in those skills clubs.

One of the things the previous speaker also mentioned was in his Department of Highways and Public Works — I agree with the member. I think that it is great to train people in their communities to work in various departments, not the least of which is the Department of Highways and Public Works, because they are in every community and they work between all the communities in the Yukon, and that is what brings us all together as one big community.

The minister should be aware that they also need to treat the apprentices they have fairly and equitably and ensure that they have the opportunities to move into jobs and that there is actually a need for more training in that area in the central workshop, specifically around maintaining the equipment that the Department of Highways and Public Works uses to maintain our highways system.

That's another area I believe could be improved, where the government could make some improvements when we're talking to this motion.

I'm not questioning the dedication of the department, but when you look at the record of this government, they built one school in five and a half years. If you look at the capital budget that we're going to be talking about later this afternoon, it's down across the board. The total vote is down 29 percent, a little over \$3 million — \$3.2 million or \$3.3 million. They built one school in five and a half years; they're on their second or third facilities study; there was a school promised but not delivered, and that led to at least two of the studies, I believe. If I'm not mistaken, we're probably on our second or third study of what to do with the facilities we have.

I'm not saying we shouldn't be studying what we need for facilities; I just think we could be more efficient at it. We could involve the school councils in the planning process. We need to listen to some of the communities. In Watson Lake, there was a need for more space for cultural activities. We've had that discussion with the minister. I trust that something actually came of that discussion and there was funding made available to make use of space that was available or to improve space that was available and make that a reality for that community.

I believe there are other communities, not the least of which is Burwash, which was looking for a facility in their community for the purpose of education.

One of the things in this motion that isn't touched on when we talk about expanding education in training programs in areas of particular relevance to the north — although I heard the mover of the motion touch briefly on it — is climate change. They talk about construction north of 60, but climate change, mitigation and adaptation are important to Yukoners and to all people who live in the north.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, I would propose a friendly amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Cardiff: I move

THAT Motion No. 276 be amended by adding immediately after the expression “resource management”, the expression “climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

Speaker: The amendment proposed by the Member for Mount Lorne is in order. It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne

THAT Motion No. 276 be amended by adding immediately after the expression “resource management”, the expression “climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

Mr. Cardiff: I’m hoping this is important enough for the government, for the mover of the motion, for the Minister of Education and especially for the Minister of Environment. I know he would have a lot to say about this particular amendment, as would the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I look forward to their comments on this addition to the motion.

Climate change is a fact. The minister has admitted it. I don’t think there is a person in this Legislative Assembly who would not admit that it is a fact. It’s well-documented that we in the north are the ones who will experience the effects of climate change in a profound way.

We have heard about invasive species and we have seen temperature increases, shorter winters, reductions in the snow pack, declines in glaciers, how it has affected the wildlife.

I have constituents who are telling me that they see less wildlife travelling on the highways. Listen to what elders are saying about the changes to the migration patterns of caribou and the effects it’s having on other wildlife. This is a serious issue. I think it is of particular relevance to us here in the north.

Yesterday was Earth Day, and we tried to get the government to do some green things yesterday, and I did not see any press releases from the government yesterday. It’s interesting. They could take a lesson from our neighbours down to the south, and the government could possibly use some training in that area too, and maybe that could be part of the expansion of education and training programs.

Yesterday, the Government of British Columbia announced plans for 11 new class A provincial parks and 66 new conservancies — basically like protected areas, I believe — in the Province of British Columbia.

But here is one that is specifically directed at what I believe is education, and where our new leadership is coming from. They announced \$3 million over three years, I believe, to encourage young people to become environmental activists. It is called the “Youth Climate Leadership Alliance”, a program that gives people between the ages of 17 and 28 a chance to be ambassadors in fighting climate change. It’s a chance to learn about what’s affecting the environment, to learn about climate change, mitigation and adaptation.

I think that we could put funds aside for this type of a program, a Yukon climate change corps of youth whose jobs are to increase awareness and minimize our ecological and climate change footprint.

We could extend training and education on climate change adaptation and mitigation. We heard some of the efforts today that are being done through funding to help homeowners, but

we need to educate them as well. Education and training initiatives could be directed at Government of Yukon employees, or all employees, that would include knowledge about the benefits of carpooling and finding energy savings in offices — we have done some renovations in our offices to promote energy savings — and education and training opportunities on using alternative energy, like solar power, wind power, and biomass. I think those types of things are important.

We need to educate people about the fact that the climate is changing and the fact that we need to cut back on our emissions. We also need to ensure that our communities can meet the challenges of this changing world. There are a number of industries that are going to be affected by climate change. The Department of Highways and Public Works is going to be affected by it — construction, building, architecture, roads, bridges. There is going to be melting permafrost, increased flooding and other impacts.

Another area that’s missing, and that I haven’t included in this amendment, is the fact that the motion talks about education and training programs. One of the things I think is important is that we do research and learn from that research. So, we could have included education, research and training.

I realize that my time is running out, but I hope that the government and members in the Official Opposition will look favourably on the amendment as I’ve proposed it. I think that climate change is definitely something of relevance here in the Yukon and in the north.

I look forward to hearing from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the Minister of Environment, because I know that this is a matter that is dear to their hearts.

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, I can support this friendly amendment. This amendment is very consistent with what is being done currently. Mr. Speaker, there was actually a symposium held recently at Yukon College regarding this subject. Another reason why I can support this amendment is that in October there was a northern strategy application that was approved for a northern climate exchange community adaptation project. \$1.2 million was provided to carry out climate change adaptation planning and to implement adaptation actions in three Yukon communities.

A further reason why I can actually accept this friendly amendment is that yesterday during Question Period, our Premier stated that we are one of the first jurisdictions in this country to ensure that adaptation was part of the climate change planning initiatives. He went on to say how we’re going to deal with climate change in the Yukon terrain, such as the permafrost outreach program in partnership with Alaska. The program is with the University of Alaska to support academic studies on permafrost to use as a model here in the southern Yukon. It will look at permafrost-related terrain hazards, monitoring and climate characterization in southern and central Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, that is why this friendly amendment does sit well with this motion. I would actually like to thank the member opposite for bringing this friendly amendment forward, and I think that we can support this.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.
Amendment to Motion No. 276 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any debate on the main motion as amended?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the Member for Klondike as well as members opposite for their support for this motion thus far.

I just want to start out by saying that motions such as these that we as members of the Legislature have the opportunity to debate are really an opportunity to remind us of where we have been, where we are at and where we ought to be going in terms of advancing Yukon.

Indeed I have said on the floor of the Legislature on numerous occasions where we have been as a territory, and recent developments that have really advanced the Yukon's economic and social climate on a number of different planes. There have been developments such as implementation of land claims — we have 11 of 14 that have been settled — and devolution through the devolution transfer agreement that was negotiated by the previous government, which we are now implementing. It is historic occasions such as those that really remind us as Yukoners where we have been and where we are at, and all of the great opportunities ahead of us. The future is shining brightly upon Yukon.

We have seen many exciting developments on many different levels in the territory over the recent years, and we have seen and experienced better times for families. We have seen unemployment at an all-time low; we have seen our population growing; we have seen more families and younger people making the Yukon their home; and we've seen neighbourhoods growing. We only have to take a look at certain neighbourhoods in respective areas to really give us proof that things are excelling in the Yukon.

How does training and education fit within that? In order for us to be able to take advantage of those opportunities that are at our doorstep, it is absolutely advantageous and it is incumbent upon us as legislators to make resources available so that we can equip Yukoners with the tools necessary to take advantage of those economic opportunities.

