

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, May 12, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Nurses Day

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise in the House in honour of International Nurses Day, which is today, May 12.

Monsieur le Président, nous sommes aujourd'hui le 12 mai, et j'invite mes collègues à se joindre à moi pour souligner la Journée internationale des infirmières et infirmiers.

In the Yukon, nurses are people to be treasured, skilled professionals, mentors, educators, and health leaders in the community. This day offers us a chance to commend our nurses and thank them. It's a chance to let them know how much we value them and their role as catalysts and innovators in the delivery of health care.

Au Yukon, les infirmières et les infirmiers sont une grande richesse. Ils sont à la fois des professionnels compétents, des conseillers, des éducateurs et des chefs de file en matière de santé.

Nous profitons de cette occasion pour les féliciter et les remercier. Et nous voulons leur dire toute notre estime pour le rôle de catalyseur qu'ils jouent avec créativité dans la prestation des services de santé.

International Nurses Day fits within National Nursing Week, the theme for which is "Nursing: You Can't Live Without It!"

Nurses find creative, innovative ways to deliver health care. They guard our health today to help prevent illness tomorrow. They know the unique concerns of Yukoners and work hard to address them.

Nurses help save our lives if we are injured or when we face life-threatening medical conditions, but they also keep us healthy by educating us and by raising our awareness of potential health risks.

Nurses are crucial to the well-being of the north, especially in smaller communities, where sometimes all that stands between life and death is a nurse. The Government of Yukon helps support them by mentoring nurses who have recently graduated and nurses who have just moved to the territory, and by providing funding through the Yukon Registered Nurses Association to further their education goals.

To help reduce the pressure on nurses, we set up the Yukon HealthLine, or 811, a 24-hour health line staffed by registered nurses outside the territory who can answer health

questions or direct us to someone who can within our own communities.

In Yukon, nurses work in hospitals, health centres, continuing care facilities and private clinics. They work in our jail and with our addictions services.

They also work within government to create partnerships for initiatives such as chronic conditions management, to help Human Resources reach and recruit nurses to the territory, and to help inform policy decisions regarding health concerns.

Nurses help deliver babies and they comfort us at end of life. They teach us about staying healthy. They reassure us when we don't know what's happening to us or to the ones we love. They are members of our churches, our hockey teams, our reading groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Yukon nurses for the work they do. Their commitment, professionalism and compassion make the territory a better place to live. In particular, I would like to mention the work of the Yukon Communicable Disease Centre nurses during this time of heightened preparation for the possible appearance of the H1N1 flu virus.

While many people are involved in pandemic preparedness, nurses are in the forefront, not only in preparedness, but in identifying possible cases.

Our community nurses perhaps say it best: Nurses are partners in health through life. They provide trust, hope, respect and understanding. And, I submit, they are entitled to the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Mitchell: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Nursing Week and International Nurses Day, which is May 12.

National Nursing Week runs from May 11 to 17 and always includes May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birthday and International Nurses Day. The Canadian Nurses Association's theme for 2009 is "Nursing: You Can't Live Without It!"

Cette année, le thème de la semaine nationale dessoins infirmiers est "Les soins infirmiers: on ne peut s'en passer."

International Nurses Day and National Nursing Week help us honour our local nurses and raise awareness of the nursing profession and recognize the important role nurses provide. It also acknowledges the positive contributions that nurses make every day, and their commitment to improving the health system for Canadians.

National Nursing Week provides an opportunity to celebrate all nursing professions and recognize the diversity and complexity of the roles nurses play. It allows us, as Yukoners, an opportunity to understand and appreciate the significant contribution nurses make to our health and well-being on a daily basis.

La Semaine nationale des soins infirmières est une occasion de célébrer et de reconnaître le rôle vital que jouent les infirmières au sein du système de santé Yukonnais ainsi que dans la vie de tous les Canadiennes et Canadiens.

We recognize and value all of our nursing professionals from all levels of health care: registered nurses, nurse practitio-

ners, certified nursing aides, licensed practical nurses, community health nurses in rural Yukon, flight nurses, public health nurses, long term facility nurses and home care nurses. We would also like to extend special appreciation to all our Canadian Forces nurses who are courageously serving overseas in Afghanistan and contributing to the global effort to bring peace, stability and development to the region.

The nursing profession is a cornerstone of our health care system. It is challenging, emotionally demanding and yet, one of the most rewarding. Nurses are the backbone of every respectable health care facility. They are essential to the health care system. We value their compassion and commitment to their profession and their continued efforts to promote health and wellness and their role in primary health care. On behalf of all Yukoners, please accept our heartfelt appreciation for your dedication, your contributions to our health, our families and our communities. You make a difference in someone's life every day.

Célébrons la profession infirmière et encourageons notre entourage à participer à la fête.

You deserve recognition and our thanks not only during National Nursing Week, but every day of the year.

Thank you for being there. Merci d'être ce que vous êtes.
Merci, Monsieur les Président. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to tribute National Nursing Week and International Nursing Day. Today, May 12, is Florence Nightingale's birthday and the second week in May was proclaimed in recognition of that. Today we salute, not only registered nurses, but also nurse practitioners, certified nursing aides and licensed practical nurses. Today there are 11 Yukon people studying at Yukon College and by next February will be graduating and hopefully be within our health care structure to assist people in the Yukon.

Nursing is changing all the time and it has changed immensely since Florence Nightingale's day. She would be surprised to see that the number of male nurses is expanding every year. The range of services that nurses provide and the various professions involved in the field are amazing. Scopes of practice in the nursing field are being broadened, and medical decisions unheard of a few decades ago are now the responsibility of nursing staff.

This year's theme of "Nursing: You Can't Live Without It" is especially noteworthy for many of us. Nursing follows us from the instant we are conceived. For all of our lives we rely on nurses to care for us in many different ways and in many different medical situations — from the doctor's clinic to the surgical ward. In our last days a palliative nurse will likely be at our side providing medication and compassionate care. Working around the clock and on holidays, nurses endure hard physical work. The aging workforce is an emerging concern and the shortage of personnel makes for even harder work for our nurses as they fill in shifts for others who have either retired or are ill themselves.

It is an emotionally demanding profession as many patients have not only physical problems but psychological needs.

It can also be very dangerous. The rate of assault on nurses is twice that of police officers. Through all these hardships, our nursing professionals put the interest of their patients first.

The Yukon Registered Nurses Association is showing leadership in promoting preventive measures in health care and recommending innovative approaches, such as a collaborative clinic. It is hoped these efforts will be responded to positively very soon. Many Yukoners and others around the globe are healthier and happier because nursing professionals show immense devotion and commitment to their calling.

We and all their patients sincerely thank them for this kind of work. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years I have been in quite a close relationship with many nurses, both in the Yukon and in British Columbia. At one point, I really did understand the term, when people talk of nurses in hospitals, calling them "angels of life". Not only by their presence do they assist us in our medical needs; they also assist us so much in preparing our mental needs to deal with illness and death.

Mr. Edzerza: I rise as an Independent member to honour National Nursing Week, May 11 to 17, which provides an opportunity for people to take the time to show their respect and appreciation to nurses throughout the country. Nurses play a vital role in the health system and in the lives of every Canadian. They are basically the spine of the health care system. We cannot live without them.

One would have to try to visualize being rushed into the emergency room at the hospital with life-threatening injuries from a car accident, only to find no nurses available to assist you. Try to imagine how that would be. Nursing is not only about putting a band-aid on a cut finger. There are numerous areas throughout the nursing profession one can specialize in, such as the ER team, rehabilitation team working with addictions, nurses who work in pediatrics and let's not forget the nurses who work countless hours in the operating rooms. These are only a few examples, and there are numerous other opportunities in the nursing profession — in fact, too numerous to mention in this tribute.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that my daughter Crystal is a registered nurse in Dawson Creek, B.C. Since she completed her degree, she has had many promotions at her job and has been working in the ER section of the Dawson Creek hospital for the past two years.

I'm not finished yet, Mr. Speaker. My eldest granddaughter, Jocelyn, is also finishing her fourth year at the university in Kamloops, B.C. in the nursing program. At the present time, she is in Somalia, completing her last practicum on a student exchange program.

So today is a very special day for me, because I have the opportunity to thank all nurses, including my daughter and my granddaughter. Thank you.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming several guests to our Assembly today.

Today we have Mr. Toews and students from F.H. Collins Secondary School with us. As well, we have Mr. Sullivan and students from Porter Creek Secondary School. Welcome to our Assembly.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling a report of the Ombudsman, entitled *Report to the Legislative Assembly*, pursuant to section 25 of the *Ombudsman Act*, dated May 11, 2009.

Are there other returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise in the House today to table the Yukon College annual report and the audited financial statements.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I have for tabling the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues 2008-09 annual report and the Yukon Law Foundation annual report and financial statements, dated October 31, 2008.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Yukon government to table the annual report of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board during this spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Cardiff: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Yukon government to treat the shutdown of the north Klondike Highway due to the bridge closure at Tatchun Creek as an emergency by:

(1) determining the level of need for essential supplies, including food, medical supplies and pet food in communities affected by the closure, and ensuring these supplies are delivered in a timely fashion; and

(2) ensuring that any person stranded by the closure receive assistance or transportation.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges Yukon College to investigate whether an industrial sewing course should be added to its regular programming to provide trained sewers for Yukon's expanding textile and garment industry.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to develop a long-term strategy to retain registered nurses and reduce absenteeism by:

(1) offering them more flexibility in their work practice and scheduling;

(2) instituting policies that offer a percentage of time for professional development;

(3) removing non-nursing tasks;

(4) providing more support staff;

(5) ensuring that appropriate technology is provided;

(6) effectively organizing services.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to develop legislation to broaden the scope of practice for many health care professionals as part of a strategy to address the chronic shortage of doctors.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Dawson City sewage project

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development has received a letter from a Calgary-based company dated May 5, 2009, and I have a copy here for filing.

The company was part of a competitive bid for the proposed Dawson City sewage project but the bid was rejected by this government. The bad news is that this company has been repeatedly frustrated by the government's public tendering process. Allow me to quote from the letter: "Unfortunately our first two experiences to date have certainly soured our desire to pursue opportunities there." This letter raises serious concerns about the government's contracting practices and the president of this company has respectfully requested assistance from the Minister of Economic Development.

Will the Minister of Economic Development provide the assistance that is being asked for?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, of course we're talking about the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant and certainly there's a process in place that is a partnership again between the territorial government and the City of Dawson. We have very capable people on the ground doing the review and, once the review is done, there will be a contract let and the water treatment plant will go forward in Dawson City. That's how the process works and that's what we will follow.

Mr. Inverarity: Last year this government more than doubled its use of sole-sourced contracts. A whopping \$123 million worth of government contracts were awarded without competition. Now we have a potential \$25-million project that is surrounded by confusion. The contract will end up being sole-sourced as well because this government disqualified the only other bidder. The Minister of Economic Development is supposed to be responsible for creating a positive business environment in the Yukon. Mr. Speaker, the way this company is being treated does not create a positive business environment here in the Yukon.

Will the Minister of Economic Development call for a third party review of this specific case or does he support his colleague's handling of this contract?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, there is a process in place and we are going to follow the process. I would like to remind Yukoners and individuals in the process of the comments that the member opposite made yesterday. Quoting from *Hansard*: "I have rarely seen such blatant biased and/or incompetence as evidenced by this committee." The committee is made out of government, City of Dawson and engineers, and I am sure that member would like to take that comment back.

Mr. Inverarity: If the minister was prepared to actually read *Hansard*, he knows that it was this company that made that quote, not me, so I think that the minister owes me an apology, not the other way around.

This is about economic development, Mr. Speaker. This is about the Yukon's ability to attract capable and qualified business partners. Here we have a long-standing company that wants to do business in the Yukon and has been frustrated by this government's non-competitive contracting practices. Instead of gearing up for work in the Yukon, the president of this company is writing directly to the Minister of Economic Development with this warning, and I quote: "If you want to attract companies to the Yukon, decisions like this cannot be allowed to stand unchallenged."

Mr. Speaker, this letter concludes with the following request, and again I quote from this company's president: "I respectfully request your assistance and support in having this whole process reviewed by an independent body, including a truly independent technical expert." Will the minister do that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, we're in the middle of a process. Everybody who's involved in the process knows how the process works.

I will remind the member opposite that when you put things on the floor here, read them on the floor, these things have impacts throughout the territory. The communication that he put on the floor yesterday said: "I have rarely seen such blatant bias and/or incompetence as evidenced by this committee." Read whatever you want into that, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Dawson City sewage project

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, we remain concerned over how the government has handled the contract for the Dawson City waste-water treatment project, and we're not the only ones.

The government has taken what was a multi-million dollar tendering process and essentially turned it into a sole-sourced contract. The minister responsible has simply put his head down and decided: "We're going ahead with this." It doesn't matter that the only remaining bid is \$9 million more than the other bid that the government has rejected.

The president of one of the companies that was disqualified is not happy with the Government of Yukon. He has expressed his displeasure to the federal Minister of Transport in a letter and asked the federal minister to intervene.

So I'll ask the Premier this: why should companies have to write to a federal Cabinet minister to get answers to their questions? Why can't the Government of Yukon sort this out?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, it is a good question — why should they, when there is a process that they can follow? It's called a bid appeal process. So, as I understand it, the member opposite is now suggesting — at least, from his comments — that this is somehow a sole-sourced contract. I would totally disagree with the Leader of the Official Opposition. If that's the Official Opposition's definition of a sole-sourced contract, then I urge them to look at the contracting list, so that they can clearly differentiate between what is tendered and what is sole-sourced. There is quite a difference.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, what is clear is that the minister and Premier do not understand how this is reflecting on Yukon.

People involved in this process are understandably upset. They're not upset because they didn't get the contract; they recognize that's part of doing business. However, they are upset with how the government has handled the tendering process.

This company was disqualified and they have not received an adequate explanation of why. The Government of Canada is supplying part of the money to build this project. There's \$3 million from Canada for this project in this budget. One of the companies involved is so upset their president has written the federal minister, asking him to look into this.

The issue is simple: we can deal with this at the local level or we can wait for the federal government to come in and fix it. Which will it be: clean up our own mess or wait for the federal government to do it and embarrass us on the national stage?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Speaking of embarrassment on the national stage, I'm sure the federal government and others across this country are, from time to time, aware of the proceedings of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and I'll leave those Canadians across this country and federal government representatives to pass judgement on what is embarrassing.

The member opposite clearly is implying that the government should interfere in a contracting process. No, the government will not do that. There's a good reason for that: because someone has an issue with a contracting process and immediately goes to the media, for example.

