

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, May 14, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Point of personal privilege

Mr. Hardy: On a point of personal privilege, I just want to give a gift to each person in here. That is why you have a flower at the front of your desk. For many years, I've had the honour to work with each and every one of you, and I would like to recognize the many things you've taught me about politics and life.

Thank you very much.

Applause

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Todd Hardy

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would just like to extend our gratitude from this side of the Legislature to the Member for Whitehorse Centre for the thoughtful gift, and for all of his many and varied contributions over the years. I have certainly learned from the member opposite.

In recognition of International Museum Day

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise today as Minister of Tourism and Culture to pay tribute to International Museum Day. In 1977, the International Council of Museums adopted a resolution designating May 18 as International Museum Day. This resolution was passed to remind everyone of this very special role museums play in preserving our cultural heritage. The theme for this year is "Museums and Tourism".

Museums and our entire heritage sector contribute greatly to the quality of life of not just Yukoners but people everywhere. They also contribute greatly to the economic well-being of our country.

The work that Yukon museums — community museums, interpretive centres and First Nation cultural and heritage centres — do to preserve our local history is part of the much larger picture. These institutions are working as part of a global community to preserve the heritage of all humanity.

The museums program, administered through the Department of Tourism and Culture, is pleased to provide support to 18 museums in the Yukon for a total of just over \$1.3 million in direct funding support. This year we are very pleased to provide funding support of \$38,000 to the newest member in the museum family, the John Tizya Centre in Old Crow. I was very fortunate to attend the opening of the centre last year, and it is a beautiful facility that lends itself proudly to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation's objective of using the facility as a

multi-purpose centre, offering a variety of educational opportunities to the community and visitors from afar.

Museums throughout the Yukon are to be recognized and congratulated for their hard work each and every day of the year to preserve, protect and interpret our unique history and cultural legacies.

The Old Log Church Museum, for example, launched the photo exhibit last fall entitled "Your connection to the past, legacy for the future — 150 years of the Anglican Church in the Yukon."

The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre also hosted "Polar Perspectives", a coast-to-coast International Polar Year speaker series and youth forum earlier this year, an event that was well-attended and built on community partnerships to provide regular programming for youth.

Last summer, MacBride Museum also officially opened their expansion that now offers many additional exhibits and space for displays designed to enrich the visitors' experience.

The Yukon Transportation Museum earlier this spring also hosted "*Silver Dart* — Celebrating 100 Years of Aviation in Canada" exhibit. Those who attended were given a glimpse into Canadian aviation and more specifically, Yukon's aviation history, commemorating Yukon aviation pioneers in Canada's north.

These are but a few of the many events that were hosted by Yukon museums that have helped raise awareness of our history, as well as instilled a greater sense of community pride in each and every one of us. The popularity of Yukon museums among residents and visitors alike demonstrates a desire to be engaged and to learn, to discover something about ourselves that we didn't know, to see something we have never seen before, to understand and appreciate how the past affects today and potentially impacts the future. That is all part of the important work museums provide.

Yukon's museum community is celebrating International Museum Day on Monday, May 18. The Department of Tourism and Culture is very proud to be participating in the celebration at the Beringia Centre, along with 10 other museums in seven different communities, which have all planned various events or waived admission charges for the day.

I encourage all Yukoners and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to celebrate International Museum Day this weekend, and take this opportunity to pay tribute to the many pioneers who have shared and handed down their legacies to each of us. As guardians of our cultural legacies, Yukon museums are to be commended and congratulated. What better way to say thank you than to celebrate their special day, International Museum Day, on May 18?

Thank you.

In recognition of Todd Hardy

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, with the House's indulgence and yours, I would just like to take a moment to add my voice in paying tribute to the long service to this territory and to this House of the Leader of the New Democratic Party. We have had many good debates, and while we haven't always agreed, I've always understood the passion with which he has presented the issues that he believes in.

I'd also to thank him for the numerous discussions off camera and out of the House. We have all learned from these, and I wish him well.

In recognition of International Museum Day

Mr. Inverarity: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to International Museum Day. International Museum Day was created in 1977 to encourage awareness about the role of museums in the development of society. The 2009 theme for International Museum Day is "Museums and Tourism". Museums on all continents will be celebrating how heritage can bring tourists and local communities together in beneficial relationships. This year's theme encourages museum professionals and volunteers to work together with visitors and tourists creating interactions with local communities in order to experience heritage both inside and outside the museum walls.

Our museums help Canadians understand our history and do their part to safeguard our past. They also increase and promote the diverse heritage of Canadian society, allowing us to learn and grow individually and collectively. Yukon museums trace our territory's colourful history from First Nation heritage to gold rush bonanzas to transportation legacies. The Yukon offers approximately 24 museums, interpretive centres, and First Nation cultural centres throughout the territory.

As we journey through Yukon's rich past, we learn about Yukon's pioneers and their stories and of First Nation cultures and traditions. We learn of Yukon's mining and geology history, tools, equipment, transportation and wildlife exhibits and Ice Age mammals. We learn of the early pioneers, missionaries and the building of the narrow gauge railway in 1898. We see the photographs and artifacts of an early era and unique architecture and local landmarks.

Through First Nations, we experience pre-gold rush history, artifacts, rare collections of stones, bone tools and also hear stories, oral history and the languages of many of the 14 First Nations.

Tourism is a major industry in the Yukon and, through our museums, interpretive centres and First Nation cultural centres, we offer our visitors a glimpse of our past while preserving our history and heritage for future generations. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the curators, staff and volunteers who are involved in all aspects of museum life, including research, restoration and conservation efforts.

Through your dedication and hard work, the history of the Yukon will live on and be preserved. We ask all Yukoners to take time, bring your family, bring a friend, stop by a museum, interpretive centre or a First Nation heritage centre in your area and spend some time revisiting Yukon's history — your history. It will be well worth the time spent.

Thank you.

In recognition of International Day Against Homophobia

Mr. Hardy: I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the International Day Against Homophobia, which is May 17 each year.

May 17 has been chosen to draw attention to homophobia, because that is the day that the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. Today it is widely recognized that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual — or LGBT — individuals are not mentally ill, nor do they deliberately choose their sexuality, nor are they all predators.

The theme this year is "Homosexuality Knows No Borders". The intent is to make the general population, and especially ethnocultural communities of all backgrounds, more aware of gay and lesbian issues and sexual diversity. The false belief that everyone is heterosexual and that only heterosexuality is acceptable and legitimate is based on the idea that the majority sets the norm in society.

In several countries, the right to love a person of the same sex is limited by law or cultural practice. In some of these countries, it is an offence in law punishable by death. Both on the conscious and subconscious levels, homophobia surfaces in various ways — feelings or convictions that LGBT persons are abnormal or sick show negative attitudes toward them, and sometimes even violence and murder. There are built-in institutional practices, putting gays and lesbians at a disadvantage in careers and social life. Silence or a lack of response to acts of homophobic language or behaviour is a more subtle homophobia.

Fighting homophobia promotes the growth of healthy relationships for everyone. We can all resist homophobia in our daily life by intervening when there is a display of homophobic behaviour, pointing out the aggressor and opening debate by informing those involved that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Ask the aggressor why they said or acted as they did and request them to modify their behaviour. Then put the victim's mind at ease by inviting him or her to advise you if the behaviour reoccurs.

Many Canadians plan to raise a rainbow flag on May 17. The rainbow flag is the most recognized symbol of LGBT diversity, with the six colours representing facets of LGBT communities and social life. It is an important step toward social harmony to support the successful integration of LGBT persons in all walks of life.

Let us commit ourselves to doing just that in all of our personal, public and official endeavours.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Are there any introductions of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hardy: All of you have enjoyed some cake today. I am not the one who made the cakes. They were a gift on behalf of Louise and me. Join me in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly a former MP of the Yukon Territory, my wife, Louise Hardy.

Applause

Speaker: Thank you.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have for tabling the Yukon State of the Environment interim report.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I have for tabling today the *Yukon Health Care Review* and *What We Heard* preliminary report. I also have for tabling today the Yukon Workers' Health and Safety Board 2008 annual report.

Mr. McRobb: I have for tabling a floor plan drawing for the new school that was planned in Burwash Landing, from the former minister.

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

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 7 — received

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 7, of the First Session of the 32nd Legislative Assembly, as presented yesterday by the Member for Porter Creek South. The petition meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Petition No. 7 is accordingly deemed to be read and received.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Petition No. 7 — response

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I rise in response to the issue just raised. May I have the opportunity to do so?

Speaker: Yes. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, several parents and school councils raised concerns about Yukon students having to write mandatory British Columbia provincial exams, rather than following the 2004 B.C. policy of only having to write five BCPEs and making writing the other exams optional.

The Department of Education appreciates all comments that come forward from concerned Yukoners, and the Department of Education is committed to working together with our partners to deliver the most accessible and best quality education possible. When the department considers making changes to the education system, some of the ultimate objectives that we plan to accomplish include increasing the knowledge, abilities and opportunities of our students.

As teachers, parents and students have told me, we can't lower the educational standards just to have more graduates. We have a responsibility to maintain high standards and provide support so Yukon students can reach them. When considering making any changes to our assessment and evaluation policies, we must ensure that these changes practice pedagogically sound approaches, maintain appropriate academic standards, provide an accurate measurement of the students' accomplishment of the learning objectives, provide a fair ap-

proach to all students, provide for comparability of results, and eliminate any real or perceived disadvantage that Yukon students may face when being compared to students from other jurisdictions.

After this issue was raised, the department immediately established a process to review the issue. This included an assessment of provincial practices, recent changes to university acceptance guidelines and consultations with our partners in education. The Department of Education sought the input of school councils, the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, the secondary program review advisory committee, the First Nation Education Advisory Committee, First Nation education directors, the Association of School Administrators, the Yukon Teachers Association, the general public — which included video conferencing to Yukon's communities — and of course with teachers, parents and students.

We received a lot of feedback, and the consultation process concluded last Friday. Based on what we heard and the information received, the decision has been made that it is in the best interests of Yukon students to have choice in writing exams in those courses that have optional B.C. provincial exams. This decision will be made retroactive to the beginning of this school year. Just as in British Columbia, five exams remain mandatory as a graduation requirement. Those are language arts 12, language arts 10, science 10, mathematics 10 and social studies 11. Additionally, students will have to confirm with the institutions that they wish to attend for post-secondary to identify if there are additional requirements to enter their programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those parents, school councils, teachers, administrators and department staff who participated in this process. It is an excellent example of partners working together to improve the education programming in Yukon.

Speaker: Are there any other petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the lack of disclosure of timely information.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the lack of teeth in the child advocate position.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the current situation with the asset-backed commercial paper investments.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the lack of economic diversification.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the lack of funds and cancellation of the mortgage programs under the Yukon Housing Corporation.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for rising electricity bills and the cuts to the rate stabilization fund.

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

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of a report on ministerial travel showing the costs and a breakdown of those costs in 2008-09 and to date for 2009-10.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the ballooning costs of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the non-reporting and non-action on the educational reform initiatives.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for the ongoing lack of planning and the tremendous cost overruns on the Watson Lake hospital project.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to affirm the importance of full public disclosure regarding the actual cost estimates and costs on all Yukon government projects by releasing such information in a timely manner.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of this Legislative Assembly to account for its sole-source contracting practices.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to produce an accountability statement for the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly to account for delays in the Yukon *Liquor Act* review and in the release of its regulations.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately provide adequate funding for the mortgage financing loans program in the Yukon Housing Corporation.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to make a commitment for the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly that the first departments called for debate will be those not debated this spring as a result of the guillotine clause.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to accept the findings of and adopt the recommendation made by the Ombudsman/Information and Privacy Commissioner in Investigation File No. 05-047, dated May 11, 2009, related to fore-going collection from a complainant of all costs related to his or her medical evacuation outside of the territory in 2005.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon government reconsider the applications for funding for arts festivals, such as the Yukon International Storytelling Festival and the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry, in the interests of the promotion of Yukon arts and tourism.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that it is incumbent upon honourable Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to work harmoniously together, and it is the hope of the Assembly that this can be realized through positive, mature contemplation on how to achieve the betterment of their constituencies and themselves.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a ministerial statement?

Hearing none, this brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: DIAND minister's visit to Yukon

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, one of the most important jobs the Premier has is to work cooperatively with the 14 Yukon First Nations. We have seen over the last number of years this government in court with those First Nations more often than we have seen them working together.

This week, several Yukon First Nation chiefs were in Ottawa to attend an important conference on land claims. The Minister of Indian Affairs was supposed to be the main speaker at the conference. He cancelled at the last minute, and instead dropped by to visit the Premier here in Yukon.

Yukon First Nations are not happy with the federal minister. They believe the conference was a higher priority, and the federal minister skipping out sent a very negative message. Does the Premier support the federal minister's decision to skip out on Yukon chiefs?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I'm not even going to bother to rebut some of the preamble of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

First off, the Yukon government does not schedule federal government ministerial travel. On the other hand, though, I would accept, and I'm quite flattered by the fact, that the Official Opposition thinks we control the federal government. However, we'll continue to do our work with the federal government in ensuring that Yukoners' interests are being met when it comes to the national agenda.

As far as the minister's visit to the Yukon, I'm sure there's reason why he's here, and I'm sure there's good reason why the minister is in western Canada at a time when a convening of First Nation chiefs and other First Nations across the country to do with land claims is happening in Ottawa.

Mr. Mitchell: Federal ministers don't come to meet with the Premier without discussing it with the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon chiefs are not happy that the DIAND minister wouldn't meet with them in Ottawa this week. They've called the minister's decision a deliberate attempt to avoid them. The Premier could have brought this to the minister's attention and advised him to attend the meeting in Ottawa of the Yukon chiefs. Instead, the Premier did nothing, and agreed to some photo ops here in Whitehorse. The Premier sided with his federal colleague, not with First Nations.

