

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 26, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hardy: Before I start my tribute, I'd like to introduce some members of Ed Stick's family, who are in the gallery with us today: Lorraine Stick, Jan Stick, Jessie, Marlee, and Ciara, whom I've known for so long. Unfortunately, I don't know your name — John.

Please help me welcome them to the gallery.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Ed Stick

Mr. Hardy: I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and the NDP caucus to pay tribute to a man who gave his life to others. Edward Charles Stick, who is also known by his Southern Tutchone name, Kwatsada. Sadly for all who knew him, Ed left this world too soon in August this year.

Ed was a teacher. He was in the first graduating class of the Yukon native teacher education program and taught at Riverdale Junior High School and later at F.H. Collins Secondary School, but Ed's adult life was also about more than formal teaching. With his pupils he always had time to sit down and talk. He was pragmatic about their problems and he didn't lecture them. He had an innate sense for how children felt and was often willing to share his own life experiences with them showing how it is to be very human.

Ed was born at Aishihik Village in 1952, and lived there until, at age five, he left to attend St. Agnes Hostel in Whitehorse. Known as "Sticky", he made such an impression on the workers there that the matron of the hostel was still in touch with Ed years later and came to his YNTEP graduation.

Aishihik was Ed's true home. Aishihik is where Ed is buried, but his soul was always there even when he was not. He, and later his wife Jan and his children Elijah and Jessie, spent summers there with their extended family of aunts, uncles and grandparents. The time spent at Aishihik was spent travelling along the road of teaching and learning for the whole family.

One year, he and Jan mapped and photographed burial sites of the Tutchone ancestors at the village, researching and identifying forgotten grave sites. Spending time around the campfire with the elders was one of the family's greatest memories of the place and its people.

While Ed worked at Youth Services, he often took children to Aishihik. He kept them busy and out of trouble, climbing

mountains, setting snares, fishing or just walking through the bush while he taught them about First Nation history.

Ed was a very private person and would do things for others but didn't want anyone to know about them. Jan says he was always the guy who had the pickup and the chainsaw to help people who didn't have them. He never turned down a request. True to Ed's educator character, on the day of his funeral, the services for him at Champagne and Aishihik were a learning and teaching moment for everyone there. It was a welcoming and inclusive ceremony that reflected both cultures he was part of. We have been privileged to have had Ed in our lives in the Yukon. He was that rare human who loved without reservation or conditions. Always an educator, his life itself shows us many lessons for our present and our future lives.

Thank you.

Mr. McRobb: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to also pay tribute to the late Ed Stick.

Like many people, I knew Ed for several years including at the Aishihik Village and can certainly say he was a role model for many people. His influence will live on for many years. He will be deeply missed by the many who knew him, but he will never be forgotten.

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

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: The Member for Kluane, on a point of personal privilege.

Point of personal privilege

Mr. McRobb: On a point of personal privilege, I would like to correct the record on a comment I made yesterday. After further review, it appears the NDP's press release regarding the non-confidence motion did not state its members would be voting against the motion, and I apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. Hardy: I have for tabling the following documents, including a letter that is addressed to all Members of the Legislative Assembly from CPAWS and the Yukon Conservation Society. It's the final report: "Yukoners' attitudes on the environment and Peel watershed".

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House expresses its disappointment with the lack of leadership shown by the Government of Canada in regard to climate change and urges the Minister of Environment to work with her counterparts in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to present a united message from the north in support of a stronger action on climate change.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to assess all major intersections along Yukon highways and construct turning lanes for safety considerations where deemed necessary.

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

THAT this House urges the Prime Minister to show leadership by attending the climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Speaker: Are there further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Aboriginal languages

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Premier. The first day of this sitting, I urged this Legislature to establish an independent, non-partisan commission on Yukon aboriginal language protection. The commission would be comprised of four Yukon residents and would conduct a public consultation campaign over a period of two years and would present its findings and recommendations as to how our aboriginal languages should be preserved, promoted and protected.

I put this motion forward because I believe our territorial public government should have a significant role in the preservation of our rich linguistic tapestry in our territory. This is backed by many Yukoners who believe that our territory's aboriginal languages are endangered to various degrees. A strong cultural and linguistic fabric can only contribute to healthy, resilient Yukon communities.

Does the Premier recognize the immediacy of the threat to the very existence of our territory's aboriginal languages?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: First off, yes, the government does recognize this, and that's why, along with Canada, the Yukon has a number of initiatives to try to preserve aboriginal languages here in the Yukon. But I would remind the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin that the question is actually housed in a motion that the member tabled, and that might have been a very good motion to debate yesterday, as presented by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Mr. Elias: Language is one of the most tangible symbols of a culture and group identity. When these languages vanish they take with them unique ways of looking at the world and our precious heritage. The preservation of the ancient aboriginal languages of the Gwich'in, the Tlingit, the Kaska, the Tagish, the Han, Northern and Southern Tutchone, and the Upper Tanana deserve a priority amount of attention in the next Yukon government budget. I think the Yukon government

needs to commit to action, commit to protecting and revitalizing our aboriginal languages.

Why would any government stand idly by and allow ancient languages to perish? Will the Premier do just that and budget substantial dollars for the establishment of a non-partisan commission on Yukon aboriginal language protection?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: This government certainly recognizes the importance of Yukon's aboriginal languages and works very closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations, with individual First Nations and with First Nation language speakers throughout the territory to continue to educate people and prepare people to speak Yukon's aboriginal languages. An example of this is the work that is done at Yukon College with the Yukon Native Language Centre with their elder mentor program and some of their other tutoring programs there. There are also significant First Nation language speaking programs in the majority of Yukon schools, if not all Yukon schools.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we have announced earlier the bicultural program with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Haines Junction, which is working in a bicultural and indeed in many cases a bilingual manner with the aboriginal language and with English in that school's community.

This government recognizes the importance of this and has committed significant resources and people to work with Yukoners to address this very important issue.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I am asking for the creation of a non-partisan commission to conduct a careful forensic-like examination of our Yukon aboriginal languages and individual community linguistic needs. We need to do this carefully, thoroughly and in a measured and studied way. The Government of Canada says that our country's aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world.

The Government of Canada report recognizes that, over the past 100 years or more, nearly 10 once-flourishing aboriginal languages have become extinct and at least a dozen more are on the brink of extinction. The federal study also says that a number of aboriginal languages are close to extinction, including some Yukon languages. It says the Tlingit, Tagish, Gwich'in and Northern and Southern Tutchone languages are listed as endangered — that is five of our eight aboriginal languages. Will the Premier support the establishment of a non-partisan commission on Yukon aboriginal language protection?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Not only has the Minister of Education clearly represented here in the House this afternoon the amount of work that is being done here in the Yukon with respect to the preservation of First Nation or aboriginal languages here in the territory, there's also a direct relationship between the federal government and Yukon First Nations in this area. I think that's also a good thing.

Once again, I want to reiterate that the motion the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin tabled in this House would have been a much more constructive motion to debate yesterday than the proceedings we all witnessed.

Question re: Old Crow school bus

Mr. Elias: I've tried quiet diplomacy, letter writing and face-to-face meetings to try to convince the Education minister that the purchasing of a school bus for the children of the

Chief Zzeh Gittlit School is a win-win situation and demonstrates a need, but all I've heard is a flat-out no.

Section 47, paragraph 2 of the *Education Act* says the minister shall provide transportation for the children who are more than 3.2 kilometres away from the nearest school. There are children in Old Crow who live more than 3.2 kilometres away from the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, not to mention the extenuating and harsh circumstances that all the children have to deal with every day.

The minister has an obligation to provide safe transportation for these children and the minister has been neglecting this obligation for too many years. When is the minister going to provide a real school bus for the students of the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, there is a troubling practice going on in this Assembly whereby members are only quoting part of the information presented and are not including the additional pieces of pertinent information. The member is correct that Government of Yukon, following the *Education Act*, may provide transportation services to students over 3.2 kilometres away or it may provide a travel subsidy, as is done in many cases to assist parents to get their children either to school or to a place where the school bus can pick them up. Or the Education department may provide distance education materials for those students who are in very remote areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon a few years ago built a beautiful school in Old Crow which I believe is within walking distance, if not all the community, certainly a large majority of it. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation does own a vehicle in that community and they do provide daily transportation services to students who do require it or want to access it. This government has stated before that we will certainly work with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to help them to address many of their needs in their community. This government will certainly live up to our commitments under the *Education Act*.

Mr. Elias: The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has done their part for years. Now it's time for the Education minister to do his part. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation currently has a 21-seat, hotel-type shuttle bus that is used for student transportation, and it is in a state of disrepair. The minister needs to be reminded that there are 39 students at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School.

There have been several near collisions while students were on the shuttle bus, and the driver has directly attributed those close calls to the lack of flashing red lights and other safety equipment on the vehicle. As the Minister of Education, he should be able to do the math. There are twice as many kids in the school as there are seats on the school bus. This is a serious safety concern. The law requires the minister to provide transportation for the students, and the minister just keeps saying no. When is Old Crow going to get a government-sanctioned, safe and reliable school bus?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The government certainly works with the community in Old Crow, with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and with the school council for the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School. We have certainly worked with them to address many of their education needs, and earlier this year, we were

very pleased to announce that through the northern strategy program, the Old Crow community will be the home of a land-based experiential education program.

This was one of the largest and most significant requests coming from the member's community. The people there wanted to see land-based experiential learning opportunities and the Government of Yukon through the northern strategy is very happy to be able to support that.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to offer support to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. I believe they are the registered owner of the vehicle that the member is referencing. Perhaps some of his questions and concerns regarding this vehicle should better be addressed to the owner of the vehicle rather than to the Government of Yukon.

I am trying to find some solutions for this member. He has asked how to move that many students. You know, in other areas, Mr. Speaker, the bus company will often do two runs if there aren't enough seats to pick up students on the first run, so they will run through it twice. I am offering these as some constructive solutions for the member opposite.

Mr. Elias: This is a government that has a billion-dollar budget yet this minister refuses to spend any of it on the safety of the children in my community. This is nothing short of the minister's callous lack of compassion for the safety of the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. Order. Sit down. Honourable member, control yourself. You cannot attack an individual member in this House and the honourable member full well knows that, or he should. You have the rest of your question. Be careful.