I think what members opposite have articulated on the floor of the Legislature is, yes, governments of all stripes have certainly placed a priority on education. I am very proud to be part of a government that places the highest priority on education. As was relayed by the Minister of Education not long ago, we have seen injections of additional funds into public education — \$30 million over the last five and one-half years.

We have also seen additional injections of funding into advanced education, which includes Yukon College. One of the first things we were able to do as a government upon being elected was to inject an additional \$1 million into the base grant that is provided from the Yukon government to Yukon College. That is, I think, the first increase in 10 years and has

certainly proven time and time again a great return on investment.

We have also seen that, under this government's watch, we have been able to reinstate the community training funds that were reduced by the previous government. We were very pleased to place renewed emphasis on that particular area. In fact, it is now at a current \$1.5 million. These are community training funds, which go directly to our communities. Some of the members have articulated which communities those are — Carmacks, for example; we have the Campbell region training fund, which places dollars and enhances the employment training opportunities for Ross River and Faro area residents; Haines Junction — the Champagne and Aishihik training fund, as well; Klondike region training fund; Silver Trail training fund, which again provides training opportunities for residents in the Mayo, Keno and Elsa area — that is a new area that has been very well-received.

In particular, with all the growth in mining and tourism opportunities, it is a great expenditure that has been invested and it has had a great return on investment. We have also seen an expansion of funds in the cultural industries training fund, which is currently administered through MusicYukon. When we talk about diversification of our economy, it's important to look at a renewed emphasis on industries such as cultural ones. I refer to film and sound and heritage. When we look at expenditures within the museum community, I refer to cultural centres, First Nation heritage and cultural centres, Yukon museums, and community interpretive centres. We have more than doubled direct funding support to those institutions and have expanded the number of institutions in the family of museums in the Yukon.

Every time we place emphasis on industries such as those, it's wonderful to see growth in those areas. The heritage training fund was sought after by the museum community in the territory, to which we were very pleased to respond by providing a training fund of \$50,000. I know that has provided a lot of various levels of training for independent heritage workers, groups and sectors for the purpose of enhancing skills development for employment.

We have seen significant employment in this particular area. This sector employs many individuals throughout the territory — not just in Whitehorse, but literally in every single community in the territory.

It certainly adds to the quality of life that we currently enjoy as Yukon citizens. It builds on the economic strengths of Yukon by employing individuals who, in turn, invest dollars in their respective communities.

It also provides additional attractions and understandings for our visitors at large, which is so important to the tourism industry to really build on — product, capacity, awareness, and so forth. So, again, we're very pleased to be able to provide that particular training fund to that sector.

We also have a Yukon environment training fund, which is administered through the Yukon Conservation Society. Again, it trains individuals employed by environment-related organizations or those working on respective issues in the Yukon. Again, it is something that is very well-received by individuals

in the Yukon and, again, this is so critical to advancing the Yukon on another level.

So, really, when we speak about investments in training and education, it is a win-win situation. We have certainly seen renewed emphasis placed on having to respond — and wanting to respond — to the different dynamics that are occurring in our labour market today.

I don't think it matters which sector we look at, whether in health care, the hospitality industry, or the trades. We see and certainly hear throughout the world, and especially here in Canada, the need to really place more emphasis on training and educating our young people, and people of all ages in this country, to really be able to prepare them for the opportunities that are occurring in the country today.

It is certainly what we find here occurring in the north.

We have heard a great deal from members with emphasis on different areas. I know that the Member for Mount Lorne made reference to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology. I have had the opportunity to work with Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, and have had the opportunity to come to know Ms. Betty Irwin, who is really the mover and shaker of YWITT over the years. Thanks to her leadership, creativity, hard work and effort over the years, she has raised the bar in terms of reducing those barriers to women entering the trades.

It's really wonderful to hear of so many women enrolled in trades in the Yukon today. That wasn't necessarily always the case, but it is wonderful, thanks to more emphasis placed on public education in our schools. Again, even from training clinics taking place, either in the evening or on the weekends, you see more women engaged in different levels and becoming interested in every single trade that is offered in the Yukon today. It's wonderful to see, because women do bring different traits when it comes to the trades. I think that they can only strengthen and enrich the delivery of trades in the territory — which we have been witnessing shortages in over recent years.

We spoke a little bit about the need for emphasis on different areas and different sectors of our economy and, in particular, placing emphasis on our communities. A little bit was touched upon; in fact, I think it was made known that some member — I can't recall which member — had made reference to the fact that this government was only responsible for constructing one school. I actually have to correct the record: we have actually been responsible for constructing two schools, and I refer to the School of Visual Arts in Dawson City.

We have placed a great level of expenditure on the refurbishment of the old liquor store for housing the School of Visual Arts, which we were very pleased to see have a first year of accreditation for the delivery of a fine arts degree.

It is a marvellous asset and a great addition to the City of Dawson, and we are very pleased to provide expenditures to ensure that institution is maintained and also grows. We are very proud of the level of investment and again we congratulate the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture for their many years of hard work and vision. If it weren't for their vision, we certainly wouldn't see this school up and running today. We are very pleased to partner with KIAC on the development of the School of Visual Arts.

As I made mention before, we have also seen incredible emphasis on First Nation governments implementing and settling — some have just recently settled, some have been implementing for many years. I concur with members that part of any labour market strategy and any movement afoot to advance the Yukon has to be hand-in-hand in full partnership with First Nations.

I was recently doing a bit of research on-line and looking back to some news releases pertaining to funding initiatives such as the northern strategy trust fund. Going back to last October of 2007, we were really pleased to see a number of different expenditures housed within the northern strategy.

There was \$700,000 identified for training to develop municipal and First Nation government capacity. That is a great thing and I know that the Association of Yukon Communities is very appreciative of this particular funding. Also, the staff of First Nation governments that deliver these types of services are also very appreciative of funding being made available.

There is \$600,000 made available for Yukon First Nations public service. This is to work cooperatively among First Nations to develop effective human resource practices and initiatives. Another example that was funded through the northern strategy recently was \$150,000 to provide training to develop community peacekeepers, mediators and negotiators. We are always speaking about the need to collaborate more or to speak more and to do what we can before it goes to another level.

There is also over \$1 million identified for developing comprehensive First Nation executive leadership management programming. This is a really exciting initiative and I believe that the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations are involved in this particular initiative, as well as Yukon College. It is great to see, and I think that there are some really creative partnerships that will be coming out of this particular program. It could potentially set the bar or serve as a model for the rest of Canada in terms of being able to advance First Nation and Yukon interests.

There are dollars available — almost \$400,000 for a cooperative education program for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation university students to address short- and long-term labour shortage issues.

There is \$210,000 available for the youth leadership training and skills development, again building on life skills and development. This is absolutely critical in advancing the economy of the Yukon for both its social and economic well-being.

There is also just over \$2 million available for the Selkirk First Nation to provide them with resources to strengthen governance structures in support of economic development. Clearly, these are but some of the identified resources that have been made available for First Nations to really assist them in helping to build capacity.

Furthermore, and more importantly, it is also one of the areas identified in the nine-year review that is currently underway, which is really identifying the shortfalls or the deficiencies associated with implementation funding. We are currently speaking with the Government of Canada in this regard.