This is a clear sign of why the government should not interfere; that would taint the process. There is an appeal mechanism for any and all involved in tendering in the government. This process is something that had professionals involved and engineers involved. Only one part of the representation on this overall tendering bid committee was Yukon and also included the City of Dawson.

So the members opposite are clearly demonstrating that they have no confidence in Yukoners — in Yukon professionals, in Outside engineers and professionals, and most certainly have no confidence in Yukon companies.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will point out for the Minister of Highways and Public Works that the letter to the federal minister from the president of this company says, quote: "This conclusion will result in Dawson City paying way too much for a system that in all likelihood has a real possibility that it will not meet the permit requirements." I'll file the letter, Mr. Speaker. The president of the company involved in this project is so frustrated with the non-answers he has re-

ceived from this Yukon Party government that he has gone over their head to Ottawa, and it is never good news when the feds get involved.

The government's mishandling of this issue is giving us a black eye with businesses who want to work here and the result could lead to the federal government stepping in to sort it out.

Dawsonites and all Yukoners deserve this project to be completed quickly and with the best technology. The process to date has left us and this business with little confidence in how the minister has handled it. So will the Premier move now to review the process to date and ensure that Dawson City will end up with the best system available?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that this will comfort the Leader of the Official Opposition to some degree. That's exactly what is happening through the tendering process, including ensuring that Dawson City gets a system that will work. Let me remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that this issue, bequeathed to this government, has been a long-standing problem for the City of Dawson and is in the courts. So, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what's happening.

Now, the leader references that the Yukon has a black eye with the corporate sector or the business community. I want the member then to explain to Yukoners how is it that Yukon had a 5.2-percent gross domestic product growth in this last year, ranked second only in this country — second only. How is it that the majority of that gross domestic product growth was an 84-percent increase in corporate profits? I'll let Yukoners judge who has the black eye.

Question re: Education partnerships

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has said many times that the intention of this government is to work with all partners in education. He says that that is the way to provide the best education system possible, and we agree, but he can't be listening too closely to those partners.

There are partners who want more local decision-making. They are told they can help with school growth plans. There are partners who want to devolve education to First Nations, and to build their own school, and they are told "too bad." There is only one way to do education in the Yukon, and that's his way. There are partners who want to control their own budget for the one school board that we have in the territory, and they are told "see you in court."

How does he justify calling these relationships "partnerships," when their needs are not considered important?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: This government has taken great steps to work with all involved in education: through the education reform project; through the New Horizons initiative, on which the member received a briefing this morning. We'll continue to work with all of our school councils and our school board in the territory, as well as with Yukon teachers and Yukon school administrators.

We've gone to work with school councils and with other partners in looking at creating the school growth planning process, which is an excellent vehicle for addressing the specific needs of a community in their school. That is one tool that we have at our disposal to ensure that the needs of the community are being reflected in their school.

Also, our self-government agreements signed with Yukon self-governing First Nations are very explicit as to the transfer of services. Those are mechanisms that, should a Yukon First Nation wish to draw down education, we would support them with that and provide any and all the assistance that we can, should they, with their right to do so, make that decision. Until that time, we will continue to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations, with individual First Nations, with the school board and with school councils, teachers, parents and students in order to create the best education system possible for all Yukoners.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister can listen all he wants, but it is about recognizing that there needs to be some sort of level of control.

Now since 1973 and the paper, "Indian Control of Indian Education", the main issue in First Nations' education has always been jurisdiction. Years ago, the devolution of responsibility for education from the territory to First Nations was written into law with self-government agreements, and the minister agrees that there is a process that they will go through and that there is a set process for that. That set process needs partners. It cannot be done by First Nations alone and the minister knows that, so although he said we have a commitment to work with First Nations, his actions don't necessarily prove that out.

So how far along are negotiations? And how is the minister working with First Nations that have requested the draw-down of education? How are those discussions going with the Minister of Education on the devolution of education?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: During the budget briefing, there was a request made by the NDP to have a briefing done by the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations on New Horizons. That was accepted and offered, and it was offered to the Liberal Party as well. Unfortunately, they chose not to respond to the briefing.

I do have a question now for the member opposite: does he really believe that what he is putting on the record today reflects what he heard at the meeting this morning? Because it does not reflect the relationship that this government has established with Yukon First Nations. It does not reflect the strong working relationship between the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations; the work between myself and the Chiefs Committee on Education; the work that this government is doing with individual Yukon First Nations, such as the Champagne and Aishihik bilateral program; and it does not include the work being done by the First Nations Education Advisory Committee or the Department of Education's First Nation programs and partnerships unit, which is making curriculum changes and changes to teaching staff throughout all Yukon schools.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the briefing this morning. It was a good briefing and I did learn a lot. There are two paths: there is the working together for better outcomes, but there is also the self-government agreement, section 17 path. We want to know what the minister is doing on that. He says, "We'll make our schools more reflective of our community," and he offers more curriculum. He just talked about that. He offers more cultural programs; he offers advisory commit-

tees and he offers school growth plans. That's not necessarily a partnership, Mr. Speaker. Partnership is about equality, responsibility and respect. Partnership means listening and acting. It means inclusion.

How does the minister plan to make schools more reflective of communities when he isn't listening to those people he calls "partners?"

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite just listed all of them — by working with school councils, by working with the guaranteed representations on school councils, by fostering a relationship between the local First Nation and the school. We just heard — the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and I were in Pelly Crossing last weekend for the graduation and heard the tremendous successes going on in that school and that community and the strong relationship between that First Nation and the school.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to foster those types of things. We will continue to work with Yukon First Nations. We're not asking them to devolve their responsibility or their authority. I don't think anyone is asking anyone to do that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yes, there are two paths. We can look at the paths of how do we work together in order to make a better system collectively. Or, we can look at the path of the First Nation, should they choose, as is their right under the self-government agreements, to draw down education. Whichever path the First Nation government chooses to work on, we will accommodate them. Should they wish to draw down education we, the Government of Yukon, will work with them to do that. Until that happens, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon will work with all Yukoners to make our system the best we can make it.

Question re: FASD and the court system

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, FASD/FAE is a lifelong disorder. There is no cure. Those suffering from FASD/FAE have brain damage. Although a person with FASD/FAE may be chronologically 20 years old, their mental and emotional functioning may be at a much lower level. Does the Minister of Justice have any indication of how many offenders going through the conventional court system fall into this category?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I can tell the member opposite that the Yukon has a high number of persons with FASD. As to the numbers who go through our courts, I do not have those figures.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, Mr. Speaker, beyond the denial and damage of FASD/FAE today, society is finding out what happens to those who have this brain injury and break the law. Those suffering from FASD/FAE must be taught skills in the context in which the skills are to be used. FASD/FAE adolescents will not generalize from one context to another. They do not understand when their behaviour is appropriate and when it is not. Does the Justice minister know of any special program to support those suffering from FASD/FAE who are consistently going through the court system?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, where do I start? What are we doing in Yukon for those suffering from FASD? I'm proud to report that Yukon is the leader in Canada in addressing FASD and those afflicted with it. That was a purpose

of our correctional reform. The Government of Yukon is taking the lead in addressing the barriers that people with FASD encounter.

As members of this House are no doubt aware, in September, in partnership with Justice Canada, we held a conference in Whitehorse, which was the first of its kind in Canada where all those came together in Whitehorse to address the best method of assisting those with FASD. The approach we are taking in FASD is the five-step plan that includes the promotion of prevention programs to eliminate alcohol consumption of high-risk parents in order to foster the birth of healthy babies — that's the number one priority.

The number two priority is early diagnosis of FASD before the age of six to assist those afflicted with FASD in the early stages of their life.

Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Edzerza: It is critical to have those suspected of potential FASD/FAE diagnosed to ensure they receive the proper help. I don't only criticize; I would also like to offer solutions to the government. One suggestion I have is to develop the same approach as the Lethbridge police department and implement a community FASD/FAE project officer within the RCMP to help those individuals through the court system.

Will the minister consider contacting the Lethbridge police department and explore the possibility of implementing the same program in the Yukon Territory?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As maybe the member opposite did not hear me, we are the leaders in Canada in addressing FASD and those afflicted with FASD. I believe we have been in touch with other agencies throughout Canada. I can tell you what we are doing briefly. You know, I might run out of time, because we are doing so much in this area. We have \$27,500 right now committed to FASSY for their lunch program. In 2008, we hosted a national conference drawing experts, judges, lawyers and senior government officials from across Canada — and internationally, U.S. and Israel — to learn how we are addressing those afflicted with FASD. The Yukon Minister of Justice has raised the issue of FASD as an access to justice issue at the 2008 ministers of justice FTP. At the request of Yukon Justice officials, senior justice officials from across Canada are now reviewing the recommendations put forward during our conference. We are reviewing and updating the inmate handbook, which specifically addresses those afflicted with FASD when they enter our justice system.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing so much. If the member opposite would like, we can send him literature on what we are doing for those afflicted with FASD.

Speaker: Thank you.

Question re: Yukon Housing Corporation programs

Mr. McRobb: Let's follow up where we left off yesterday on the Yukon Housing Corporation issue and the minister's refusal to provide sufficient funds in the mortgage loan programs to assist Yukoners to build their own homes. This Yukon Party government has not only failed to live up to its word to provide sufficient funding to the several applicants, who now feel let down; it's added insult to injury. We must realize that in today's world, banks require greater security,

which is very difficult for first-time homeowners or people in rural communities.

Yet the minister criticized applicants who don't qualify for bank financing. These people were encouraged to apply by this government. They deserve better than to be dismissed as dead-beats. Will the minister do the right thing and provide sufficient funds?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: It would appear that the Member for Kluane missed some of the answers yesterday. Currently, the Yukon Housing Corporation has \$20,000,884 invested in the home ownership program, and in the owner-build, \$3,438,955.

When it comes to home repair, there is \$8,127,659, and joint venture, which is all construction — \$2,765,706. So when you start looking at what we have invested as a principal balance over time, there is \$44,738,180 for a total of 926 different projects.

The Yukon Housing Corporation looks after a wide range of programs involving housing — this being one of them. A very large amount was put into the budget at the time. Of course, the members opposite haven't seemed to be too enthusiastic to debate the budget this sitting, but if they get a chance to, we would be happy to get into more details. And we're very pleased that the uptake occurred.

Mr. McRobb: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister's response yesterday raises more questions. The minister has said on record that he was pleased there was only three weeks of funding in the program, and called it a great success. Yesterday he was asked several times to disclose the amount of funds actually spent from the budget this fiscal year. Each time, he avoided the question, as he did today.

He also avoided responding to the assertion that funds have been siphoned from the budget. Yukoners deserve answers to these important questions.

So will the minister now give us the total amount spent from this year's fiscal budget for the home ownership programs — not the other programs, Mr. Speaker — the home ownership programs — and tell us whether funds were siphoned?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Speaking of avoiding the question, Mr. Speaker, frankly it would appear that the Official Opposition — the Liberal Party — refused to ask the question. The budget of \$1.3 billion — the opposition seems to have not had any appetite to ask anything to do with the budget. In fact, this is as close to a budgetary question as we've got in over two years from the Liberal opposition.

But for the member opposite, the 2008-09 mains — \$4.4 million were put out and that is sort of on average, although the year before, the forecast was closer to \$10.4 million. The figure is a dynamic amount that's moving all the time. For the member opposite, and for anyone listening, I think the term "siphoning" is offensive. If the member has any proof of anything that is being done that is inappropriate or not in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*, I ask him to not only put it on the floor, but to take it outside where he can be held accountable. He can't be held accountable in here.

Question re: Yukon Housing Corporation programs

Mr. Mitchell: New question, same topic: it's time to take stock. The Yukon Party government promoted these mortgage loan programs. It promised Yukoners there'd be sufficient program funding to build their homes. Its budget this year, the main estimates, allocated \$7 million for these loan programs. Only three weeks into the fiscal year, the government has turned away all additional applicants due to insufficient funds.

The minister exuberantly referred to this as "excellent news". The minister avoided the budget questions and chose instead to be remarking about the applicants. The minister has now refused, and continues to refuse, to admit that advertised funds have been moved to other programs — all despite a budget surplus of \$150 million.

Again, why did the government move funds from this program, despite fully knowing the high public demand for this program?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, the current Leader of the Liberal Party, I would draw his attention to the very large difference between the terms "insufficient funds" and "fully subscribed". We're very pleased to put a program out there and Yukoners are willing to take us up on that, especially right now, in a time of historic lows in mortgage rates. In reviewing some of the mortgage rates across Canada, I see competitive rates — very competitive — and, in some cases, better, frankly, than the Yukon Housing Corporation's.

The Member for Kluane said that banks are now requiring more security. Isn't that kind of what the whole financial meltdown in North America was all about?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the honourable member asks his next question, the Minister of Economic Development referring to the Leader of the Official Opposition's status — he is the Leader of the Official Opposition. We had this earlier on when members were referring to people as "new" ministers. Well, we eliminated that terminology as well. So please respect that.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier made a commitment to Yukoners last fall, and he hasn't kept it. It's about accountability. It's about following through on promises made. The Premier likes to ask this side of the House to provide constructive suggestions. We've been asking the minister to act on our suggestion to put more money into these mortgage programs for two weeks now, but he has refused to do so, so we're asking for the Premier to step in because he controls the purse strings. The government is sitting on a \$150-million surplus, yet it refuses to help these Yukoners. Some of them will be forced to turn back lots that they have recently purchased, because the government is not following through on a promise the Premier himself made.

These programs are extremely important, especially in rural Yukon. So will the Premier dip into the surplus and help out these Yukoners who need it as we begin the building season?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, let me see. Earlier in the sitting, I believe, it was the member opposite who was commenting about having some financial resources in order to deal with the global financial situation to

have some reserves in order to respond. What the member opposite now is suggesting, of course, is go out and spend that reserve, what the heck, put it into something and if there's further problems, we'll deal with it at that point in time.

In a time of historic lows of mortgages, when you start looking on-line — and I'm sure there are members opposite whom, in their Googling time, can go off and take a look at some of the interest rates — some of these are as low as 2.9 percent. We are not in the mortgage business. We are in the housing business and what we are trying to do is to help the maximum number of Yukoners deal with their housing situation. We can put money into \$400,000 or \$500,000 homes or we can put money into affordable housing and social housing. That's what Yukon Housing Corporation does.

I think the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party, has been very clear on where they'd put their money, and I find that rather frightening.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the minister says we're not in the mortgage business. He should take a look at his own department in the budget.