Mr. Elias: This minister knows full well that he has the discretion but simply refuses to use it, Mr. Speaker. That was my point. My constituents are asking for a school bus. Why does the minister have such a problem with this? They have a billion-dollar budget. Other Yukon communities have regular, normal school buses to transport their kids safely to and from school. The law says the minister has the opportunity to do this. He has the discretion to do this. So let me ask one more time —

Speaker: You're done.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the zeal and the passion and the enthusiasm with which the member opposite represents his constituents' issues. That certainly is not lost on this government. This government has a responsibility to all Yukon students and we certainly do provide bus service throughout the territory. It is a fact of life that I believe over 60 percent of Yukon students travel every day on a bus. That's part of the nature of our community.

Those students within walking distance are expected to walk to school. That's also part of our education system, where 40 percent of our students do walk to school. I appreciate the comments coming from the member opposite. It was just the other day he was also telling us about the efforts of running in the Terry Fox relay in a snow storm. I appreciate the comments he is coming forward with, representing some of the needs or perceived needs of his constituents.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: No, I'm not speechless for the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, but when you constantly interrupt and cat call from across the aisle, it does break the focus of debate. Rude outbursts don't go to —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. Order please. Characterizing another member's comments as rude outbursts, although they may be relevant in the minister's mind, is not pertaining to the organization or the action of this House. We treat all members as if they're honourable.

Next question — that would be the Member for Mount Lorne, please.

Question re: Climate change

Mr. Cardiff: All this week, the NDP has raised concerns that we are just not taking climate change seriously enough in the Yukon, in Canada and around the world. The Premier has said the government is doing everything it can do, that the status quo is good enough. His mantra has long been that Yukon doesn't create much in the way of emissions; we're not responsible, so we don't have to do much.

The 2006 national inventory on greenhouse gas emission sources show that two-thirds of the Yukon's emissions come from transportation, most of these from road transportation. One of the planks in the government's climate change action plan released in February was to, and I quote: "Undertake an extensive study of the transportation sector and recommend options to reduce ..." greenhouse gas emissions.

What progress has been made on this action item since it was identified last February?

Hon. Mr. Lang: As Minister of Highways and Public Works, we are very conscious of our carbon footprint. We are working with our Fleet Vehicle Agency to modernize and to bring our vehicles in line so that our carbon footprint is not as large. We're working with it on a daily basis. Of course, when we make purchases we do keep that in consideration. Out of our fleet vehicles, I think about 30 percent of them now are fuel-efficient vehicles, but as we go through this over the next five years, we're going to hopefully have 100 percent of our fleet vehicles being in a situation where they are more fuel efficient than they are today.

Mr. Cardiff: That's great for the Fleet Vehicle Agency, which is just a minute portion of the transportation sector — so they've done nothing. Governments need to act with more urgency around climate change. Every year of delay means a tougher transition down the road to a low-carbon economy.

We've known for a long time that in order to substantially reduce our carbon footprint, we need to look at the transportation sector. We all know how dependent we are on the trucking of goods from down south. It's that "just in time" delivery aspect of the transportation industry, and we have a long way to go to achieve self-sufficiency and sustainability here in the territory. What's going to happen when fuel prices rise to \$2, \$3 or \$4 a litre?

One of the planks in the government's climate change action plan released in February is, and I'll quote again: "Develop incentives for fuel efficient transportation..." What progress has been made on this action item since it was identified last February?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Correcting the member opposite, we're looking at our total fleet, and that includes when we buy new dump trucks, when we buy graders, when we buy other equipment. Fuel efficiency is one of the stipulations we look at, so it's not just our fleet vehicles we're looking at. That's easy to look at. We have been looking at that over the last couple of years, but also, as we put in requests for new vehicles, part of the conversation, or part of the bidding process, is to maximize our fuel efficiency. So we are doing it throughout the Department of Highways and Public Works. Over the next four or five years, as we modernize our fleet on every level, fuel efficiency will be one of the main criteria as we make our purchases.

Mr. Cardiff: I can't believe it, Mr. Speaker. The minister is ignoring the question. He's talking about the Fleet Vehicle Agency, not the transportation sector. Now the Premier — and hopefully the Premier can help the minister out on this — thinks that we, in little old Yukon, have a diminished responsibility to address climate change, because we don't have any auto plants, steel mills or heavy industry. But we don't live in a bubble, Mr. Speaker. We're part of the global economy that has led us to the brink of an environmental collapse. We consume food and other goods that are shipped from all corners of the globe, and we're absolutely dependent upon that just-in-time delivery of goods. We need serious vision — serious action — if we're going to address climate change. For the Yukon, our relationship with products produced thousands of miles away is fundamental to doing anything significant about mitigating our contribution to climate change.

Is the government prepared to get serious on this fundamental question? Is it going to do everything it can do?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Unfortunately, the member has chosen to reference the fact that the government believes that, because we emit little, we bear no responsibility. I would correct the member. That's not what this government has said, nor what this government is doing. In fact, the government has taken some very significant steps relating to climate change.

The member has referenced our climate change action plan, and I would encourage the member to go through the action plan thoroughly and recognize the number of areas that are already being implemented — not the least of which is climate change research so we understand better. By modernizing our data sets, we can better understand what it is that we can do. We also have to deal with adaptation, and we are dependent to a great degree on goods and supplies and materials that we require in our daily needs that have to be shipped from afar. There are agriculture initiatives to maybe lower some of that traffic. There is a long list in the action plan of what we all can do that will reduce transportation emissions, because we are more efficient here. We are investing in hydro infrastructure, for example, reducing transportation emissions by reducing the need to transport hundreds of thousands of litres of diesel fuel from afar into the Yukon.

Question re: Climate change

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, excuse me around this question as it is more philosophical than anything else but it is around this issue.

Last night the parents of a six-week-old baby allowed me to hold their beautiful child in my arms. His name is Owen. As I held him, I thought about what we are doing here, what we're doing around climate change. I looked into his little eyes, his life, he's still adjusting outside of his mother — he's six weeks old. I thought, are we really doing enough? Are we doing enough for young Owen, who has just been born? Are we doing enough for Drew and Nicole's child, Leo? Are we doing enough for a young child, a young baby, who was just introduced in the House today, young Marlee? Are we doing enough for all the children who are going to inherit what our actions, or lack of actions, bring about?

My question is — and it's not really a question, in a sense, but it is really a challenge to all of us — are we really being honest with the problems that our world and our little piece of it in the Yukon is facing regarding climate change?

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The short answer is, as honest as we can be, understanding the knowledge base we have about this global phenomenon and what it is that we think we can do or what we possibly can do. The point is we are doing as much as we can now, but I don't think anybody would dispute the fact that this government has stated on many occasions that there's much more to be done.

That's essentially why the discussions are happening right now, as we speak, in Ottawa with all the environment ministers. I think that's why the Prime Minister of Canada along with President Obama and other world leaders will be attending the COP15 conference next month in Copenhagen.

I want to refer back to what the Yukon is doing. The Yukon has taken significant steps, if you can compare us to other jurisdictions. The fact of the matter is our emissions, our contributions to the phenomenon that we still don't understand fully globally, are limited but our impacts are quite severe. We have a double challenge in the Yukon and in the north — not to say that that diminishes the challenges around the world, but I think here in the Yukon we continue to do what we can do.

Mr. Hardy: It's not so much what we're doing, it's how we're preparing to deal with what's going to happen and that's a serious question. Tomorrow, Malkolm Boothroyd and children in one of our schools — F.H. Collins Secondary School — have organized a climate change panel and rally to put tough questions about this serious issue to politicians and other people.

Our elders have seen the changes to the land, wildlife and seasons and have been warning us for many, many years. Every day new stories emerge like the Antarctic ice-shelf melt that forced scientists to readjust their grim prognosis.

The deep thinkers on this topic say we must make fundamental changes to our societies and economy, to what we produce, what we consume, how we live and the values that have got us to this point in our evolution — like unfettered economic

growth and the supremacy of markets. We need to get back to the local, Mr. Speaker — we honestly do.

Will we be getting there in time with the government's proposal to date or are we going to look at how we're going to deal with what's really coming?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is why the member's question is the essence of why the Yukon government and indeed, the sister territories, have made a very clear stand nationally that climate change and all its processes and initiatives in Canada must include adaptation.

In our action plan, by way of reference, the main goal — the number one goal — is to enhance knowledge and understanding of climate change so we can better understand what it is we can do going forward. It includes the establishment of a research centre. We've done that and the research centre is now working on building the mechanisms to do the research we need. These are also including study areas that we must thoroughly analyze and understand and developing climate scenarios on how we can better adapt to what's coming.

The member also referenced what we can do locally. If the member were to look at the action plan, there is a list of 50 initiatives that each individual in the Yukon can undertake — albeit small in terms of contribution but collectively large in scope — contributions to reduce our emissions, thereby doing our part further to address climate change. I encourage the member to read those.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I have read them and frankly that isn't going to be enough — it is nowhere near. We are all in this together. This is a race for human survival; there is no question about it. It is not about one country's actions or one government's actions or one territory's actions. It is about doing all that we can with all the power that we have to try to halt the direction that we've been going in.

Anthony Perl says, "We need systemic change, and systemic change can only be initiated by governments." "If people wait until the world really is in a crisis..." — and I say it is getting into a crisis right now — "...the risks ... are much higher." What are the risks? They are scary when you think about it. We could do a lot more in this House and we must act. We could create Yukon agricultural base so we don't have to be so dependent on goods shipped from thousands of miles away. We can look at our tax code and make changes to create incentives for change. We can support our communities to become self-sufficient and sustainable so we are better prepared for the future. We haven't done it. That is not really in the action plan. We could do so much more. Why haven't we?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I guess one would assume that, in reading the action plan, given the member's questions, there are some gaps in what hasn't been thoroughly analyzed. Agriculture is an initiative that is happening in the territory. That's why the investment this government is making toward agriculture provides those types of incentives. But we have a long way to go and we understand that. We have challenges there too, by the way, that have to be thoroughly understood.

The suggestion that all these things we can do individually aren't enough is, I think, the wrong way to approach the issue — that we as human beings, individuals, each bear a responsi-

bility toward. Anything we can do is about making a positive contribution.

I would also caution the member and all to not get into a situation where we're predicting the end of the world. This is something we all recognize is a global phenomenon and the fact of the matter is countries — not just governments but countries in general — will have to change. That includes countries in the west that have been addicted to cheap energy.