There are so many different initiatives that are underway, but I am very pleased to speak to initiatives such as this. I think

there is never anything wrong — we only stand to benefit — with renewing our commitment to strengthening the delivery of education to Yukon citizens for the young, middle-aged and old. I think it only makes us a stronger territory, it makes us more competitive and it makes us much better people as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I rise in support of this motion. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward and for the encouraging words of the members opposite.

I would like to begin by reviewing what it is we committed to do during the last election. Clearly, education is a key priority for this government. We believe that to achieve a better quality of life, we need to educate today for jobs tomorrow.

While the value of an education extends far beyond what career options it allows, the fact remains that many careers require a specialized skill set. We committed to provide Yukon students with the fundamental skills necessary to prepare them for jobs, responsible citizenship and lifelong learning.

Through different funding mechanisms, we have invested in both trades and academic education programs. Some of these programs are region-specific. For example, the Campbell region training fund enhances the employment and training opportunities of Ross River and Faro area residents. On behalf of my constituents, I have already approached my colleagues about developing a mine training school in Faro. It is indeed a good idea. I appreciate the support of the ever-astute Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the Minister of Education. I appreciate their willingness to discuss and investigate this idea.

I do appreciate the ongoing work of my colleagues in promoting further support for this project. I am also appreciative that the opposition has now gotten onside, albeit a little late in the day. I think it is important to note, as my ever-astute colleagues pointed out, this government works as a team, in unison, to perpetually achieve credible end results.

Yukon has a long and rich tradition of producing top-flight students. Whether their focus is the academy or the workshop, our students have excelled. As government, we have supported and we will continue to support our students as they pursue their education.

As I am sure many of us know, being a student is sometimes a stretch financially. In the 2006-07 school year, 1,578 applications for various funding sources were approved for 1,064 Yukon students.

Students attended 138 post-secondary institutions in the Yukon, throughout the country, and around the world. Last year, for example, the Department of Education allocated \$4.2 million for the Yukon grant and student training allowance program. This includes an annual indexing amount of \$102,000.

We committed to work in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College, and other stakeholders to help First Nation citizens acquire the skills necessary to participate fully in areas of importance, including land claims.

Mr. Speaker, a host of studies have been done about the interrelationship between language and culture. One is integral to

the other. As a First Nation citizen, I firmly believe that we have to pass our language on. About a year ago, we also announced an increase of nearly a quarter of a million dollars in First Nation education-related funding under the 2007-08 budget. This funding for the Yukon Native Language Centre includes \$53,000 that will cover increased operating costs of the Yukon Native Language Centre, while a further \$170,000 will cover the salaries of two education support workers within the Council of Yukon First Nations. That means that our investment in aboriginal language teachers in Yukon schools, including the staff at the Yukon Native Language Centre, was \$2,600,000 last fiscal year.

I would like to share with this House a few more examples of our work with First Nations: First Nation program and partnership staff at the Department of Education for \$589,000; Yukon native teacher education program for \$540,000; First Nation curriculum and resource development for \$500,255; and Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon Native Language Centre for \$405,000.

Cultural enhancement funding for Yukon schools — \$305,000; Council of Yukon First Nations — \$170,000; First Nation elders in the school program — \$50,000; counselling support worker for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — \$15,000; youth counsellor for Teslin Tlingit Council — \$15,000; and First Nation orientation for Yukon teachers — \$20,240.

Our support does not end there. In a few minutes I will talk about our trades initiatives, but I did want to mention the results here. As of February 29, 2008, 72 First Nation members are registered in the apprenticeship programs. There are three automotive service technicians, 39 carpenters, five construction electricians, two cooks, six heavy equipment and truck and transport technicians, two industrial electricians, one motor vehicle repairer — that's metal and paint — two oil burner mechanics, two painter and decorators, four plumbers, one power-line technician, one recreation vehicle service technician, one sheet metal worker, one truck and transport technician, and two welders. That is 72 First Nation members who are registered.

Last year, our Yukon Party government investment in First Nation education initiatives was just over \$5,200,000.

Speaking of culture, we have made progress in expanding education programs of relevance to the north by investing an additional \$270,000 under the 2007-08 budget to support the delivery of the School of Visual Arts program at the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture in Dawson City.

This was in addition to the \$500,000 that Yukon College received in 2006-07 for this project.

We recognize that not every student learns in the same way. In addition to the traditional educational paths, we understand that different students need different supports, so we went to work to expand and support alternative education, apprenticeship programs and post-secondary education.

Last year, we invested nearly \$75,000 in continued funding for Skills Canada Yukon. The skilled trades offer challenging work, job satisfaction, respect and good salaries. They rep-

resent a very good career choice that more young people need to know about.

Our investment in training and promotion for skilled trades in the Yukon is making a difference. This financial support, along with the participation of Yukon trade employers, has helped to increase apprenticeship registrations by more than 39 percent in the territory over the past three years.

In addition to promoting the skilled trades as a smart career option, the Government of Yukon works with Yukon employers as they develop skilled trades training opportunities in the work place.

Through an agreement with the federal government, we provide the resources to enable trades training because that is a smart investment in the long-term health of Yukon's economy, especially considering the skilled trade shortage we are currently experiencing.

Through community training funds, support for Yukon College and their agreements with the federal government, the Yukon government is providing the training that people need to take advantage of local economic opportunities and participate fully in their communities. We continue to invest in trades facilities at Yukon College.

In 2006-07, more than \$1 million was spent for trades apprentice coursework through the Canada-Yukon skill development contribution agreement. More than \$470,000 was dedicated to apprentice-level courses delivered by Yukon College. This government is committed to supporting this kind of growth, because it will sustain Yukon's economy in the long run.

I would like to point out that Yukon apprentices are among the best in Canada. Over the years, Yukon apprentices have achieved some of the highest pass rates on the interprovincial red seal certification exams. Over 19 percent of Yukon's apprentices identify themselves as First Nations. Per capita, the Yukon is higher than most other jurisdictions in terms of First Nation participation in apprenticeship training programs.

We said we would implement measures to encourage greater participation in vocational skills and trades training by women, such as the women exploring trades and technology program, persons with disabilities and students who do not wish to pursue an academic education. We have worked to get more women interested in the trades. For example, the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology received \$75,000 last year to deliver a number of exciting trades education projects for women across the territory.

The investment is paying dividends.

As of February 29, 2008, 35 women are registered apprentices. We committed to put in place measures to encourage the underemployed, school dropouts and the working poor to pursue vocational skills and trades training. For example, earlier this year, we announced over \$30,000 in funding to support an employability skills program to be delivered by Challenge Community Vocational Alternatives, starting this month. The funding means 12 individuals with a broad range of disabilities will get the help they need in their quest to make a meaningful contribution to our community.

This motion calls for us to address health care professionals and care providers. We are doing that. I am so proud of this government and the Minister of Health and Social Services in doing his job on this front.

I would like to mention one example of a win-win program. We have Yukoners who need medical assistance and we have Yukoners who want to provide that assistance. We did not have a local program where Yukoners could get the education they needed to provide that service. We addressed that gap. This fall, we will see the start of a licensed practical nurse program at the Yukon College campus in Whitehorse. The LPN program builds on a \$12.7-million health human resources strategy which was launched in 2006. By being able to offer this program in the Yukon, students will not have to go elsewhere to receive this level of education. Having this program available in Yukon is a good-news story.

To summarize, we have made progress in helping First Nations. I mentioned the work we have done in providing education and training initiatives for the trades, tourism and culture and health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased with the progress we have made in addressing the items noted in this motion. I think we should continue to expand our education and training programs that are relevant to the north.