Time is of the essence here, Mr. Speaker. Yukoners were promised by the Premier that the funds would be there when needed this spring. While the minister is busy Googling and looking at mortgage rates, he should check how many of those mortgages go to rural Yukoners. Without these mortgages, some Yukoners will be forced to turn back their lots. They need an answer from the government now so that they can get started building this spring. The only response from the government is to say how happy they are that the program's over-subscribed, and that people shouldn't be building expensive homes.

Last Friday, the Yukon's unemployment rate increased to almost eight percent. It has been rising steadily for five months. These mortgage programs put people to work. They also mean more money is spent on building supplies and lumber sales. We would support an amendment to the budget, or a supplementary budget, to allow for more money to be put into these programs. I see the Premier's buttoning his jacket, so will the Premier overrule his minister and put more money into these programs and help Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition is constantly amazing the government side of the House at how quickly the member loses sight of what really has transpired.

Mr. Speaker, in the last fiscal year — in which, if the members cared to look at the budget, the forecasts demonstrate clearly — we put a whopping increase into the Yukon Housing Corporation's programming to meet the demand on the programs within the Yukon Housing Corporation. That transpired, by the way, in this House through a special warrant that the members opposite obviously criticized at great length, but it is also in the supplementary budget, and it is also during the winter.

I don't know how many houses the member opposite saw being built during the winter, but I can assure the member that, out of the significant increase that was provided in last fiscal

year for applicants to Yukon Housing Corporation, many of them will be starting up this spring.

Furthermore, let's look at the actuals. The members are suggesting that somehow the government has shortchanged the Yukon Housing Corporation. The last actual figures, 2007-08: \$26 million; this year's budget: \$38 million. That's hardly being shortchanged.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private member to be called on Wednesday, May 13, 2009. They are Motion No. 799, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and Motion No. 800, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 69: Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 69, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Horne.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I move that Bill No. 69, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 69, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to talk for a few moments about the changes in this act.

This act corrects inadvertent errors in several statutes. The set of amendments does not make substantive changes to the statutes. These are housekeeping amendments. Given I've discussed the changes we are making in my comments in Committee, I do not intend to go over them here again.

I would like to thank everyone involved, especially our department officials for their assistance.

Mr. Mitchell: First of all, I do want to thank the minister for not going through it a third time in detail. We'll be brief. We want to thank the officials for the work they did in finding the errors or, in some cases, the necessary changes to rationalize different pieces of legislation and regulations. As we said at second reading and in Committee, small errors or individual words can have substantive meanings when they are in legislation, and they can have unintended consequences.

We want to thank the officials for bringing this forward; we thank the minister. We will support this act and that's all that needs to be said.

Mr. Cardiff: I'll be even briefer. I think we said it all in second reading and we will be supporting the act. We thank

the officials for the work they've done on this and it will make all these pieces of legislation better for all Yukoners.

Speaker: If the minister speaks she will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'd like to thank this House for their support.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 69 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 69 has passed this House.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 710

Deputy Clerk: Motion No. 710, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader that the membership of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, as established by Motion No. 70 of the First Session of the 32nd Legislative Assembly, be amended by:

- (1) rescinding the appointment of John Edzerza; and
- (2) appointing Steve Cardiff to the committee.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will be fairly brief in introducing this motion, as I believe that all members are aware of the background of it. To recap, a commitment to establish an all-party committee to review appointments to major government boards and committees is a commitment that has been made by every political party in the Yukon. We are the first government, the first party, to actually fulfill that commitment by establishing an all-party committee to review the boards and committees outlined in the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and enumerated as listed.

In our 2006 election platform, our commitment was, as worded, "to continue to work with the political parties in the Legislature to establish an all-party standing committee to oversee Yukon government appointments to government boards and committees." And that, of course, again, is spelled out in the Standing Orders. The list of those major boards is enumerated.

We did so and that committee has been functioning. We appreciate the participation of all members and all parties on that committee and the work that has been done. This new initiative has been yet another step forward by this government in attempting to involve members of all political parties, adding, of course, to initiatives such as the select committee that was established to tour the territory, which I chaired. It included members from the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, and it reviewed the private member's bill presented by the Leader of the New Democratic Party with regard to anti-smoking.

That tour concluded and another select committee on human rights was established. I would remind members: those are two of the total of three committees that have been established to tour the territory and seek Yukon input directly — Members of the Legislative Assembly directly going out as an all-party

committee to tour the territory. But this initiative, the standing committee on appointments to major government boards and committees, is an important part of similar initiatives in providing more opportunities for engagement. I would again remind members that, despite the to and fro that goes on in this Legislative Assembly, in the last mandate — the last term — the Legislature passed more unanimous motions than every other Legislature combined. So, we will continue to make efforts to work with the opposition, which sometimes goes very successfully and sometimes can be challenging.

The membership, as established by the motion, of course, is to rescind the appointment of the Member for McIntyre-Takhini, and appoint the Member for Mount Lorne. This, of course, is based on the discussed, committed-to and agreed-to membership of three government members, two members from the Official Opposition, and one member from the third party, due to the Member for McIntyre-Takhini's change in party status from being a member of the New Democratic caucus, the third party, to being a private member, an Independent. We have, at the request of the New Democratic caucus, brought forward this motion listing the member whom they identified to be their representative on the all-party Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees — that, of course, being the Member for Mount Lorne.

That summarizes the motion in a nutshell. I encourage all members to support this motion, as I believe they will.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, there has been much debate in this Assembly about how well various standing committees are or are not working. There have been discussions about all-party cooperation or lack thereof. We hear members from all sides stating emphatically that the committees should not be partisan or politicized, and then we see the exact opposite being the practice.

Motion No. 710 appears to be intended, as the minister has explained, to ensure that the third party, the NDP, has a representative on the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, as established by Motion No. 70 of the First Session of the 32nd Legislative Assembly, by amending that motion by:

- (1) rescinding the appointment of the Member for McIntyre-Takhini — although it names the member; and
- (2) appointing the Member for Mount Lorne to the committee.

We would like to note for the record that there is no mention in this motion of proposed amendment, as there was no mention in the original motion that it seeks to amend party standings. The members are named, not their party standings. I would also point out to the Member for Lake Laberge that he was referring to the all-party committee, but it is actually referred to as the standing committee, not the all-party committee. I also want to note that the member himself, when he was on his feet, said that we appreciate the work done by all parties and all members. When we reviewed our Standing Orders, we found no indication of the party constitution of the standing committees.

In chapter 9 of the Standing Orders, on page 25 of the edition I have in front of me, under appointment of Standing Committees, we see the following sections as relevant — 45(3.1) — a Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees may be appointed; 45(3.2) goes on to list the relevant boards and committees to which appointments should be nominated and recommendations made by this committee; Standing Order 45(3.4) and 45(3.5) continue to lay out the procedures for operating a committee; and Standing Order 45(5) states that, quote: “No standing, special or select committee shall consist of more than seven members without the consent of the Assembly.”

Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, do the Standing Orders proscribe or prohibit Independent members from serving on any standing committees. We believe that it’s important for Independent members to continue to have a voice on this committee and in all aspects of this Assembly.

The Member for McIntyre-Takhini has twice been elected to this Assembly to represent his constituents, albeit under two different political parties. Nevertheless, his constituents deserve for him to have full participation in the workings of this Assembly and to represent their interests, including by serving on committees. There has been no suggestion that he has served any less capably on this committee than has any other member. In fact, the Member for Lake Laberge cited that he appreciates the work done by all members.

Nevertheless, and despite what may be absent in the Standing Orders, there is, as the minister referred to, a long tradition of ensuring that all established political parties have a voice on these committees, and we have no argument with that principle. We also recognize the need for the third party to be part of the work of this committee. And we recognize the established principle of the government maintaining a majority on these standing committees. I therefore move to amend Motion No. 710.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Mitchell: I move

THAT Motion No. 710 be amended by deleting the phrase “rescinding the appointment of John Edzerza” and substituting for it the phrase “appointing Hon. Marian Horne”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt

THAT Motion No. 710 be amended by deleting the phrase “rescinding the appointment of John Edzerza” and substituting for it the phrase “appointing Hon. Marian Horne”.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to ensure the balance of power remains on the government side, so to speak, the control, we are proposing the addition of a government member to the committee and if the government has objections to the person who is selected, we are, of course, open to amendments.

We are simply following the established procedure of naming a member to serve on the committee, and the government can certainly choose a different member, if the workloads involved require that.

This would bring the total membership of this committee from five to seven members, which requires no change in our Standing Orders, although section 5, on page 26, as noted, would provide a mechanism for doing that, if it were necessary, because we can’t enlarge these committees to more than seven people, but it would not be required in this case.

This amendment would resolve the concern of the third party that they are not represented on the committee; it would alleviate any concerns by the government that they would not retain a majority on the committee; and it would show Yukoners that the Assembly respects their right to elect members who are not members of a party and provide those members with the tools to do the job on behalf of their constituents.

In stating this, I recognize that I am the leader of a political party in Yukon, but I don’t believe that in order to have strong political parties we need to disenfranchise any member of this Assembly.

I believe that this amendment strengthens the motion, and I urge and ask for the support of all members in passing this motion, as amended.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for his constructive input. I believe in my introductory remarks I indicated that the membership was three, two and one. Of course, as members know, that committee membership is three, one and one with three government members, one from the Official Opposition and currently one Independent member. This, we believe, is a constructive amendment. As I indicated in discussions at House Leaders, the government had no problem with the concept of providing for Independent members to take part in the committee, but based on standard practice in this House, when the committee membership has been established, if there is a changeover in membership that was originally set aside for any one of the parties, then at that party caucus’ request, the government would bring forward a motion to amend the committee membership. That has been standard practice. That is exactly what we did. The government has no problem with this amendment. We see it as a positive initiative. We see the appointment of the member named in the motion, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, as a very acceptable choice and therefore we will be supporting the amendment.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, I just want to convey my thanks to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for acknowledging this amendment. I believe Independent members should have the right to represent their constituents to the fullest extent, and that means being eligible to sit on any government board that requires Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Amendment to Motion No. 710 agreed to

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

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Madam Deputy 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. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Hardy: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 710 agreed to as amended

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Education. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 15 — First Appropriation Act, 2009-10 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*. We will now resume

with general debate on Education, Vote 3. Mr. Rouble, you have about nine minutes left.

Department of Education — continued

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yesterday we began debate on the Department of Education's \$128,172,000 budget. This budget further enhances our vision, which is for all Yukon people to see all of their lifelong learning needs met.

We began with a discussion of the capital budget, which is \$8,390,000, which includes specific initiatives, such as the \$400,000 allocation requested to establish the planning committee that will work on the program and design needs of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School. We then went on to discuss the Yukon College budget, which this year is just over \$20 million. Members will recall that when this government took office, the budget was approximately — I guess it was a bit below \$14 million, a few short years ago. Today, Mr. Chair, this year's budget allocation is just over \$20 million. This significant increase in appropriations for Yukon College clearly demonstrates this government's trust in the organization, its significant value in the community, and our commitment to help them to accomplish their great work. Indeed, it is an excellent vehicle in our community to prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

We also discussed yesterday the issues with apprentices, and how we would, month after month, continue to see a record number of apprentices. We are at a record number of apprentices in the territory now, and we've also seen significant growth in our apprentice statistics of the number of women participating in our trades, and also people of First Nation ancestry.

Mr. Chair, yesterday I shared with the House that our operation and maintenance budget for the Department of Education this year is \$119,782,000, and some of the specific initiatives that we have underway. These include initiatives such as support for New Horizons, which is our response and our implementation strategy for addressing many of the issues and concerns brought out of the education reform process, out of the Auditor General's report, comments that we received from our First Nation Education Advisory Committee, also the ongoing work that we do with our other partners in education, including Yukon First Nation governments and, as well, our school councils.

Yesterday we also spoke about the \$150,000 for the early years transition learning program that targets prekindergarten to grade 3 students, had a moment to discuss the \$150,000 request for funds to implement a curriculum and special programs training program, \$140,000 that is being requested for assistive technology software and related training programs, and there are a few other different initiatives that I'd also like to share with members today.

Mr. Chair, all of these initiatives confirm that the Department of Education is working very diligently in addressing the many recommendations received from the education report and the Auditor General's report. The Individual Learning Centre, launched in February 2005, continues to be a complete success in re-engaging high school dropouts back into lifelong learning. The full-day kindergarten and the home tutor program will con-

tinue to receive support under this year's budget. These initiatives have proven to be very important and meaningful for people throughout the Yukon.

Other programs that the government has supported through its last mandate will also continue to receive funding. Reading Recovery and the Wilson Reading program are very important learning tools for school communities and they give students a solid start in school learning. We continue to receive good feedback on all of these programs.

The vocational experiential education initiative continues in 2009-10 with \$385,000. This money will provide more flexibility for schools to access experiential and outdoor education opportunities.

To support the Yukon Teachers Association collective agreement in the 2009-10 fiscal year, we are requesting \$924,000. Yukon teachers are some of the best paid teachers in all of Canada. We believe our teachers are at the heart of learning, so to attract and maintain the right teachers we make sure they are remunerated appropriately.

We are requesting \$77,000 to continue our support of the canines for safer schools program. This \$77,000 will be put to good use at Porter Creek Secondary School to support this drug abuse prevention program.

The Department of Education is also requesting \$91,000 to continue the support of the Whole Child project. The Department of Education is requesting \$575,000 to support the Council of Yukon First Nations in their delivery of education support services. This line of funding represents \$405,000 to support the operating costs of the Yukon Native Language Centre and \$170,000 to provide salaries for support staff for education.

The Department of Education has a very good working relationship with the Council of Yukon First Nations. Our staff attends Chiefs Committee on Education meetings, as well as the meeting of the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee.

Mr. Chair, we appreciate that the Council of Yukon First Nations is going through a bit of a state of change right now and we look forward to working with the new entity that will replace the Chiefs Committee on Education once that is established. These kinds of connections have greatly benefited both the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Department of Education, because the lines of communication are open as we work to reach a common goal, and that is increased First Nation student success.

Earlier today, there was an opportunity for a briefing from the Council of Yukon First Nations to the Department of Education, with officials from the opposition parties, and I was pleased to see some attendance at that meeting.

There have been a number of Department of Education initiatives over the past few years that are improving how we incorporate First Nation culture and values into the classroom. We discussed many of those earlier today in Question Period. I very much appreciate that the New Democratic Party is recognizing some of the changes that are occurring in today's schools.