Question re: Dawson City hospital

Mr. Mitchell: Yesterday, the Minister of Health and Social Services delivered a message to the people of Dawson City. He said the voices of hundreds of residents who petitioned against locating the new hospital in Minto Park don't matter. Dawson City residents have valid concerns. They say the area can't handle the traffic or parking implications of the hospital. They worry that the hospital may eventually expand further into Minto Park, and they ask: how does building a hospital next to the music festival grounds make sense when hospitals have quiet zones? Once again, the government has refused to listen to Dawson City's concerns.

Many residents are particularly upset that they were told by the MLA for Klondike that the government and Hospital Corporation may move the hospital to Mayo if they don't step back in line on the location. Yukoners should have a say in their community's development, so why does this minister think it isn't important to listen to the residents of Dawson City?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I also stated yesterday within that delivery on the petition that we have listened to the citizens of Dawson, and we have listened to the Town of the City of Dawson. They are the ones who wrote to us previously on the situation, indicating that that particular location was satisfactory to them for the building of the current facility. It was based on that information that we went forth.

It was also based on that information that we utilized the current playground to build our new footprint on that particular jobsite. We plan to build there. We currently have a health centre facility in that area right now.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, Dawson City residents — the people who know their community best — have tried to work cooperatively with this government; 267 residents signed the petition saying this was the wrong location.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. On the point of order.

Mr. Nordick: On a point of order, I just want to clarify that. Out of 260 residents — the member knows full well that there aren't 260 residents from Dawson on that petition.

Speaker: On the point of order.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order and the member knows that. There was no point of order cited; that's all there is.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: That was succinct. From the Chair's perspective, there is no point of order. It is simply a disagreement

among members. However, I'd like to remind members that the purpose of Oral Question Period is to seek information from Cabinet ministers about government policy and government administration. The actions of a private member are not matters of government policy or administration; furthermore, a private member has no opportunity during Oral Question Period to respond to statements made about him or her. I would therefore ask members to focus on their questions and the preambles to their questions on government policy and administration and not on the actions of a private member.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: These residents know that Minto Park isn't the right location, but they haven't simply refused the government's proposition out of hand and walked away from the table. Residents want this hospital and they want it to work for their community. That's why they have brought forward suggestions for other sites for the hospital — sites that don't infringe on the park that is at the heart of Dawson City.

Can the minister tell this House, has the government put any effort into surveying and evaluating the alternative sites put forward by Dawson City residents?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We worked very hard with the citizens of Dawson City with regard to this particular facility. As I stated earlier, we have the concurrence of the council for the City of Dawson on that location.. Yes, we did look at other locations with regard to the facility. There are very few locations available for a footprint of the size required for the facility in Dawson City — very few.

We got concurrence from the town council to move ahead with this current facility, and we've done so. We're in a process now where we need to move ahead in order to get the project underway.

Mr. Mitchell: The city council in Dawson refused to pass a motion endorsing this as the only location for this hospital. They want the hospital, but they refuse to rule out other locations, and the minister just keeps trying to excuse his government's inflexibility. Yesterday the minister said, "Considerable time and costs have been expended already to develop the plans for the facility on this site, making it unreasonable to consider options now for locating it to another site."

Residents are right to wonder just how much work has actually been done. The Hospital Corporation recently told them that the land transfer was in progress, not completed, and they said that they couldn't provide the city with design requirements including a site plan or a conceptual sketch of the building. No one is suggesting that Dawson should not get a new hospital, but residents want a greater say in where it is located. After all, it is their community. Perhaps the minister can justify this to the people of Dawson City.

If there is no design, no site plan and no sketch, how advanced can this work be?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The Hospital Corporation has already got the contract out for the facility and design and the process is well underway — in addition to the review under its legal aspect and under YESAA. We are well underway in this process. For us to even consider going to another location would be

very difficult and time consuming for the citizens of Dawson, which would require further delay in this facility being finished and providing further and enhanced health services for those citizens.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Nordick: 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 Acting 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. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Community Services. 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 come to order.

Bill No. 17 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services — *continued*

Hon. Mr. Lang: Before we continue with general debate on the Department of Community Services supplementary budget, I do have some further information regarding questions raised on November 24, starting with the question about the status of a new Yukon driver's licence. I am very pleased to confirm that we will begin issuing new secure Yukon drivers' licences by the summer of 2010. This secure driver's licence will also set the platform for issuing an enhanced Yukon operator's licence in the future.

We will also be issuing new identification cards featuring security features that meet all national and international standards, which will be recognized and accepted across Canada and the United States. A new secure driver's licence and identification card will provide secure, government-issued identification and assist Yukoners who travel outside of the territory to rent motor vehicles and board airplanes for flights within Canada.

With regard to the young workers consultation, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is the lead department on this matter. The board has introduced a code of practice to clarify the employer's responsibility for the orientation, training, and supervision of young workers. The code of practice will take effect on January 1, 2010. Work between the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Yukon Employment Standards Board to address age restrictions in certain industries and occupations will commence in early 2010, after the implementation of the code of practice.

On the question about disclosure forms in real estate transactions, I do remember the case before the courts, and I can advise that there was no complaint filed under the *Real Estate Agents Act* and there was no offence under the act.

I want to also take this opportunity to mention that the Sports Yukon annual awards ceremony is taking place tomorrow evening.

Sport sets children and youth on positive life courses and helps to reduce youth involvement in crime, substance abuse and other unhealthy activities. Participation in sports also enhances skills and productivity in the workplace and positively affects everyone's quality of life. This government recognizes the importance of active living and we are currently providing significant funding for 27 Yukon sports governing bodies, seven Yukon special recreation groups and several high-performance athletes.

I'm also going to take some time to talk about the levels and volumes of services delivered by the Department of Community Services. I think these numbers are simply amazing, Mr. Chair. For example, in the year 2008-09, homeowner grants were paid to 7,370 Yukon households, averaging \$410 each. The building safety branch completed 4,700 inspections for buildings, plumbing, development, electrical, gas and boiler and pressure vessels in the 2008-09 year.

In 2008-09, Motor Vehicles issued 49,600 vehicle registrations. So far this year, the Emergency Measures Organization supported 8 volunteer search and rescue teams and trained 40 volunteers and RCMP members in search and rescue emergency operations.

In 2009, Emergency Measures Organization responded to 3,950 ambulance calls in Whitehorse and 813 calls in rural communities. The fire marshal's office supports 17 volunteer fire departments who have responded to 30 fires and other emergency incidents in Yukon. Community Services infrastructure branch is currently working on approximately 50 capital projects throughout Yukon. Last year, Community Affairs provided a total of \$18.8 million in grants to municipalities and our communities.

Community Operations operates 20 solid-waste sites in rural Yukon and delivers water to approximately 500 customers in Carcross, Keno City, Old Crow and Ross River. In 2008-09, Labour Services fielded 3,670 inquiries and complaints and collected a total of \$187,771 in unpaid wages on behalf of employees. Last year, Consumer Services licensed over 2,900 professionals and 186 insurance companies. Staff also issued 123 bingo and raffle licences that enabled charitable groups to raise over \$1 million.

Before I finish my remarks today, I did want to touch on the issue of the dogs running at large in Ross River. We have been in touch with the Ross River Dena Council and RCMP in Ross River on the dog issue. This government has updated the *Animal Protection Act* and, in 2009, we are well on our way to implementing operational plans to support the act, responding to complaints and providing education and awareness initiatives to help prevent animal abuse and encourage the humane treatment of all animals.

An animal welfare officer started work in March and has been developing operational policies and procedures and obtaining the specialized equipment to deliver education and awareness programs to encourage the humane treatment of animals. We are currently developing a public outreach program and will soon place ads with information on our program and how to contact program staff to deal with dog issues.

Community Operations is also working on an information package that will be distributed Yukon wide on our programs and services related to animal welfare and animal control.

Mr. Chair, we encourage any Yukoner who feels they are at risk of any animal-related emergency to contact the RCMP immediately. We also need the public's help to control dogs at large and ask that concerned citizens call us and provide us with information that will help us tackle this important problem. Our program staff can be reached at 1-800-661-0408, extension 3597.

Mr. Chair, I thank the members opposite for all their questions about this supplementary budget thus far. I am also very proud to talk about the fantastic job the hardworking staff in the Department of Community Services is doing every day to make a difference in the lives of Yukoners and, of course, our communities.

Mr. McRobb: On that note, I would also like to thank all the hard-working employees in the department and certainly any issues we have are not with the employees. The issues pertain to mainly budgetary decisions made at the political level of the Yukon government, which is represented by the ministers across the way.

On Tuesday afternoon I asked the minister about a couple of issues like the Mendenhall well and the high uranium levels in the water, and I didn't receive a very satisfactory answer. Likewise with the Beaver Creek fire hall issue and housing for the emergency services vehicle. The minister replied that it was on his list. He also mentioned that the community didn't raise it as a concern in the last meeting held in the community of Beaver Creek during the Premier's annual tour. I've had occasion since Tuesday to discuss this matter with people in the community and have been reassured that this matter has been brought to the Yukon Party government's attention on several occasions, so the minister is well aware of it, yet we have no announcement.

I would like to just touch on that issue a bit more, because we know currently the Cabinet members of the Yukon Party government are probably nearing the end of their internal budget process, and the next capital budget of the territory will be crafted. Decisions need to be made now about capital projects that will occur in the next year.

We heard an item brought forward by the former Yukon Party member from Lake Laberge about the Mayo intersection. The minister stood up yesterday afternoon and announced that this project will be happening next summer.

Well, it's that very type of issue that I'm asking the minister to respond to. There's nothing stopping him from indicating what will be in the budget, as he clearly demonstrated yesterday. Further to the Mayo Road intersection issue, I'd point out that I've asked about this matter several times in the past and each time the minister gave the same response that it's just something the government's looking at. It gives reason to maybe question what happened yesterday.

Let's move on and let's see what the minister has to say about a couple of other issues also in the community of Beaver Creek. The first issue is in regard to the community library, where I understand there's a serious mould concern and I would like to ask him what he's doing about it. After all, it's a Yukon government building and there are people who work in that building and people who visit that building.

We know that mould is a serious problem in other government buildings. Some of them are being attended to while others may be being ignored. As the MLA for the Kluane region, I certainly would find it disturbing if this government is ignoring the mould in this building.