Yukon chiefs are meeting in Ottawa to discuss self-government implementation and the funding that goes with it. Successful implementation of these agreements is critical to our economy. This should be a top priority.

Why did the Premier not encourage his fellow conservative to meet with Yukon chiefs in Ottawa as was planned?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Speaking of accountability statements, there is certainly a demonstration of where some accountability is now required. Mr. Speaker, I hope I don't shatter the Leader of the Official Opposition's view of the world and what the federal government should or should not be doing as far as their ministers are concerned. Actually the federal minister is not here to meet me at all. Out of courtesy, however, I expect we will be introducing the minister here in the Legislative Assembly during the course of his visit here in the Yukon, but it is certainly not a visit to come and meet me. In fact, quite the contrary. We are scheduling, some time later this spring, a meeting in Ottawa with this very federal minister.

Now to the issue of the FTA, I challenge the Leader of the Official Opposition to explain to this House and to Yukoners the extensive work that the Yukon government, in partnership with seven Yukon First Nations — those that the FTA relates to as far as the nine-year review — to explain why the months and months and months of work we've conducted with First Nations has resulted in a successful negotiation of a mandate by the federal government to negotiate a new FTA. I challenge

the member to refute the results of the nine-year review; I challenge the member to refute the gross expenditure —

Speaker: Thank you.

Final supplementary, please.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's little this Premier says that shatters any of our understanding over here.

The economic impact that the successful implementation of these self-government agreements can have should not be underestimated. The Premier thought it was more important to introduce the federal minister this afternoon. When these new arrangements were being worked on in Ottawa and when they're completed, they will bring a significant economic boost to First Nation government and indeed, to this territory as a whole.

We took a step back this week, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon government made the wrong decision, and the Premier knows it. Yukon First Nations and the Premier were also supposed to meet this spring in the intergovernmental forum. This body hasn't formally met since the fall of 2007, and it sounds like the meeting that was scheduled for this spring is off as well — again, another opportunity to work with First Nations on our economy and other issues has been missed by this government and his federal colleague.

When is the next intergovernmental forum going to happen, and does the Premier think his federal colleague will actually attend?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, I can agree with the Leader of the Official Opposition on one thing: it is impossible to shatter the Official Opposition's understanding, because there just simply isn't any understanding of what's going on.

Intergovernmental forums are a process where agendas are jointly developed with the federal government, First Nation governments and the Yukon government, and I'm sure that work is ongoing to schedule an intergovernmental forum, as far as an agenda is concerned.

For the member to stand in this House and suggest that the priority issues of the Yukon have somehow changed over the last six to seven years, when we consider the actual evidence of all the progress being made in terms of land claims, the implementation of the claims, how we've progressed with self-government, is actually laughable. When we came into office, I believe there were seven self-governing First Nations. Today, a few short years later, there are 11.

Look at the partnerships evolving across this territory. Look at the economic development accords we have with First Nations in the Yukon. Look at the joint investment sharing arrangements with the northern strategy. Look how we've developed the joint arrangement with the northern housing trust; look at how we jointly developed legislation, such as the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong.

Speaker: Thank you.

Question re: Ombudsman's report on medevac

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, in the Ombudsman's report to the Yukon Legislative Assembly, she draws the Assembly's attention to a matter that has been dragging on for five years. This government is trying to force a Yukoner to pay

\$20,000 for a medevac trip to Vancouver. After a thorough investigation, the Ombudsman made the following conclusion, and I quote from the report: "I find that the Yukon Hospital Corporation, in failing to fully and clearly inform the complainant of the financial consequences of agreeing to the medical evacuation, was negligent, and as such offends subsection 23(1)(b)(iii) of the *Ombudsman Act*."

We know full well the difficulty of getting full and clear disclosure from this government. Two days ago the Ombudsman spoke out under section 25 of the *Ombudsman Act* to alert the public of the government's negligence in this respect.

Why has the government refused to follow the Ombudsman's recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition is not even correctly articulating the report from the Ombudsman. He is now suggesting that the government has been negligent in ensuring medevacs take place. That is ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. Frankly, the medevac system in the Yukon Territory is of the highest standard. In fact the member has just received a report that stipulates, by Yukoners themselves, what a tremendous health care system this territory has.

For the member's reference, some of the bad debts that we continually deal with in the Yukon Territory are directly related to medevacs. We have a process to deal with those. We respect the Ombudsman's report and findings. That's fine. She has tabled those findings. We continue to work on the issues accordingly; however, because there are certain standards by policy required for eligibility for medevacs, we will stick to those.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier didn't answer the question at all. It had nothing to do with the quality of the medevac program and everything to do with who was responsible for paying.

Now, the Ombudsman found the government negligent and offered the following recommendation — and, again, from the report: "That the Department of Health and Social Services, the authority responsible for collecting the costs related to medical evacuation, should forego collection from the complainant of all costs related to the medical evacuation to the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, British Columbia.

In a response to the Ombudsman, the Minister of Health and Social Services dismissed her conclusions by saying, "We have reviewed your findings and we respectfully do not agree with them or with your consequent recommendations." There are consequences when you are found negligent. It's about time this government clued into this equation.

The Ombudsman is doing her part to ensure that this government accepts the liability for its negligence. Why did the government abandon this Yukoner?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I think the member has this all wrong and is very, very confused. Nobody abandoned the Yukoner. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Yukoner's health and well-being was firmly addressed first and foremost. The Yukon citizen's health was the priority.

As far as what the member is suggesting, in who is responsible for costs in certain areas, again I repeat to the member: there are policies, there are regulations and there are standards that the government must follow. That's exactly what we're

doing. We respect the Ombudsman's view and findings. However, that is merely one component of the overall process that we as a government must follow.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the individual's health was addressed and then he was handed a very healthy \$20,000 bill. Now, Mr. Speaker, there were alternatives. The government could have gone to bat and negotiated with the other jurisdiction that was involved.

Now, if this minister's reading of this is not correct, then I suppose that's why they say it's not a reasonable reading of the entire record by the Ombudsman. We can sympathize with the minister; he's not happy about the Ombudsman's conclusions that, in this case, the standard of care required of a public authority was not met and it's his department or his Health department that's liable — but to suggest that the Ombudsman can't perform, quote: "a reasonable reading of the entire record" is insulting. It's no wonder that the Ombudsman went on over the minister's head and submitted this report directly to the Assembly. Will the Health minister assure us that other Yukoners will not be billed \$20,000 for medical services after the fact?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Government billings, in accordance with policy, will continue, but I can tell you what's insulting. What's insulting is the continuing reference to the incompetence of Yukon government employees. What's insulting is Googling government employees who choose to exercise their right to freedom of speech. What's insulting is suggesting that the Yukon Housing Corporation is not accountable.

Mr. Speaker, what's insulting is the Official Opposition's approach to trying to criticize the government. In fact, they are criticizing hard-working Yukoners who do everything they can to address the quality of life for all Yukon citizens, whether it be health care, the economy, the education system, whether it's our roads, our highways, you name it — hard-working officials, hard-working employees, dedicating themselves to Yukoners' needs and requirements. Mr. Speaker, what the Official Opposition does is very insulting.

Question re: Decorum in the House

Mr. Hardy: Now, the poet, dissident leader, and later President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel wrote: "A genuinely fundamental and hopeful improvement in political and economic systems cannot happen without a significant shift in human consciousness, and that it cannot be accomplished through a simple organizational trick... Man must extricate himself from this terrible involvement in both the obvious and the hidden mechanisms of totality, from consumption to repression, from advertising to manipulation through television. He must discover again, within himself, a deeper sense of responsibility toward the world, which means responsibility toward something higher than himself."

Havel was talking about the complicated task of improving our lives and our society. Mr. Speaker, change has to happen. I think we can do it in the Yukon, and we can do it by leading the Legislative Assembly.

So my question is this: will we do it here?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect to the Leader of the Third Party, I would

submit that that's exactly what we do do. We have been elected to lead — all of us in this House — and I think it's fair to say that, on an ongoing basis, there's clearly demonstration of that.

We're not perfect, and I don't think anybody expects us to be perfect, but certainly we have all dedicated ourselves and committed ourselves to why we are here on behalf of the Yukon public. It's not always the case on certain sides of the House, but the government side always tries to rectify that by providing sage advice to the Official Opposition.

Mr. Hardy: I'm not even going to address that. In the 2006 Yukon Territory election, voter turnout was the lowest in 24 years. Nearly 10 million eligible voters took a pass on casting a ballot in the last federal election and less than 60 percent bothered to vote — another record. Only 50 percent of eligible voters bothered to vote in the recent B.C. election. The B.C. Chief Electoral Officer has said, "A significant number of people ... were simply disengaged with the political process and just didn't have an interest in following politics, being involved and being part of the voting process."

If people are turning away from politics, then we all must share the responsibility of turning this around and bringing people back into the political debate. Let us ask the question: why? Let's address the problem and re-inspire people, young and old, to be part of our political future. Can we do it? Yes, we can. The question: will we do it?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Yes, we will do it, and I'm very pleased to say that in listening to the Leader of the Third Party's presentation here in Question Period, I couldn't agree more. There needs to be more involvement of citizens across this country, not just in Yukon, in the democratic process.

You, yourself, Mr. Speaker, have undertaken an initiative to engage young people here in this very Assembly to try to do that.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: As much as the Chair appreciates the recognition, the Chair should not be brought into debate.

The Hon. Premier has the floor, please.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I respect that, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't help myself.

Also, I must suggest to the member opposite that we have to look at the demographics of the territory and be very cognizant of the fact that we have an aging population, that we need to get our young people more involved, as I was saying. I'm very pleased to say to the House today that this party, the Yukon Party, has a very young executive and the involvement of young people in the party itself at the grassroots is a demonstration of that very fact.

Now I see that the Official Opposition is laughing. Well, the reason they're the Official Opposition and nothing more is they find the democratic process funny.

Mr. Hardy: I have no doubt that everyone who runs in an election and wins office enters this Assembly with good intentions and a desire to be part of a positive social change, but compare this with the feelings toward politicians on the streets and the stories in the media. There is a truly a deep disconnect somewhere. Maybe it's because of the party system;

there's no question about that. Maybe it's because the "first passed the post" electoral system leaves many people feeling that you can cast a vote for someone you like, or a party you like, but your vote will not count. Maybe it's because our education system has extensive courses on how to get ahead in business and life, but very little about civic responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I do not like the path we are going down. Truly it is a failure of democracy if people aren't engaged. We can make this change. We can elevate the politics in the Legislative Assembly and we can re-engage the public, but first we have to really be honest with ourselves and admit there is a serious problem out there and change has to happen. So, I ask once again — I don't need the rhetoric — can we work together to make this happen?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Yes, we can. The short answer is of course we can. Once again, I will suggest that we should look at past history here in this Assembly. Over the last number of years, we have demonstrated on many fronts, through many initiatives, whether they be unanimous motions in this House or legislation that has jointly passed this House for the benefit of Yukon citizens — we have done that.

But the member is correct. There is a disconnect with the public, not just here in the Yukon but across the country. I would even refer the member to the elections in the United States recently, and the turnout there. Apathy is a serious challenge when it comes to societal views and opinions. In the case of our democratic process, let us not forget that we have a democratic process second to none in the world. We should be proud of that; we should respect that; we should nurture that; we should grow that.

Our job as legislators is to bring forward on behalf of the public, whom we represent, to the best of our ability and to the extent possible mechanisms, policies, legislation, investments and all that we are charged to do to ensure a better quality of life for all.

Question re: Decorum in the House

Mr. Hardy: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and you know we really need to change it too. Now, Gandhi thought it was a citizen's sense of moral responsibility for his own actions that ultimately determined the character of the state. The citizen has responsibilities, and I don't think the Members of the Legislative Assembly are solely to blame for the state that we find ourselves in, and it is a serious state. The causes of the people's alienation are great, and we do have examples where we have worked together, but they are few and far between.

Let us rise — and this is my request and this is what I want to debate about today in these questions — let us rise above ourselves. Let us rise above our parties. Let us serve the people. Serving the people means that this Chamber needs to make some change as well.

Will the Premier work on that?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Speaker, again with the greatest respect, we have been working on that. In fact, if we look at the facts where we've come from — you know, again I see the Official Opposition finds all this funny and I find that disrespectful, not only to the third party's leader, but to this House. This is not a laughing matter. This is a very seri-

ous matter. This is about democracy and our future, and to have off-microphone laughter and joking around and kibitzing about this is disrespectful. Of course, that's understood, given the Official Opposition's conduct.

We have to work on that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: On a point of order, go ahead, Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Mitchell: We've been tolerant of the misrepresentations we're hearing, but now the member is personalizing debate and I don't think the Premier should be doing that. It's unseemly in this Assembly and you've quite often told us to rise above that and not do so.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Order please. From the Chair's perspective, there is no point of order. The honourable members were talking about each other's parties, not individuals. The Chair will step in to draw the line when individuals attack each other on an individual basis.

Although it's unpleasant, if things are said about each other's parties, that is within the realm of debate in this Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: As I was saying, we are working on that, but it's also a responsibility of each individual member of this Assembly. However, if the Leader of the Third Party is referring to some sort of legislative change, I think we're pretty clearly on record that we have embarked upon a process right here in our Assembly, and we'll continue to do that work.

Mr. Hardy: You know, in the 11 years I've spent in here, there are many accomplishments we can point to, as I said earlier, and unfortunately and sadly there are exceptions. There is far too much partisan bickering and personalized debate, and we're starting to see it all over again. I mean, at what point shouldn't we feel a little ashamed of ourselves? Why do people not even pay attention to us any more?