This year we will provide \$1.77 million in funding to support the First Nation programs and partnerships unit at the De-

partment of Education. I'm pleased to say that this unit continues to grow and provide a unique and helpful service to the Department of Education and the larger education community in the Yukon. This unit works in partnership with the Yukon First Nation curriculum working group of the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee to ensure the validity, accuracy and authentic voices in all materials developed. The Department of Education consults extensively with First Nations at all levels and works in partnership with First Nations to develop curriculum materials and resources.

To ensure that Yukon students have access to the best possible opportunities to learn aboriginal languages, the government is seeking \$2.98 million to cover the salaries of aboriginal language teachers in Yukon schools and at the Yukon Native Language Centre. This year we are continuing funding to the Yukon First Nations elders in the school program for \$50,000. This program is integral to bringing the model of traditional learning into Yukon classrooms and making the classroom a more relevant place for all Yukon students.

I do have a couple more points about specific initiatives going on that I will share with members in future responses.

Mr. Fairclough: Yesterday I took about less than a minute to ask the minister a question, and the minister has been speaking for about 40 minutes now. Part of it, of course, is to outline the department and its budget, but I don't think it should take the minister that long to do. He should be shortening up his notes and being more to the point and actually answering the question.

This was a very important one. I told the minister that we get a lot of calls from people about this annual Yukon Teachers Association meeting.

The minister wasn't there. I asked the minister and gave him the opportunity to clear the air about why he was absent and why there wasn't a substitute in his place at this meeting. So I will give him that opportunity now.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I certainly agree with the first part of the member's statement and that there are 128 million things to talk about in our budget. There is an extensive budget here of \$128 million and the Government of Yukon is investing in education across the territory. This is our allocations for private schools and for our Yukon College and to assist with labour market initiatives.

I'm amazed that, throughout the entire debate so far in this session, I have not received questions regarding what is the Government of Yukon going to do to address the issue of early year transitions. I haven't got any questions about that.

The opposition hasn't asked questions about what we are going to do to replace F.H. Collins. It's fairly clear, Mr. Chair, that we are making a specific commitment — indeed, allocating \$400,000 in the budget that is before us — to address that important situation.

That is one of the big questions that I get asked when I am on Main Street or in Yukon communities. I'm flattered by the amount of importance that the member has put on my attendance at one meeting, but I do believe that that is overshadowed by many of the significant initiatives that we currently have underway in education.

It has been my honour, pleasure and privilege to meet with the Yukon Teachers Association on several different occasions, both on a formal basis at their annual general meetings, where I have appeared with them twice, but also on an informal basis, whether that is in their office or meeting with the president in my office or in Yukon schools. The Yukon teachers certainly know of my high regard for them and the importance that their role holds to this government in meeting the challenges in our educational system. I continue to demonstrate my support for Yukon schools and students wherever I can, whether that means attending a “Be the Change” day or supporting them at bridge-building competitions, attending graduations — just as the member and I did last Friday in Pelly Crossing — or the week before attending the ridge run in Carmacks, which is another great event in the member’s riding.

Mr. Chair, people know and have commented several times on the support this government has provided for education. I will continue to provide that support and work toward establishing a very clear and attainable vision for education, working to identify appropriate objectives with all our partners involved. Yes, that does mean many discussions with other partners, be they attending the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees meeting that was held recently or meeting with the Yukon Association of School Administrators to identify these pertinent issues.

One group that we recently formed, Mr. Chair, has been the Education minister’s advisory committee and this is a group of students from across the territory I had the privilege of meeting with two weeks ago during Education Week, where I sat down with them and asked them what their issues and concerns in education were, what their hopes and aspirations were, and really asked them, if they were the Education minister, what would they do and what changes would they make?

I think we’ve clearly demonstrated in all departments in this government our willingness and our eagerness to work with all our partners, to meet with them on a regular basis, both in formal and informal methods, in order to identify issues and to work to address and resolve them. I will continue to do that, Mr. Chair.

We all know the time pressures on members in this Assembly. We do know that, relatively speaking in comparison to other jurisdictions, we have very few ministers with significant responsibilities. In our jurisdiction, with the small number of ministers, with having eight ministers, we do have all the responsibilities of other jurisdictions and that puts some significant demands on our time — and it is unfortunate that we are not able to attend all the organizations all the time.

For example, last Friday, I was invited to attend a DARE graduation at one of the schools, but unfortunately I couldn’t because I was attending the graduation ceremony in Pelly Crossing. I appreciate the invitations and I do make best efforts to attend events where I am available, and I will continue to do so.

I look forward to a very good relationship with the Yukon Teachers Association. I look forward to new discussions with the incoming president. I did have an opportunity to chat briefly with the outgoing president last Friday during the

graduation ceremony in Pelly Crossing. And I look forward to continuing our relationship with the new executive.

There are significant challenges in education. We recognize that, and we’ve discussed many of them in this Assembly.

The Yukon Teachers Association and the role that the teachers play in the classroom will be a very important and critical part of addressing concerns in classrooms. Indeed, they are the most important part in making a difference in the classroom. I look forward to working with the association in the future, and today, Mr. Chair, I look forward to debating with the member the budget that is before us.

We have \$128 million in this budget, with significant programming for early childhood education, for public schools, for secondary schools, for advanced education, for Yukon College, for labour market initiatives, and all the other areas that are before us. The member has asked me about programs, and what are we doing for this or what are we doing for that — this is the opportunity, Mr. Chair, where I am able to address that. If he has specific questions regarding the budget items, I can go into much greater detail on those.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, Mr. Chair, I thought the minister would take that opportunity to clear the air about his being absent from the annual meeting of the Yukon Teachers Association. He didn’t do that. He didn’t say why he was not there. He said why he wasn’t at another meeting — because he was attending the grad last week. That was easy enough to come from the minister. This was one of the easiest questions I could’ve asked the minister, and he has taken close to an hour and avoided the whole issue.

I think it’s really important, because the Yukon Teachers Association is a major partner with the minister in education. They are major partners, and I know he is going to say that he is willing to work with them in the future; that’s all fine. This was a major event and I could not think of anything else that this minister would have been attending as a Minister of Education or any one of his duties as a minister. I just find it difficult to take, and it would have gone a long way if the minister had just cleared the air. I’m just going to leave it alone and not go there any more, because I’m not going to get an answer from the minister at all.

This is the frustrating part, too, when people are asking questions and we don’t get anywhere with the minister. It is very frustrating. I think the minister understands the importance of being at some of these places, and I do have to thank him for making the effort to go to the communities, to go to graduations — the important things that may seem small to some people are very big to a lot of the community people.

We had an excellent grad in the community of Pelly Crossing — 11 graduates. They went all out in decorating their school gym. It’s one of the highlights for me as an MLA to come this time of year, because I know Pelly always goes all out. We have a couple more in my riding in the communities of Mayo and Carmacks.

Pelly Crossing, though, does something that’s unique to them. They do a traditional graduation, where it was set up by one of their elders and they’re drummed into the room and into a circle. They sing a song and the whole community comes out

and recognizes the grads as they stand in the middle of the floor. It gives every community member an opportunity to show their respect, either by going up to shake their hands or give them a gift. This is what happened. I was thankful to be able to witness that once again. It is a really good thing Pelly is doing, because I think that other communities can do the same thing.

Education is so important in the Yukon and we want to make it better and make suggestions. We ask the minister questions on policy — sometimes not necessarily what the budget entails, but we have a budget before us. I do have questions in regard to that, but a lot of what happens is how the government does things. So we ask those questions and what they do not do and what they recognize as areas of improvements that could happen under their watch. I have asked the minister over and over again, many times in regard to the Auditor General's report. I said that this was a wake-up call for the minister. He needed to hear the results of the Auditor General and not call it "just an opinion" like other members of his team do. He hasn't said that so far, Mr. Chair, but I hope that it doesn't go to that extent.

Now, what is increasingly frustrating are the facts and we hear this from the Premier all the time: he wants to know the facts and here are the facts and he wants evidence and evidence gets produced, and yet the minister skirts around these questions. We don't want him to do that. We want straight answers on how we can make improvements. A lot of those recommendations that came from the Auditor General should be followed through by the department and laid out by the minister exactly how it is to happen.

In Pelly Crossing we had the biggest graduating class they ever had — 11 grads. They brought them in from Whitehorse and even outside of the territory to attend the graduation in Pelly Crossing, and I thought that was a good thing. That doesn't often happen. Two years ago Carmacks had their biggest grad ever, and they went from that to nothing — no grads, or one grad; this year they had one grad and so does the community of Mayo. At times you will see a huge graduation class and then very little.

Although I am really glad to see the community of Pelly Cross and Selkirk First Nation have a large number of graduates this year, we still have the facts before us. The facts before us are laid out by the Auditor General, and the Auditor General says that in the Yukon, for aboriginal students, we have a 60-percent failure rate. Sixty percent do not graduate, and that to me is a shocking number and one that First Nations have known for quite some time, the department has known for quite some time, yet no major move on government's behalf to make improvements to the system.

We're not talking about failures of teachers here; they're doing a great job, and so are the administrators. But they work within the system that is set up today, and that is why the First Nations are looking at drawing down education: because they feel that government has failed them in providing education. The monies come straight from Ottawa for education for aboriginal children, and the Yukon government takes that and pro-

vides that education, and they're failing in doing their job. That's why they're going forward to draw down education.

I really feel that this is not what they want to do, but are forced into it. It would be unfortunate if it came to the point where they're running their own schools. Fortunate for them, perhaps, because when you look at the stats and the facts out there, every school that is run by a First Nation with modern treaties — I'm not talking about schools run on reserves — all of those schools have been very, very successful. That is information that they're getting, and the minister ought to know that and to work harder with the First Nations.

I bring it up because it's not just First Nations. The success rate is 60 percent with non-aboriginal people graduating here in the Yukon, and we want to see those numbers go up higher, of course.

But back to 1970 when they started talking about land claims, education was first and foremost on people's minds back then, and it was students who were leading the way. I hope the minister understands this because the frustration level built up to the point where the *Education Act* was produced in the Yukon and was thought to be one of the greatest pieces of legislation in Canada.

Since then, of course, we've had land claims agreements and the fact that we did an education review, which had a tremendous amount of public input, and all point to education reform and the governance model. The minister refused to look at that area. It becomes frustrating because now what we've gone from is an *Education Act* review and we've gone to education reform — which all points to governance and making a new bottom-up approach to education — which we all want, which the public wants. But the minister refuses to even engage in the whole issue of governance with communities. It was said so loud and clear by his boss, I guess — the Premier — in this House.

It's frustrating because that was what was being said out in the public. What was important was that the minister take this document, *What We Heard*, and take it back out to the public. But we're now running into — we have the *Education Act* review; we've got the education reform project — which we spent millions of dollars and years and years on. We've got the New Horizons. You know what? There doesn't seem to be an end to it.

I know the minister would desperately like to implement New Horizons and has mentioned a bit about it and we want to see exactly where this Yukon Party government is going when it comes to education. So I'm going to ask the minister this and I've asked him this before. New Horizons discussions — the education reform project talks about governance models being developed in a bottom-up approach, which is totally different from what we have today. Why didn't the minister take that approach to the communities and say that this is perhaps an area the department is interested in? We need to make changes to the system we have today, because it wasn't and isn't working today properly. So why didn't he do that? If not, is this going to be a part of any of his discussions with his many partners?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When the Member for Mayo-Tatchun first rose, he added some comments about the Yukon Teachers Association. I just wanted to share for the member opposite some of the involvement that the Yukon Teachers Association has with the Department of Education.

I don't have an exhaustive list, but I do have a few of the key committees that the Yukon Teachers Association is currently involved in with the Department of Education. In addition to being the trade union or the bargaining agent for the Yukon teachers, Yukon Teachers Association is also very involved in several different committees, including the School Growth Planning Advisory Committee, the New Horizons project team, the Secondary School Programming Advisory Committee, the Education Leadership Program Advisory Committee and recently the master of education program that is being offered through Yukon College and providing a degree accredited from the University of Northern British Columbia. So indeed there is a very strong involvement by the Yukon Teachers Association with several different initiatives going forward by the Department of Education. If the member opposite likes, I can provide more information about what the School Growth Planning Advisory Committee does or what the New Horizons team works on, or the Secondary School Programming Advisory Committee. I believe the member opposite has seen the report that has come from that and has seen the changes happening in today's education system. Also, I can provide more information on the educational leadership program.

The Government of Yukon and the Department of Education recognize that we have a situation where we have a number of principals and administrators who are nearing retirement age, and we need to take significant steps and very quick action to ensure that we're developing the leadership capabilities of our teachers, so that they can assume greater responsibilities in our school, that being the role of the principal or administrator. We can go into more detail about some of those initiatives if the member opposite likes.

He also went on to discuss the graduation ceremony last Friday at Eliza Van Bibber School in Pelly Crossing, and yes, I agree, it was a great ceremony in the school, with the decorations that they had done, with the community dinner, with the Selkirk First Nation-specific ceremony, and also the dance afterwards. It was really an important community event, because, as the member mentioned, it wasn't just the graduates of Eliza Van Bibber School who attended, but also graduates — or actually, I think the word is "graduand," to be specific here, indicating those about to graduate.

But the grad did include people who had attended schools in Whitehorse, Dawson and also in Faro, as well as Outside, I believe. So it was very welcoming to see the community embrace all of the graduates.

I had a bit of a discussion with the people at my table, and I will pass it on to members of the Selkirk First Nation and the organizers of the event that I thought it would also be great to see that graduation ceremony opened up to include recent graduates from college, university, trade certificates or other certificate or diploma programs. It would be a great way to

celebrate lifelong learning and show community support not just for high school students graduating, but also those graduating from post-secondary institutions or receiving trade certifications or some of the other accreditation systems that are out there.

It's always amazing to see what's going on in the community. Many of the initiatives people know about, but sometimes it's very quiet, where someone is continuing their education on their own and perhaps doing something through distance education.

Now, Mr. Chair, the member also then went on to the Auditor General's report. This was an important audit that the Auditor General did of looking at historical actions of the Department of Education over a fairly significant time frame — I believe it went from about 2002 until late 2006. On many of the issues examined, they did recognize that there were actions being taken to address those. Unfortunately, many of the changes instituted — either through departmental changes, such as the creation of the First Nations programs and partnerships unit — some of the curriculum changes had not been in place long enough in order for them to see an impact, so they could not make a comment on the efficiency of that or the effectiveness that was happening in the schools.