On another issue in Beaver Creek, I received a letter dated October 27 of this year regarding the pending failure of the structure of the community centre in Beaver Creek. This is also referred to as a recreational complex. People involved with the Beaver Creek Community Club have discussed this with the Yukon government, with the Premier and with this minister, so we know he is well aware of it. In this letter I received, it outlines the process to date. Government officials have worked with the members of the community club to apply for funding. At the current time, there is an engineering firm that is contracted to do a report.

In addition to this, the building also received a notice from the Health and Social Services department and it was actually an order from that department. This order threatens the operation of the building, and repairs to the building are overdue. This is a matter that I raised a year or so ago with the same minister, yet nothing has been done to upgrade the structure of this community building.

For the minister's information, this building is used for a variety of purposes in addition to it being a meeting place for the annual Premier's tour. It's used for community gatherings, potlucks, an exercise room and as an area for students from the school. The White River First Nation and other members of the public all have use for this facility.

As a matter of fact, just this past summer, I volunteered to cook dinner for the Texas 4000 for Cancer group as they pedalled their way through the territory to Anchorage, Alaska, all the way from Austin, Texas. Of course, they were fundraising for cancer.

I'm sure the minister understands that this facility is used by a wide variety of groups, and especially by the residents of Beaver Creek. As mentioned, it was brought to his attention, and the date of that meeting was October 2. The community

club advises me that the government suggested the members of the Beaver Creek Community Club should write to me and seek my assistance in acquiring funds to make the necessary repairs to their facility in order to have the health officer's order lifted.

I've asked about this facility before and the government has done nothing. Yet, at this community meeting, the government suggested that the members should write to me.

We all know on the opposition side of this Legislature, we have no ability to include items in the budget and, quite often, we see a budget from this Yukon Party government that is void of line items that would address issues within our own ridings. That is one of the main reasons why we vote against the Yukon Party budgets — for what the budgets lack.

If the government side were serious in that suggestion that the people of Beaver Creek should write to me, then I would expect the minister to be serious now, after I have followed up on the community's follow-up and have asked him what he will do to help the community lift this health order and ensure upgrades to the structure of the facility are done as soon as possible.

Just in case the minister has forgotten, the roof of the building is sagging, it almost caved in last winter with the heavy snowfall, and it's quite conceivable this community building is one heavy snowfall away from collapsing. That is certainly the indication from the letter I received from the community club.

If the roof of that facility collapses, then obviously the cost of repairs will increase substantially. The minister has an opportunity now to pre-announce a bit of next year's budget like he did yesterday with respect to the Mayo Road turnoff and inform this House that, indeed, there will be funds in next year's budget to deal with this matter. Now there's another option at the avail of the minister and that is the government has decided to fund the necessary repairs in advance of next year's budget; that is essentially the request of the community club. We see a multi-million dollar supplementary budget before the Assembly during this sitting, and soon we will find out if this matter has been addressed in the supplementary budget. If it hasn't, I would expect an explanation from the minister.

There are also other funding vehicles available, but I must emphasize that there is a sense of urgency to deal with this issue, because we are well into the winter season now and there could be a large snowfall at any time and that would endanger the entire structure. Let us hope that there is nobody inside the building should that ever occur, Mr. Chair.

I have basically described this matter for the minister, and that gives him two issues to respond to while he is on his feet — the mould in the community library and the structural weakness in the community club and the health order associated with that. I will sit down and eagerly await his reply.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, in addressing the member opposite I was just reading the minutes of the meeting and at no time did any of my caucus or members ever request somebody write to the Member for Klwane; that was in fact not done. We have had meetings in Beaver Creek with the executive from the community club or the community association.

There was need for some emergency assistance with respect to a health issue, on which we are dealing with them at an emergency level. We certainly don't want to see the community of Beaver Creek without its community complex, but understand our responsibility as a government.

Certainly, as we move forward here, Mr. Chair, many questions were asked at the meeting, by the way. Of course the community club is a very important centre of the community itself. I've met the president of the community club many, many times on the issue, and we're certainly working with them through the structural issues to see where we could be of some assistance in making sure that the building is a safe recreational facility. There was a study done on the building itself; there have been recommendations on what they could do. On the back of those recommendations, we've moved forward to work on where the funding would come from and how much help we as a government could be to make the building safe for the residents of Beaver Creek.

As far as the library is concerned, we have replaced the library in Teslin; that was an investment last year. We're doing space plans for the Carcross library and planning what we're going to do with Burwash Landing. Of course, Beaver Creek has to be looked at, and Tagish, so I make a commitment here today to undertake the space planning for all those communities. The libraries are well-used institutions in our communities. As you can see we're looking forward to a brand new, expanded facility here in Whitehorse, which will house the main library in the Yukon, and that institution would be where the individuals who assist the other libraries in our communities work. That will be an improvement for all of Yukon. This government has proved its mettle on committing to libraries in our communities.

I recommend to the member opposite that he go to Teslin and take a look at the new Teslin community library. It's an excellent facility, and we're looking forward to enhancing it in respect to the books available, the modern technology we're going to put in our libraries so that people in the communities can take advantage of much of modern technology that is available to Yukoners today.

It's very clear that we're undertaking library space planning for the community of Carcross, Burwash Landing, Beaver Creek and Tagish. Those four communities are out front. They're being looked at now, and a go-forward plan should be put together in the new year on how we're going to deal with those libraries and what the timelines are for doing the work that has to be done.

In response to the member opposite about the turnoff — the traffic situation on the Mayo Road — that is just a management tool in Highways and Public Works as we monitor and manage the traffic flow. That's a daily operational question, and would certainly be part and parcel of any budget. As far as announcing investments in fire halls and all those kinds of infrastructure things, the member will have to wait until such a time as that budget is put forward. Certainly, at that time, we'll have an opportunity to debate it here in the House and we can vote on it.

The member has never voted for any budget that we put on the floor, so I imagine if we had the Beaver Creek fire hall in next year's budget, it would be voted against. But this government is committed to every community in the Yukon. Our fire halls are inspected on a yearly basis. Our fire equipment is inspected and, of course, priority lists are put together.

This government purchases two to three ambulances a year to replace our fleet and that is a commitment we made to make sure that we could upgrade our ambulance equipment so all our communities would have equipment that was modern, not only for delivering the service but also modern in the sense that the trucks or vehicles are modern for individuals to learn to operate and all of the things we do on a daily basis.

This government has put money into our fire halls. I only have to take a look at the opening of the Mendenhall fire hall, which I was part and parcel of at the opening ceremonies. There was also Golden Horn out here last year — a beautiful new facility. Certainly, the Marsh Lake extension — all these things, Mr. Chair, are there for the benefit of all Yukoners.

I certainly look forward to the spring budget. At that point we would be able to make announcements on how this government is going to move forward. If in fact the Beaver Creek fire hall is on the list, then it would be voted on and discussed at that time.

Mr. McRobb: I'm not willing to go on a wild goose chase and examine the library books in Teslin because doing that won't help the mould issue in the library in Beaver Creek. We still haven't heard anything from the minister about him taking action to resolve this problem. Likewise, we haven't heard anything new from the minister about the health order and the immediate structural repairs that are needed in Beaver Creek at the community club. All we heard was what we already know about: the study the community is doing. I'll remind him, that information is included in this letter along with the urgent concern about what could happen with an immediate snowfall. Again, Mr. Chair, we're talking about a probable collapse of the roof of that building. A study that was already underway does nothing to help the building.

I'm asking the minister what action he will take to alleviate this urgent concern and protect the roof of that building and protect anybody inside, as well as the action he's going to take regarding the mould in the Beaver Creek library.

Hon. Mr. Lang: We've had meetings with the individuals in Beaver Creek. We've made a commitment. We're working with them on the health issue; we're working actively on that to make sure that's behind them. The plan for what we can do with the building is coming out shortly, so there will be an investment there.

We're not turning our back on the investment we have in the community complex in Beaver Creek. That would be foolhardy. We are working with the people of Beaver Creek and we are working with the executive or community association on their issues around the structural issues they have with the building. We're doing that as we speak.

There is a review of the building itself so we know where the investment would go.

Also, on the health issue, we're working with them to make sure that any of the questions that were raised in that inspection are answered. Those are pretty simple questions to answer, but they need the expertise and they need the wherewithal to go to work. We have to understand that Beaver Creek in the winter has about 20 people — a population of 20 or 25 people — so there isn't the number of people to work in the community association in lots of respects, to do a lot of the work that has to be done.

If you've ever been to Beaver Creek, Mr. Chair, it's a fairly large complex. The community hall is a very big investment in that community. By saying there are few people there doesn't mean it's not important to the community. We're willing and ready to invest to make sure that building is structurally safe and we'll do that under working with this study. We're working at the moment to make sure that the building can pass the health issues that were raised at the time. So we're doing all of that.

As far as a new library in Beaver Creek, I just mentioned to the member opposite we are doing an overview of the library in Carcross, Tagish, Beaver Creek and Burwash Landing. Those four libraries are getting a review as we speak. I am not predicting what is going to be in next year's budget but I am saying to you that we've tasked the individuals to go out and see what we can do on those four libraries.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we will proceed line by line in Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

Corporate Services underexpenditure in the amount of \$1,381,000 cleared

On Protective Services

Protective Services in the amount of \$1,230,000 agreed to

On Community Development

Community Development in the amount of \$1,469,000 agreed to

On Consumer and Safety Services

Consumer and Safety Services in the amount of \$94,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,412,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$350,000 agreed to

On Protective Services

On Emergency Measures

On 2009 Yukon Flood Response

2009 Yukon Flood Response in the amount of \$150,000 agreed to

On Fire Management

Fire Management in the amount of \$23,000 agreed to

On Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, I'd like the minister first to tell us what the \$302,000 is. I recognize that I probably should

have brought this up in the O&M section, so I don't know if the minister will be able to answer this question under this particular line item.

It came to our attention that, in September, the government put out a request for proposals for a medical director, for the provision of medical director services, for the Yukon Emergency Medical Services protective services branch. The question for the minister is this: why was it done this way? Why was it done as a value-driven request for proposals as opposed to just hiring a person to manage the —

Chair: Order. Just to clarify, members, we are on line-by-line in capital under Emergency Medical Services, and we're discussing the Emergency Medical Services capital of \$302,000. Questions need to be asked about this line and this line only during line-by-line debate.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is about the medical director of Emergency Medical Services. I recognize it probably should have been brought up in O&M, but I was —

Chair: Order please. I guess, Mr. Cardiff, I do believe you kind of answered your own question there. It was supposed to have been brought up in O&M, so the Chair feels we should be discussing just the capital under this line.