Günilschish. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise today in the House to debate this motion, as amended. It gives me great pleasure to do so, and I'm proud of what our government has done in this area of expanding education and training. This amendment further demonstrates the ability of the government to work with the opposition in a constructive manner.

I will try to respond to the issue that the Member for Klondike refers to in this motion. I will say that as the MLA for Riverdale South, I'm very committed to my constituency and am honoured to represent them here in the House today. This is an attempt to speak to the issue the member has brought up with this motion about just what we are attempting to do as a government to expand education and training in a variety of areas.

Nous sommes fiers du progrès que nous avons fait au fil des années envers l'éducation et la formation.

The importance of education and skills training play a critical and much-needed role in helping Yukoners achieve their potential. Education and skills training has a role to play in helping to educate and mobilize people so that they can learn what they need to know to achieve the work they desire.

We spend a significant part of our lives working and it is important to find the right work, education and training to assist people to find the work that is right for them.

Our government has seen the Yukon enter into a period where we have the lowest unemployment rates on record. We are also dealing with the unprecedented building boom. Our government's goal is to continue building on the successful economic and social indicators. We are already seeing the return of some skilled Yukon workers who had to leave the territory for work. Now that our government has done the hard

work of creating opportunities, industry has returned to do business here in the Yukon.

Education and skills training supports all Yukoners, especially the Yukon youth and Yukoners wishing to change their career paths. Education and skills training programs assist youth to take control of their futures by providing them with opportunities afforded to them through education and training programs.

Demand for skilled tradespeople is at an all-time high. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that there will be a shortage of one million workers in the trades and related occupations within the next 20 years. Employers in many industries and regions raise concerns about shortages of skilled workers in the trades. The baby-boom generation is going to retire soon, and it needs to be replaced.

Industries that rely on apprenticeships, including construction, transportation, manufacturing and services, have been growing and need new workers. These jobs are highly skilled and always of interest to anyone looking at a career option that pays well.

Education and skills training assists young and old alike to develop skills and careers as instructors, contractors, entrepreneurs, managers, salespeople and inspectors among a myriad of other career categories.

By having people access more education and skills training, people are able to reach new levels of personal development. But this is about more than people. Organizations too will benefit by expanding education and skills training. Organizations can take many forms. They may be territorial, First Nation or municipal governments. They may be NGOs or health care agencies. They may be mining or tourism companies, schools or other industrial organizations.

These organizations will benefit from expanding education and skills training. An organization is made up of people and the combined skill level of the people in the organization determines its capacity. By increasing and expanding education and skills training for people, organizations can grow as well.

Organizations with more capacity and a higher collective skill level are then better able to perform and achieve greater results. Here we can talk about the greater capacity for governance, economic development and resource management. These are just some of the examples of how organizations can grow as a result of expanding education and skills training. This in turn provides more value to those who work for the organizations, as they can take pride in their contribution to the work of the organization. A better performing organization also performs more value for those who receive the services or products of that organization. Clients can get a little bit more than they did before, which is always appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, under my responsibility, each of my departments is involved in providing some training in a variety of areas. I will take just a few moments to highlight a few of them here today.

In the Department of Community Services, we have the Yukon Sport for Life program. The sport and recreation unit manages a wide variety of programs and services aimed at enhancing opportunities for sport, recreation and active living in

the Yukon. The sport and recreation unit works with organizations, groups, government departments, and the volunteer bureau in the areas of sport, recreation, health, education, justice, and social services to promote a vibrant and healthy Yukon.

In the Public Service Commission, there are two programs I would like to highlight today. They are the First Nation Training Corps and the GradCorps programs. The First Nation Training Corps provides training and employment opportunities to Yukon First Nation citizens to support Yukon government efforts to meet land claim obligations. There are also temporary assignments between the Yukon government and the Yukon First Nation governments that allow for people from one government to learn how the other government works.

The GradCorps internship program successfully attracts new graduates to the Government of Yukon. Successful applicants are offered a one-year placement in challenging, career-related assignments within the Government of Yukon that provide work experience in their field of study. GradCorps encourages the transfer of knowledge from experienced employees to new employees.

Dans la Direction des services en français, nous offrons des cours de français aux adultes.

The Adult French Language Training Centre offers a variety of French courses during the fall and winter semesters. Courses are offered at all levels from beginner to advanced. The two-hour classes are offered once a week for 12 weeks, from mid-September to mid-December, and again from mid-January to mid-April.

Je pourrais dire que j'ai profité beaucoup de ces cours.

These are just some of the examples of how my department has contributed to the expanding and increasing education and training opportunities for Yukoners. This government has provided, and continues to provide, many education and training opportunities. This is one of the many things that we are doing to support our campaign pillar of providing a better life for Yukoners.

As my colleagues and I have spoken about for some time now, we can see that there are already many examples of the expansion of education and training programs going on here in the territory. This kind of advancement provides the Yukon as a whole with more capacity to address the various needs of Yukoners in areas such as health care, construction, mining, governance, resource management, teaching and tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I might also mention on a personal note that I am very pleased that many of our children are able to take their education right up to grade 12 in the Yukon and obtain a trade within Yukon, and are also able to obtain a job in Yukon and remain here to add to the Yukon's economic strength, as well as keeping the family close by.

I would like to mention once again, as I think my colleagues and I have demonstrated, the strong efforts that this government has made in the area of education and training. We appreciate the value of this important institution and we continue to build on its strength and capacity. There will be more projects and opportunities to work on and we will continue to perform as we make progress and build the Yukon's future.

Again, I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for introducing this motion, and I encourage all members to support this motion.

Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: There are a number of training programs that this government has been involved in and I think we've been listening to a number coming from different departments. I will probably come back to some of those, but I would like to mention some from my own department that have had a very good uptake and proven to diversify the economy and involve a wide range of people.

The Yukon is a very film-friendly region with generous incentive programs for filmmakers shooting on location in the Yukon, including rebates for labour, travel and training costs, training being a big part of that.

We've got the look, we've got the land, we've got the light — all of this relates to our geographic location in the north. We have snow earlier, we have snow later — sometimes you wonder about that but, on average, that is true. So we have to really look at this as another area to diversify the economy. There are various programs we have within the Film and Sound Commission. Studies have shown that, on average, we will have an economic benefit of between \$9 and \$10 for every one dollar spent. It has proven to be an incredibly good investment, in terms of a wide variety of things.

One of the real points within the Film and Sound Commission, of course, is to have experienced local crews and very serious production savvy within the Yukon. One thing we get when we do exit surveys with our filmmakers up here are comments on the very high quality of abilities of Yukon crew members — everything from casting directors to production managers, second camera, and makeup personnel. It's amazing sometimes the number of positions within the film and sound industry that can be filled within the Yukon due to our training programs.

As I say, we do have relative roadside snow as early as late September, and there is snow on rooftops around the third week in October. We have icefields that allow us to extend on that — the largest non-polar glaciers in the world.

Basically, it gives us an ability to give incentives for filmmakers to shoot. We're putting money where our mouth is as we invite productions to take advantage of the spectacular locations. We allow a 35-percent labour rebate, on approval, payable eight weeks after completion.

Grip and electrical equipment is available locally — again, anything to train crews, have them on-site, and have them equipped to be able to do their work.

This is an important program that I think a lot of people aren't aware of. And I think a lot of people aren't really aware of the fact that this is very much a training program and getting people involved — training rebates are available, as are location incentive funds.

We also have the sound recording program, which was established to support the Yukon recording industry to further develop the cultural industry sector and to encourage business focus among those in the Yukon music industry.