Conversations I had with the Auditor General's staff said, "Yes, if we did the review a year later, we probably would have seen different results, because we do appreciate that you're taking steps and the department is taking steps to address many of the issues." But as they had not been in place for that long — and also recognizing that I had not been in place for that long as the Minister of Education — they could not comment on them and did not comment on them in the audit report.

It is also important, as the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee reminded people — and I'll quote from the Public Accounts Committee hearing: "The issue from an audit perspective is that the Yukon Department of Education could not demonstrate that it effectively delivered public ... programs to Yukon children. It doesn't mean that it isn't effectively delivering public school programs in many, many cases, if not all, to Yukon children, but rather that there wasn't information that allowed measurable, quantitative analyses to take place." I think we've discussed in the past, Mr. Chair, that we do have some work to do in collecting, evaluating and utilizing those quantitative, measurable initiatives.

One of the specific initiatives in this year's budget is a request for funds to continue with the British Columbia enterprise student information system. This is commonly referred to as BCeSIS. This is part of the implementation of New Horizons and it is in response to the Auditor General's report that the department has committed to replacing the current Win School system that has been used for the past 18 years with BCeSIS. It is anticipated that the implementation of this new system will take two years but, once implemented, will provide current, accurate and historical information that allows for informed decision-making by educational leaders for Yukon students across all curriculum areas in Yukon. That is just one of the responses to the Auditor General's report.

The member should have a copy of the implementation plan that was tabled when the Department of Education senior staff came before the Public Accounts Committee. The implementation plan laid out a step-by-step response to the Auditor General's report, with indications of action items, of what they intended to do in order to address those concerns.

Furthermore, we did have an opportunity to discuss several of these different initiatives and this plan during motion debate earlier this session, and I don't think we need to redo that debate again today.

It is also important to note that the Department of Education did commit to updating all Yukoners on their status with this in the annual report. The member opposite will recognize that there have been significant changes made to the annual report since I have become the Minister of Education, that there have been some different indicators, some different ways of laying out the information, taking great steps to try to communicate the information that we have in a more meaningful manner. So the member will recognize that there has always been a disclaimer in the annual report regarding graduation rates.

I'm not sure why the government of the day, in the 1990s, made the decision to report graduation rates the way that they chose to. It doesn't provide a clear picture, in my mind, as to how the education system is serving the needs of students and what number of people are really engaged with it, and who is dropping out or when, but we have made a commitment in the Department of Education to change how that's reported and to make more information available that will create a better picture of what is currently happening in today's education system.

Now, Mr. Chair, having that information is one thing, but the next step is to make use of that and to look at the information that we received and say, okay, knowing what we know now, what will we change in order to achieve the intended objectives that we have all agreed to? The objectives are identified at the beginning of the Department of Education's budget. We did have an opportunity two weeks ago in this Assembly where I put on the record the Department of Education's vision and key objectives. If the member opposite would like to discuss those, I will certainly engage in that kind of very meaningful debate. If he doesn't, I will accept that he recognizes that those are good objectives that should be implemented in our system.

We have seen some significant changes in our education system. There are changes that the previous Minister of Education implemented, and there have also been changes that I have implemented. Members will recognize that upon assuming the responsibility of Minister of Education, one of the first major initiatives that I had to undertake was the finding of a new deputy minister. I would like to again publicly thank Gordon McDevitt for his many years of service as the Deputy Minister of Education for Yukon in his previous Education capacity.

But when it came time to find a replacement there, we did engage in a different process. I did put together a committee, including a representative of the Council of Yukon First Nations, a representative of the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees and a representative of the

Yukon College Board of Governors to give a perspective from a post-secondary role. In this most important decision that the government had to make about the senior leadership of the Department of Education, we went to work with our partners in education. All of us, with the Public Service Commissioner, contributed to the process of the creation of interview questions and of the review of the whole process of asking questions. We jointly conducted the interview together and then jointly made our recommendation to the Premier. It was that type of very meaningful first step of engaging all our partners in education that we've continued throughout my whole tenure as Education minister.

We've also gone to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations and other Yukon First Nation governments on the education reform project. We have received the final report from that committee. The different entities involved have taken a look at it. The Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations and other Yukon First Nation governments made a commitment to continue to work together on this to implement and to address the issues that were raised in New Horizons — and other issues that arise, too, in education. That has been titled the New Horizons initiative.

We have had several different engagements with the New Horizons team, which is led by the Deputy Minister of Education and senior people from the Council of Yukon First Nations. This group has worked and made presentations. I'm not going to remember all of them, but they include working with the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, working with our literacy forum that was held a year ago, and making individual presentations to Yukon First Nation governments throughout the territory.

Wherever they've been asked to attend, they've gone and presented information about what's going on and provided additional information about different initiatives that are being considered. The leadership group has also provided updates to members of this Assembly. They've provided updates to the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Chair, when I talk with Yukon First Nation orders of government, they recognize the changes that are being made in today's education system. We heard of some of those changes being made in the education system last Friday at the graduation in Pelly. We see programs changing on the ground — for example, the bilateral program in Haines Junction. We appreciate the curriculum material that was provided to the Department of Education from the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. We see all the work that the First Nations programs and partnerships unit is doing and the work that is being advised on from the First Nation Education Advisory Committee. Those people recognize the changes that are being made, the progress being made, the differences being made in the classroom and the differences being made in the lives of our students.

We're engaging students with increased experiential education programs. We see that in the budget with the allocation of resources again today. We see the expansion of First Nation history programs, language programs and culture programs. We see the engagement of students in other programs, such as the Individual Learning Centre. There are significant changes

being made in the delivery of education. It was commented to me the other day that if people don't know about these changes, it's because they don't want to know about them. At that point, I really have to ask the Liberal education critic one more time why he refused a briefing from the New Horizons folks a year ago when it was offered. It was offered to the NDP. I offered it in the Assembly to update them, to make senior officials available and to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations officials. During the budget briefing, there was a request by the NDP for another update on New Horizons.

I wrote to both caucuses in response to the questions that were asked in the budget briefing that did say, yes, I will provide a briefing on this. We really held off on the briefing as long as we could. We did receive a response from the New Democratic Party that said that they wanted to be part of this briefing, so we did arrange it. It happened this morning. It was an opportunity where senior officials from the Council of Yukon First Nations and senior Department of Education officials sat down and provided a briefing to the New Democratic Party caucus on this. I don't understand why the Liberal Party is not taking me up on my offers for providing additional information, additional background and additional specific program information, coming right from the team. I've made that offer many times in the past. I've made it in writing recently, but for some reason, they choose not to find out what's going on in today's education system.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, the minister used up as much time as he possibly could on this question and didn't answer it directly. This is becoming a pattern with the Yukon Party government. We see it every day in this House.

I can say that the Minister of Education is learning very well from the Premier on this matter. And here was a commitment by the Yukon Party to improve decorum in this House, and that hasn't happened with this minister.

I could go on and on about suggestions we made to the minister, and he hasn't taken us up on our suggestions. Why didn't the minister do that? We're listening to people on the ground and in the communities. We're listening to the members of the YTA. We're listening to them and bringing forward issues that have been raised. All we get from the minister is avoidance. Every time we ask questions in the House during Question Period, nothing gets answered directly. People out there are taking note of that — lots of good, strong questions, and the minister could have just answered them. Yet we go around in a circle, and the minister just doesn't want to say what's on his mind right now about the question. I don't know why, but people will be kept in the dark about this.

Back when the Yukon Party was supposedly working with their partners, with First Nations, there were some very strong suggestions to the minister, who was part of the committee on education reform, to the government, and to the Premier about being inclusive in the process in developing a system that is going to change the way in which we do things. That was a governance model. It wasn't about diluting jurisdiction over education whatsoever, but those are the types of words that this Yukon Party government uses day in and day out to try to paint a picture that is perhaps different from what is there. The chiefs

were very clear to the minister on this. They were very clear to the Premier on this matter of governance. The Premier said that it is off the table — no more discussions. We need that leadership from the Minister of Education. We need it; the Yukon public needs it. When the minister does not voice himself in Cabinet or at the table loud enough, we get what we have today — frustration out there.

There was a desire for change. Does the minister understand that? What we saw the minister, the department and the Yukon Party government do is to cherry-pick through the *Education Act* review report, the education reform project report, and pick things out and implement them or include them into the New Horizons. There is an avoidance of the big picture here and that is they should have governance and a governance model that could be worked on by the government, by the department, with their many partners in education, including First Nations and move that along, rather than the route we're going, which seems to be going to court and drawing down education. There are First Nations in Ottawa right now talking about PSTAs and the draw down and programs and so on. Many have moved quite a distance in the design of what they want to see.

This is all under this Education minister's watch. So what was the major thing that this minister has done so far under his watch? Everything that we see that's being followed through on right now was done by the previous Minister of Education — all the plans, the working with the many partners and so on. There are some things that the minister was trying to do, and that is some follow-up work, but we need really strong leadership from the minister. We need it; the Yukon public needs it; the students in the Yukon Territory need it; and we need this minister to fight on their behalf.

I can't see why the minister would just go out of his way to avoid the questions. They are really important, and these have been talked about in the general public for years and years and years. We have spent millions and millions of dollars at it, and yet this minister just avoids it. I know he has perhaps taken some direction from the Premier on this matter, but it is not right and the public knows it. They see it; they tell us day after day. We get phone calls, e-mails from them, and it is just not right. I am hoping the minister will change his ways in how he does things on this matter and really include the suggestions made by the public, by the students, by the parents and by the teachers in how we do things.

The minister is anxious to get up and answer a question — are we going to get just another 20-minute answer? Are we going to get improvements from this minister? Do I have to lay out all the questions that I have in 20 minutes for the minister, or can we work through this as a debate, going back and forth, rather than lose and try to dilute what we have?

You know, the frustration is so high — I want to read the minister some of the things that were said by the Auditor General in her conclusions. This is frustrating because we hear time and time again out there, and it has been said at least for the last five years, that we need to make some improvements. It says right here, page 27, that “the Yukon Department of Education could not demonstrate to us that it effectively delivers public school programs to Yukon children.” Do you know that's a

very similar statement to what First Nations have been saying, and that's why they enter into negotiations with the federal government to draw down education.

Does the minister understand that? And if he does, why didn't he take these conclusions by the Auditor General a lot more seriously? Why didn't he take these conclusions by the First Nations — when it was raised to him in the committees — why didn't he take them seriously and act upon them and perhaps make changes? Why didn't the minister do that? I think the public wants to know that. This is before the Auditor General said this. This has been said to the minister already and I really hope that the minister does not simply push that aside.

These are comments — I'm talking a lot about what has come from First Nations and the desire to make improvements in their system. The bottom line is putting more diplomas in our graduates' hands and getting our students to graduate. That's the drive and I am hoping that the minister could take it seriously, stand up for those who have been saying this of the Department of Education, of the ministers, even previous ministers. The time for change is now. The big change in the documents that we have before us, as far as legislation goes, was the introduction of the *Education Act* and its review was to happen in the year 2000 — 10 years after it was passed through this House — and we still haven't had any of that. As a matter of fact, I have a draft copy of some changes that we may perhaps see in the *Education Act*. When it comes to annual school growth plans, for example, they will be submitted for approval to the department by the end of each year. Prior to being submitted to the Department of Education, school growth plans shall be signed off by the school administrator and a representative from the First Nation within whose traditional territory they reside.

Now, the Department of Education shall provide signed approval on written response for the reasons given as to why approval has not been forthcoming. Again, this is not developing a system that is a bottom-up approach, but rather more of a minister's control over the system. This is contrary to what the minister has been saying — I mean, contrary to what the public has been saying to the minister year after year.

The minister has those draft plans. There is a lot in there that we can go over, but I'm trying to stress the importance of this to the minister. The Auditor General found that — in her conclusion: "We also found that, in most cases, they have not adequately analyzed root causes, prepared action plans, or taken corrective measures to help close the gaps" in our system — between First Nations and non-First Nations.

There was one area that I believe that the minister said they're following up on and perhaps he will go through more of the recommendations of the Auditor General. I just wanted to read another one, Mr. Chair, for the minister. That was recommendation 95: "We expected that long-term planning for school facilities would exist, capital assets would be managed effectively, and capital and maintenance decisions would be based on a sound and rational process. We found that the Department does not have a current long-term master plan in place to effectively manage school facilities."

I know the minister is going to say they're working on it. It says, "The last long-term plan was effective from 1995 to 1999."

Throughout some of the recommendations I have read what the department has said and whether they agreed to it and some of the suggestions that were being made. Here's another one and it sort of relates to the draft changes that we'll be seeing before us today: recommendation 103, "The Department of Education should take the appropriate steps to ensure that teaching staff are evaluated on a timely basis, as required by the Education Act, the Education Labour Relations Act, and departmental policies." The department's response was they agreed, "Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that teachers are evaluated or participate in Growth Plans by June 2011."

Perhaps the minister could update again to the public those recommendations and perhaps spell out clearly at least the last four conclusions that the Auditor General spelled out in 109, 110, 111 and 112 for our listeners who are out there and tell us again how he as minister will show this leadership to proceed with the suggestions of the general public when it comes to changing the system that we have before us.

I am not talking about New Horizons, but the actual way in which we administer education in our communities and that is with a bottom-up approach. Does the minister even agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, it is always an interesting process entering into a debate with the Liberal education critic. There is always the tendency to provide a very long and detailed question, commenting on a multitude of different issues. For example, in the member's previous question, he commented on the Yukon Teachers Association; he commented on the Selkirk First Nation graduation ceremony; he commented on the Auditor General's report; and he commented on the New Horizons project. Then, when I get up and I provide an answer to the multitude of different issues, the member opposite refers to the script that he continues to read from in Question Period where it says that the minister didn't answer the question. Well, here we go again.

Here we have the member opposite, who did finally ask a question, but it wasn't until after he had given, what, four quotes from the Auditor General's report? I'm not sure. I could answer three of the quotes, and he would then stand up and, as the script says, say, "The minister didn't answer the question. Here we go again."

Now, Mr. Chair, I'm trying to provide information to the member opposite. I'm providing information from the budget, I'm providing information from implementation plans, I'm providing information that has been communicated from other people to the member opposite, but for some reason he's not acknowledging it. I continue to hear, "Oh, you're not doing anything. Oh, there's nothing happening on this."

Mr. Chair, I stand up here and he asks me, "What are you doing to ensure that the community voices are heard in the schools?" And I could talk to him about the whole process now where we have school principals retiring or moving on to other opportunities, where we work and engage the school council and engage the First Nation in that community to be part of the

process. We have that underway right now. There are a couple of instances in the member's own riding where we're looking for new principals, and he's seeing the First Nations and the community engaged in the hiring process and the selection process for the principals.