I mean, the rules in here don't work very well. We can improve it all, but there's not really a will. I can see it. We've tried in the past to bring forward some change, and it hasn't worked. I always want to believe in the positive, and we are a small territory and we can work together. We really can. And we can stop this damn partisan politics, because I am sick of it. I don't care what party it is — Liberal, Yukon Party, NDP, Independent. It's shameful in here, Mr. Speaker.

So we can create a new democracy — we can — and I'm willing to work for this. I want to see a committee that tries to make change and inspires people. Will the Premier do that?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, the point that the member is making is understood — clearly. However, I have to also, hopefully, come to an understanding with the Leader of the Third Party that great effort is being made — daily — great effort is being made. I can't agree with the member that we've alienated people, because that's not what comes through the offices — at least, on the government side, on a daily basis.

I can't agree with the member that we've alienated people, when we look at the good that we're all doing out there in the Yukon public. There is a better quality of life in this territory than there was a few short years ago. Look at the evidence. There is a growing population. There is great interest in the Yukon. We have a low unemployment rate. We have healthy institutions in our education system and our health care system. We have what I would call a modern justice system. We have done a lot of work. We're not alienating people; we're working on behalf of people.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I'm not listening to the words of the Premier at this moment, only because I'm listening to the words of the people when they have a chance to vote for our democracy, to vote for people. That vote continues to drop. I'm trying to say to the Premier and to everybody else in the Legislative Assembly that it's getting worse. Look at the polls; look at the charts; look at the opinions of people in the public — not just in the territory, but across this country and around many parts of the world.

They're saying they don't believe in democracy, because they're not even voting. Fifty percent of people voted in the general election in B.C. — an election that will shape their lives. Fifty percent do not vote, Mr. Speaker. At some point, we have to recognize that we're going in the wrong direction and must engage people and make politics part of their lives. These are challenges that confront us — the changing environment, the hoarding of wealth and the gripping poverty, the threats to democracy. All these are priorities we have to work on.

We will be asked if our actions lead to the evolution of humanity and our society. Those who come along after we are dead and buried will be asking the same question: what have they contributed? Not just budget after budget.

So my question is this: have we really done enough in this area?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Frankly, you can never do enough, and I think that is part of what democracy is all about: the continuing struggle to build the democratic process and institutions and to always improve them, make them better, ensure that those people who live in democratic countries continue to experience a better quality of life and a higher standard of living. I share the member's view that there are issues, but it is a better system than in other places across this globe. I have committed myself, as my colleagues have committed themselves, to try to leave this Yukon Territory of ours a better place than when we came to office and the way that we found it then. That is what we are doing. Again, we are not perfect, but we are certainly trying our best to ensure that we leave office, whenever that time is, and leave the Yukon in a better place.

Question re: Yukon Housing Corporation programs

Mr. McRobb: Yesterday we made an appeal for compassion from the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, but he chose to avoid addressing the matter entirely. He may choose the same approach today, on this final day of the spring sitting, and spare himself from being asked more questions until next fall. This possibility has added to the burden felt by many Yukoners who trusted the government's

word that their applications for home mortgages would be approved.

We've already seen correspondence from the public, outlining how they'll be out of pocket \$40,000. Will the minister now respond to this appeal for compassion toward these distraught citizens?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, again I remind him that during 2007-08, the actual figures into mortgage programs was almost \$7 million. The estimates that came out during the year — the forecast — came out to \$12.7 million, and that was primarily in response to survey problems at Whitehorse Copper, making sure that people had funding so that they could proceed without being able to get full title, and settle their problems later, and that was a very good program that we were very happy to get involved in.

In 2009-10, the estimates for the main budget — which we haven't debated at this point — is \$7,050,000, a five-percent increase. We're pleased that the amount has been increased. The member opposite is correct that it has been fully subscribed and people are taking advantage of those programs. Unfortunately, the budget isn't an unlimited hole.

Mr. McRobb: People feel let down because they believed in this government's word there would be sufficient funding for their applications. People are being forced to lose their \$20,000 down payment on government lots in new subdivisions like Whitehorse Copper. This is causing them considerable distress. Some have already made property improvements and stand to lose another \$20,000.

People were hoping the minister would have picked up on the example yesterday when the Education minister finally saw the light and changed his ways. What, if anything, does the minister plan to do with respect to these distraught citizens?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I'm glad the member opposite makes that comment about the Education minister, since he reacted before the petition was presented. I guess he might have missed that part.

I do have some difficulties with the way the Member for Kluane is wording the question. The government has met its commitment by increasing the mortgage portfolio by five percent, increasing it from \$6.7 million — almost \$6.8 million actually — to just over \$7 million. But what I hear the member opposite saying is that promises were made and I challenge the member opposite to put that on, because these people work with the good employees of the Yukon Housing Corporation who do a stellar and spectacular job on this. I do hope the member opposite isn't saying again that government employees acted inappropriately.

Mr. McRobb: The minister had his chance to show some compassion; obviously he can't do it. He has put on record a number of statements, including some today that could be legitimately disputed. They reveal a misunderstanding of this issue — the mortgage loan programs — and his portfolio in general.

For instance, on Tuesday he declared, "We are not in the mortgage business." Evidence was tabled from the government's own budget proving him wrong. The minister also failed to reveal what has been spent on these programs in this

fiscal year. That figure is known because the money was spent. Instead, he continues to refer to estimates and projections — that's not accountability.

This government needs to show some compassion. It's sitting on a budget surplus of \$150 million. The final question of this sitting, Mr. Speaker, is this: when will the government do the right thing and honour its commitment to provide sufficient funding to these distraught applicants?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Although the Chair hates to interject at the eleventh hour, so to speak, Hon. Member for Kluane, accusing an individual member of having a lack of compassion would be against our Standing Orders. Just keep that in mind, please. I know you have no more questions left, but — minister, your response, please.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, it is disturbing that the debate goes that way. We have a great deal of —

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: No, no, no. Please don't comment on the rulings. The rulings are the rulings.

Just carry on. The Member for Porter Creek North has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The Yukon Housing Corporation does an excellent job in working with the funds and with clients. I've been very, very impressed with that corporation, and again, just under \$7.1 million, a five-percent increase, is in the budget for now.

But again, I am concerned and confused, Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Kluane says that the money is spent. My understanding is that the budget hasn't passed yet, so that would be quite contrary to standard procedures. It will be spent when the budget is voted on later today, and I do hope that he votes for that \$7.1 million and doesn't vote against it.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

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

Department of Education — *continued*

Chair: The matter before Committee of the Whole is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Education, which is Vote 3. Mr. Edzerza, you have a bit of time left — 18 minutes.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Chair, I would just like to maybe recap a little bit of where we left off in debate from the previous day. I suggested that maybe the minister look at following some of the traditional ways. That would be to really seek understanding of the clients he is responsible for, and that is all students who attend education facilities across the Yukon. I heard the minister talk about inclusiveness with regard to students; but sometimes there may be a more appropriate approach to assisting those with special needs — whether they be associated with FASD/FAE, those with disabilities or other reasons. Bottom line: “Not one shoe fits all.” Some citizens have to have specialized teachers. Some will have to be taught through a different process other than the conventional classroom setting.

I mentioned in particular one individual with FASD and how a classroom was decorated, for example, could make a difference on whether or not a student will succeed in that classroom or not. Through research and other hands-on volunteering experiences I’ve had with those with FASD, I learned very early that their attention span is very short, and they can be distracted very easily, so I do believe that even how a classroom is decorated could hinder the progress of someone with FASD, for example, being able to succeed in education. I do know from personal experience working with individuals who were diagnosed with FASD that — for example, this student I worked with learned calculators very well. He caught on to it quickly, but he was not allowed to use a calculator in the classroom, so there are little changes like that that probably could really change the dynamics for some students in a classroom.

I do thank the minister for agreeing to take some of my comments into consideration and to look at them. It’s all about change and accepting change and working with the changes that need to be made.

Never did I ever insinuate to anybody that, for example, the Education department is not doing its job, because I know it is. I know how difficult it is to work with those seeking an education.

I know that for many, many years, there has been a lot of First Nations have been trying to get involved with being responsible for their band members. There again, we have a real cultural clash, because First Nations are people who live in

bands. What one band member feels, we all feel. A good example of how the different cultural clashes exist is, if someone in Riverdale, for example, passed away, probably the next-door neighbour wouldn’t even know about it. The community doesn’t get involved with it, to the best of my knowledge. But in a First Nation community, when someone passes away, people from all over the territory come to that funeral or to that potlatch. So that’s the difference.

I’m not saying that First Nations need any kind of preferential treatment; what I’m saying is that we need to understand the cultural differences and, where one thing would have a devastating effect on a First Nation, in the average population it probably wouldn’t be anything. So there are those differences that one needs to be respectful of.

When I finished yesterday, I was talking about the House of Learning at Kwanlin Dun. I am today asking the minister to consider what I’m about to present. It is to look at maybe turning the House of Learning into a community campus. I believe that it would be a very good gesture — a very good example of the government being prepared to work in partnership with First Nations. Kwanlin Dun being the biggest First Nation in the territory, we really feel that the House of Learning is like the heart of our community. It is; it is like the school in our community.

For information purposes, the House of Learning started in 1998 with a partnership with the college, basically. Since then, approximately 175 students have attended the House of Learning. That was through employment training programs, through college prep — which I might add was a very great success in the last year, the college prep courses that were being taught there. Developmental studies is another one greatly attended by people in the community. Apprenticeship prep with math and science was another very good program.

Literacy was probably one of the highlights that went on in the House of Learning for elders and community members. We had elders in this program who were 70-plus years old learning how to speak English, which was quite phenomenal. I might add that there were a lot of other citizens in the community who were attending these programs to learn how to read and write. I think that is really something that the department needs to take a look at and recognize that 175 students since 1998 is a lot to go through the House of Learning. It demonstrates that it is being used quite extensively for education.

One of the reasons I would like to put on the floor regarding Kwanlin Dun’s request for a community campus is that it would surely assist in building capacity, for example. A campus puts adult education in the community to support the development of community capacity. The capacity is to increase employment and take full advantage of economic opportunities and to meet the challenges of self-government and community development. Those are all critical to the success of a land claims agreement.

We could talk about community development. Adult education has an important place in community development in contributing to the path of community and fulfilling its vision for the future. With this in mind, it makes more sense to move adult education to the community than it does to move the

community to adult education. I know I've heard comments before like, "Well, there's a college right here in town. Kwanlin Dun can go to that college." But there are a lot of barriers that prevent that from happening. Some of them are financial, transportation, living accommodations — all of those things contribute to providing barriers for Kwanlin Dun First Nation citizens to attend the college for these courses. Having a facility right in the community — like I said, 175 students proves that it's beneficial — very beneficial.

We could talk about success, comfort, accessibility — and family supports are important in student recruitment, retention and success. Again, there is a cultural clash here when it comes to community events. I know that having the House of Learning in the community provides easy access for elders to come there, to talk to students about traditional things, traditional practices. And we know, like I said, that there is that main Yukon College campus that's close to Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

But you know, distance cannot be measured only in physical terms. Distance is cultural, social, emotional and in the mind. For many, the distance is too great to cross over in one step, and the path must start in the community.

Again, I can truthfully say that when I went back to the college myself, I had a very difficult time to go to the college. In fact, it took about two years for me to finally be able to find what I needed to really go in and actually enroll. At that time, I was past the age of 50. So if someone at 50 years old has difficulty enrolling in the college, one can imagine what somebody who's 22 years old is having. The issues are no different.

I went through a lot of abuse in my childhood, and through my teen years, and right until, basically, I was 33 years old.

So, yes, there are barriers to education. Having a community campus right in the Kwanlin Dun community I feel would probably help minimize that to a great extent. Again, 175 students can't be wrong, that the facility in the community isn't of benefit — because it certainly is.

I can even talk a little about life transitions, to grow in places that are familiar and that allow us to move with confidence into life experiences that are unfamiliar. For children, the family — the place for adults is in their community. The community campus is a familiar place that allows a community to make the transition, to move with confidence into work and education, experiences that are unfamiliar and beyond the community.

Now when we talk about the House of Learning, to even support this statement is a simple fact that, when Kwanlin Dun was talking to the Education department about even having a facility in the community, the House of Learning used to be an elders complex and Kwanlin Dun decided — because education was of such a great importance — to renovate that facility and turn it into a House of Learning.

Rather than hire a contractor to go and remodel and reconstruct that facility, Kwanlin Dun used their own people with, I believe, one journeyman carpenter as the lead person. The rest of the people were citizens who were having a difficult time in life. Anyhow, to make a long story short, what happened with the House of Learning is that the community members pro-

ected it. They actually protected the building. If they saw anybody — I remember being in the foyer one day when someone was going to attack a picture on the wall, and one of the people who had worked on the building jumped up and said, "Don't you put any holes in that wall because it took us a long time to construct this and to make it nice."

By the people working on that building, it became more than just another building. What was really something to be proud of is that it really made education more of a priority among the people.

Having said that, my question to the minister would be this: would the minister support looking at having the House of Learning being transferred into more of a community campus?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the comments coming from the member opposite. The member is right: it was back in 1998 when the elders facility up at Kwanlin Dun in the McIntyre community was transformed into the House of Learning. I certainly remember the celebration that occurred in the community at that time.

I believe the member opposite — the Member for McIntyre-Takhini — was on the Kwanlin Dun council at the time. That was actually the first time I met the member opposite. Actually, I was involved in the opening of the House of Learning, and I do remember the celebration in the community of seeing the future there. The member and I have talked about opening schools before and how that is such an optimistic moment in time. I also remember the computers that went in there and how they were made available for training.

I'm very encouraged to hear some of the stories about how things are progressing there. I look forward to an opportunity in the future, if the member opposite would like to give me a tour of the facility, and he and I can take a look at what's going on up there and some of the activities involved, whether they be the literacy programs or the computer programs, or even some of the apprentice training programs that are underway. There is one underway right now that is done in participation with Yukon College.