The program assists Yukon sound recording professionals in developing viable careers and businesses. Another thing that involves training within this industry is assisting to support facilities for recording artists to produce everything from covers to marketing their records, to have computers to work on and to come together and learn from more experienced sound recording artists or people within the support industry.

As I mentioned, the Yukon labour rebate can refund up to 35 percent of wages eligible. We also have a training rebate that may provide a rebate of up to 50 percent of a trainee's wages at \$12 an hour or 35 percent of a trainee's wages at scale — again, some pretty impressive programs to try to assist people and not only assist them to do it but to have that training with their colleagues, to sit down and work with the people who have been doing it for a longer period of time.

Within other programs within film and sound, again, the capital budget for 2008-09 is approximately \$760,000. It really brings together a lot of benefit, when you're looking at \$9 to \$10 recovery into the economy. On some of these productions, when you look *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock* or *Out in the Cold*, too, that was produced more recently, approximately 200 Yukon residents worked on these productions, which is pretty impressive in terms of the relatively small but quickly growing industry. The highly successful *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock* — we should note, Mr. Speaker, that they have approved episodes 7 through 13 of this series to look at the \$45,000 in development funding for an additional seven episodes. This is primarily due to the facilities that we have available and the number of trained crew and people we have to work on these productions. Without the training programs for these people, this industry would not be working at this level.

When we look at other programs that come out of Economic Development, we have training in a wide range of areas. First Nations governance — Selkirk First Nation journey to self reliance project will provide the Selkirk First Nation with resources to help strengthen their governance structure and processes in support of economic development. The four-year project has received funding approval for \$2.012 million from northern strategy trust with the Selkirk First Nation contributing an additional \$500,000, and the Yukon government's Department of Economic Development was a co-applicant in that program.

We have training programs with the Teslin Tlingit Council through their development corporation and also with Kluane First Nation through chief and council and board training.

One of the things we have to be constantly aware of is capacity development — or what is sometimes referred to as “development ready” programs — to have First Nation governments, our own governments, including regional governments and non-government organizations, to be ready when that development opportunity becomes available for them to take advantage of it.

The First Nation economic development conference is a multi-partner initiative. The partners include the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon Indian Development Corporation, Council of Yukon First Nations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada — INAC.

The Yukon government is a funding partner with INAC; funding is still being negotiated on this, but it is coming along quite nicely.

We also have resource economics training. The objectives of this two-year project are to support First Nations' capacity to engage in resource projects and to take economic advantage of benefits flowing from projects.

This is not mine training, it is resource economics training — in other words, how to partner with industry, how to set up joint ventures and how to resource economic works. This is a multi-partner initiative that includes Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon Indian Development Corporation, Council of Yukon First Nations, INAC and the Yukon government through our regional economic development branch. This is in development now as we speak.

The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dun First Nation, through the First Nations employment pilot project — \$37,500 — this pilot seeks to improve aboriginal workforce participation rates by matching potential employees with Yukon businesses experiencing labour shortages. This includes life skills and job market training.

I Association franco-yukonnaise — and I won't attempt to say any of this in French after my colleague has done such a marvellous of that — *Place aux jeunes/Make Way for Youth* and domestic hospitality recruitment programs — that's about \$47,420 plus another \$49,000. These projects highlight various bilingual labour market interventions to attract and recruit youth in the rough age ranges of 16 to 35 to live and work in Yukon.

Some of the initiatives include a bilingual Web site linking Yukon employers with potential youth workers. They include piloting of a Yukon youth ambassador program, where select youth enrolled in colleges and universities across Canada are encouraged to promote Yukon as a desired place to live and work. This includes what is referred to as "ambassador training."

It includes participation in job fairs at Canadian campuses and includes an open-your-home campaign, encouraging Yukoners to invite relatives and friends to come to Yukon this summer for employment, and the design and setting up of Yukon employee reception service for new-to-Yukon employees. This service will help orient new arrivals and will assist in locating housing, support services, et cetera.

All of these things really involve a combination of training, readiness for development and capacity-building and this is before we even begin to get into the community development fund. Some of those projects include a training and implementation of community engagement techniques through the Yukon Volunteer Bureau; instructor training through the Freedom Trails Therapeutic Riding Association — this is an interesting one, because Freedom Trails is an incredible organization working with handicapped and challenged individuals. However, it does require people and instructors to be properly trained in how to do this.

Again, by training the instructors, we open up a whole new program. I can't speak highly enough about this one.

We have aquatic training for the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon. We have hands-on capacity workshops in the Village of Teslin. We have the young women exploring trades conference. I believe that the Minister of Education has chatted about that a little bit. We have further work on horsemanship certification training through a group called Gentle Steps, which is similar to Freedom Trails in the Watson Lake area. They are doing their very good work down there. Again, further training with the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon and aquatic training is the second program.

There is work on a Yukon heritage training needs assessment in the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation. We have a life skills project through the Youth of Today Society, working with youth for training in life skills. There is the Whitehorse Youth Centre Society service training program.

There is a wide variety of things involved in training that are extremely beneficial. This government has been very pleased to get involved in those and many other programs as well.

The current economic climate, which is both a blessing and a challenge, has led to a renewed interest in industrial opportunities in the Yukon. In order to ensure that wealth generated from large industrial developments remains in the Yukon, the Department of Economic Development has developed an industry benefits initiative. The industry benefits initiative seeks to optimize industrial benefits to Yukoners through the development of initiatives designed to increase the number and capacity of local suppliers. Again, this means working with a variety of organizations and businesses to train them in procurement initiatives to increase success in bidding work. It means working with them on education and training initiatives to increase the number of skilled local employees and identifying and facilitating infrastructure and industrial synergies.

The initial phase of the Yukon industry benefits initiative has three components: (1) an environmental scan of the current programs within the government that relate to industrial benefits; (2) an awareness campaign that provides information to government and non-government stakeholders on the positive aspects of industrial development; and (3) a case study assessment of a current development to identify potential secondary business opportunities and gaps in the local support sectors.

Industrial benefits include direct employment for those who are trained to upgrade themselves in these areas, business and economic development resulting from project expenditures, multiplier or spin-off effects, the economic development resulting from project-related infrastructure, and economic development resulting from synergies in other economic activities.

The key principles within this team are cooperation, collaboration and education, building on existing local strengths and capabilities, targeting a diversified and sustainable economy, emphasizing quality, fostering local research and development — and all of these are parts of that.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the wide variety of training programs that are available and that are worked on through the good work of the Department of Economic Development in conjunction with the Department of Education. I

mention Education here because they have been given a lead to develop a labour market framework that will guide the Yukon government's activities over the next 10 years. We are participating in an interdepartmental committee to oversee the development of that labour market framework to provide an economic perspective.

It is anticipated that the framework will generate substantial strategies that will further identify and attempt to address our labour market needs. We have to look at comprehensive skills and trades training and in that strategy we have to look at an immigration strategy. It is no good to set up all training programs when you have not enough people to train in the first place, so that has to be part of it. It has to include a national recruitment strategy, both in trained or skilled workers and in the unskilled workers — get them here and get training them.

Once we've got them here, we've got to retain them. That's a big part of that strategy. It makes no sense to recruit people, get them trained up, and then have them move into another jurisdiction. The labour information market strategy is always a part of that.