Hon. Mr. Lang: The breakdown of that \$302,000 — the increase of \$302,000 was due to a revote for the following projects. There was \$250,000 for delivery of a new ambulance that was delayed due to the ordering of a specialized chassis from the United States. That was a purchase of a new ambulance. There was \$22,000 to collect, assess and document current and future needs for emergency medical services dispatch functions and prepare a detailed user requirement document. There was \$23,000 to complete the Whitehorse emergency medical services staff space planning and \$7,000 for the purchase of ambulance quad benches that were unable to be delivered prior to year-end. So that totals \$302,000.

Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$302,000 agreed to

Chair: Just to clarify for the record, if members feel that they need to go back a couple of lines or back to another thing, they can request unanimous consent to go back to a previous line that has been cleared.

Mr. Cardiff: Thanks for that clarification. If that is the case, I would request unanimous consent of the Committee to go back to the operation and maintenance line in, I believe, Protective Services.

Unanimous consent re revisiting Operation and Maintenance Expenditures — Protective Services

Chair: Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

On Watson Lake Integrated Emergency Response Facility

Mr. Cardiff: Could the minister give us a breakdown on this line item?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The request is for \$692,000 for the Watson Lake integrated emergency response facility.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Elias: I didn't hear anybody disagree to the Member for Mount Lorne's —

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order.

Mr. Lang?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The \$692,000 is an increase for the revote to complete renovations to the Watson Lake integrated emergency response facility.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Watson Lake Integrated Emergency Response Facility in the amount of \$692,000 agreed to

On Community Development

On Sport and Recreation

On Kluane First Nation Youth and Elders Activity Centre

Mr. Elias: Could I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The \$916,000 is an increase due to the revote of a contribution to the Kluane First Nation toward the construction of a youth and elders activity centre.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to know, is this a multi-year funded project? This has come up before. Can we expect further funds in the spring mains?

Hon. Mr. Lang: This has been an ongoing issue. This issue has been a work-in-progress for the last couple of years. I'm not going to pre-empt what will happen in this spring's budget, but I would imagine going forward there would be more requests. I think the commitment is a larger commitment by the territorial government for the youth and elders activity centre in Burwash — so it's ongoing.

Kluane First Nation Youth and Elders Activity Centre in the amount of \$916,000 agreed to

On Dawson City Recreation Centre

Mr. Elias: Could I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: It is a \$250,000 increase that is due to a revote for a contribution with the City of Dawson for renovations and rehabilitation to the Dawson City recreational centre.

Dawson City Recreation Centre in the amount of \$250,000 agreed to

On Community Infrastructure

On Planning and Pre-Engineering

Planning and Pre-Engineering underexpenditure in the amount of \$25,000 cleared

On Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Old Crow Water Well

Mr. Elias: Could I get a breakdown from the minister please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Chair, this is a \$42,000 increase due to a revote for further water testing and for the purchase and installation of any equipment that may be required at the Old Crow water well.

Water Supply, Treatment and Storage — Old Crow Water Well in the amount of \$42,000 agreed to

On Water and Sewer Mains

Water and Sewer Mains in the amount of \$76,000 agreed to

On Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Carcross Sewage Treatment and Disposal

Sewage Treatment and Disposal — Carcross Sewage Treatment and Disposal in the amount of \$29,000 agreed to

On Solid Waste

Solid Waste in the amount of \$50,000 agreed to

On Flood/Erosion Control

Flood/Erosion Control in the amount of \$358,000 agreed to

On Equipment Purchase

Equipment Purchase in the amount of \$25,000 agreed to

On Road/Streets Upgrade

Road/Streets Upgrade in the amount of \$14,000 agreed to

On Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Carcross Waterfront

Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Carcross Waterfront in the amount of \$7,000 agreed to

On Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Whitehorse Waterfront

Mr. Elias: Can I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, that's a \$6,037,000 increase due to the revote for projects not completed by the City of Whitehorse in the year 2008-09, and it is 50-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada.

Mr. Elias: It's my understanding that this money was allocated for the development of a parking lot, trail development, First Avenue development and the actual wharf on the Whitehorse waterfront. It's the beginning of those developments. Is that what this money is actually being spent on?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, that's exactly it. We're working in partnership with Whitehorse on the waterfront, and those items will be covered by this \$6 million.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for asking those questions. I'd like to know how much of this \$6 million has been expended already. We're into the winter season, so some of this work probably won't be progressing much further, given the inclement weather. Is all this money expected to be expended by the year-end, or are we looking at further revotes in the spring?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I talked to my colleagues, Mr. Chair, and a lot of those resources were spent over the summer so there still is some, but the money is being invested as we move forward with the waterfront plan in conjunction with the City of Whitehorse.

Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Projects — Whitehorse Waterfront in the amount of \$6,037,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Hamilton Boulevard Extension

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Hamilton Boulevard Extension in the amount of \$3,233,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Lakeview Avenue: Water and Sewer Installation

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Lakeview Avenue: Water and Sewer Installation in the amount of \$45,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Dawson City Playground

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, maybe the minister can tell us what the \$68,000 has been spent on or what it is intended for. I'm just wondering whether or not it is to relocate the playground so that we can build a hospital there, or what improvements are being done to the playground in advance of building a hospital there?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In talking to my colleagues, this is a First Nation playground in the City of Dawson, and this revote is to complete the project. It was delayed as a result of the late arrival of the playground equipment. So we're talking about playground equipment, and we're talking about the First Nation in Dawson.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Dawson City Playground in the amount of \$68,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Selkirk First Nation: Small Diameter Piped Water

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Selkirk First Nation: Small Diameter Piped Water in the amount of \$70,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Selkirk First Nation: Wastewater Disposal

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Selkirk First Nation: Wastewater Disposal in the amount of \$152,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Haines Junction Water Supply Improvements

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Haines Junction Water Supply Improvements in the amount of \$245,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Unallocated/Administration

Mr. Elias: I'm just wondering if this is part of the MRIF project funding that is unallocated. Is that correct? Is there a call for proposals for this money to be spent at a later date or in the new year or before the 2010 budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: This resource is a \$1.389-million decrease, due to the \$1,389,000 transfer to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for their cultural centre project.

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Unallocated/Administration underexpenditure in the amount of \$1,389,000 cleared

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — Water, Sewer and Road Improvements

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — Water, Sewer and Road Improvements in the amount of \$21,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — Cultural Centre

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — Cultural Centre in the amount of \$1,389,000 agreed to

On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Mayo Community Centre

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Mayo Community Centre in the amount of \$84,000 agreed to

On Building Canada Fund — Carmacks Sewage Treatment

Building Canada Fund — Carmacks Sewage Treatment in the amount of \$3,993,000 agreed to

On Community Library Development Projects

Community Library Development Projects in the amount of \$120,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy Projects — Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building

Northern Strategy Projects — Yukon Water and Wastewater System Operator Capacity Building in the amount of \$412,000 agreed to

On Northern Strategy Projects — Old Crow Roadway and Drainage Upgrading

Mr. Elias: Mr. Chair, can I get a breakdown as to what this money is to be spent on?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The \$140,000 increase is due to the revote to continue work on the project in the community of Old Crow.

Mr. Elias: Can the minister be more elaborate on his breakdown? Is this for the design of the project? Is it for looking for sources of gravel? Is it for crushing gravel? What exactly is this for? This has been on the books for a number of years now, since the promise was made by the Premier in 2006 in Old Crow, so I'm just wondering what exactly this \$140,000 revote is for?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're looking at the partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to complete the reconstruction of over seven kilometres of community roads in conjunction with the development of a drainage system designed to alleviate flooding within the community.

It is all engineering and we have to get that done before we make the commitment to where we go with the actual construction of the improvements.

Northern Strategy Projects — Old Crow Roadway and Drainage Upgrading in the amount of \$140,000 agreed to

On Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated — Community Infrastructure Projects

Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated — Community Infrastructure Projects in the amount of \$831,000 agreed to

On Dawson City Infrastructure

Dawson City Infrastructure in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

On Land Development

On Industrial

Industrial in the amount of \$600,000 agreed to

On Residential

Mr. Cardiff: I have a couple of questions about this. It is my understanding that all the functions of land dispositions and land planning went to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It appears that land development still remains with Community Services.

I'm just wondering if the minister could clarify what the relationship is there, for starters. Could he further tell us which

developments that were proposed in the spring are not going forward at this time?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The decrease of \$11,742,000 consists of the following: a \$10,842,000 decrease due to the \$4,522,000 for the Grizzly Valley project being delayed pending First Nation consultation. There was \$450,000 for a Mount Lorne project being delayed due to consultation with the Hamlet of Mount Lorne and completing a feasibility study; \$3,840,000 for Porter Creek residential pending City of Whitehorse planning; \$708,000 for Dawson's Dome Road project being delayed due to changes in location has resulted in more planning; \$250,000 for Haines Junction urban residential project being delayed due to the permit planning process not progressing as fast as expected; and \$1 million for Haines Junction Willow Acres project being delayed due to permit planning process not progressing, again, as fast as we expected. The \$900,000 decrease is due to the transfer to the Burns Road industrial project.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. I've attended numerous hamlet council meetings. I've attended the Premier's meetings for the past two years in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne. There have been meetings about moving forward on reviewing the land plan. So we had a land plan. It's about 15 years old. I recognize that the land planning part is in Energy, Mines and Resources, but Community Services obviously has a stake in it, if they can't spend the money due to a delay in a consultation process that needs to happen with the Hamlet of Mount Lorne. I think the Hamlet of Mount Lorne and the citizens of Mount Lorne have made it abundantly clear that they would like to see a review of the land plan.

It was a couple of years ago, I believe, when an actual steering committee was struck to look at land planning issues around reviewing the land plan. So, obviously, the minister has a stake in this, because his department is being held up by something that his other department hasn't been able to move forward on. This has been a source of frustration for a number of years for the hamlet councils and for citizens of the hamlet. I'm just wondering if the minister can tell us what he can do to move this forward.

Residential underexpenditure in the amount of \$11,742,000 cleared

On Total of Other Capital Expenditures

Total of Other Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$7,588,000 agreed to

On Revenues

Revenues cleared

Chair: That concludes the Department of Community Services, Vote 51.