Last summer, Mr. Chair, the apprenticeship unit of Advanced Education made a presentation to Kwanlin Dun First Nation staff and citizens about the importance of apprenticeship and trade certification, and I know the Member for McIntyre-Takhini shares this passion. I know he took great pride, as I do, in signing the apprentice certifications and the red seal certificates that cross the desk of the Minister of Education. The result of these discussions with Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Department of Education was the initiation and implementation of a trades exploration program for Kwanlin Dun First Nation community delivery, and to set up a process for the establishment of new apprentices. I think it's initiatives like that that are, in part, the reason for the continuing record number of apprentices. We now have well over 400 apprentices in the territory, and those apprentice statistics are growing in the categories of people of First Nation ancestry and females in trades.

Yukon College was responsible for the delivery of the trades exploration program. This was done with the assistance of Yukon College, Kwanlin Dun and financial assistance from

the community training funds. We do have some very important tools and vehicles out there that we can currently use. I am glad to see the relationship fostering and growing between Kwanlin Dun and Yukon College. I think it would be an excellent opportunity for other programs, whether they be programs delivered by Yukon College or delivered by Kwanlin Dun First Nation people or organized through Kwanlin Dun and contracted to other organization such as Dana Naye Ventures. I know when I was employed with that organization, there was some use of the facility at the House of Learning. It is a great facility. One of the benefits of having a facility like that in the community is that the community can be responsive to the specific needs that come up from time to time and contract others to provide courses and to facilitate the learning that can go on in there.

If the Kwanlin Dun First Nation sees an opportunity for programs like Food Safe or for surveying or for computer awareness or ACCPAC, they can make those kinds of decisions in their community and find others to deliver the coursework. It does offer a great palette upon which to paint many educational opportunities. I am encouraged to hear the member opposite talk about the Kwanlin Dun First Nation's willingness to utilize that centre for additional opportunities. I would be interested in discussing those with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

The member also raised the issue of the importance of engaging people in education. I really do take that matter to heart and have taken great steps to visit every school in the territory at least once and to meet with teachers and parents — both on a formal and informal level. I have also had the great opportunity to talk to our students in our system — whether they be younger children in the early grades, or older students in the high school grades.

I realize that a formal vehicle for having the inclusion of students was really missing, so earlier this year, the Department of Education established the Education Minister's Advisory Committee. That's a collection of youth from across the territory. I've had one meeting with a group so far and look forward to many more. I hope it becomes a continuing organization that other ministers will use in the future.

We sat down with the students, both formally and informally, at a dinner and also at some more structured events. I found that it was one of the most engaging discussions on education that I had had recently. They certainly were not shy with sharing their thoughts, ideas and perspectives. We did at one time just have to stop and say, "Okay, what are all the things that you folks want to talk about?"

We ended up making a list that went on — well, I believe it went on for about four pages of flip chart paper, and there were issues that they were concerned about. They were concerned about the curriculum, the teaching styles, the method of instruction, the relationship between teachers and students, the issue of respect in school, and the issue of bullying in schools. They had thoughts about the mixture between academic, physical, cultural and aesthetic education — that whole mix.

So I did have an opportunity to engage with them. Also, I was fortunate that immediately following the discussion with EMAC, the Education Minister's Advisory Committee, I had

an opportunity to meet with the public schools senior management team. So I took the notes that the students and I had generated — and they were all the comments that the students had come up with — and I presented them right to the assistant deputy minister of public schools, the superintendents and all the key personnel in that department. I had a great opportunity to say, "Okay, folks, here's what the kids have to say about education in Yukon." And I went through all the issues they had raised.

It was very gratifying to see a situation where I could go from finding out information and concerns from students on a Friday, to on a Monday tasking the department with finding ways to address the concerns. It was a very immediate process, and I believe we are seeing responses to many of the issues that were raised being implemented in our schools as we speak.

The member opposite also talked about making some of those changes — some of those big changes or even some of those little changes. He talked about the decorations in the classrooms, and I know many teachers take a great pride in how their classroom looks. I know they put hours of time in preparing the materials, the bulletin boards and all of the artwork that goes up on the wall, all the learning tools that are used. It really does make a difference.

One only has to walk through Yukon schools to see the vibrancy and the excitement of our teachers in how they prepare our classrooms, our hallways and our schools. I appreciate the member's comments that yes, those decorations do affect people, and I believe that our teachers do take that into consideration. They find appropriate ways of making either large or subtle changes in our classrooms to meet the needs of the students who are there.

This also goes into things like the seating arrangements, or the arrangement of desks in schools. Yes, there are some classrooms that have the formal rows, as many of us would remember from our school days. But there are many other situations where students are in small groups, or in working groups of four, or in a circle, or in different patterns, and those subtle differences, those changes in seating arrangements, changes in classroom design, affect the learning environment. I certainly appreciate the professionalism and the dynamism, I guess, the dynamic thinking that our teachers have in how they go about arranging the classroom.

As well, things like the schedule can affect students in the classroom. I believe the member and I have discussed this before, about different things in the morning or different things in the afternoon. I did discuss recently with one school council an initiative they had undertaken. It does appear to be a very simple thing but it has had a significant impact. They instituted what they call a reverse lunch in the school. They found that when the lunch bell rang, many students were so eager to go outside and play that they might have only taken a bite of their sandwich and a bite of their apple and a sip of milk before running outside.

The school council and the school changed that. They reversed the lunch so now when the lunch bell rings, the children run outside and do what kids do during recess, and then they come back in when they've got all their energy out and sit

down, then they can focus on eating all of their sandwich, eating of all their apple and drinking all of their milk.

It is just subtle changes like that — the reverse lunch — that has started in one school and is spreading to other schools. It is those discussions about those changing practices that happen from teacher to teacher — both formally and informally — and from school council to school council. We try to facilitate those things with both structured and unstructured meetings — whether they be the spring or the fall meeting of the school councils. We will also try to foster more of those initiatives with things like the innovation fund, where if school councils, teachers or others have a good idea that they want to test out, they can apply for some funds to do that so that we can encourage and foster things like the Be the Change program that happens in many of our schools, or the reverse lunch. Look at alternative programs like the gender-based classrooms at Takhini Elementary or some of the other programs like the outdoor pursuits at the Kluane school in Haines Junction.

So these are some of the ways that we will encourage that innovation and change in the classroom in addition to ongoing professional development and making other education opportunities available for Yukon's teachers, with things like the master of education program from UNBC offered at Yukon College.

The member commented about ways of involving First Nation people, and we certainly work to involve all members in the community in all our schools. In addition to having people volunteer in the schools, there are also opportunities for programs like the elders in the school. There is, at a minimum, the guaranteed representation of Yukon First Nations on school councils. Of course, that is a minimum representation, and certainly not a ceiling, so people of First Nation ancestry are certainly encouraged to get involved with school councils.

We also have the First Nation Education Advisory Committee, which includes membership from all Yukon First Nations. This is another vehicle through which we can ensure that we have that type of voice for all our school programming on a real territorial level. We have seen those changes come about, and we have seen other changes such as the NorthWind books. Members might have heard that a couple of new books have come out in that series of early primary readers. These are readers that include Yukon people and Yukon context and Yukon situations. I'll make a point of getting a copy of the latest books over to the member opposite, if he would like that. I see him nodding, so I will ensure that a copy of those books go over to him.

I did recently just send some of those books — the NorthWind readers — to the Yukon Literacy Coalition and to Yukon Learn so they can add them to their libraries as well, because they are a really neat series of books.

I also appreciate the member's comments about recognizing cultural differences. We certainly have to do that with all the cultures that are represented in Yukon schools. Of course we have a responsibility to reflect the First Nation cultures and characteristics of our First Nation people who make up about 30 percent of our student population, but we also recognize that

we have many, many other cultures represented in Yukon schools.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I stand corrected. I'll have to dig into the annual report here; I didn't check that specific statistic before I rose, but there are the many other cultures that we also celebrate in Yukon schools. The cultural days are celebrated in many communities or schools, where different lunches are served, and people bring a dish from their traditional culture. The heritage fair that we celebrated recently is also another great way of sharing information about people's histories and cultures. While it does celebrate that we're all Yukoners, it also identifies some of the unique characteristics of the cultures that people belong to.

The member also commented on his return to school at the age of 50. I certainly applaud him for that. It is that kind of dedication and commitment to lifelong learning that is so important in our communities. His work in going back to school and what that demonstrates to young people certainly holds up the member opposite as a role model in his community. The member opposite has made a special point of sharing with young people his trade certification in the past. Now I hope he shares with them the fact that he went back to school at the age of 50.

The member also brought up the issue of transitions. He did provide me with quite a list of issues that he wanted me to comment on. I see that my time is done, and I won't be able to address the issue of transitions.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for his responses. The reason I mentioned the cultural clash is because I believe that there is a direct reflection as to why we have low graduate rates — it's the difference in culture. At this time, I would like to thank all the staff at the Kwanlin Dun House of Learning. We have a new director there now, who was recently hired over the last few months. I would like to personally thank the instructors there, who show great dedication and commitment to their responsibilities as instructors in the House of Learning. For this, Kwanlin Dun First Nation citizens are greatly indebted, and we greatly appreciate her understanding of the community and the people. She sure has made a difference for the students who have attended the House of Learning, because she has that gentle spirit and the personality that attracts people. She certainly has done that with the people in Kwanlin Dun. The students all greatly appreciate what she has been able to do.

The last question I'd like to ask of the minister is — or, before I go on, I would like to respond to the minister's request to tour the House of Learning. I certainly will arrange that once the renovations are done. We are in the process of doing some minor renovations in the building right now, but when that's completed, I will arrange for the minister and any other people from the Education department who want to see what's there. It would be a pleasure to do it.

Native language — I know this is a very important initiative for all First Nations across the territory. I think I've made the comment before that it's quite embarrassing for people like me, who are 60 years of age and don't speak their own lan-

guage. Sometimes when I have gone to Telegraph Creek, I have elders come and talk to me in my own language and I don't understand them. Sometimes they find it puzzling as to why somebody as old as I wouldn't understand the language. But there is a lot of history behind why a lot of our people don't understand their language.

We know today that the Language Centre at the college does excellent work. I admire the staff there and what they have been able to accomplish over the years. Like I said before, I believe these people have very gentle spirits and they are very understanding. I think the last time there was a drive to increase the number of native language instructors was back in 2004-05 when I as a minister put \$2.3 million into training some language instructors. I might add that the ones who took that course and were successful in completing everything in it are now employed within the education system as First Nation language instructors — and quite young people, which is very encouraging to me.

My last question to the minister is this: will he be looking into maybe holding another course at the Native Language Centre to train instructors?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question coming from the member opposite. He had asked me about transitions and that is certainly something that the Department of Education and their partners in education are concerned about. Some of these transitions are the early years transition that shift from early childhood education or from the home to school. There is also the transition then from primary school to the high school system. For some there is the transition from a rural school into Whitehorse. Then for others there is the transition from secondary school to post-secondary school, and how we can go about easing those transitions at all those different levels.

In the current budget that is before us, the government has provided \$150,000 for the development and implementation of an early years transition support.

This is being done to enable a holistic, integrated approach to addressing the concerns at this very important stage of learning. This early years transition support process will target pre-kindergarten to grade 3 students, and the goal is to establish a context-relevant, multi-sensory, multi-intelligence-based learning program that is developed and implemented to help reduce the performance gap in both First Nation and non-First Nation children. So the members will see that there is an allocation of \$150,000 in this year's budget to address this situation.

Additionally, there are initiatives that the department and teachers and community members have put in place to assist with some of the other areas of transitions. This issue of transitions has been discussed very recently, both at the New Horizons meetings and also with the Association of School Administrators, in their meetings with the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee.

In some cases, this is facilitated by having the First Nation bringing children — well, in the grade prior to coming into high school in Whitehorse — to Whitehorse and doing a kind of “get to know” visit. This is important in finding out about what's ahead of them when they come to attend some high school courses here in Whitehorse.

Also, there is work that the Council of Yukon First Nations is doing to provide additional support to help students from outside of Whitehorse become involved with programming and recreational activities here in Whitehorse. I know that individual First Nations also provide specific supports to their students who are here in Whitehorse.

Yukon College is also working to ease the issue of transitions on a couple of different fronts. One of these ways is to — I guess the best word to use is “normalize” — visit Yukon College to make students aware of Yukon College and to use that facility for a number of different activities, so that kids and students become aware of it. So if we can bring students from across the territory to Yukon College for things like the Yukon Skills Canada competition or for open houses or for other activities, it does a great service by opening students' eyes to what is at Yukon College so that they are familiar with the opportunities.

There are other areas of transition where we continue to make work or continue to do work with teachers and students to help them to move from one level to another.

The member then also asked me about the House of Learning and I would welcome a visit to that facility with him in the future. We have been in contact with the House of Learning in the past. Unfortunately because of scheduling or conflicts or some such, we weren't able to make arrangements; they weren't able to accommodate a visit. I look forward to seeing the facility — it has been a few years since I saw it last — and finding out about some of the initiatives going on up there.

The member also talked about cultural issues and ensuring that some of those types of issues are being raised and acknowledged and addressed, not only from the Department of Education, but also from the schools.

I'm just curious — has the member opposite seen the document entitled *Helping Students Succeed — vision, goals and priorities for Yukon First Nations education*, created by the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee?

I will send a copy of it over to him. There has been some very good work done by FNEAC — the First Nation Education Advisory Committee — and people in the community to coordinate a lot of this work. We have the plan created and established and, now with the First Nation programs and partnerships unit — and I discussed many of their different program initiatives already and those are on record in *Hansard* — but now FNPP is working on implementing many of the issues brought forward.

There is a bit of a challenge in here in this Assembly now though that we have the Official Opposition, the third party and the Independent member. There are occasions now where we're being asked the same question three times.