We will continue to work with all levels of government and other stakeholders to explore and address labour shortage issues, as well as a Yukon-wide coordinated strategy.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a bit of an overview of some of the training initiatives and such from the Department of Economic Development's perspective. I'd certainly like to hear what other members have to say at this point.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Nordick: I'd like to start by thanking the members who spoke to this motion and supported the intent. I'd also like to say thanks to the Member for Mount Lorne for his positive contribution to the debate with his friendly amendment. That amendment is another example of how this government will work with the opposition on constructive debate. I appreciate when members opposite do debate constructively. It benefits the entire Yukon as a whole.

But on a less positive note, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun asked the question: why speak to this motion? I recognize a pattern — a pattern from the Liberal Party. The pattern, or maybe the motto, of the Official Opposition is: do not debate important initiatives, especially if you, yourself, have failed on these initiatives.

This Yukon Party government is committed to educating Yukoners and expanding education and training programs relevant to the north. Under this government's watch, the investment in the public schools branch has increased from \$69 million in 2003 to over \$92 million in 2007 — an increase in investment in public schools of some 33 percent.

Over the same period of time, the number of teachers has grown from 452 to 473. That's a five-percent increase in teachers in public schools.

Secondly, the number of educational assistants has increased from 86 to 111 in the public school system, and that is

an increase of 29 percent. There is a 33-percent increase in investment, a five-percent increase in teachers and a 29-percent increase in the number of educational assistants.

The Yukon has one of the lowest teacher/student ratios in the country, and the per capita investment of this Yukon Party government has increased from \$11,157 per student to a total of about \$15,000 per student. That is an example of how much this Yukon Party government is committed to educating our youth.

I would like to compare that to the past Liberal Party government. Their budget for 2002 had seven priorities — this is relating to the question of why we should debate this motion. Their seven priorities: rebuilding the economy, maintaining quality health care, addressing alcohol and addictions, settling outstanding land claims, achieving devolution, developing infrastructure and restoring confidence in government.

Mr. Speaker, did the previous government succeed with their seven initiatives or priorities? No, they did not, especially in the last priority — restoring confidence in government. I will give them credit, though, for they did succeed in one thing: being the shortest lived majority government in Yukon history. Actually, I believe it was the shortest lived majority government in the Commonwealth.

That is why we need to speak to educating and expanding trade initiatives and educating our tradespeople in the territory, because the past Liberal government did not. They did not even have it in their priorities.

Back to this question of why: not only did the previous Liberal Party government not succeed in their priorities — I have to restate this — it was not even a priority of theirs to include education in those seven priorities.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to the third party, to me and to my colleagues — it is too bad the Official Opposition does not consider education a priority.

In closing, this Yukon Party government puts a great emphasis on education. Our economy is thriving; we have gone from people looking for jobs to now where jobs are looking for people. Many of the jobs that need filling are for people trained in trades and technology. Trades and technology jobs are rewarding, well-paid careers that are highly in demand across North America.

Recognizing this, our government has been working toward fulfilling its election commitment of educating Yukon for jobs tomorrow. Our government has increased apprenticeship registration in Yukon's 48 designated trades by more than 39 percent over the 2003 levels. It is worth noting that 19 percent of Yukon apprentices are First Nation people, which is one of the highest First Nation participation rates for trades in this country.

This emphasis on apprenticeship programs and trades training is part of our comprehensive skills and trades training strategy. We have provided new initiatives to increase the labour pool for entry level jobs in the service and retail industries.

One group being targeted is older workers. A targeted initiative, older workers program, began in May 2007. It will run for two years in Whitehorse and in Yukon communities. The

program will recruit 140 individuals between the ages of 55 and 65 who want help in developing employment skills. The program is jointly funded by the Yukon and federal government and is delivered by Yukon College.

Another group being targeted is immigrant workers. The Yukon nominee program takes a broad, multi-departmental approach that includes the Department of Education, Health and Social Services, and Economic Development to address the Yukon labour shortages.

Working in cooperation with the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Monte Solberg, and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Diane Finley, it was possible to modify the YNP by establishing a critical worker impact component and discontinuing the requirement for labour market opinion under the skilled workers component.

These changes have resulted in a phenomenal 112 applicants to the program and has speeded up the process of labour and immigration and fast-tracked the immigration of skilled and semi-skilled workers in high-demand fields. They will also help local businesses meet their current and future market shortages.

This government assisted the Dawson City Arts Society with setting up the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture. KIAC has now expanded to include the School of Visual Arts, which offers an accredited visual arts program that provides students with the first year toward a bachelor of fine arts or bachelor of arts in design.

These are just a few examples of the education and training programs our government has supported and funded. I am proud to be a member of this government that puts a strong emphasis on education. We are making good progress in fulfilling our election commitment of educating today for jobs tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd like to once again thank the Member for Mount Lorne for his friendly amendment. So, what I'll do is read the motion as amended: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue expanding education and training programs in areas of particular relevance to the North, such as First Nation governance, mining, tourism, resource management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, construction north of 60, health care professionals, care providers and teachers."

I'd like to thank the members for supporting this. It's too bad the Official Opposition doesn't care about educating the youth of our territory and the adults.

Thanks.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion as amended?

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. Ms. Taylor: 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. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 276 agreed to as amended

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

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 11 — *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Education.

Do members wish to take a brief recess for officials?

Some Hon. Members: Agree.

Some Hon. Members: Disagree.

Chair: We have to wait for officials.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. McRobb: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I'm wondering why you are not recognizing the Member for Mayo-Tatchun who is standing waiting to speak to this. If you're wondering if the minister should always have the right to speak first, he had lots of time to get his speech here and —

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, we will now proceed with the Department of Education.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's my honour and pleasure to rise today to debate the budget. It appears that today is education day. It is good to see the keen interest that members have in education. It is great to see the participation from the New Democratic Party in the debate earlier. I look forward to discussing things further with all members of the Assembly as well.

I rise in the House today to present the 2008-09 budget for the Department of Education. I am pleased to say that we are continuing to build on the good work that we have begun with this budget — the second budget in our second mandate.

This budget focuses on what we are doing and continuing to do well. The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$121,818,000.

Before I speak to the numbers behind the 2008-09 budget, I would like to speak to the education reform report that was released on February 8, 2008.

Over the next few months, the Department of Education will be working in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations and our partners in education in the development of a multi-year implementation strategy. We will build on our strengths as we move forward into new horizons.

We intend to honour our commitment to the future by continuing to improve the education system for all students. Careful planning for this kind of initiative is critical to ensuring that government resources are used wisely and that the valuable input we have received to date is considered.

The Department of Education's main objective is to deliver accessible and quality education so learners of all ages can become productive, responsible, self-reliant members of our society.

Our vision is for all Yukon people to possess the desire for — and appreciation of — lifelong learning, a strong commitment to the communities and the knowledge and skills needed to live meaningful, productive and rewarding lives.

Mr. Chair, our first strategic goal is to create a more responsive education system that enables all learners to succeed. This can be accomplished by sustaining a planning process that is ongoing, inclusive and dynamic. We see this goal as an important step toward building tomorrow's workforce and economy by developing and enhancing programs and resources to meet changing educational and labour market needs.

Our total support for Yukon College this year is \$18 million. This is a reflection of how much we value this northern post-secondary institution. Yukon College's academic and skills-based programs offer a wide variety of training opportunities for Yukoners.

Our second strategic goal is to enhance transitions between different levels of education, training and the world of work. We have just seen a recent meeting of the Association of Yukon School Administrators and the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee, where the theme was "transitions". They looked at strategies for ensuring success in children coming into our education system, making the transition from the primary system to the secondary system, from the secondary to post-secondary, and also the transition that some face in going from a rural community to an urban centre; and

we'll continue to work with our partners to ensure that transitions are done smoothly and have the best results and outcomes for our children.