Department of Community Services agreed to

Department of Economic Development

Chair: I understand that we will now be proceeding with Vote 7, Department of Economic Development.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Yes.

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. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Economic Development, Vote 7. We will now proceed with general debate.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I am very pleased today to introduce the supplementary budget for the Department of Economic Development. This supplementary budget seeks total supplementary approval for an increase in our capital budget in the amount of \$3,540,000, of which \$170,000 is recoverable.

This increase consists of \$2,920,000 for a variety of ongoing projects supported by the department that had been revoked from the 2008-09 fiscal year into the 2009-10 fiscal year. There is \$388,000 in new initiatives to support the Yukon's film industry, Yukon entrepreneurs and technology projects and \$235,000 in funding to the business incentive program. There is a slight decrease of \$9,000 in our operation and maintenance budget. Although globally we are experiencing a historic period of fluctuation, Yukon's economy remains very strong and is continuing to grow.

Unemployment has remained well below the national average throughout 2009. The population of the territory continues to increase — around 2.6 percent in June 2009 from June 2008.

Preliminary gross domestic product or GDP growth in 2008 was reported at a rather amazing 5.2 percent — well above the national average of 0.5 percent. Developments in our mineral industry around Capstone's Minto mine and Yukon Zinc Corporation's Wolverine mine projects continue to drive that economy upward. The Wolverine mine is currently under development and is slated to begin production in 2010, which could very well make it the only base metal mine to open in North America this coming year. We have now received a production decision from Alexco Resources on the status of their Keno mine project and, although our economy remains strong, we require now — perhaps more than ever — a considered and thoughtful approach to managing the growth of Yukon's economy.

The mandate of the Department of Economic Development reflects and highlights this thoughtful approach. First, the department is tasked with developing a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy that enriches the quality of life for all Yukoners. The second departmental objective is to pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovations. The final department objective is to forge partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of Yukon.

We are furthering that mandate through our request for a 2009-10 supplemental budget. Internal transfers within the department are also reflected in this budget. The former business and trade and strategic industries development branches of the department have merged to form the new business and industry

development branch. The new branch is more strategically positioned to service the needs of Yukon businesses through the consolidation of business support, advisory and investment attraction initiatives and activities.

The consolidated branch is placing an enhanced emphasis on working with Yukon's small- and medium-sized businesses that continue to create jobs and build the Yukon economy.

This budget also reflects some new initiatives that fall under the community development trust program. The Yukon entrepreneur support program is a two-year program intended to partner interested new or existing entrepreneurs with industry experts, who will provide mentorship and advice through the early stages of business development.

The film concepts development training program, or Film Fantastic, will provide training to Yukon filmmakers, enabling them to develop projects to a level where they are in a good position to attract the financial support of a television broadcaster, a film distributor, or Telefilm Canada.

\$170,000 of this supplementary budget is recoverable through two federal programs and these are: one, a \$100,000-commitment from the community adjustment fund for the first year of a two-year project to support the filming of 13 webisode commercials promoting Yukon as a choice filming location; and two, \$70,000 for Industry Canada to support the community access program. This program is administered by the Yukon government, and supports the setup of locations in Yukon communities where people can use computers and access the internet at no cost.

Of course, Mr. Chair, a note on that is that the Yukon remains the best-connected jurisdiction, certainly in North America, and perhaps the world, with close to 99 percent of our people having access to broadband internet.

Our requested budget changes reflect the ongoing status of many programs the department administers. Some of those programs include the business incentive program which requires an additional \$235,000 in anticipation of an increase in the number and the value of rebates due to major construction projects planned or underway and departmental funding programs and projects that require revotes.

Among the funds requiring a revote are the regional economic development fund which facilitates coordination of economic planning at the regional level and the community development fund which funds Yukon community, industry and professional associations, non-profit and charitable organizations and municipal and First Nation governments for a variety of community projects.

The revote for the community development fund is specifically for tier 3 projects that were approved in January but not completed in the 2008-09. Mr. Chair, this is an annual occurrence due to the way the calendar runs on that.

A similar situation is reflected on the revote request for the strategic industry's development fund in the Film and Sound Commission's programs.

Also included in the revote request are three northern strategy projects: the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, the Selkirk First Nation *Journey to Self-Reliance* and the Council of Yukon First Nations e-commerce Yukon projects.

In closing, I would like to point out that this budget represents the successful work the Department of Economic Development is undertaking on behalf of this government, on behalf of all the people of Yukon. Our vision continues for Yukon's economic growth and includes an economy that will capture external dollars and capitalize on the strengths of our geography and of our people.

We are working to build and diversify Yukon's economy so that year after year, Yukoners see growth and prosperity in their region.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his opening comments. We also would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication by the several employees within the Department of Economic Development. We understand they're doing their utmost to contribute to the Yukon economy, both today and tomorrow. We certainly encourage them in that aspect.

The first question I would like to ask relates to the number of current unfilled positions in the department. Can the minister give us that number?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: There is a normal turnover, of course, in the department. It's a new department, since the previous government had the foresight to dismantle the Department of Economic Development as an economic development stimulus. The reorganizing of the department, as well, and the merging of two branches has created some interesting twists and turns. If the member opposite wants exact numbers on that, I'd be happy to provide those to him.

Mr. McRobb: All right, I'll accept the minister's undertaking, probably by way of legislative return, I suppose.

One of the most frequent questions I hear from Yukoners and indeed reflected in the local media is, what is the cost of the minister's travel to Asia? I'm not aware of any recent accounting of the taxpayer expenses in that regard, and I would request a list of trips and a breakdown, to as much detail as necessary, to explain the cost of the trips.

If the minister doesn't have that information with him, of course I'm willing to accept a legislative return.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The whole initiative was initially brought forward in a document called *Pathways to Prosperity*, which was put out in the early reorganization of the Department of Economic Development. I believe that document is still on-line for the member opposite. If it isn't, he could certainly get in touch with us and we will provide it — but I'm pretty sure it's on-line.

Given the geography of the Yukon, where it is — it's part of the Asian gateway or Pacific gateway. We have a port, which even the City of Skagway, Alaska, refers to as the Yukon port — it's a deepwater port, year-round, and it will take some of the larger ships, and we have a proven track record of getting ore and goods out and into Asia.

This is why we look in that direction. We certainly do look in other directions; we look in the direction of Germany, Switzerland and central Europe for tourism. We look at Japan for tourism and northern lights. So by attending the various missions and meetings in Asia, we continue to establish relationships in order to promote the Yukon world-class mineral de-

posits — oil and gas resources, as they would come on-line and not be stranded any more.

The travel really ensures the Yukon's voice is heard on national issues affecting Yukon people and involving all the development in these areas. China certainly has been a major player. Other major players include Korea and Japan and we have had some discussions, although not in great detail, but more limited discussions with other countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

The possibility too — again of working in the international forum — puts us in touch with other countries such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which is very well world renowned for its shipping ability, and we've enjoyed a good relationship with our ability to pull off what knowledge we can. To look at, for instance, the most recent trip and travel — I think it was around \$22,000 — and actually we supported a number, I believe eight or nine, Yukon companies to go and have meetings.

Our job is to put companies together. We are not going over there ourselves to sell a product. We are going over there to put investors together with companies who then make their own decisions. We're there to show that we support those activities. We're there to support the fact that we will stand by our commitments and interest in developing infrastructure. My most recent meeting, for instance, was the new Consulate General of Japan, who had just started weeks before and was unaware of the rail connections we had and the rail study we had done and some of the activities there. So we will be going back and looking further at Japan for that.

What has that gotten us, Mr. Chair? What it has gotten us is a pretty substantial interest in investment in the Yukon. We're looking at the Yukon Zinc Wolverine project, which will come on-line — it's still slated to come on-line ahead of Alexco's Keno Hill mine — although they might beat us — to become the next operating mine in Yukon. By the time they have done their due diligence, investigated it, come over a number of times, brought geologists to take a look at it, bought the existing shares and developed it — by the time they are actually shipping ore, there will be the better part of an investment of \$400 million.

Now, I know the media likes to say the Robert Campbell Highway is the road to nowhere in the Premier's riding. It would appear that they didn't notice a \$400-million mine at the end of that road, but that will become apparent as things go by.

There are other successful investments in Yukon. Approximately 18 or 19 percent of the Selwyn project — Howard's Pass — is now within China. There are other projects — the foundation of Yukon Nevada and the Jinduicheng Molybdenum in Northwest Non-Ferrous groups from Shaanxi province invested \$3 million in the formation of what is now called the Yukon-Shaanxi company. They are actively looking at investments, and we expect that there will be announcements there and in other areas.

Doing business in Asia is quite different from doing business in Canada. It has been a learning experience. It has been something that we have really worked hard and diligently on, and the staff has worked very hard on. It's interesting that, at

one of the meetings of the Canada-China Business Council at the China Institute at the University of Alberta — which is basically an invitation-only meeting under Chatham House Rules — a rather interesting meeting occurs. To hear that really most of the people involved in all these aspects of business feel that, as a country, Canada has been lagging badly, that it has been left as a provincial or territorial responsibility. I was very pleased to have everyone agree that Yukon at this point is leading all the provinces and territories of Canada in drawing investment out of Asia.

We have an unusual situation in that we have a very small population but massive resources, and there are various places, countries and businesses that require those resources and require partnerships. We are very pleased to get into those relationships, because we can work with the groups. We can work together. There is an old Chinese saying, for instance, that unless both parties win, no one wins, and that is what we have worked on. They come here to invest. They involve First Nations very much. They have been very good, corporately, in that. They ask the right questions. The very first question that I was asked at a government agency when I went to China was, would we treat their investors and their companies the same way and hold them to the same standards as Yukon or Canadian companies and the answer is clearly yes, absolutely. You could see real relaxation in the room, because if we weren't willing to do that, the Chinese government wasn't willing to get into it. I have seen huge changes in China in just the six years that I have been working this file. They are moving quickly forward, but you don't draw a country that huge with that many people and that much square footage along in a wave. Unfortunately, that involves a magic wand, and that's not something that we have. So, the file continues. We will be involved in the future in other activities, and I would expect that there would be some very serious announcements in the coming months, if not the next year — but I'm hoping in the coming months.