I appreciate the member opposite has asked me a question about what FNPP is doing, but I'm going to ask him if he could review the Blues or *Hansard* from a previous day.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm sorry the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is saying —

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. Members have to speak through the Chair. Unless members are recognized by the Chair, I hope they would hold their comments until they can be recorded and documented.

Mr. Rouble.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will leave the comments from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin alone until we can appropriately debate them here in the Assembly then.

It is something that we do have to become used to — the process and the decorum and the Standing Orders in our Assembly, that there is a process for this kind of debate and, as the member opposite characterized it, the dialogue that does happen. Those do need to be respected so we can continue to have the appropriate discussion about many of the issues before us.

I'll leave the member to review *Hansard* for some of the initiatives of the First Nations programs and partnerships unit. In previous days' discussion, I provided some significant details about some of these programs, but the member has raised the issue of First Nation languages and what we are doing on this front. There are some significant different projects going on in addition to the work being done by the aboriginal language centre at Yukon College, which is continuing to do some great work — I was talking to their executive director last month when I was at Yukon College for the Territorial Skills Competition. He was telling me about an upcoming Tlingit workshop that they were working on. There were also some other programs that he had coming forward.

Indeed they have a master trainer program going on up there and are continuing to do a lot of work with both teaching teachers how to speak Yukon aboriginal languages and also in teaching aboriginal language speakers how to become teachers. There is both that mix of preparing people to teach First Nation languages in all our schools.

In fact, Mr. Chair, we have 22 First Nation language programs offered in 20 Yukon schools. The department has a First Nation language program and curriculum consultant position. This position provides support to First Nations who wish to engage in developing local, cultural and language curriculum while incorporating the knowledge of local elders as a foundation.

Additionally, some of the programs that are currently underway include a northern strategy project. This is titled, "Walking Together to Revitalize and Perpetuate Yukon First Nation Languages". The Yukon First Nations programs and partnerships unit, along with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Department of Education, are engaged in a project funded by the northern strategy fund. This is called "Walking Together to Revitalize and Perpetuate Yukon First Nation Languages". The project will develop an action plan aimed at revitalization, maintenance and perpetuation of Yukon First Nation languages. There is significant work going on throughout the territory on this issue. The lifespan of the project is three years,

from 2008 to 2011. The budget of \$150,000 from last fiscal year is being carried over to 2008-09.

Sorry, it looks like the 2007-08 funding of \$150,000 is being carried over to 2008-09, but there is a continuation of this project.

The member spoke about First Nation language teachers and trainees. Our government is committed to supporting First Nation language programs in our schools. We understand the critical state that Yukon First Nation languages are in and, for this reason, will continue to invest in the training of Yukon First Nation language teachers and trainees.

As a way to help support the development of language proficiency, the Department of Education is working in partnership with Simon Fraser University to deliver a professional development program for language proficiency. This is an accelerated program that can be completed in four terms of study, which is about one and a half years of coursework. In June 2009, we expect six trainees to be the first graduates of the Simon Fraser language proficiency program.

Mr. Chair, currently there are 30 teachers assigned to supporting or teaching First Nation culture and language programming in Yukon. This includes 10 positions allocated to support the Yukon Native Language Centre. It is in addition to six First Nation language teacher trainee positions. There are programs underway, including the Simon Fraser program, the master apprentice program, the language proficiency certificate program and others that we have in our territory, not only to train people in the important language skills but also to train them in the pedagogy of teaching language. We will continue to work in this area to address this very important issue.

Mr. Edzerza: I want to thank the minister and his staff for the responses. I would like to offer my help in any way I can as an MLA to assist in any way to ensure that Kwanlin Dun First Nation — who resides in the middle of my constituency — advance education by respecting and working with the minister and Education staff.

But of course I know I represent all citizens in my riding and I have extended the same opportunity to the citizens in my riding. For example, I was asked at one time to open up YNTEP to all citizens in the territory and that happened. Without any further discussions, I once again thank the minister and the staff for the dialogue that we had in this Committee.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the comments from the Member for McIntyre-Takhini and the past work that he did. I certainly appreciate that and I look forward to touring the House of Learning with the member opposite, once that opportunity is available.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Elias: While I have the Education minister's attention on this last day of sitting, I am asking a question about providing a proper school bus, a certified school bus, with all the lights and safety mechanisms, for the children who attend the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'd like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his question. He did raise the issue with me in the last sitting. Immediately after he raised the issue and his concerns about student safety and the use of the transporta-

tion vehicle in Old Crow, we did get in touch with the school. I believe the school sent out a notice to all residents, reminding them of the importance of yielding to the school vehicle.

I appreciate the member's questions about whether we could put in a proper bus. There is a bit of a challenge with putting a 72-passenger school bus in that community. Possibly if there's a — I don't think it would fit on the plane.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member opposite is saying, "Cut it in half." I guess if we cut the bus in half, shipped half of it up and then shipped the other half up and then welded it together, we could do *Monster Garage* Old Crow style to have the bus there.

The Department of Education does have its school bus transportation policy in place, which provides bus transportation for students who are greater than three kilometers from the school. We will continue to work to ensure that safety issues are addressed. It is our number one priority for the Department of Education — the safety and security of our students, teachers and staff. We will continue to remind people in the community about the importance of yielding to the vehicle and to watching out for school-aged children — especially when they are heading to school or coming home from school.

I ask for the member opposite's support too, because I do know that he knows everyone in the community of Old Crow and it might go a long way for him as a community leader during one of his public meetings to address that as a concern and also ask people to slow down and watch out for the kids.

We will continue to work with the school to address the needs and to encourage people to practise safe driving habits around school kids.

Mr. Elias: I believe the Education budget this year is about \$128 million, and the government has a surplus of \$150 million. I'm just wondering if the Minister of Education gives that advice to each and every MLA in this House, to go to their constituency meetings and tell people, "Make sure you slow down when you're behind the school bus and be cautious and safe around children."

What I'm talking about here is that the students who attend Chief Zzeh Gittlit School deserve a proper school bus with flashing lights, with all the regulations, with all the seating requirements. I'm not asking for a 72-passenger school bus. There are many varieties of certified school buses. I'm asking the minister, with his \$128-million budget and his government with a \$100-million surplus — to ensure that a proper, certified school bus is delivered to Old Crow, so that the students who go to Chief Zzeh Gittlit School are afforded the same safety and transportation to the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and back home as many of the other students around this territory enjoy.

I'll let the minister know this: the community is planning for a winter road next winter into the community of Old Crow for a variety of reasons and for a variety of infrastructure projects in the community of Old Crow. This is a tangible thing. With a \$128-million budget, I don't see an issue with this.

The students who attend Chief Zzeh Gittlit School deserve to be — when they're in the custody of the department — transported to and from home safely, just like every other Yuk-

oner. Will the Minister of Education please provide a proper school bus for the children of Old Crow, so they can get to and from home safely — a school bus that has flashing lights with the stop signs on the side, et cetera, et cetera? Will the minister do that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In answer to the member's first question — yes, I would encourage every member of this Assembly to have that discussion with his or her constituents. Every year during Road-Safety Week and the week that schools go back into session for the year, the Minister of Education has traditionally done some advertising and radio interviews calling on all Yukoners to slow down. I would encourage all members to get involved. When they see an injustice or something wrong happening in their community, I would encourage them to get involved. If they see someone racing past a school bus and they know who it is, yes, I would encourage that person to have a discussion with the driver and ask, "What are you doing? Why are you racing past a school bus and endangering our kids?"

I would encourage all members, if they see problems in their constituency, to try to address them. You know, this isn't one of those situations where the member opposite would see an injustice and then go and phone me and ask, "Would you please phone him and tell him to stop?" Well, why doesn't he pick up the phone himself? I will. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun is asking, "Why don't you?" I do have to remind everyone in this Assembly and all Yukoners that if they see a problem like that, one of the number one avenues to resolve it is to ask the person to slow down. We don't always have to ask government for help in these situations.

Now again, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun is heckling from the back row. It's always interesting in this debate where we do try to follow the rules and try to follow the order. I get asked a question and then the members start yipping and yapping in the background and contributing off-microphone comments.

Mr. Chair, do I have the floor, or does the Member for Mayo-Tatchun?

Chair's statement

Chair: I would encourage all members to speak through the Chair and, while doing that, I would ask that they not personalize the debate on the very last day of this session.

I would personally like to have a relaxed afternoon and get on to visiting my riding. I would like members to stick to the budget and not personalize the debate so that we can end the session on a good note.

Mr. Rouble, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I also appreciate the comments coming from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin about a winter road. I will take those under advisement. There is a line item in the budget for school vehicles, and we will take that into consideration with future budget planning.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Chair, the response from the minister is unacceptable. Basically what he is saying to my question on the floor of this House about providing a proper certified school bus to the children attending the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in

Old Crow is that he is going to allow those students to be treated as second class citizens in the territory.

Chair: Order please.

Chair's statement

Chair: When the Chair calls for order, I expect members to actually sit down and stop speaking. I just requested members not to personalize the debate and then the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin crosses the line like that. Mr. Elias, you know better. I expect more from all members of this Assembly.

Mr. Elias, you have the floor.

Mr. Elias: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought I was providing the opportunity for the minister to respond to something that my constituents feel is important: providing a school bus — a proper, certified school bus with all the safety mechanisms. I tried to provide a solution. The community is working on a winter road. He has a \$128-million budget. They're sitting on a \$150-million surplus. My community is in need of a proper school bus.

I really don't understand why the Education minister cannot commit to a tangible asset for the community. Will the minister provide a proper, certified school bus, with all the safety mechanisms, so that the children of the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School can get safely to and from home? Will he do that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I certainly take exception to some of the comments coming from the member opposite, but I won't go there.

The member opposite has had the opportunity to read the budget and knows now that there is not that allocation in this budget. He has now just told me that there is going to be a winter road going in, and I have told him, "Thank you for that information. I will look at this situation and see what we can do." I'm not sure what more the member opposite wants right now. He is talking about all of the special features.

Honestly, I would like him to stand up and tell us a bit more. Is he looking for the arm that swings out right now? The lights on the vehicle that start flashing? What are the features that he is looking for in this?

I appreciate that this is an area of concern. We take school bus safety very seriously throughout the territory. We provide school bus services for students who have to travel greater than three kilometres in order to get to school. We do have thousands of Yukon students who travel on Yukon highways on a daily basis, and we take the issue of school bus safety very seriously. We do also use other vehicles. The member in here is aware that we are replacing the school vans with more of a shuttle bus type of vehicle — an airport shuttle vehicle. Is that the kind of vehicle that he is looking for? We can turn on flashing lights. We can put a revolving light on the roof of the vehicle, and I hope that those measures make a difference to people.

But, in many cases, people know where the bus is; they can see it. But it comes down to sometimes having to say to someone, "Hey, don't be so irresponsible and pass the vehicle that way." If the member likes, I can get in touch with the RCMP and ask them to do more public education in the com-

munity regarding this issue. I've been to Old Crow a number of times, but vehicle congestion has not always been a big issue.

I'm doing what I can for the member. He has raised different ideas. He has talked about the hockey school idea, and he has talked about the importance of physical fitness in schools. We're willing to look at the initiatives he's bringing forward. He has just told me about the winter road initiative. I'm willing to do what I can on these issues.

Can I make a commitment to him? No, I can't. I don't have it in the budget right now. I can only commit to what is in the budget — other than to say thank you to the member opposite, and we will take efforts to address the concerns brought forward.

Mr. Elias: I would like the record to show that the Minister of Education — who sits as a part of Cabinet and holds the public purse, can change his mind on a whim as was seen yesterday and can also put forward supplementary budgets — refuses to address the safety concern brought by my constituents with regard to the students from Chief Zzeh Gittlit School being treated like the majority of the students around this territory with a proper, certified school bus for the community of Old Crow.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: No, Mr. Chair, that is not accurate. We all know that there are some significant challenges with getting a 72-passenger school bus — the big yellow school bus that we all see every day — to the community of Old Crow. He has raised his concern with me; I've discussed some of the things we can do to address the issue of kids being safe around the school vehicle when it's being used. We can put flashing lights on that vehicle; we can ask people to slow down; we can have the RCMP monitor this issue; we can have the principal send another letter out to the community members, encouraging them to slow down when kids are coming to and from school — because there are many kids who are walking to and from school as well.

We provide bus service to students who have to travel greater than three kilometers a day to get to school. The member has put forward some suggestions and some ideas. I said I would consider them. Regarding his characterization about flip-flopping — while that might be relevant to the previous Liberal government and indeed this Liberal Party for their position on issues — this government doesn't do things that way. We make carefully considered decisions. We take a look at the situation. We do an analysis of it. We look for appropriate solutions. We go through the appropriate process to allocate funds. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member opposite has some perspective on how budgeting is done, but that is not how it happens in the real world. I appreciate his comments. I have taken them under consideration. We will certainly look at ways of enhancing school bus safety issues in the community of Old Crow.

Number one, I will encourage all Yukoners to practise safe driving habits, to slow down when they see a school vehicle, to yield to children when they are walking to and from school, and now that I am aware of an ice road going into the community of Old Crow, we will take that under advisement. We will also look at the vehicle that is currently there. I am not sure if

the member has any other ideas about other retrofits that might happen — if he is talking about having the swing-out “stop” arm or if he wants additional flashing lights, but we will take a look at it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: Hopefully, I have only one question for the minister on one topic. Listening to the debate over the last few days on the Department of Education, a couple afternoons ago, my colleague, the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, asked the minister about the ever-increasing population and overcrowding at Elijah Smith Elementary School, which, as the minister knows, is in my riding. The minister indicated that they were looking at possibly a temporary classroom to deal with overcrowding. I know when I speak to constituents in the riding — in Granger, in Copper Ridge and in Hillcrest where students go to this school — there is a lot of parental concern. Several years ago the government indicated that they would be looking at a new school in the area. They weren't certain what kind of school, but they said there definitely would be some sort of school. Following one of the Hold Fast reports, that was put on hold.