Mr. Chair, the Department of Education will continue to enhance literacy programming initiatives. There are challenges for young people trying to break into the labour force, whether those challenges they face involve getting more education or acquiring the job-ready skills that they need to secure and maintain employment.

Our third strategic goal is to further develop and maintain meaningful relationships with partners in education and training. I will just take a moment now and speak directly to what the department plan means in terms of the 2008-09 capital and O&M budget for the Department of Education. First, I would like to begin by addressing the capital portion of this year's budget.

The capital budget for 2008-09 is \$8,109,000. This budget reflects the fact that we are wrapping up some of our major capital projects and entering into a planning phase for our next phase of capital projects.

This budget also includes capital costs for new training initiatives, such as the licensed practical nurse program. As we just completed the new school in Carmacks last fall, which was officially opened last week, we are laying the foundation for other major capital projects involving our schools. We will continue our extensive consultations with the public under this secondary programming study to facilitate a vision and strategic plan for secondary education programming in Whitehorse secondary schools that best address future student needs.

The study will make recommendations for future facility requirements and programming to improve options for Yukon students. Because this government is committed to being fiscally responsible, we will continue to do this in a very effective manner and involve our stakeholders and partners in education.

Mr. Chair, this government is completing the necessary planning that is required to build the best schools. After the necessary planning is done, Yukoners can expect to see our commitment to building and enhancing Yukon schools reflected in the coming years. Under the 2008-09 Department of Education capital budget, the government is requesting the following funds: to demolish the old Tantalus School in Carmacks, we are requesting \$400,000. The new school was built on the site of the old school and attempting to retain the old Tantalus School building in its current condition poses a safety risk to building users and to the adjacent, recently completed, new school building.

Additional space in the new building will be used in a manner acceptable to the Tantalus School Council, the Village of Carmacks, and the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation.

Improvements to the F.H. Collins Secondary School fire alarm system are budgeted at \$182,000. There were delays in tendering this project last summer, and it was deferred to the 2008-09 fiscal year.

For general site improvement and recreation development throughout Yukon schools, the department is requesting \$335,000. Included in this request is \$85,000 to complete phase

1 for Jack Hulland Elementary recreation improvements; phase 2 will be completed during the 2009-10 fiscal year.

In order to accommodate the cost for the Wood Street school gym replacement, the department is asking for \$158,000; \$158,000 is also requested for the Takhini Elementary School roof repair.

To pave the parking lot and driveway at the Saint Elias School in Haines Junction, the department is requesting \$158,000. Foundation repairs are also required at both the Kluane and Nelnah Bessie John schools. The department is requesting \$105,000.

The department is requesting a further \$130,000 to begin a two-year project to replace the public address communication systems at four schools. Also being requested is \$75,000 to begin security system upgrades at various schools throughout Yukon.

And for ongoing routine projects, such as school-initiated renovations, special needs infrastructure, various school facility renovations, indoor air quality movements, energy management projects, capital maintenance repairs and school painting, the department is requesting \$1.7 million.

Also under our capital budget, the Department of Education is requesting funds to support our instructional programs.

Mr. Chair, \$25,000 is requested to support our distance education programs. Strong distance education and technology-assisted learning programs are very important when you consider some of the geographical changes we face in delivering education in our vast territory.

Where our school populations are small, distance and technology-assisted learning can help to ensure that students are able to enrol in the courses they need to make their desired transition to post-secondary education. I'm very proud of our distance and technology-assisted learning programs in the Yukon.

Our students on average have the best access to computers in their schools when compared to students across Canada. That is according to a 2004 national report issued by Statistics Canada on information and communications technology. The study indicated that on average, every 2.5 Yukon students have access to one computer with high-speed Internet access at their schools. To compare the national ratio of students-to-computers, it is 5.5:1.

We have video conferencing facilities in all Yukon schools, which are a definite asset to student learning, for teacher learning and for involving school councils. Video conferencing is a very important component of our distance learning system at the department as it connects teachers and students in the communities and also gives schools access to experts from Outside, including Canadian astronauts.

The department is requesting \$129,000 for routine maintenance on the EDUNet system. The department is requesting \$650,000 to improve and enhance school-based information technology. I believe investing in this kind of infrastructure is money well-spent. \$415,000 is requested to purchase school-based equipment; \$305,000 is requested to continue replacement of our school vans; and \$70,000 is requested for special education equipment.

The government has also committed to continue its support of advanced education through our 2008-09 capital budget. Community training funds will be renewed at their previous levels. The department is requesting \$1.5 million to support localized training initiatives throughout the Yukon. As we heard today in debate, there is widespread support from members in this Assembly for these initiatives.

Community training funds provide important training in the skilled trades and other vocational and industry-related activities. Sometimes short-term training opportunities in communities are just what people need to be able to seize local economic opportunities, and that is part of the gap that the community training funds fill.

Mr. Chair, to support the development and the completion of a student financial assistant on-line system, we are requesting \$35,000. This on-line system will greatly improve the ease and efficiency of the application process that Yukon post-secondary students undertake each year as they are attending post-secondary education. Students can submit applications on-line, which speeds up the processing time; students will also be able to check the status of their applications on-line at any time.

To continue our support of the Yukon Work InfoNet — YuWIN is the acronym most people will be familiar with — we are requesting \$35,000. This Web site is a great help for anyone seeking employment in the territory. Not only does it function as a clearing house for all jobs advertised in the local media, it provides information on career planning and job search tips.

In order to provide funds for youth-at-risk initiatives, we are requesting \$150,000. This will be used to support a wide number of initiatives, such as to assist Yukon College to run the Yukon employment strategy — YES — program at various campuses throughout the territory and fund other youth-at-risk initiatives. Developed in partnership with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the program enables Yukon College to host an 18-week program that targets youth-at-risk between the ages of 15 and 30. These youth are considered at-risk because they have previously had difficulty obtaining the work experience necessary to enter the workforce.

The government is also committed to continue its support of Yukon College through the 2008-09 capital budget. Yukon College is the territory's primary provider of post-secondary education. As I have indicated, our total support for Yukon College this year is \$18 million.

We are very proud of this northern institution. We are very grateful for the quality education opportunities that it provides Yukoners. Yukon College is a leader in trades education in the territory and offers a full complement of academic courses, as well as certificates and diplomas. It also offers degrees through matriculation agreements with other post-secondary institutions in Canada and Alaska. Those include agreements with the University of Regina, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Alberta and Royal Roads. I know that they are exploring more and more of these opportunities every day.

Mr. Chair, \$750,000 is requested to support Yukon College capital expenditures. The sum represents our annual base support for Yukon College. Under the 2008-09 capital budget,

the department is seeking a further \$417,000 for Yukon College trades education infrastructure improvements.

There is \$300,000 requested to enhance the service provided by Yukon College in purchasing and revising curriculum and updating much-needed training equipment to deliver a six-month pre-employment course in the heating trades. A further \$117,000 is being requested to revitalize the survey technician program by updating training equipment and classroom space. These funds are made available through a federal transfer under the Government of Canada post-secondary education infrastructure trust bill, Bill C-48.

In addition to promoting the skilled trades as a smart career option and working with Yukon employers as they develop skilled trades training opportunities in the workplace, we are also working with Yukon College to ensure that they have the support they need to provide the best educational facilities possible for our apprentices.