Mr. McRobb: Well, instead of answering the question, the minister gave a lengthy infomercial on why he goes to Asia, what document initiated these trips, or where he goes on these trips, or who his travel companions are, et cetera, et cetera. Perhaps he forgot what the question was, so I'll have to re-ask it. Can he provide a list of his Asian travel expenses, and a breakdown of the taxpayer costs?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: We can provide a breakdown on that, reminding the member opposite that the breakdown of one person on this file is really relatively meaningless — but if he would like that, we would be happy to provide it, sure.

Mr. McRobb: Just to clarify, Mr. Chair, we're looking at a breakdown of the cost to the taxpayer for these trips.

I would also like to ask him about one trip in particular and that's one of his recent ones. I believe it was announced August 27 — the trip to China. I read the government's press release and there was nothing in it, I believe, that indicated we were joining other Canadian jurisdictions in this major travel effort. Now, through my normal reading of industry news I'm aware that other provinces were partnering together. I'm especially aware of B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan, for instance. They

would partner together to save taxpayer costs and I'm wondering if that was just an omission from the press release, as I understand it, or if in fact the Yukon had a totally separate contingent that attended this conference.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Sorry for the delay there; I was just trying to put the dates together. On that particular trip, there were two — actually three — conferences that we attended in one shot. The first two were in the city of Changchun in Jilin province, which involved provincial and government leaders from around the world, basically talking about all of these different strategies and such. That was very beneficial. There were representatives there from British Columbia and, I believe, from Ontario. However, the group, basically, that I sat with for much of the meetings were from Estonia, Greece, the State of Michigan — which was kind of interesting — and a variety of other jurisdictions, including the former President of France.

From there, there was a show that went on, on equipment, which was interesting, but that really wasn't the reason that we were there. It was a concurrent meeting and there were no extra funds paid whatsoever for being there.

At that point, we went into Beijing and attended the China Mining Association of Canada. It's out of Markham, Ontario, just north of Toronto. On that one, as members of the association, we had a chance to present to Chinese investors, as did the Province of Ontario. For the member opposite, who is always involved in thrifty endeavours, most of the expenses of that conference were actually paid for by Ontario. We sort of tagged along and did our presentations, as did New Brunswick.

At the same time, we had the great pleasure of spending some time in Canada's embassy in Beijing, and I spent, oh, probably an hour with the new ambassador, David Mulroney — who is in the news this afternoon, actually, for other things — again, talking about Chinese investments and structures and some of the challenges that we've had with governments at the national level. So it was a very productive meeting.

And the member is quite right — it was different from the usual bringing companies over and such. It was basically a very high-level meeting and problem-solving meeting.

Mr. McRobb: I see in my notes there was another trip. I believe it was announced in October, perhaps on the 20th, and it could very well be that trip where the other provinces were partnering to save costs.

I will just ask the same question of the minister. Did the Yukon go solo or did we try to join in with the nearby provinces to save costs and achieve the same effectiveness?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The member opposite is quite right. The trip in October was to attend the China Mining Congress and Expo which is an annual conference usually held in Beijing, but this year it was held in the City of Tianjin — about three or four hours out. There were a number of Canadian jurisdictions present for that and that was the one that we brought over — I believe it was — eight different Yukon companies. There would be no savings, of course, to bring over companies from other jurisdictions. However, the Government of Canada was very supportive in partnering with us on that. For instance, we flew into Beijing and then the Government of Canada spon-

sored three or four buses to take us all over to the city and to the show on that. So there were some costs savings there.

After that conference we had the great honour of continuing on to the City of Xi'an in Shaanxi province and met with them on the possibility of setting up a sister province relationship — a rather interesting relationship, given the fact that much of the investment that has come to Yukon has come out of Xi'an and, because they have been over here so many times, we have a lot of good friends there.

It's an interesting sort of Mutt-and-Jeff relationship because we have a sister relationship — or are setting up a sister relationship — with a jurisdiction of 37 million people and a second jurisdiction of 37,000 people. We have a lot that we can work with them on and they have a lot of things that they can learn from us. We spent some time there and really learned quite a bit.

At Tianjin, there was also the NRCan, or National Resources Canada, forum, which brought together Chinese investors to show the various investors what our projects were to highlight with them and then set up the meetings where the companies could meet on a one-to-one basis. Again, we're not parts of those meetings — our job is to put the groups together and it was all of Canada that was really involved there. There was quite a wide variety of people from all over the place. The second thing is the NDRC, the National Development and Reform Commission, which is a Chinese federal government agency that evaluates and approves large investments coming out of China. They sponsored a forum at the Canadian embassy in Beijing. Again, I don't believe that was of any cost to us; it was a sponsored thing through NDRC.

The feedback from the various companies is that there has been great success. Discussions are happening and people are now going back and forth on their own. Again, in the next year or two, we will see progress on that. That's the way things are done over there. You don't go in, present something and bingo, you sign an agreement. It's a long and slow process. You learn a couple of different things: one is, you just have to keep trucking, and the second thing is, don't ever give up because all of a sudden, things will start happening when you least expect it. So we were very pleased with the effect of that trip and what we got out of it.

Mr. McRobb: For the record, I certainly do understand the rationale behind the trips to China. We all understand how China is a major emerging economy in the world and it could very well be that its currency is the world monetary standard in the years to come. It's something that cannot be ignored and fostering good relations is certainly a good idea.

We're also aware of investments in the territory and investments elsewhere in Canada, the United States and other countries in the world.

As the minister knows, I visited China myself during the Olympic Games the summer before last — at my own expense, I will add. I am quite fascinated by the country and the culture there. I'm sure the minister has many of his own stories to tell. I'm not asking him now, for the record, to indulge us with those stories because we do have to be mindful of the time.

One of the first images I'll never forget is the sea of umbrellas going down the streets. What in fact was happening was that there was a rainstorm and most people commute by bicycle. The drivers of the bicycles were holding an umbrella in one hand and the handle bars of the bicycle in the other. It was quite an image to behold.

Anyway, I would like to switch topics for a moment. We know this Assembly will be dealing with the *Oil and Gas Act* amendments in this sitting — at least, we hope to.

I note that one of the amendments is the transfer of the pipeline toll-setting authority to the minister's desk. Currently, the Yukon Utilities Board is responsible for that authority. We know the Yukon Utilities Board is a quasi-judicial tribunal that operates independently from government. So this is quite a major change from a completely independent process to a political process. I would just like to ask the minister, what are the reasons why the government is doing this?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: If I can jump back slightly, and save a little bit of paperwork here, the Member for Kluane was asking specifically about vacancies in the department, and I can give him that information now, actually. There are currently 48 out of 51.25 positions staffed within the department. We use temporary assignments for developmental purposes and to provide an opportunity for the department to re-examine the functions of existing vacant senior-level positions. In other words, we can loan other organizations, regional governments, or First Nation governments that have a capacity issue. We will sometimes put temporary assignments in and out. So, it does fluctuate a bit.

In support of fair human resources practices, the deputy minister does require that the temporary assignment opportunities are always posted and permanent vacant positions will be ultimately filled through a competitive process.

The member talks about the sea of umbrellas and I think that is quite true but to say that most commute by bicycles I think at this point is somewhat inaccurate. I have never seen traffic jams anywhere in the world like I've seen in Beijing. I can fall back on two stories. I can remember coming out of a hotel with a car that was going to take us to a meeting — fortunately, not a very important meeting and one that we sort of wanted to do on the side. You couldn't take a left-hand turn out of the hotel so you had to take a right-hand turn, go one block down and circle the hotel. By the time we got back to the front of the hotel to be in a position where we could make that left-hand turn, it took an hour and half. At that point, we decided to heck with the whole thing and we turned back into the hotel and had dinner because it was just not worth the time. Bicycles and cars are pretty dramatic over there.

I was over there at approximately the same time, as well, and in the same area right directly across the street from the Bird's Nest at the Olympics. We were there in June looking around and that was a personal trip.

It was amazing how it wasn't anywhere close to being done and this is two months before the Olympics. Everything was still gravel construction site, construction fences, plywood and really not too many people working, but that was also at a time that was fairly close to the Sichuan province earthquakes

and all the problems that they had with that — sort of assume that that would set them back a lot.

We were back about a month after the Olympics, which I think was late September, and you would swear that place was there for 300 years. The construction was done. There was no sign of anything under construction. The cobblestone walkways looked like they were well aged, the plants looked like they'd been there for generations and I just was totally amazed at what they did with that, but it is rather amazing the size of the country, the size of the workforce. When you think that China has more honour students than we have students, you can begin to understand what they can accomplish in a short period of time.

As for the rest of the member's question, perhaps he has more information than I do at this point, but I would be happy to get back with him on that and would suggest strongly that he bring those questions up at Energy, Mines and Resources. That would be a more appropriate place to put it.

Sometimes things are moved around for very strange reasons. We have a program that we inherited from the Department of Finance, I'm still not really sure why, but that's just the way that it worked. It was more appropriate to put with us. The work continues and nothing really changes. It's just: whose desk does it land on? So I'll invite the member opposite to have that discussion with Energy, Mines and Resources. But I will try to find out more information and get back to him on that.

Mr. McRobb: That would be appreciated. Since the minister went back to his ongoing China travels, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the Yukon's Olympic weightlifter, Jeanne Lassen, and her very valiant attempt at the gold medal. I'm sure it's an understatement to merely say that all Yukoners were behind her. But it was a moment I'll never forget — helping to cheer her on during her lifts.

For the minister's information, as he would know, during the Olympics the number of vehicles on the road was scaled back considerably. The part of Beijing I was staying in was more of the older traditional part. Perhaps in that area at that time, the bicyclists certainly did outnumber the vehicles on the road.

I will accept his undertaking with regard to the transfer of authorities from the Yukon Utilities Board to the minister's desk. It is not clear whether members in this Assembly will have the opportunity to ask that question to the other minister. There is no mechanism that allows me to force an answer out of the minister. He clearly had an opportunity to give it. If he wants to provide it in writing, that certainly would be fine with us.

I don't have too many more questions on this department. One other one I would like to ask is, what mechanisms are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the various programs in the department? I am aware there were reporting requirements previously but I am not quite sure what exists today. Can the minister provide us some information on that?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Yes, I certainly agree with the member opposite — the efforts of Yukon participation in the Olympics — the one thing — the other story I was going to tell — and he reminds me to at least mention this — that you forget why our tiny little jurisdiction and how we are felt across the

world — when we met with Ambassador Mulroney in Beijing. It was kind of funny, because we were travelling with a translator from Shanghai, who was quite intrigued with who in the Yukon really is known worldwide.