Have the minister and the department, in light of the increased population in this area — the increasing number of young people because of new housing — given any consideration to any other alternatives besides busing kids to more distant neighbourhoods, because people are very concerned about the fact that their next-door neighbour on either side can go to the school by walking or riding their bike down the street, and yet the family in-between — and they're all playmates — has to be bused out to a more distant neighbourhood on the Alaska Highway. It's dividing natural friendships that are formed within the neighbourhoods. So I'm hoping I can just get a straightforward answer as to what might be in the planning stages. We don't need to be responding with talk of flip-flops or any of that. I'd appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, immediately upon taking office, the government took a very careful look at several different communities throughout the territory, including the Copper Ridge area. Also included in the Hold Fast study were the Porter Creek Secondary School, and the F.H. Collins Secondary School. When we did the work of looking at the Copper Ridge area, we received some very strong advice from community members, from the Copper Ridge school advisory group. At that time, they felt that there would be some very negative repercussions on other schools in the community, and wanted us to put this issue on hold.

We have honoured that. On an annual basis, we have gone back and looked at the population, the demographics and the school composition. We continue to meet with the Copper Ridge school advisory group to keep them aware of the different changes in population and demographics. We have made changes to the school catchment area, which will take a bit of time for all of the changes to come into effect. As the member knows, we grandfathered some students in to allow them to continue their school career through the primary school in which they started. These changes in catchment areas are having an effect. We are looking at all the other possible changes with the school administration and with the school council.

They are very involved in the decisions and the options that are there. As the member realizes, there is a finite capacity at that school. If you do have more students who want to attend that school, an option is to find another school for them, to change the catchment areas so there is a smaller group of people to draw from, to reduce the number of students who go there or, if there is a temporary excess of population, a greater population than we can currently accommodate with the current structure, an option that is being discussed with the administration and school council is the temporary use of a portable type of classroom. These are all situations that are being discussed; it's being looked at on a very regular basis. There are ongoing discussions with the community as to how to proceed.

Mr. Mitchell: I would just request that the minister keep me informed of the decision-making process because, when I'm visiting constituents at their door, they do raise this frequently — including some of the people who served on that initial advisory committee to which the minister referred. Yes, they very much value the multicultural aspects of the existing school; they don't want to lose that in the community and we all feel that way. However, several of the people who have served on that committee have told me that they did not recognize when the initial questions were asked how much additional growth there would be on the school population beyond what was initially projected in those studies that accompany the Hold Fast report. So they feel that the environment has changed and they are concerned about the continued pressure on the school, as is school administration.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the comments coming from the Member for Copperbelt. We certainly take great steps to best utilize all the assets and all the schools we have. This was more of a specific direction provided to us by the Auditor General in her advice — that we do have to make best use of all school facilities. While we do recognize that in Whitehorse, as a whole, there is excess capacity in the system, there are pockets in the community where there are greater densities of people. We do have this type of situation. We will be in contact.

I'm not sure of the next date for the meeting with the Copper Ridge school advisory committee, but we will make efforts to bring that group together to keep them updated as to the process, the population, the demographics and the issues affecting that school. I will endeavour to provide information to the member opposite.

Mr. Fairclough: I have one more quick question for the minister. Yesterday, I had a call from a parent in Riverdale, and they said that their issue is in regard to kids' programming in school, that there is a lot of money that is coming out of parents' pockets to pay for these — not just in Riverdale, but elsewhere in the Yukon. A lot of school councils do fundraising all year-round and they raise thousands of dollars. A lot of these monies go back into school programming for such things as hot lunch programs and for busing, for books, for music and so on.

This was a Yukon Party campaign promise in the last election and I was just wondering how far the Yukon Party has come to take care of their issues.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I would ask the member to — he doesn't have to do it right now — but provide me with the information that he has received. There are some comments that he has put forward that are inconsistent with school practices and operations, and I would certainly like to take a look at that. There are issues where schools do provide projects and opportunities outside of the normal course of school and there are sometimes fees associated with those types of voluntary programs. He has raised a couple of issues and I would appreciate it if he could send me the information or have his constituent give me call so that I can look into some of these in a little bit more detail.

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

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Chair, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Edzerza has requested unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$119,782,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$8,390,000 agreed to

Department of Education agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with the Department of Tourism.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I would ask the indulgence of the House at this moment to turn our attention to the gallery and welcome the Hon. Chuck Strahl, the federal government's Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and his staff who are along with him. Welcome, Minister Strahl, to the Yukon, to our Assembly, and of course, to our capital city, Whitehorse.

Applause

Chair: Order please. Before the Committee proceeds, instead of taking the 4:00 p.m. break, would members like a brief recess now?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, I am very pleased to be able to present the 2009-10 capital budget and operation and maintenance budget for the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Chair, I have a rather lengthy speech that was in part prepared by a number of officials and I very much appreciate it; however, I know how important it is for the member opposite to actually raise some questions in the little time that has been allotted to this very important strategic industry in the territory. So I am going to try to do my best to hit upon all the highlights — and there are lots of highlights in this department.

First I would like to extend by heartfelt thanks to the Department of Tourism and Culture for all their support and all their hard work and their diligence over the last number of years. It has been a real privilege to be able to serve as the Minister of Tourism and Culture for Yukon, since we first took office in 2002. I have seen a lot of changes on the ministerial front from time to time in other jurisdictions, so I am very pleased to be able to still be a minister of this very important portfolio. And of course to be able to witness a number of really important changes that have occurred over the last number of years.

First and foremost, I want to just extend my gratitude to all the officials. We really are grateful to have a lot of expertise when it comes to corporate services, but also the tourism branch as well as cultural services branch. You know, earlier today we tributed museums and International Museum Day, including the theme of tourism and museums.

I have sat at a number of ministerial meetings over the years in which they strive to try to bring the two together. I have to say that in Yukon, it really has served as a real blueprint for success for other jurisdictions to take note and to serve as a blueprint for other jurisdictions to follow. The two areas working together and being housed under the same department has made a huge difference.

Our government has had the opportunity and the liberty to work with a number of stakeholders in the Department of Tourism and Culture. I won't list all of them but there are a multitude of different agreements that we have in place with a multitude of different stakeholders. We are very pleased to be able to have worked with them and continue to work with them to advance the strategic priorities of tourism in the territory.

Tourism, we all know, is a strategic industry in the territory. It's a major economic generator. It also contributes to the social well-being of the territory, whether it's through the presence of arts and culture, heritage — we paid tribute to museums earlier, which includes cultural centres, First Nations heritage and cultural centres, and also includes community museums, as well as interpretive centres throughout the territory. So we're very pleased to be able to work with industry and to be able to listen carefully to the needs and the priorities of industry over the last number of years. I'm very proud to say that we have been able to introduce a number of new initiatives, as well

as expand programs in response to various needs and priorities and interests, as expressed by stakeholders over the last number of years.

One important initiative has been that of the tourism cooperative marketing fund, initiated by our government in 2004, of \$500,000, to re-energize and revitalize tourism activities. This budget continues to support the tourism cooperative marketing fund in direct funding to tourism businesses, First Nations, municipalities, organizations and partnerships in promoting Yukon's many valuable tourism products.

This budget item consists of approximately \$350,000 for marketing projects administered by the department, as well as \$150,000 for trade and consumer shows administered by the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. The beautiful thing about this particular fund is that it has been able to leverage matching dollars from the tourism industry at large, which means that approximately \$1 million is invested each and every year in targeting Yukon to prospective visitors around the world. It has really been a collaborative investment that we have been able to improve with a number of small but significant changes to the delivery of the program over the last number of years to respond better to the needs of tourism.

In 2008, for example, the marketing portion of the fund approved 84 applications for almost \$334,000, with a total contribution from industry of \$668,000. Again, in addition, as I mentioned earlier, there were also approximately 36 trade and consumer show applications for almost \$150,000 with matching dollars from industry, again, making the total contribution almost \$300,000. It has really enabled a number of communities, non-government organizations and members of the private sector to receive dollars for projects, such as print ad placements, trade and consumer shows, familiarization tours, and so forth.

Another important initiative that our government was able to launch not so long ago was the Yukon scenic drives initiative. This year's budget reflects this particular initiative again, to the tune of \$350,000, and it supports Yukon-wide interpretive signage, site construction and improvements, and a number of pullouts on the Alaska Highway to the Silver Trail, from Mendenhall Landing to the Kathleen River, to Quiet Lake and Tagish and more.

We actually have seven official scenic drives in the Yukon, all of which are listed in the *Yukon Vacation Planner*. In 2009, we will be utilizing some of these dollars to capture new, high-definition video footage along many of the scenic drives routes to share with international media and travel-trade partners and to assist in the production of on-line streaming video for the department's Web site as well.

Just building on that, I did want to make reference that each year since we launched this initiative — first in 2004 — we have been able to contribute approximately \$200,000 of this initiative money toward interpretive signage. In fact, last year marked just over \$1 million in interpretive signage investments that this government has made. What it has done is it has enabled us to really meet — we have had a number of studies and reports done over the last number of years, and all of these wonderful scenic drives where interpretive signage is front and

centre — so what we have been able to do is with this initiative alone is we have been able to not only invest in marketing initiatives abroad, but we have also been able to designate about \$200,000 each and every year toward implementing each of the requirements or each of those recommendations made in all of these different reports that were sitting there, literally shelved over the years.

So it has been a real investment and one that is readily noticed by residents and by visitors alike. Interpretive signage not only helps raise awareness, it also helps to promote very important icons throughout the Yukon and also helps each of us slow down and stay a little bit longer in the Yukon, which is absolutely key to contributing to the economic well-being of the territory.

There is also support provided for product development and resource services, which will assist with land use planning and support product development initiatives that grow tourism, meeting market demands and reflecting Yukoners' values. Funding is also being made available for industry research and strategic planning, which allows partnerships and projects to assess tourism potential business opportunities and measures the success of tourism initiatives that really add value to our economic infrastructure.

We are also pleased to be able to provide visitor services through the six visitor information centres located in Watson Lake, Whitehorse, Beaver Creek, Carcross, Dawson City and Haines Junction. This year, infrastructure upgrades to each of the visitor centres will include a number of initiatives, including re-roofing, painting, landscaping and other work to ensure that our six centres continue to be a "must stop" for the travelling public, because they seek valuable information on what there is to see and do while in the territory.

The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to support Yukon's diverse arts, cultural and heritage communities to foster creativity and quality of life. We recognize the very important role that arts, culture and heritage play in contributing to social and economic well-being of Yukoners.

In this year's budget, we were able to continue our investment in arts and culture and, in fact, see a tremendous increase with the investment in the Winter Olympics coming up in 2010. We are pleased to provide funding to the craft strategy which has been instrumental in support initiatives such as the, *Art Adventures on Yukon Time* studio guide, which also maintains the "Created in Yukon" craft identifier program used by many artists for their made-in-Yukon products and artwork.

Craft producers and visual artists are always looking at ways to expand their markets outside Yukon, and the Department of Tourism and Culture is pleased to be able to help with research and development around programming that will help facilitate emerging markets for their products.

Last year, the arts section, in partnership with Yukon College and Arts Underground, for example, offered a number of workshops designed to teach marketing art as a business, along with tips on sound business practices.

The department is also pleased to be able to continue its funding allotment to an initiative otherwise known as the "decade of sport and culture", of which \$200,000 will be going to-

ward supporting initiatives such as Culture Quest. The department's annual investment in Culture Quest has proven very successful, I might add, in recent years — namely, with the high calibre of work that was presented and displayed during the 2007 Canada Winter Games. Building on that success, this year's Culture Quest program in this fiscal year will concentrate on the continued development of the cultural community toward showcasing Yukon cultural activities at a national level, with its eye on the upcoming Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as I mentioned earlier.

In this regard, I would be very remiss if I didn't mention the fact that we have a number of key Yukon performers who are chosen for the 2009 cultural Olympiad, which took place in February and March of this year.

It is estimated that, collectively, the cultural Olympiad associated with the Olympics will attract more than two million people to performances and exhibitions and will reach millions more through on-line digital programming and television. This year's budget also reflects a new funding to the tune of \$150,000 for programming at the Old Fire Hall, which has been a tremendous success over the last couple of years. It started off as a pilot project and has really been able to evolve. It is a very successful cultural venue here in the City of Whitehorse drawing many individuals to the downtown core, to the Whitehorse waterfront — again, building on the significant number of improvements that we have been able to make to the Whitehorse waterfront. All told, it's approximately \$19 million, of which there is, I think approximately \$3 million or \$4 million, with the remainder being spent this fiscal year, including the development of the Whitehorse wharf.

All these various initiatives, from the extension of the trolley to the expansion of the MacBride Museum and now, of course, to the new programming at the Old Fire Hall, which has been a tremendous collaboration with the Yukon Arts Centre and the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, we're very pleased to provide long-term funding — three years — starting with this year, and we think it will continue to be a successful collaboration with those various entities.

As I mentioned earlier, we're very pleased to continue our support of museums, interpretive centres, and First Nation cultural centres. In this regard, we have approximately \$1.3 million being made available to a number of various community museums, and we're very pleased to support them with this direct funding support.

As we mentioned earlier, these institutions are very much the stewards of our collective heritage, whether it be First Nation culture, the Klondike Gold Rush, building the Alaska Highway, the flora and fauna in the Kluane region and so forth. We're very blessed to have them with us here today.

Mr. Chair, I have so much more, and — believe it or not — I've pared it down. But I have pages more here to divulge, which I'm sure I'll take the opportunity to elaborate on a little bit further down the line. I will perhaps just skip over to some of the other initiatives that we're also highlighting in this year's budget.