Apprentice-level classroom enrolment at Yukon College is now at record levels. Enrolment has increased by a substantial amount over the last four years and our government wants to support this growth. We believe that by ensuring Yukon's labour market, we will have an adequate supply of skilled tradespeople who are also taking the important step to ensure the long-term health of our economy.

In addition to the above, \$187,000 is being requested for the licensed practical nurse program. This will provide funds to purchase one human patient simulator mannequin to accommodate the training needs of students.

Mr. Chair, I certainly have many more things about the Department of Education's budget to reveal — this is a substantial budget — but, as I can see, I have used up my first 20 minutes.

Thank you.

Mr. Fairclough: I have a lot of questions in this department, and I'm hoping the minister can give me the direct answers that he has in the past. I would like to make a lot of comments in regard to the educational reform project.

I want to ask a quick question, though, of the minister, in regard to the Carmacks school. There is \$400,000 in the budget for demolition of the old school. What I did not see — and I know it's a big expenditure for other schools — is the completion of the grounds around it. I did not hear the minister say that this is part of the \$400,000. I'd just like the minister perhaps to clear that up.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I must apologize to the Assembly. I'm only on about page 20 of, really, a 40-page speech here, which would detail many of the initiatives going on in the Department of Education. It might prove to be an opportunity to provide answers to members' questions. We've anticipated many of their questions and have incorporated them into this introductory speech.

However, for the member opposite, I appreciate him bringing up the new Tantalus School. It was certainly an honour to be there last week with members of the community to officially open the school and to join with the community in the celebration. It's wonderful to see how quickly the community has embraced the new school and has embraced some of the key as-

pects of it such as, for example, the large round gathering room. I understand that's now being used for council meetings and community meetings. And I understand that the First Nation Education Advisory Committee will be going up there in the very near future and will be holding its meetings there.

We did take into consideration the member opposite's request to look at options for using the old school. Unfortunately, it did not prove feasible. So we are now at the point this summer of demolishing and removing all of the associated matter that goes along with that. And, as I'm sure the member would expect, with the construction on that going on and finishing up everything else, it really didn't make sense to plant the lawn only to have the heavy equipment go over and destroy everything.

So we anticipate that, once the work is done this summer to demolish the old school, remove the debris, and remove any remnants of construction that may remain on the site, we will then work within our normal site improvement budgets to ensure that the appropriate type of landscaping is done and it will be a beautiful school.

We've spent a considerable amount of funds in working to ensure that the school was designed to meet the needs of the community. We will continue to make the appropriate investments to ensure that it really becomes the jewel in the centre of the community that I think the member opposite would like it to become.

As we get into line-by-line and into the specific budget item for site-based improvements, I can point that out for the member and identify where the funds are in the budget.

Mr. Fairclough: Are we expecting any of this work on the Carmacks Tantalus School grounds to happen this summer, after demolition takes place? I am asking about the improvements and so on. I don't believe that it will take a whole lot of time to demolish the school.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, once we have demolished the old school and the debris is removed and all the construction material is cleaned up, we do plan to go in and do the site-based landscaping work this summer.

Mr. Fairclough: Has that already been worked out with the community in terms of the design they want for the school grounds — say, a track and field or soccer field, or any of the normal playground toys that are usually in schools? Has that already been worked out between the department and the community?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, as this is a significant line item in the budget, I expect we'll spend more than this afternoon on this. I am going to look into this a bit further.

I expect that many of these discussions would have gone on at the beginning of the project. As to what the overall site condition would look like, I don't have that information at my fingertips now, other than the regular type of landscaping that would take place.

I will look into the member's questions about specific improvements or specific climbing apparatuses, fields, tracks or baseball diamonds — I will have to look into that for the member opposite.

Mr. Fairclough: I think this is important for the department to know what is going into this school's grounds. I am a little bit surprised, actually, at the fact that the minister and department don't know at this point. I know that, perhaps, the minister will be talking this over with the department and just talking about this a bit more. This Tantalus School has been built now for a number of years. It has taken a long time and it has gone through an extensive community consultation process except for right at the end. I know that the minister wants to get it right and do a good job with the community on this matter.

It has been brought to my attention several times, already, from parents who do not have children in that school yet. It has been brought to my attention by parents who have children in the school now. It has also been brought to my attention from concerned community citizens. They want to know. In the past, Carmacks has had some very good success with the athletes who use the facility there.

Right now, as the minister knows from his last visit — and he could perhaps see that some of the snow has already melted — there is a field there and it is maintained by contract. It is kept in fairly good order. I understand what the minister is saying about the safety aspect of the old school beside the new school and we would like to see those safety issues taken care of too.

The minister mentioned the fact that the department has looked into concerns raised by community members in trying to do something with the gym in the old school to somehow make it part of the new school. I know the buildings are quite close to each other. There was a lot of concern about it, simply because after the school was built, people didn't want to see a building like this suddenly just disappear, if in fact they can use it for something else, whether it's cold storage or a place to — say, for example — build canoes or boats, or even store First Nation materials in the gym.

The suggestion was also made to the minister for perhaps having an indoor swimming pool. This has been brought to my attention for quite a long time. I haven't seen any studies presented to the community or school council on this. The minister said that engineers will look at it and determine whether or not it's feasible to in fact turn this gym into an indoor swimming pool.

People thought it was perhaps an idea that could happen. There is a dressing room; there is a boiler on-site that could heat the water and so on. That part of the school could be utilized.

What the minister is saying is that it's not to be. If it's a cost issue, I'm sure the minister has those figures at hand. If it's strictly a safety issue, then the work the department has done with respect to that — I'm sure the minister has those too, and would be glad to table them in this House for all to read and to send to the community people also. So, it was a big issue.

It was good to see the minister at the opening of the school. It was a very good event. And I think the community people wanted to see this for quite some time. It's official — the school is open and it's functioning well, despite going through a bit of a rough ride with what took place with some of the students and some of the damages that took place.

One of the things the minister said with regard to questions last fall is that the cost of the school was some \$11 million, but he didn't give the exact amount of money. Now we have the demolition of the old school, which I would assume is part of replacing the Tantalus School.

That should be tagged on to the costs of the school; it is climbing. Any other school that is being built in the territory will see an increase in costs from what we have seen in the past. I think the amount of money that is being put into this school took people by surprise. If we compare this to the school in Old Crow when it was built, even though that one had a winter road put in, the cost of the winter road and all the materials and equipment hauled in — that school was built eight feet off the ground on pylons — cost some \$8.5 million. It has the capacity for 250 students. There are a lot of people who were taken by surprise by the cost.

I would like to ask some questions with regard to that. Perhaps we will go into more detail on it, because there were some issues that the community members in Carmacks raised with the department when it was building the school. One of them was ensuring that they had a solid base to build on. I say that because when we were walking in the school — all of us, the minister included — for example, in the gym, I looked up and there were cracks already in the gyproc. I'm really hoping that we don't have a repeat of what took place, for example, in the Mayo school, where the building shifted tremendously, to the point where the hardwood floor in the gym has come apart.

I'm hoping that we're not running into problems where we constantly have to adjust the building because of work that was not done right at the beginning. Those are the type of things that I'm going to ask the minister in regard to that particular project. I'm hoping that the minister says, "Wait until we come to that line item," but I know he'll do some work tonight and, when we come to this tomorrow, I'll be asking some of these questions.

Mr. Fairclough: I can see the time is close to 5:30 p.m., so I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fairclough that we report progress.

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. 11, *First Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, and directed me to report progress.

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

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.