That is an incredibly strong voice in governance in that school community. The principal plays a very important role in setting the tone and providing administrative services and providing management services in addition to — in some instances — providing teaching programming in the school, being a mentor to the teachers, working between the teachers and the school and the Department of Education, and the community with parents and with First Nations.

Mr. Chair, we're involving the school councils in a very meaningful role in that process, being part of the selection committee. I could tell the member opposite this and then I would sit down and then — true to form — I would hear it again. I've heard it I don't know how many times now — "The member opposite isn't doing anything; They aren't making any changes; there's nothing different; it's all the minister's fault; he's not doing anything. Everybody else is doing a great job, but the minister isn't doing anything and he's just getting in the way of this."

Well, I've heard this now for months, Yukoners have heard this and they just shake their heads at this. They realize the changes being made. The school councils realize the changes being made. Yukon First Nations recognize the changes being made. Teachers recognize the changes being made. We see the differences in the classroom and, yes, I made a commitment to work through these issues with people. I made a commitment not to make — as the member opposite would characterize it — a decree from on high, saying this is the way it shall be. No, in many examples now, I've gone to work with the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees and other entities. I've asked other people to be involved in the process and the decision making. That does take time. Sometimes we have to work according to their schedule. There are times where we are eager to get going on something, but other partners in education need some additional time. We have to accommodate that. We have to allow for them to have meaningful input. The other characterization that the Liberal education critic made was particularly interesting too. He went on to say that it was the previous Education minister who had done all of this, and then without even catching his breath — all of the good stuff was done by the previous Education minister, but all of the bad stuff in the Auditor General's report is all your fault. Excuse me, Mr. Chair, that's the fault of the Education minister of the day.

So all the good stuff was done by someone else, but I'm responsible for all the bad stuff. Well, you know, yes, I could hear members "tsk, tsk, tsk" — I'm not sure how *Hansard* will record that, but they're making a "tsk, tsk" noise in the background.

I appreciate many of the different initiatives that the previous Education minister put in place. I supported them. I mean, it was a Yukon Party decision to put the initiatives in place. It was part of a Yukon Party budget that did this — part of a

Yukon Party philosophy that was supported by his colleagues around the table. I did appreciate the perspective from the Member for McIntyre-Takhini. He and I had some pretty good discussions about education and about other issues.

So here we are today, attempting to debate a — what was that total again? It is a \$128-million budget. I'm trying to outline the plans, the budget allocations, and the resources that are being identified. I've identified the vision and the priorities, and as minister that's one of the specific responsibilities that I have. That isn't done in isolation; it's certainly done with the involvement of many others.

We have also tabled — and when I say "we," I mean the Department of Education — other documents and shared other information about plans, processes and programming with members opposite. Now the member is asking about specific initiatives and specific responses from the Auditor General's report. It is interesting to look at where now he wants me to get involved, which I think is with the evaluation of teachers. I've got to put my Public Service Commissioner hat on to answer this one and say, no, that is a responsibility within the department, within officials in the government, and with our managers there. It is their role to carry out those activities. Yes, there is an expectation from the political people — from the Cabinet ministers — that they will carry those out.

That is the whole point of doing an audit with the Auditor General. The Auditor General comes in and doesn't look at the policy issues. That's what we're supposed to debate in here. The Auditor General takes a look at the policy initiatives that have been directed by the government — those elected people; those are the people in Cabinet — those initiatives being carried out efficiently and efficaciously by the government officials who have a responsibility to do so.

That is what the audit looks at. That is what the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee said. He went on to say that it wasn't a tool to question policy, but to examine how it is being implemented. The member did have an opportunity to hear the discussion between senior Department of Education officials and the Public Accounts Committee. That hearing transcript is available on-line, I believe, through the government Web site. He can go to the Legislative Assembly page and pull it up and see what happened through that debate. He can read the responses from the Department of Education officials.

I've got to ask if the member opposite has a copy of the implementation plan that was a response to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Public Schools and Advanced Education, Yukon Department of Education*? Has he seen a copy of the implementation plan?

If I could get a yes or no, that would help the debate.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That's right. I've tabled it; the member has seen it.

It includes specific information as to how the Department of Education officials will carry out the implementation of their action items to address the concerns. That has been the direction that I've given to the Department of Education, of yes, we've realized these initiatives — or these concerns; excuse me — from the Auditor General. Yes, they've been expressed by

others in the past too. It did reinforce that the concerns that were raised in the past were significant concerns. It wasn't new issues that were raised, but it didn't recognize the ongoing work that had been recently started to address these. The Auditor General's office recognized that. They commented about that during their hearing and during interviews.

The department has prepared a plan. They are implementing it now. They're taking action. There are changes in operation being made because of the Auditor General's report and, on the broader issue, we are making significant investments in education. As I mentioned, the budget here is over \$128 million. It's intended to carry out the objectives that are identified at the beginning of the budget. It's identified to provide support to our tremendous teachers. The member will realize, when he takes a look at the budget, that we continue to have the same number of teachers in our education system that we had last year, and that number is significantly above what it was in past years when we had a thousand more students in our education system.

The member opposite has seen the number of students in our system take a significant decline — really, about a thousand students in recent years — and at the same time, we're seen a significant increase in the number of teachers and in the number of education assistants. The member opposite has to recognize the tremendous investment the government is making in education and the support that we're providing there.

We're continuing to make significant investments in the number of teachers that we have. We're taking steps to provide opportunities for additional training and professional development for teachers. We certainly recognize the tremendous challenges that they face in the classroom and are working to provide additional support.

We did discuss very briefly in the Assembly the changes to the *Yukon College Act*, which allows Yukon College to become a degree-granting institution. At the same time, now we're putting in place a master of education program at Yukon College — a master of education program in a community of about — what's the population of Whitehorse now, about 27,000 people? That's a tremendous step forward. That's a tremendous learning opportunity for people here in our territory.

We're increasing the training opportunities and education opportunities for teachers so they can effect better changes in the classroom. We're also looking at how we can find out other good ideas that are out there and support them. Some tremendous ideas have come forward from teachers and school councils in recent years that we're taking a look at and implementing. I'm thinking of initiatives like the Be the Change program that has spread from our Yukon high schools to create a more inclusive school atmosphere and reduce bullying; I'm thinking of initiatives like the gender-based classroom at Takhini Elementary, which appears from the latest report to be at least an initiative worth looking at a little bit more.

These are innovative and creative ways of addressing issues in education.

Now, there are other ideas that come forward that we want to take a look at and support teachers, administrators and school councils. That's why we've established the innovation

in education fund. This is a fund that will be available to Yukoners to say, "Hey, I have an idea for making a change in education, let's take a look at it." It will go through a peer review process, so it will be reviewed by members of the Yukon Teachers Association, members of the Yukon Association of School Administrators, Department of Education officials, representatives of the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees and others to take a look at to see if it's a good idea or not and then provide some resources so that they can go out and dig into it and see if it should move from an idea to a good idea to a best practice to a common practice.

So we're looking at making changes and providing resources to those people who want to see initiatives happen in their schools. We're making changes with the school growth plan. Yes, of course, to address literacy and numeracy and, as I've said before, I expect to see the issues of literacy and numeracy addressed in every school growth plan because it won't, in my opinion — and the member often reminds me that the buck stops with me — it won't be a complete school growth plan unless it addresses literacy and numeracy. So, of course, we have to see literacy and numeracy addressed in our public school system. But there are additional components that we can add to that, and that's where we can work with the community and identify those different initiatives and, where feasible, incorporate them.

We look at the resources we're providing to education — almost \$130 million in the budget — and we look at the allocation of resources in our public school system, and we see that there is an investment of about \$16,000 per student. That is one of the highest per capita student investments of any jurisdiction in Canada. I would encourage members to take a look at some of the other schools that are funded by DIAND, because those schools are funded on a basis of about — well, in the range of \$6,000 to \$7,000 per student. That's a significant difference. It's a huge difference.

This is an investment we're making for all Yukon students and trying to create opportunities for all to succeed — whether they're here in Whitehorse, Old Crow, Watson Lake or all the points in between, whether it's people of First Nation ancestry, whether it's people who speak French as their first language, whether it's people who follow the Catholic faith or others. We're working to make a difference in the lives of all Yukoners. As well, we're working to provide additional programs for labour market developments and post-secondary education and to enhance lifelong learning.

Mr. Chair, I know I probably haven't answered the question, because he did go on for quite some time with significant different issues. I tried to keep track of them. Last time, he complained when I spoke about the YTA, about Selkirk, about the Auditor General's report, and about New Horizons. I tried to hit the issues that he has raised, but if he has other specific questions, I would be more than willing to try to respond to them.

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

Chair: Order please. The Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10, Vote 3, Department of Education*.

Mr. Fairclough: I listened to the minister's response and I want to remind him that the Auditor General's report came out in January of 2009. I know that he wants to point back to governments — right back to 1990 — but I don't believe that is right. After all, it is this Yukon Party that has promised change and we are holding the government to its word.

Also, I don't know how the minister can draw conclusions from what I have been saying, but when I read out recommendation 103, that the department should take the appropriate steps to ensure that teaching staffs are evaluated on a timely basis, I by far did not mean that the minister should be doing this. If the minister is already jumping to the conclusion that this is what I said, then I could say that is why we are in trouble here today.

The Auditor General said that the department — and I also wanted to say before that when we talked about the hiring of principals and working with school councils and so on, the minister has a final say. We have heard how on the government's side they would say they work with their many partners and how they are taking recommendations from people, but when it comes to YESAA or the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, we have seen the ministers overturn those decisions even though they are very well documented with only a small paragraph that explains why they're doing what they are doing by not taking those recommendations. This is being noted by the general public too, and that's why we are saying that this minister needs to stand up and show that leadership.

I wanted to read another recommendation section of the Auditor General's report and this is recommendation 31. It says, "We noted that the graduation rates published in the Department's Annual Report are expressed as percentages of the potential to graduate. We have brought this up before. I don't need to go through the whole thing, but I believe that the minister said that we're going to see changes here, that this is one of the areas where we're going to see changes. But the Auditor General did say that we calculated a five-year average potential to graduate based on the data in the department's annual report: "This produced a five-year graduation average of 92 percent for Yukon students as a whole and 89 percent for First Nations students. This is significantly higher than the actual graduation rates based on data in the Department's Student Information Management System (58 percent for Yukon students as a whole and 40 percent for First Nations students), making the rates published in the Department's Annual Report misleading." We take the words of the Auditor General very seriously. We will bring them up time and time again in this Legislature.

We will ask the minister questions in regard to her recommendations over and over again, until we see that things are being done properly and according to the Auditor General. I wanted to raise that with the members opposite. That report came out in January of 2009.

The minister also raised the issue of teachers, and I've asked this question year after year. I'd like to move on from the debate that we've been having, because I really feel that we're really not going anywhere when it comes to governance or the minister explaining why he did not attend the annual general meeting of the Yukon Teachers Association. Now, from what we gather, as far as teachers retiring, we're told that — and maybe this number is higher than what it is, but there's approximately 30 teachers who are retiring, and approximately nine principals who will have to be hired into the system. The minister said that there is the same number of teachers in this year who will be there for the next year.

We won't see any changes. I brought up this question to the minister in the past, and he says there are no changes. Then I met with the school council at Golden Horn, and they said — this was in April of 2008 — that they did lose a teacher, and the year before, there was a half-position. I'm concerned about it, and I would like the straight goods from the minister as to exactly what is taking place out there.

I also understand that what the department is doing is taking teachers out of the system and seconding them into the Department of Education. There are several positions like that right now, and I would like to know whether those positions will be backfilled, or do we just see a decrease in the number of teachers in the schools?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I will try to start with the beginning of the member opposite's questions. They were regarding graduation rates and how those are reported. I would like to bring to the member opposite's attention the annual report for 2007-08. This is one of the first real reports that I've had a hand in ensuring that the information is presented. The year before, I had really kind of just taken over as the Minister of Education, so with this one, we started to make some changes because we recognized that there were some challenges in it.

I ask the member to read the first page that says, "To the reader" where it says, "This Annual Report format is in transition. We are working on improving our reporting methods to help ensure we provide the most useful information, presented in the most understandable way, for identifying the state of education in Yukon. Persons seeking additional information about the Department of Education can contact the Department of Education's Communications Coordinator..." for more information.

Mr. Chair, that's on the first page on the notice to reader. On page 47, where it details the graduation rates, it says in paragraph 1: "The Department of Education is currently reviewing how it identifies graduation rates. Within Canada, there is no consistent method among provinces and territories for collecting data and determining graduation rates. Traditionally, Yukon Department of Education has calculated graduation rates by dividing the number of students who actually graduated by the number of students who had the potential to graduate at the beginning of Grade 12."

It goes on to detail that in considerably more information. It also provides information on how Statistics Canada graduation rates are calculated.

Mr. Chair, we realized quite some time ago that we needed to change how we presented the information. That is changing. These changes are being made. We said we were making these changes before the Auditor General's report came out. We recognized that there were some challenges in how the information was collected, distributed and used. That's the big important part: how do we make use of this data? How do we ensure that the department is making changes to the system, to the curriculum, and to, really, all facets of education, to effect the outcomes that we want? And that is more students learning more, increasing their competencies and increasing their mastery of the subject matter. This will result in more graduations and more opportunities. That's the role of the Minister of Education, I believe — to ensure that Yukoners are prepared for the opportunities that are before them, and to work with them to help them accomplish their goals — not to do the work for them, but to work with them, and that is an important part of this mix. We provide opportunities, but we can't always — well, to put it bluntly, we can't force people to accomplish all of the programs. There is a responsibility of students to become involved, to be engaged, to do the work and to gain the competencies from the intended courses. That is the whole part of the mix. Students have a significant responsibility as well.

I certainly don't want to see a system where we start to reduce our expectations just in order to increase the graduation results. That doesn't help. The purpose of making changes to the education system is to increase the knowledge, abilities and opportunities of students. Teachers, parents and students have told me that we can't lower education standards just to have more graduates. We have a responsibility to maintain high standards and to provide supports so that Yukon students can achieve them.

That's what we'll continue to do. If that means changing teaching styles or changing techniques or the Individual Learning Centre or more distributed education courses or more video conferencing or making other changes, we're certainly welcome to look at that. That's what we're doing right now. We're working to engage students to provide them with a meaningful curriculum, to provide them with meaningful assessment tools that assess their understanding, mastery and competency on the learning objectives in order that we can help them to create more opportunities in the future.