When we talk about tourism organizations, this year's budget has well over \$1 million, which will be supporting a

number of tourism-related stakeholders, from the First Nations Tourism Association, to the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon, to TIA Yukon and so forth.

I've said it again and again that Yukon has some very first-class tourism products that have been able to grow and evolve and which meet our visitors' interests. We have wilderness adventure, we have authentic cultural products, a strong convention bureau, quality accommodations and restaurants and a customer-focused service sector.

I just wanted to say that this year's budget, first and foremost, is really in direct response to what we have heard from the tourism industry. This budget of course provides an additional \$500,000 in new money toward marketing operations overseas. That, in fact, was identified as a key priority by industry and where we have seen an increase in visitation over the last number of years. This is thanks in part to the continuation of the Condor flights which continue to grow each and every year, but also other modes of travel are bringing in Europeans — German-speaking Europeans primarily. These dollars will contribute to additional means to extend our reach to the European overseas markets.

We are also pleased to contribute an additional \$100,000 toward the meetings, conventions and incentive travel, which was also identified as a key priority of industry. We know that for every dollar invested, we are receiving approximately \$10 in addition to that. It has been a tremendous benefit to the territory. These additional dollars will help leverage further reach from our industry into new markets, such as sports tourism, which was really what the Canada Winter Games were all about.

Mr. Chair, I can see my time is up but I look forward to continuing on.

Mr. Inverarity: I have to say, I look at the clock on the wall up there, and I see that we're going to have a meaningful debate for the next 40 minutes. I'm looking forward to answers to all my questions in the last 20 minutes of our sitting today, and I'm sure that, if we don't get through all of them, that they'll all be followed up with notes later, letters from the minister, and all kinds of good stuff.

First of all, Mr. Chair, I'd like to extend my thanks to all department officials who worked so hard over the past year for the minister, and for the government, in trying to get tourism up and running in the Yukon. I really appreciate the efforts that they've gone to. Certainly, in brief discussions I've had, I've found them very informative. I would like to thank the officials who came to the briefing that we had, and I thank the minister for arranging that. I found it quite informative, and I'll get on to that in just a minute, as I get through my preamble here today.

I would also like to thank the individuals I met in Dawson City at the annual Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon convention at the end of April. I found that going up there and seeing some old friends from years and years ago — making a joke from time to time, back before the war. I've been out of the industry for a few years and so I had missed it. I hadn't realized exactly how long I had missed being in the tourism industry, and I have to say I am a strong supporter of tourism in the Yukon and culture. I think I have stated that before in this

House. I consider it to be the one industry that has hung in there for decades and decades, and I'm proud that those tourism operators who are still around from early days are still operating. It is nice to see new adventures going on, particularly in the area of adventure tourism and wilderness travel. I have always felt that that concept actually was one that has not been fully developed. Over the years, we have depended largely on the rubber-tire traffic and while that has always been there, we're seeing those numbers decreasing, which is a bit of a shame. Hopefully, it's just a lull, because of issues outside our influence and that we're looking at expanding.

I remember I was talking to a couple of individuals in Dawson, who run adventure tours — Great River Journey was one of them. I had indicated — back in the 1970s, actually — that there was exactly the same type of tourism. Well, not exactly quite the same — we didn't have fancy tents, and we didn't have fancy food and things along those lines. But there were, in fact, guided tours down the Yukon River as early as 1977 in adventure tourism, I remember. I see that while it had maybe taken a bit of a lull over a period of time, it's starting to come back and bringing those who perhaps did it back then and now have a lot more money to spend to enjoy the creature comforts. It's well worth the effort, and I wish them well in their endeavours as they go on.

Getting back to, I guess, the issue at hand here today, I don't think that I'm probably going to have time to get into a cross-the-floor debate with the limited time we have.

Perhaps what I will do is put my questions on the floor and in what time the minister has she may be able to answer them for me. If we run out of time, then perhaps they could be sent along afterwards as I had indicated earlier.

I had mentioned my thanks to the officials for having the briefing. They had made a commitment in the briefing to provide some additional information. I haven't received that information yet. Perhaps it's in the minister's office getting cleared. I anxiously wait for that information that I had asked for at the time. But it does make it difficult to try to piece some of this stuff together. I had asked for a last-year forecast comparison — I guess they call it mains to mains — if the department could have arranged that for us. That would have been good to have.

I know that as we get into these things, we'll talk about a number of items.

I would also like to thank the minister for the *2009-10 Tourism Yukon Strategic Plan*. I received it in Dawson City. As you can see, it is pretty much thumb-eared and yellow-marked with interesting tidbits. The one that struck me the most — the only reason why I am bringing it up at this point in time is that I did ask questions in the House here in April regarding the tourism statistics for last year. We only had been given the numbers up until September and I was hoping I could get the year-end ones. The minister didn't provide them at the time — which is okay. I know they are hard to come by. This particular strategic plan, though, quotes some number on April 14, and I believe I asked for them after that. I am a little disappointed to see that the numbers have decreased by nine percent over the

previous year. As we get into this afternoon a little bit, I will touch on that trend a little bit more.

At this point in time, I'd like to place a couple of questions here on the floor. The first one I talked about, which is the rest of the numbers that were missing from last year — I'm anxiously awaiting them and I know that, while they may be somewhat disappointing compared to the previous year, I think that we should get them on the record either way.

One of the other things that I would like to see is, perhaps, a forecast for the current year: what the projections are for the industry, so that they can have some idea as to what the increase or decrease in projected border crossings might be and how that might affect things. I know there was some discussion in Dawson City regarding it, and while there was a general feeling that the trend was going to be down, there was some cautious optimism about late bookings. I thought, boy, there's something we can grasp hold of, and maybe we could be looking at the late booking trends and seeing if some update could be given to the industry and to those highway lodges, for example, that are anxiously waiting with bated breath for these numbers so they can do their forecasts for staffing for the summer. I know that the general trend, it sounds like, is probably not as high as we would like it to be and I recognize that, particularly in light of the economic downturns that we have had over the last little while.

There's another subject that I would like to touch on a bit. Have there been any discussions with any of the other airlines that have been around? I know there has been some discussion about WestJet coming into town. I think that, having worked in the airline industry for 15 years, I'm not sure that I have always welcomed competition, but I know that if you are one of the two players in town, you might be a little bit concerned about having a third carrier. I know our population base here is one that doesn't lend itself to a large amount of competition, and I would be very, very interested in finding out more about whether another carrier is still planning on coming into town.

Along the airport lines, again I was wondering what the effect of the construction at the Whitehorse airport is going to have on the international tourists coming in this summer. I know some work has been going on up there, and hopefully the efforts to accommodate them during this construction season will leave them with some comfort.

I know in the tourism industry how we put our best foot forward, as always. We want to look our best and I'm sure the minister has some really constructive things there to advise us regarding that and I'm looking forward to hearing about that.

I would like to bring one issue to mind. It's a constituent issue. I picked it up last night at my constituency meeting that I had. An individual came to me and he was quite concerned about parking at the airport, specifically long-term parking versus short-term parking. I know in February when I was driving there to go to Vancouver, I had to park — I think it was within 150 feet of the Alaska Highway, it seemed like. It was clear at the other end of the parking lot. I was just going in, my wife was going to come in, have a coffee and then she was going to go home. So she was looking at short-term parking.

As we walked through the parking lot, sure enough, we saw one car with four flat tires and about two feet of snow on it. He was parked as close to the airport terminal as you can get. As I looked around, it sure looked like all the long-term parking people were up close to the terminal and all the short-term people were quite a distance away. Anyway, this individual came to me last night and I didn't really have a solution to the problem.

I know they are going to be starting to put meters in there at a \$1.50, but his argument was that, at \$1.50 a day, a long-term parker could park there for 35 or 40 days. I am not sure I'm looking to have a long-term high rate but it is certainly something that should be looked at. I know my constituent will be pleased that the issue has been addressed here this afternoon, when it comes to that.

I have so many questions — I'm not sure where to go on.

I am not sure if this is the minister's area. I think it probably goes ultimately under the Minister of Community Services, but it certainly does affect tourism within the Yukon. I was wondering if the minister knew if there were any plans to introduce an airport improvement fee to help pay for the construction. I know that I have some real issues regarding airport improvement fees at Vancouver airport and a number of other airports around. I haven't really got into debate with the minister regarding the airport improvement fees but if she knows if the Minister of Community Services has any plans, or Highways and Public Works, it would be sure nice to get that at least out on the floor for some debate. I think it is something that we need to consider.

At last count, I think I saw something like in the neighbourhood of 35 or 40 airports across Canada that are now implementing AIF fees, and it raises some concern.

Let's see now. I'm running out of time here, and I've got a number of other questions to ask. I think this one was answered in Dawson City regarding doing exit surveys. I think that it was said that we weren't going to do some exit surveys this year because of the economy and things along that line. So perhaps the minister might be able to just fill me in on that. That would be great.

Lately, there has been a lot of discussion around the flooding of — let's pick the north Klondike Highway. I know it affects a number of other highways around. But I'm wondering what efforts — because this affects the tourism area. I know there is, I think, single-lane traffic now around Tatchun, where the highway was washed out. Does the minister expect that her colleague in Highways and Public Works will have these highways back up to snuff for these large RVs that go up and down the highways? They have such a low clearance, I'm concerned about that, and again, it's a matter of putting our best foot forward for our tourists who come to the Yukon, whether from Europe or from elsewhere in North America.

That brings up a couple of issues: the \$500,000 for the overseas tourism budget that was an increase for marketing in Europe — I think it was raised by \$500,000 — and while it appears to be new money for that particular marketing strategy, I'm concerned about the decline in the North American marketing. I think that the minister could just explain how that backfill

is going to be handled, whether it's some of the \$2.6 million that's going to the Olympics.

While we're on the Olympics and the money that Tourism is going to spend — I think it's \$2.6 million — how much of that is actually coming out of the Tourism budget, as opposed to how much is coming out of other departments, and what are those other departments?

While I am talking about the overseas tourism in Germany, I know that there is a great deal of effort put into European conventions and European tradeshows and along those lines. I am wondering if we have an agent who works in Europe on our behalf. Is this a government employee? A YTG-type employee? Who else does this individual work for? If it is a contract, how many people? Who they are? What is their reputation? Who do they represent? Do they represent just us or do they represent other companies? Particularly, I am interested in whether they represent other companies that are doing business in the Yukon, just to see what is happening there.

I think on that note, Mr. Chair, I'm going to — I have a lot more questions, but I know I would like to give the minister some time to answer these questions and perhaps I might have time for an additional rebuttal at the end. Perhaps I could just finish up by saying that I truly believe that tourism should be our number-one industry in the Yukon. I think that we should be promoting, quite frankly, as much as we can. I was about to swear; I had better not do that. I stand behind this industry wholeheartedly. I have supported it all of my life. I am looking forward to ongoing debates in good nature with the minister. On that note, thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: With all the questions that member opposite has asked, I could take five hours, actually. But unfortunately, I am only allotted 20 minutes to actually rebut some of these questions coming from the members opposite.

I am heartened by the response or by the questions coming forward from the member opposite. First, it was great to see the member opposite present at the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon AGM, because it has been a few years since I have seen any member from the opposition at any of those meetings. So welcome back.

I also just wanted to say that I was also heartened to see the recognition of how important this industry is to the territory because, you know, when we took office — or actually it was just before the 2002 election — we had a thing occur called "renewal".

All I can say is that industry lobbied very hard to reinstate and reestablish this Department of Tourism and Culture. That's what we did right away. We went to work and actually made it from Business, Tourism and Culture, and it's now housed under one shop called Tourism and Culture.

Since we took office, I just wanted to say that when you look at the Business, Tourism and Culture department that the previous Liberal government had in place, and then when you look at where we are today with just the Department of Tourism and Culture — never mind the Department of Economic Development — actually the budget alone for Tourism and Culture has gone up by over \$5 million. So it does speak to the very importance of Tourism and Culture that's just housed

within this one shop. That's not to say that there aren't other programs offered by Economic Development and certainly all of the infrastructure improvements delivered through the Minister of Community Services and Highways and Public Works — we'll get into some of that here as well.

I just wanted to put on the record that it's great to hear the opposition's take on tourism. I concur and in fact, our government has worked very hard to work alongside with industry.

On that note, everything we do in terms of tourism marketing in particular, I just wanted to say that there is a mantra that we use and that industry uses and that is it's industry-led; it's market-driven; it's research-based. Of course, the member opposite would know that, having read this 2009-10 Tourism Yukon strategic plan, because that is what it's all about. It's about industry working with the Government of Yukon in determining what those strategic investments are, where our programs are working and where they're not working. We need to invest more where — you know, we need to look at other markets. I have to say that I can't say enough about the Tourism Association Industry of Yukon and the Senior Marketing Committee, which is housed under TIA Yukon.

This body came into being just a few short years ago, and it's their role — and I have to say that these folks have dedicated their time, thanks to their marketing expertise and their experience in marketing Yukon as a destination of choice, of course. Thanks to their leadership over the last number of years, we have become very focused.

I have to say, you know, when I look back to where we were and where we are now, we are very strategic; we're very focused in where we do allot dollars in these key markets. I just have to extend my heartfelt thanks to these individuals in industry for putting forward their time, their dedication, and their expertise in ensuring that tourism does continue to deliver for Yukoners; that it contributes to many jobs, to great revenues for the territory — and it also contributes to the quality of life that we continue to enjoy here in the Yukon.

So, Mr. Chair, I'm not too sure where to begin, other than to say that there are a number of strategic investments in this year's budget and that it's in large part as a result of those discussions between the Government of Yukon — in particular, between our Premier — and meeting with key stakeholders in tourism. We talked a bit about the \$500,000 in additional monies for overseas Yukon. That is a significant increase in the overseas market. I think I mentioned before that, when we look at numbers — and just going back to visitation numbers that yes, in fact, in 2008, Yukon did experience a decrease in visitation. But there were certain key areas within Yukon that actually experienced an increase.