I trust that that addresses the member's concerns about graduation rates. Would he nod or shake his head, yes or no?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Okay, now the member opposite is talking about the failure rate. How do we make changes to our system to reduce that? Now, that's a good question.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Oh, now the Leader of the Liberal Party is joining the debate. If he wants me to ask questions, I should join the Liberal Party. I'm not going to go there, Mr. Chair. Oh, I see, I might not be welcome in the Liberal Party.

Well, it seems to have a fairly open-door policy.

Now, the question appears to be: what are we going to do to increase graduation rates, and specifically, what are we going to do to increase graduation rates for people of First Nation

ancestry? Well, there have been a number of Department of Education initiatives over the past few years that are improving how we incorporate First Nation culture and values into the classroom.

This year, we will provide \$1.77 million in funding to support the Yukon First Nations programs and partnerships unit at the Department of Education. I'm pleased to say that this unit continues to grow and provide a unique and helpful service to the Department of Education and the larger education community in the Yukon.

The Yukon First Nations programs and partnerships unit releases annually a teacher resource handbook. The handbook 2008-09 of Yukon First Nation education resources in public schools will help teachers to include a First Nation perspective throughout the curriculum. This is an annual project and it is distributed to all teachers every year. The Yukon First Nations programs and partnerships unit is currently developing grade 4 Yukon First Nation governance units. A grade 12 Yukon First Nation studies integrated resource package, courses, textbooks, additional early primary readers reflecting Yukon First Nation people, as well as a teachers' guide, are being released. I believe there were additional readers being released just this past week and there's work on translating some of these primary readers into Yukon First Nation languages.

The unit has also participated from a distance in the development of a B.C. grade 12 first peoples' English course. That is significant progress, I'm sure the members would agree. We're working with the B.C. government, whose curriculum the Government of Yukon uses to create a grade 12 first peoples' English course, and this course will be the equivalent to the B.C. ministry English 12. Again, we are not talking about lowering standards; we are talking about changing content, but maintaining high academic standards and providing people with the tools they need to accomplish them.

Additionally, we are making very good progress on the development and expansion of First Nations curriculum. \$20,240 is dedicated to train all new Yukon teachers in Yukon First Nations culture during our new teacher orientation sessions in August every year.

To provide cultural enhancement programming for Yukon schools, we continue to provide \$225,000 a year in funding. This cultural programming funding initiative involves the schools, school councils and First Nation communities working together to increase and improve the cultural programs, projects and activities in the classrooms throughout the entire school.

Additionally, Mr. Chair, Advanced Education continues to support the Yukon native teacher education program with \$540,000 under this year's budget. Again, this is preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. I'm very gratified to see Yukon students, especially Yukon students of First Nation ancestry, becoming involved in education as a career and enrolling in the Yukon native teacher education program, graduating from that, and then going to work in Yukon schools to prepare the next generation of student.

In total, the Yukon government is investing \$5.8 million in First Nation-related initiatives. That's in addition to all the

other initiatives related to all the other aspects of education in our school system. We continue to look at innovative and creative programs: for example, the bicultural program. I might have been calling that by a different name earlier, but it's the bicultural program that is being worked on in the St. Elias School in Haines Junction with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Additionally, we're looking at experiential education. The member opposite heard me talk about some of the funding allocations available for that. Additionally, we're looking at methods of teaching. We're looking at methods of evaluation. We're constantly looking at methods of evaluation that practice appropriate pedagogical approaches, that maintain appropriate academic standards, that provide an accurate assessment of the student's accomplishments, of learning objectives, that provide a fair approach to all students, and that provide for comparability of results.

We'll consistently look at approaches in evaluation and assessment to ensure that our students are maintaining high academic standards. Mr. Chair, we're looking at ways of enhancing curriculum, of enhancing education delivery, of enhancing and changing evaluation techniques, of incorporating community issues into the school.

We're looking at alternative education delivery models. For example, that's the Individual Learning Centre. We're also expanding the use of video conferencing. There is a line item in this budget, should we ever get to that, that addresses the use of video conferencing. Mr. Chair, this is a really innovative approach where Yukon students in all Yukon schools can meet in a virtual format, either on-line or through a video conferencing method, and have a way of communicating back and forth with a teacher. Just this coming summer, we were able to accommodate a student in Dawson who, rather than having to come into Whitehorse for summer school, is able to participate in summer school from Dawson and do the course via video conferencing. So we're looking at ways of accommodating students wherever we can.

The member now has refined his question about what we are doing in order to improve graduation rates. Number one, Mr. Chair, we are not reducing academic standards. Instead we are going to look at ways of changing curriculum, changing teaching styles, changing assessment techniques, and working to reflect the community in the classroom to teach relevant and engaging information that is important to students, that will have an impact on their life, prepare them for future opportunities and, really, prepare them for a whole future of lifelong learning.

The Department of Education officials, starting with me, senior management, teachers — all have made a commitment to working with Yukon students to increase the education outcomes of all students.

Mr. Fairclough: Would the minister be surprised if I said that he didn't answer the question, Mr. Chair?

Yes. Okay. The minister wants to continue.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Last year, we had about 476 FTEs, full-time equivalents, in teaching positions in our education system. This year, again, we will have the same number. There

has been no reduction in FTEs. There are situations where, if a teacher is put into a principalship or a principal is moved into a superintendent position or something like that, there is a back-fill. There are teachers we then bring in, occasionally on a term type of position, but we have maintained the number of teachers in our system. As I'm sure the member appreciates, there are different changes from our different schools — different demographic changes, different population changes, different classroom compositions, different numbers of students in different grades, so yes, we do need to address all of those.

The superintendents work with our principals in order to ensure that they have appropriate staff to meet the staffing needs in the community, both from an operational perspective and also to address some of the specific objectives in that school, where the school can make a decision as to how to best use their resources.

But no, Mr. Chair, even though we're seeing declining populations, there is no forecasted reduction in teachers. We'll continue to have 476 — I believe there's a fraction in there — FTEs. We made a commitment to continue to work to address needs throughout the territory. We'll continue to do that. We're working to ensure that there is equitable allocation of teachers and resources from all our schools.

Yes, we realize that in Yukon, just like in every other jurisdiction in Canada, we are faced with the reality of having to use a school bus to move kids to a school — that not every child can be within walking distance of a school. We also have the reality of having mixed-grade classes, where they are appropriate.

So the short answer for the member opposite is that there's no change.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister said that there is no change, so is the minister confirming that we do have teachers who are moving out of the classroom and being seconded to the department? One of them was in regard to the tracking of students, if the minister doesn't know. Is he saying those positions that are being seconded into the department are being back-filled? Is that what the minister is saying? So we're not going to see that reduction and, if those are being backfilled, then are we actually seeing the numbers increase because they're being backfilled — for the number of employees in the department?

So what we've got here, if there are 20 teachers in the school and you take two out within the department, what the minister says is there's no reduction, that the department is actually going to be backfilling those positions while the secondment is carried out within the department.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member opposite appears to be a bit confused around this issue and is putting more into it than really should go into it. There is an issue each year where when the staffing allocations are being done — and as I said, we have the 476 FTEs in the system. When the superintendents do sit down with administrators, they look at their overall school population; they look at the breakdown based on grades; they look at the current teaching complement in the school; they look at the current grade structure; and they look at the current strengths and weaknesses in teaching preferences and subject matter expertise of the teachers and where they fit.

They do make some changes. There won't be a change in the overall number, but there certainly could be some changes from school to school to school. That is just in response to the changing nature of the population throughout the whole Yukon. We do our best to ensure that we have levels of equity out there.

You know, it really isn't fair to see one class with, say, five students and another class with 30 students. That wouldn't even be following our collective agreement, so we wouldn't have that. But we do have to maintain some balances and seek to ensure that we have equity between the different schools.

There was one more point on this one. As we get closer to all of the finalization — that's what the Department of Education is working on right now. They are currently working with administrators on finalizing the staff allocations for the upcoming school year. But we really won't know the final numbers of students in each of the schools until about the middle of September, when we see different moves that happen or different people moving into or out of a community. So there could be a situation where the department responds to something next school year to finally fine-tune — as you can imagine, with 476 people having two or three — well, just doing a bit of fine tuning. This is done every year in our education system, where every year, based on the final numbers, there has to be some arrangements and just fine tuning of the system, based on the actuals rather than based on the projections.

There is some work being done to train additional teachers in some other specific — addressing behavioural issues, or some other specific topics. I mean, these are all in response to the initiatives that were being raised with this, but I don't expect to see changes to classroom teachers. As I said, we've got 476 teachers, and we expect to see 476 teachers next year. We're seeing fewer students in our system, and we're seeing more teachers and more educational assistants. We're also doing work to prepare teachers, to give them additional support to address the tremendous issues that they face in the classroom. That's additional professional development, additional information on dealing with behavioural issues, or dealing with learning disabilities. I mean, I haven't even had a chance to speak about the special program unit and the work that department does helping to work with teachers on addressing students with special needs, whether they be cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or other disabilities.

We currently have a significant amount of support there with occupational therapists, with speech therapists and with other people who provide that type of specialized assistance.

I hope this has cleared up for the member opposite that this year we have 476 teachers and next year we expect to have 476 teachers in our system. We have seen a decrease in population, but we have seen an increase in teachers.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, we'll hold the minister to his word and we would like to see the movements between schools for the number of teachers, too. If the minister wants to lay that out — that's fine. The minister says that there will be no reduction in teachers. So I will go up to Jack Hulland Elementary School and this is what I could say to them: The teachers you

have now will be what you get next year. Those are the minister's words.

I would like to ask a question about Elijah Smith Elementary School and the fact that they have a huge enrolment. We do have portable units there. How is the department going to resolve this and what is in the works right now to resolve this problem?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I trust that when the member opposite quotes what I say in the Assembly that he will faithfully reflect what I said and not selectively interpret some of the information that I provided.

I did tell the member opposite — and he did recognize that there would be changes from school to school to school — so that does mean that there could be changes happening in all Yukon schools. This happens every year. This happens because teachers retire, because teachers decide to leave the education system or go to another jurisdiction, or they want to move from one school to another. There are changes that happen every year, and every year the Department of Education responds to the new environment based on characteristics like the population of the school, the breakdown of the size of the individual classes, the individual characteristics of the teachers and the subject matters that they teach, what they want to teach, and all of those types of things.

I made it very clear that we don't expect to see a reduction in the total number of teachers in our system. We do expect to see changes from school to school but, if the member characterizes that one school has lost a teacher or that teacher has moved to another school, it's not appropriate to characterize that as saying that all of a sudden now there's a cut, without then fully realizing that there is also growth in another school. It's really inappropriate to tell half of the story. The whole story needs to be told and you can't just cherry-pick some of the information that's presented.

The member opposite has asked a question about the enrolment at Elijah Smith Elementary School, and we're currently working with the school council on addressing this issue. One of the options being considered is moving one of the existing portables that we have, that isn't being utilized, up there to address some of the short-term concerns.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister says that we shouldn't be cherry-picking some of the information but I see the minister doing this all the time, even with information that he reads out on the floor of this Legislature.

I'll try to be as accurate as I can in relaying the message back to the schools, and the minister could follow up with the schools. I think all of them are interested to know the allotments that they're getting, which should have been done awhile back, simply because they then present a school plan once they know the number of teachers.

And for the teachers also — if there is a reduction, they should know whether or not they have a job or whether or not they will have to be moving to another school.

So I think the minister needs to speed that up. He says they are being done soon, but it should have at least been done before the end of the sitting here so that we could ask the questions, should it arise.

I would like to ask the minister — it doesn't sound like we have any long-term solution for the Elijah Smith Elementary School. I know that the numbers do change. But when it comes to the school catchment areas, we had some changes in the past. Is this something the department is looking at — to make some changes to the school catchment areas?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As I'm sure the member opposite appreciates, there is the changing nature of neighbourhoods within Whitehorse, and indeed, within all Yukon communities. Different people move, different populations age, and this is one of those issues that the Department of Education is constantly monitoring.

The member opposite is aware of the report that was done fairly recently from Hold Fast that looked at the school attendance areas and the projected growth in those communities. So of course we will continue to look at this. We made some changes in the catchment areas to help to address this issue. We will continue to monitor this issue, as we do every year, and make changes where appropriate.

There is another comment that I just would like to put on the record too, and that's coming out of the Auditor General's report, where one of the additional recommendations that she put forward was that resources be aligned with needs, and that we would have to monitor our decisions in this area. We agree with that. We realize that we do need to do some work to align and ensure our resources are responding to the needs in order that we can provide a certain amount of equity in our education system.

Mr. Fairclough: I realize that the department does go through these exercises now and then when it comes to the school catchment areas. Should there be changes, I would appreciate the minister sending over the changes that are being made.

I have a few more questions. I'd like to ask about F.H. Collins Secondary School, but first I'd like to talk about the completion of the Tantalus School. I've been asking these questions for years and years and years. We see money in the budget again for doing improvements to the grounds now that the demolition of the old school took place. The department has \$80,000, which doesn't seem near enough to do a proper job. There are quite huge grounds in and around the school.

Also, the department has asked the Village of Carmacks to chip in to see how they could make improvements to what the department would like to see as far as putting in a baseball field or a track field or whatever it is that is of interest to the department.

I would like the minister to shed some light on that. Is this going to finally be completed this year? I have been asking the question for about six years now.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I don't have all of the specifics of the architectural schematics as to what is going to be done where. The funding for the Tantalus School outside improvements is located in the budget item titled "Site Improvement and Recreational Development", which I believe has a total allocation of \$335,000. Not all of that will be used on Tantalus School. There are some other projects that will come out of that.

If the member opposite has any kind of official correspondence to the Village of Carmacks regarding this request or asking for involvement to look at ball fields or that type of issue, I would certainly appreciate seeing that. This is information that is news to the officials that are here. We would like to find out more about the issue that the member opposite is raising and really find out if this is just some rumour that's going on in the community or if, indeed, there has been some specific work going on. It's unfortunate, but sometimes situations like this develop a life of their own or people in coffee shops say things or share good ideas about something, and then it turns out that it gets attributed to the government. So, if the member opposite has some more information on this, perhaps he could send it to me and I will endeavour to take a look at it in greater detail.

I appreciate that there were a few delays in the final demolition of the old school. I did have the opportunity to visit the school about two weeks ago during the ridge run and saw the area that does need to be turned into a lawn. And you know, we'll continue to work with the community as to the different initiatives that can go on there.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, if the minister would like that correspondence, he can pick up the phone and call the mayor in Carmacks and get filled in more. \$80,000 was earmarked for this improvement — that doesn't seem near enough. I don't believe that was even the cost of any improvements to any of the new schools in the past. It just seems like — I don't know what the department plans to put in to making improvements on the school grounds, but if it's just grass, I think we're missing an opportunity to really make some improvements here. So I asked the minister to get in touch with the community.

I'm sure the department could fill him in more, in some detail, on this issue, and I'll just leave it at that. Hopefully, the department would take some interest in making good improvements to the school grounds around the Tantalus School. This school is quite often used for events, and it's popular because it's a short way from Whitehorse. Whether it's track and field and so on, they have the perfect opportunity to create something there.

I know that a lot of the students, when they come down from Whitehorse to that community, really enjoy themselves, particularly when it comes to the ridge run.

I do want to ask about F.H. Collins Secondary School. There was an issue I raised about the number of teachers who were retiring. The number that has been floating out there is around 30, and the number of principals was around nine. I just want to know if the minister feels there will be any problem in filling these positions. Are three of those principal positions — I believe there is one in Pelly Crossing. The principal told me about that. There is one in Mayo, and the one that I am not quite sure about is the position in Tantalus School. If the minister could fill me in on that, I would appreciate that, and whether or not he sees any problems in hiring into these positions of teachers who are retiring. The number that I had was 30 and perhaps it is higher or quite a bit higher or people are moving. I would just like the minister to fill us in on that.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I have had the pleasure of visiting Tantalus School several times, both the old school and the new school. It is a beautiful structure. It is something the community is certainly proud of. When I had a chance to go to the ridge run — which is an event that has been happening now for a couple of decades — two weeks ago, it was great to see all the students from across the territory there participating in that event. We had over 550 students participating in the ridge run this year, and I have to note that that is more than 10 percent of the entire student population of Yukon schools.

So it's certainly a great event and my hat goes off to the principal, the teachers and the volunteers in the community for all the work they do every year on that great event. It really was wonderful to see the whole community out, whether it was helping with the timing, or race marshals, or with helping to hand out the awards afterward. It was a great event that the school should be proud of.

That school facility is certainly a bright and shining star in the community of Carmacks. It demonstrates this government's commitment to respond to needs in Yukon communities. It demonstrates this government's commitment to work with school councils and with the First Nation to ensure they had a facility that would not only meet the needs now, but also in the future. It's a great example of building a facility to meet community needs.

I had the opportunity to talk there with the principal about how the facility is being used. He said it was great to see the community really embracing the school and using it — especially one of the large, open, round meeting rooms. Not only was that being embraced very strongly by students, but also people in the community were using it, and even people from throughout the Yukon were coming in and using that space.

The member has also brought up the issue of retirements, and that of retiring teachers and school administrators, the principals we have in our system. We do appreciate that there are changing demographics across Canada, that we're seeing an aging population, that we're seeing an aging of the baby-boom generation and that particular bulge in the demographic curve, and that there are more teachers — I think it is about 30 right now — who are available to retire, or are planning to retire.

This is something that the department has been very aware of. We have been monitoring this. Some people plan their retirement very far in advance; others make a decision a bit more — “spur of the moment” isn't quite the right phrase, but without years of consideration or years of planning.

So this is something the Department of Education responds to on an annual basis and takes great steps to prepare for. The member opposite asked if we foresaw any challenges in recruiting people for these positions and, Mr. Chair, this comes at a time when other jurisdictions in Canada, including our neighbouring provinces, are laying off teachers. The member is nodding in acknowledgement that we're seeing teachers laid off in other jurisdictions. So I don't anticipate that this will be a challenge, especially if other jurisdictions are laying off teachers.

We also, Mr. Chair, have made significant efforts here in the Yukon in the area of attracting staff. One of the goals of the

Yukon education leadership program is to be an attractive employer to current and new workers in order to provide high-quality service to the public, so we do have in place our Yukon education leadership program. We also have the Yukon native teacher education program in the territory that works with Yukon students, especially those of First Nation ancestry, to prepare them for a career as a teacher.

Mr. Chair, I would strongly encourage all members of the Assembly — if they are aware of a person or a potential student who is interested in this — for them to go up to Yukon College and discuss with Yukon College officials the very rewarding career of being a teacher and find out a bit more about the YNTEP, because it's great to see Yukoners preparing for Yukon opportunities. I know in the member's own riding in Carmacks, I believe there were three teachers there who are YNTEP grads. I've had some significant discussions with teachers throughout the territory and specifically, a couple of weeks ago in the member's riding, talking about the benefit of that program and the benefits to those teachers, about making a difference in their own community.

We also have programs to prepare Yukon teachers for opportunities as principals and school administrators. I mentioned the Yukon education leadership program. This is a program that has been designed to provide additional training, support, and assistance to people looking at continuing their education career or becoming a school administrator.

I believe we have about 55 teachers in this program now. That was very encouraging to see that more than 10 percent of our teaching staff came forward and said that they wanted to participate in an educational leadership program. This is a significant undertaking. We are also working with other institutions, whether it is Simon Fraser University or Yukon College, to prepare people with additional course work and accreditation. The member opposite has also heard me talk about the University of Northern British Columbia master of education with a specialty in leadership being offered through Yukon College. That will be great to see — that there will be those kinds of opportunities for Yukon teachers to prepare to become administrators.

I believe there is also a cohort of teachers interested in doing a distance program from Simon Fraser University to prepare for opportunities.

So the short summation answer for the member opposite is the Department of Education is well prepared to respond to this situation, that we take steps annually to attract teachers to our territory, to participating in trade and recruitment-type affairs. We are working with Outside jurisdictions and we are working to develop additional teachers here so they can take on additional roles in our schools and become those administrators.

And now, as other jurisdictions are really making some cutbacks — which aren't happening here in the Yukon, but we're seeing teachers laid off in other jurisdictions — that also might be an avenue where we can attract teachers from other jurisdictions to the Yukon.

So, number one, we'd like to see more Yukoners become teachers, we'd like to see more Yukon teachers become administrators and, if we need more, then we'll certainly work with

other universities from across Canada and other teachers from across Canada to fill the necessary positions in our schools.

Mr. Fairclough: I have one more question for the minister. He took a long time to answer the last one. I thought it was a pretty simple question.

With regard to F.H. Collins, there is \$400,000 to begin the planning of a new high school. I'd just like to know the process that's being laid out and what's going to happen next year, as far as the architectural designs, and when does he envision the completion of this school?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Yukon Party government has taken a very proactive approach to this situation as well as the construction of the Tantalus School in the member's riding that we just discussed. We've also done a significant amount of work in planning and preparing for our future facility needs. The members opposite will realize that one of the first steps that we undertook upon taking office was to work with the Hold Fast consulting group to take a look at student-projected populations in the Copperbelt area, as well as some of the future needs for Porter Creek and for F.H. Collins.

We are looking at the projected increases in growth in population in Whitehorse and where those growth areas will occur. We realize that there was a pressing need from a financial point of view to replace the facilities of F.H. Collins, that it is a very expensive facility to maintain and that many of its major systems are in need of major upgrades. We are at the situation now where — based on the financial analysis of the cost of doing repairs versus the cost of new construction — replacing the school is the most appropriate option before us. So this is a situation where we continue to provide excellent programming and a tremendous number of opportunities at F.H. Collins Secondary School. There are significant programs going on there, and some of their trades and vocational programming are top-notch. We will continue to look at how to best use some of those facilities.

We also recognize that, when we had an opportunity before us of looking at replacing a secondary school, that was going to be a tremendous expenditure and that we had a responsibility to take a look at building a building based on the needs, based on teaching, based on best pedagogical practices, and basing it on preparing students for their future opportunities.

As you can imagine, the courses that the original school was designed to accommodate are different from the courses that students are taking now. I'm not even sure if people — well, I don't think that people would have used a calculator in the first year that F.H. Collins was open, let alone have used wireless Internet to do video conferencing and do on-line Web-based seminars.

Those are some of the areas that we need to be prepared for, because those are some of the opportunities that are coming before our students. We need to have a building to accommodate the technology of the day and, in the future, that responds to the teaching methodologies used today and to meet the needs of students. That was really the whole purpose of doing the secondary school programming process review. So, we've done that. It engaged many Yukoners in that process to

get their valuable and important feedback, including comments from all of the high schools. We invited the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon to participate in that, as well as many of our other partners in education.

We realize that we have a tremendous opportunity before us in building a new secondary school — one that will have a very long and lasting legacy in our community. Mr. Chair, we anticipate the creation of the building advisory committee very shortly, and that will be established to enable the various school stakeholder groups — such as the school council, administration staff, local First Nations, the municipality, Department of Education and Highways and Public Works — to participate in the planning and design of the school.

Members of the steering committee for the recently completed secondary school programming review, which had recommendations from the same stakeholders group, may be invited to be part of the building advisory committee.

We expect that by fall 2009, we will have developed some of the requirement specifications. This will allow us to go ahead with some of the permitting and procurement procedures, including a YESAA evaluation and the whole asset construction agreement process as to how these types of projects are constructed. We then anticipate working with an architect to do the design of that, having those documents then taken out to tender and then seeing construction begin in May of 2011.

I think that answers the member opposite's question. I look forward to being there with my shovel to turn the sod to break ground on this project.

I had the opportunity to be at the opening of the Tantalus School in Carmacks, and I'd just like to share with members in the Assembly that I don't think there was a more optimistic event that one could have in the community, other than opening a school. Going and opening a school and seeing the look on people's faces, seeing the commitment that that makes to the community, and seeing the investment in the community — really, the whole investment in the future — is a very optimistic and very satisfying process. I look forward to seeing all members there as we break ground and prepare our students for their future learning.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his attempt to answer those questions. I'll just turn it over to the third party.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Where to begin? Time is short, and there are still many questions to ask, but I'm going to pick up right where the minister left off, actually.

The minister just said that there is no more satisfying experience than to see a community come together at the opening of a new school, and a new education facility. I agree. I'll tell you what I think is unfortunate, which is that this minister has only had the opportunity — and any minister of Education who has been with the Yukon Party government has really only had this opportunity — to open one school in six and a half years. The need is great for facilities in communities. The one that I'm thinking of — it really wouldn't take that much effort on the part of this government to empower communities.

The minister is going to get up and tell me that they've gone from being a school committee to being a school council.

But the reality of the matter is — and I was talking to a former Minister of Education not that long ago — that there was a school in Burwash Landing. I think the minister could get some great satisfaction in the very near future if he could get the Premier to commit the funds to complete it — I believe it's called the elders and youth activity centre in Burwash Landing — and put some educational programs in there to put the resources into Burwash Landing, so that those students wouldn't have to travel to Destruction Bay.

It's my understanding that all the students at the Destruction Bay school live in Burwash Landing. It would make sense for them to be educated in their home community with the support of their community. That is one place where I would start today, just to pick up where the minister left off.

I would like to thank the minister for the briefing that we received this morning about New Horizons. I have a better understanding of some of the challenges that the education system faces and how difficult it can be, but I reflect back to some comments that I heard from school council members who are no longer on school council, who gave up being on school council for a variety of reasons.

They were initiatives that seemed to take a long time. I recognize that we talked this morning about lifelong learning and how important that is and that the process is a long process. It takes commitment: it takes the commitment of students, it takes the commitment of teachers, it takes the commitment of administrators and the bureaucracy, it takes the commitment of parents, and it takes the commitment of politicians — and politicians are where the buck stops.

So I'll send this over to the minister. This is some information that came out of a report from the Canadian Teachers' Federation. I brought this up with him a few weeks back, when we were discussing education here in the Legislature. We talked about — and I've asked the minister this in Question Period, and I couldn't get an answer at the time — government spending on education as a percentage of the total budget. These figures, admittedly, are from 2006-07. We have seen increases and I recognize that in this year's budget but I think that other jurisdictions are probably also having to keep pace.

What Yukon spends, as a percentage, the total consolidated provincial local government spending — and the information comes from Statistics Canada — is 10.8 percent of our total spending in the \$1.003-billion budget is spent on education. There are other jurisdictions — we're in the bottom four with Nunavut, Nova Scotia and Quebec. Everybody else is ahead of us by at least a percentage point in 2006-07.

Now, the thing about New Horizons is that we're talking about new initiatives. We're also talking about the capacity to deal with those new initiatives and that's what that school council member was talking about: that new initiatives require resources, they require commitment, and they require dedication, but they also require the funding in order to deal with them.

We can't expect, unless we're going to stop doing something, that we can start going out with these new initiatives and improve the education system without increased funding. We're in the real broad policy, financial policy, of the Depart-

ment of Education here; we're not drilling down into the individual programs.

If we get through those motions tomorrow, we'll do that. Or we'll do it on Thursday, or we'll do it in the fall sitting, as long as the minister is willing to engage in that debate.

But what I see here — and the minister needs to talk to the Premier and get a commitment that we do need more money, that the minister needs more money in the Department of Education in order to pursue some of these new initiatives. It's about capacity. And it's not just about the capacity of the teachers; it's not just about the capacity of the bureaucracy; it's about the capacity of the public to participate in these new initiatives.

The minister likes to talk about partnerships. Well, the minister and the government are the ones that are holding the purse strings that control those partnerships. If the minister wants to make those partnerships real, he needs to bring the ability and the willingness to share power. Part of that is about sharing those financial resources so that the capacity is there in communities and with First Nation governments, in order to participate in those processes.

One of the ways to do that is to look at school boards. I'm going to cover a bit of territory here as quickly as I can. But there are a number of communities that have been looking at the creation of school boards as an option. Some First Nations are interested in it as well, I believe, as an alternative to the section 17 process of drawing down responsibilities for education. But it's about sharing and it's about government —

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

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled May 12, 2009:

09-1-114

Report to the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to Section 25 of the *Ombudsman Act* (dated May 11, 2009): Investigation File #05-047 prepared by the Ombudsman (Speaker Staffen)

09-1-115

Yukon College 2007/2008 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements (dated October 31, 2008) prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (Rouble)

09-1-116

Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues 2008/2009 Annual Report (Horne)

The following documents were filed May 12, 2009:

09-1-96

Yukon Law Foundation Annual Report and Financial Statements (dated October 31, 2008) (Horne)

09-1-97

Bid process, letter (dated May 5, 2009) to the Hon. Jim Kenyon, Minister of Economic Development, from Dan Huras, President, Sapphire Group re: Dawson City wastewater treatment system bid (Inverarity)

09-1-98

Bid process, letter (dated May 5, 2009) to the Hon. John Baird, Minister, Transport Canada, Ottawa, from Dan Huras, President, Sapphire Group re: Dawson City wastewater treatment system bid (Mitchell)