One of those areas was the overseas market. We were very pleased to see an increase in that market. We continue to see an increase in that market, thanks to companies such as Condor, but of course also the wholesalers and the travel trade in German-speaking Europe. They work very hard and they have a really close rapport with industry here. They have been able to develop that trust and respect for one another. I think that as a result of that relationship building we have been able to really

put Yukon on the map as a destination of choice in terms of the country.

So this \$500,000 will build on that investment for a total of about \$1.7 million in overseas marketing alone. I also wanted to say that we are very pleased to also contribute an additional \$100,000 for conventions, meetings and incentive travel to the Yukon Convention Bureau, bringing their contribution to just over \$300,000.

It's a significant increase, but again it was deemed to be a priority by industry and that which also generates a multitude of dollars compared to the dollars that we do contribute directly to the Yukon Convention Bureau. We have seen a great number of wonderful meetings, conventions being held throughout the Yukon as a result of the good work that they do in collaboration with all levels of government and, of course, industry partners working together, and are very proud of the work that they have been able to accomplish as well.

The member opposite also made reference to domestic marketing. You know, it is unfortunate that the member opposite — perhaps he didn't hear my remarks that I gave in Dawson City. One thing that we have been able to do is we've been able to contribute increased dollars incrementally over the years to the North American market — whether it has been through Tourism North, which is a collaboration between Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Alaska, or whether it has been in direct marketing initiatives with Alaska through the Alaska Travel Industry Association.

It really extends that leverage, that reach to our markets that we wouldn't be able to see if we had gone on it alone. Likewise, we've been able to really build our rapport with our two sister territories, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, on a pan-northern marketing approach. In fact, I think it was yesterday we issued a news release of a new MOU that was signed with the Canadian Tourism Commission, which was really great news because for years we've been saying that, as part of the northern part of Canada, as a smaller jurisdiction with relatively smaller marketing dollars compared to the larger marketing consortiums of Travel Alberta, Travel British Columbia and so forth, often the north has not been able to afford to buy into pay-to-play marketing programs through the Canadian Tourism Commission.

This agreement actually recognizes that the north is in fact a destination unto itself in Canada and does in fact deserve the recognition that it has worked so hard to accomplish. So we are now able to buy into CTC marketing research offerings at a much-reduced cost. For example, we will now be able to contribute to — two areas that we're targeting through this agreement immediately is the German core advertising program — again, targeted at consumers partnering with trade in the marketplace, with the call to action of driving consumers to our Web site and also to CTC's Web site and so forth.

This has enabled us to buy into programs, such as this, at a much more affordable cost, so we're able to actually extend our reach again through another partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission to extend our reach. Likewise, we're also partnering on a 2010 national asset development program. We'll be working with the Canadian Tourism Commission to

do a still and video shoot in each of our respective territories. In fact, we had a number of international broadcast networks here earlier this year to take a look at what the Yukon has to offer. You know, Mr. Chair, they were so impressed that they're coming back again this year. What that means for the Yukon is that, during the 2010 Winter Olympics, when you've got millions of eyes on the Olympics at that time, we will be able to garner the attention of millions of viewers by having vignettes showcasing the Yukon and other parts of Canada's north during that time.

You know, this is marketing and advertising that we could not even begin to imagine to afford. Because we are strategically located where we are in comparison to Vancouver, of course, which will be hosting the winter games, we will be able to take advantage of that leverage. Those are just a couple of examples. Again, this has enabled us to buy into this program at an affordable rate and again being able to garner that particular reach.

That is just one example of what Yukon Tourism has been able to do by reaching out to strategic partners with our Canadian northern territories or through the Canadian Tourism Commission, with Alaska Travel Industry Association, through Tourism North and many more. We have been able to attract some very creative ways of marketing Yukon and, in turn, we have received a very high return on investment.

When we talk about domestic marketing — as I mentioned in building on all of those initiatives through the scenic drives initiatives, as I mentioned which is really reaching out to the rubber-tire traffic.

Also through Destination: Yukon, which is a combination of working through our gateway cities with our partners of Air Canada and Air North — and I'll get to that in a moment here as well. But those programs, again, are helping to further our reach in terms of tourism marketing to other parts of the country. In fact, for the North American market, we're actually spending the most that we have ever since the launch of the national marketing campaign, Look Up North, in 2007. So this year, we'll be spending approximately \$3.6 million on the North American market alone, which is up from last year.

The member opposite asked a specific question about the Olympics, and I have answered this on a number of occasions. Approximately \$733,000 of the \$2.6 million that has been allocated to Yukon's participation in the Vancouver 2010 Olympics is going to media marketing initiatives directly. That will certainly work to the advantage of our key gateway cities of Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. It builds upon the consumer awareness that we have been able to build upon over the last number of years, thanks to working creatively with our respective partners.

Mr. Chair, there were also questions about the Whitehorse airport and, unfortunately, it doesn't look like we are going to get the Department of Highways and Public Works, but that is particularly housed within the Department of Highways and Public Works. I will say that I do have a little bit of information on hand about it, and of course we are dedicating a significant sum of dollars toward the expansion of the airport terminal building — the international airport terminal building.

In fact, it is about a 2,500-square-metre expansion. It will include additional space for security clearance of passengers and a new 230-passenger hold room that will serve as an in-transit lounge for international flights. This is really key, because if we didn't have this in place and if we weren't able to meet our security requirements, as prescribed through the Canadian Border Services Agency, we wouldn't be able to accommodate airlines such as Condor Airlines. This will, in fact, be able to secure and continue to instill confidence in airlines such as Condor and any additional international airlines that may see fit to come here. It will also provide us with a new, larger carousel, oversized freight/passenger elevator and so forth.

In terms of parking tips for the member opposite, I would have to say that I'll endeavour to take that up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works on behalf of the member opposite, because it doesn't look like we're going to get to that debate here today. It's unfortunate because there are millions of budget highlights in that particular department as well.

This is a significant key asset. Of course when we talk about growing tourism, we also talk about growing air access, as well as ensuring that we're looking at the Whitehorse airport terminal building. It should also be noted that we've endeavoured to go to work with Air North, Yukon's regional airline, on airport runway improvements to accommodate the new aircraft they hope to be able to bring in combi service here within the year, within the next few months. So we've been able to endeavour to work with them through the Department of Highways and Public Works in terms of the Old Crow and Dawson City runway expansion — turnaround lanes, that's right.

Mr. Chair, we are working on those improvements, which build upon the lovely improvements that we have also built in the community of Old Crow in collaboration with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

In terms of looking at other airlines coming to the Yukon, I think I have mentioned this before that we do have two airlines. We do have Air Canada and we do have Air North. We are very blessed to have the service of both airlines. I think, in particular, Air North is to be congratulated for the level of investment that they have made in the Yukon and, in working with Air North, we have been able to expand and open up new markets that we didn't see — actually Yukoners perhaps never thought — could actually be markets. That was marketing to folks in Edmonton and Calgary and even in the City of Vancouver to come up for a few days to enjoy the Yukon for a weekend or a week or longer. Thanks to affordable, accessible air travel provided by Air North, we have been able to do just that. In fact, those programs have been oversubscribed.

Mr. Chair, I see that I am running out of time here pretty quickly and it is unfortunate, because I just wanted to commend Air North for their service. We endeavour to work with them to continue to expand our markets into those key gateway cities and new cities as well.

Mr. Chair, it's really unfortunate, because I have a lot more to talk about here. In terms of highway infrastructure, we've talked about improvements — increased investments in

our highways budget, increased investments in our air access, increased investments in cultural centres — Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations cultural centres — investments in the Tombstone Park interpretive centre, for example, investments in the labour market, cultural services, and many more. This government continues to work toward growing tourism in the territory, which is a strategic investment.

Mr. Inverarity: Seeing the time, I only have a couple of comments. I was hoping that we could get off on a good spirit here, but when the minister comes in and starts talking about previous Liberal governments, I obviously can't leave that one untouched. I have to reply in some method.

Unfortunately, the only reply I have is that we're talking about a Yukon Party government, which is the only government to ever roll back public sector wages. I thought that that's going to have to be the way we come out.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the minister has talked about \$5 million in increased spending — well, you know, I did my faithful spreadsheet here —

Termination of sitting as per Standing Order 76(1)

Chair: Order please. Order please.

The time has reached 5:00 p.m. on this, the 32nd day of the 2009 spring sitting. Standing Order 76(1) states: "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, if the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole at the time, shall interrupt proceedings at 5:00 p.m. and, with respect to each Government Bill before Committee that the Government House Leader directs to be called, shall:

"(a) put the question on any amendment then before the Committee;

"(b) put the question, without debate or amendment, on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill, including all clauses, schedules, title and preamble, be deemed to be read and carried;

"(c) put the question on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill be reported to the Assembly; and

"(d) when all bills have been dealt with, recall the Speaker to the Chair to report on the proceedings of the Committee."

It is the duty of the Chair to now conduct the business of Committee of the Whole in the manner directed by Standing Order 76(1).

The Chair would now ask the Government House Leader to indicate whether Bill No. 15 and Bill No. 13, the two government bills now before Committee of the Whole, should be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Chair, the government directs that Bill No. 15 and Bill No. 13 be called at this time.

Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*.

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

Chair: The Chair will now recognize Mr. Fentie, as the sponsor of Bill No. 15, for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1) (b).

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Thank you Mr. Chair. I move that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be deemed to be read and carried. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of 762,613,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$240,618,000 agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Schedules A, B and C agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-2010*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-2010*, be reported without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*.

Bill No. 13 — *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09* — continued

Chair: The Chair will now recognize Mr. Fentie, as the sponsor of Bill No. 13, for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that all clauses, schedules and the title of Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be deemed to be read and carried. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$14,577,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$3,540,000 agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Schedules A, B and C agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Chair, I move that Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fentie that Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be reported without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Chair: As all government bills remaining in Committee of the Whole have now been decided upon, it is my duty to rise and report to the House.

Speaker resumes the Chair

Termination of sitting as per Standing Order 76(2)

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

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.

Standing Order 76(2)(d) states: "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Speaker of the Assembly, when recalled to the Chair after the House has been in the Committee of the Whole, shall:

"(d) with respect to each Government Bill standing on the Order Paper for Third Reading and designated to be called by the Government House Leader,

"(i) receive a motion for Third Reading and passage of the bill, and

"(ii) put the question, without debate or amendment, on that motion."

I shall, therefore, ask the Government House Leader to identify which of the bills now standing at third reading that the government wishes to be called.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the government directs that Bill No. 65, 64, 13 and 15 be called for third reading at this time.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 65: Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 65, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Horne.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I move that Bill No. 65, entitled *Act to Amend the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that Bill No. 65, entitled *Act to Amend the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 65 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 65 has passed this House.

Bill No. 64: Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 64, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 64, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 64, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 64 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 64 has passed this House.

Bill No. 13: Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Bill No. 13, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 13, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

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: Disagree.
Mr. McRobb: Disagree.
Mr. Elias: Disagree.
Mr. Fairclough: Disagree.
Mr. Inverarity: Disagree.
Mr. Hardy: Agree.
Mr. Cardiff: Agree.
Mr. Edzerza: Agree.
Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yeas, five nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 13 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 13 has passed this House.

Bill No. 15: Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 15, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 15, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

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: Disagree.
Mr. McRobb: Disagree.
Mr. Elias: Disagree.
Mr. Fairclough: Disagree.
Mr. Inverarity: Disagree.
Mr. Hardy: Disagree.
Mr. Cardiff: Disagree.
Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, seven nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 15 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 15 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to the bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Thank you. Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Deputy Clerk: *Corrections Act, 2009; Act to Amend the Human Rights Act; Act to Amend the Yukon College Act; Child and Youth Advocate Act; Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act; Corporate Governance Statute Law Amendment Act; Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009; Act to Amend the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act; Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007; Third Appropriation Act, 2008-09; First Appropriation Act, 2009-10.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by Madam Deputy Clerk.

I have a few words as this is your last day. Thank you for indulging me.

As we close the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I am sure your summer is setting up to be as busy as mine. I call it "summer busy."

I want to say to anyone who believes that the work stops when you leave today that nothing could be further from the truth. Since coming to the office of Commissioner, I have been on a campaign to educate and let others know that there is more to the work required of us than meets the eye. As a public figure, we are always on duty, whether we've decided to take a few days off, or we're in the store checking out the tomatoes. We think we are aware of this when we put our names forward to sit in these chairs; however, we are not aware of the full extent of what happens to our privacy and space.

I have the pleasure of being invited into the Legislative Assembly from time to time, and I'm always struck by the magnitude of your work — not the hour that is broadcast daily to us during the sitting, but the daily work behind the scenes, after-hours and weekends.

On that note, I hope you find a few weeks for personal time with your family and loved ones. Best wishes for a magnificent summer, and I know I'll be seeing some of you at various events. Have a great summer.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

As the House has reached the maximum number of days permitted for this spring sitting, as established pursuant to Standing Order 75(3), and the House has completed consideration of the designated legislation, it is the duty of the Chair to declare that, as provided for in Motion No. 799, which carried

yesterday, this House now stands adjourned until June 12, 2009, when the House shall hold a special sitting in Dawson City, Yukon, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first wholly elected territorial council of the Yukon Territory.

Members, have a wonderful summer.

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled May 14, 2009:

09-1-119

Yukon State of the Environment Interim Report: Environmental Indicators for 2006 (Taylor)

The following documents were filed May 14, 2009:

09-1-105

Yukon Health Care Review, The; "Taking the Pulse" – What We Heard: a Public Dialogue on the Yukon Health Care Review: Preliminary Report submitted by Yukon Health Care Review Steering Committee (dated May 14, 2009) (Hart)

09-1-106

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board 2008 Annual Report (Hart)