Ambassador Mulroney's opening words as he greeted us were, did I know Matthew Lien, and would I please say hello to him — which I have been remiss in doing, so if any of this broadcast gets to Matthew, please — he was well thought-of in Beijing.

The cars on the road thing — the member opposite is quite correct on that.

When you get off into the small hutong areas, the bicycles are a bit much, except for the odd car that seems to try to run you down and totally be in the wrong spot.

One of the ways to cut pollution down at the time was — there was a decision by the central Chinese government to limit the number of cars on the road by determining the last digit of the licence plate. For instance, on Mondays 1s could drive and Tuesday, 2s could drive or on certain times, only the evens and only the odds — depending on the area you were in. It was quite amazing because much of this has been continued — the drop in pollution from previous trips. They still have problems — absolutely — but the progress was really quite dramatic.

The other thing I found interesting was, depending on the area — and of course we do the same in North America — you buy your licence plate, you pay a fee for your licence plates. For instance, in Shanghai, a licence plate can cost upwards of 30,000 RMB. Buying the car may be the very least of your problems; you have to buy the licence plate for it. I know in other places here, particularly in the States, people will register their cars one state over because of the cheaper insurance or the cheaper plate.

In terms of monitoring the various programs, it varies. We do have an annual strategic plan, we have annual meetings, and we have a very, very good and talented finance group that constantly keeps track of this. A lot of our programs are user-driven. It depends on how much is applied for. For instance, the business incentive plan or the BIP adjustment in this budget cycle that we're talking about — it depends on who applies and a lot of external factors. The other thing is I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the reporting structure of the community development fund, which is approximately \$3.5 million. It does account for some of the renewal and revote things that we have on this because there's tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3. Tier one is up to \$20,000, tier two is \$20,000 to 70,000, and tier three is \$70,000 and up.

In January, when we have that uptake, we have that entire tier three, as well as bits and pieces of the other ones that haven't been completed and therefore have to be revoted into the next year. Tier 3 is the most obvious because there just simply isn't the time to complete them. But on some of the others, we've had cases where construction work on a project got into a little bit of trouble where one end of the project started sinking and so they will have to wait until next year when the frost goes out of the ground to finish it.

There are constant meetings on this. There are committee meetings on this and there is a good staff within the community

development fund that tracks every single project. A project officer is assigned to that and the accounting on that is quite complete as to how things are spent.

We also track the number of jobs created by a project with any of these — and again, with the community development fund, is this just simply a big project that is going to hire one person or is it something that is going to employ 20 people over the summer? The number of jobs created is really quite essential.

Also, the gross domestic product, or GDP, effects based on the Statistics Canada multiplier is always a big part of seeing what the effect is. We also have done a number of studies, both internally and through the community development fund and others, to look at the economic developments — things like looking at exactly how much does the Yukon Quest bring into the Yukon economy. How many jobs does it create? What kind of investment does it create? Those things are always done. Then again, there is industry feedback. We meet regularly with representatives from a wide variety of groups — either formally with the groups or sometimes informally over lunch — and sit down and just basically say, “How are we doing?”

That feedback has been very, very good and very vital, and it's all on an ongoing basis. So we've got a pretty reasonable handle on all of that, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10, Vote 7, Department of Economic Development*.

Mr. McRobb: I only have one more question in general debate and it was not something I was planning to ask, but it follows up on a question put to the minister earlier this week. It deals with the social conditions in China, in particular the human rights issues and safe worker issues and so on. I am not suggesting that the burden for all these issues should rest on this minister's shoulders, but at the same time, Mr. Chair, I would find it equally hard to believe that the minister should go over there and do business with everybody and talk it up without mentioning these issues. We know in Question Period sometimes it is the wrong time or place to really ask or answer a question. So I will give him an opportunity now. How does he integrate these major social questions which I am sure were on the minds of many Yukoners into his business dealings, particularly in China?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The answer there, of course, first and foremost is that the member opposite has started to get into foreign policy and it is clearly the responsibility of the federal government. In terms of on a personal end of it, the changes that I have seen in the last six years in that country have been nothing short of amazing.

As one person put it to me — and I think quite succinctly — democracy will come to China. It won't be a democracy like we understand it. It will be a different version of it, but it will

come and they don't want to do it too quickly, because they see how the Eastern bloc countries have completely fallen apart when things moved a little bit too fast.

The other thing that's always quite humorous is people will say they're going to go through your luggage — well, gosh, all they're going to get is dirty laundry and stuff that I brought over to give them anyway, so I'm not too concerned about that nor have I ever seen evidence of anything like that. Frankly, my luggage has been gone through a lot more efficiently by the Transportation Security Administration in the United States. The other thing that has been noticeable over there is I've run into a few people who will say they only take you places they want you to see and I can say that I have never been so horribly lost in my life as I have been in major cities in China and in the countryside in China and on roads and back alleys — really quite amazing. We've gotten a good chance to see a lot of changes and there are problems.

As I say, I think Canada will be in a better position to be critical when our problems — such as Davis Inlet — are dealt with. Is change occurring over there? Yes, it is, and maybe some people would like to see it go faster.

But I know in Shaanxi province, where we were travelling to a lead-zinc mine — we were a number of hours out — and you would see these small villages and old buildings. There were a lot of older homes, what we would consider substandard. And then there is a satellite dish on the top. People that I ran into in China knew more about North American television than I do.

It's not to say that everything is roses. No, there are problems, but I think the world needs more Canada in it and more Yukon in it. The Canadian government, as a whole, is beginning to engage over there. U.S. President Obama, of course, was there recently. Prime Minister Harper, I'm sure, is in the schedule now. I had the very good honour of having dinner with Stockwell Day, who had himself been over there and assured me that our Prime Minister would be going some time this fall or over the new year.

It's hard — to us, what is that going to accomplish? To the Chinese, that's a huge thing — a huge honour and a huge show of support and willingness to engage. Mr. Flaherty, as well, has been over there. So we've seen those types of changes occurring, and we've got a lot to learn.

There's a lot to learn for them and they are more than willing to admit they have a lot to learn from us. As I say, the old Chinese saying of “You only win if both sides win” — that has been clearly demonstrated and the relationship has been a very good one.

In many of the Asian countries, it's the relationship that counts. I had the opportunity because of my involvement with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region as president three years ago — I was invited to go over with the Energy Council, which is four Canadian provinces and 10 U.S. states, all of which are energy-producing. They went over to Beijing and invited me to come along. They had some high-level meetings. They had some hugely high-level meetings and then got back and waited for something to happen, and that's not how you work these files. At the Energy Council meeting the next year,

they were very disappointed that absolutely nothing had happened. Trying to explain to them that it's based on relationships — you don't just simply walk in and think that's going to happen the next day. So I hope that gives the member opposite a little bit of a background.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to weigh in on this subject as well. I don't need a long explanation on this matter. I asked the question the other day. It occurred to me — I know that one of the issues that we've heard about recently is that assessments in the Yukon for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board are high, and it's a problem for business to pay those high assessments. It's a burden on them.

I guess, from my perspective, from the question that I asked the other day, maybe there's an opportunity here. Just a few short blocks from where we're sitting today, there is a building that houses, on a regular basis, about 88 full-time employees. It's my understanding that there are about 10 vacancies right now, but I think there's some capacity there to maybe provide some assistance. While we're over in China selling our raw resources to that enormous market for those consumers, I think those consumers and those workers and those businesses over there could use our expertise in the area of occupational health and safety and mine-safety training in this huge market that is over there.

I am just wondering whether or not the Minister of Economic Development would be willing to try to market our expertise in that area as opposed to just marketing our raw materials.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I have a couple items on that — obviously, the thing I've got to put up front is Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board isn't us and it isn't my responsibility, but I take the member's points seriously on that. There are a couple of aspects to that. First of all, in operations such as the Yukon Zinc project and the Wolverine project and the Chinese who own that — the senior people have been over and they have worked with Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. They have engaged Canadians in those responsibilities. They have done really quite good things with that. That is part of the learning process because they are sitting there watching their own people work under this and learning what we expect.

The other part is the sister province relationship, and that's another area that comes in on this, because it wouldn't be a stretch to say some of their people could come over and go through some of our training courses, or our people go over there. It's areas like this that really make that sister province relationship work. The member opposite is on the right track for that.

Mr. Cardiff: I think it would be a fairly low-impact-on-the-environment type of pursuit. I can't speak for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board either, but I know there is some expertise there. When you read media reports, it may not be — China is a very large country. I know the minister made reference the other day to the fact he wasn't aware I had actually been there. I haven't been there. I would be interested in seeing what goes on there, but there are other sources, I might add, other than Wikipedia. There is lots of news media

and information about China, both through their media and through international media.

Documentaries have been done on a lot of these issues, and we can avail ourselves of them to get information. But time is short, and we've got lots of departments to debate. I just thought it was an opportunity where there might be some economic benefit to Yukon and a health and safety benefit to Chinese workers that maybe we can pursue. So if the minister will do that, it would be much appreciated.

I'd like to ask the minister some questions around the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. I'd like to know if he can tell us exactly which barriers to the movement of persons, goods, services and investment there were that necessitated the creation and the changes in the AIT. I'd like to know whether or not environmental protection regulations and consumer protection regulations are a potential barrier to trade. Both of these issues, whether or not they are a barrier, could be brought to the dispute resolution panel of the AIT.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The AIT has been around since 1991. It's not new, although this has been the first year that the territory has the honour of chairing it, and I guess for another three or four weeks I still have the chairmanship of that.

As members of the Canadian federation, really the federal, provincial and territorial governments all have to come together to look at the movement of goods and such with that. It reduces extra costs — the trucks that require plates from multiple jurisdictions; trucks that have different weight-bearing capacities, for instance. I've heard of cases of trucks having to off-load part of their load and then come back and forth because one jurisdiction wouldn't allow that weight, so there are things that cost money.

In my own experience, in my own field of expertise — not directly with the AIT, but certainly getting ready for what the AIT was going to rule on — I'm licensed in Ontario, United Kingdom, European Economic Community and most of the Commonwealth of Nations. I couldn't go down to Atlin and vaccinate a dog, for instance, so they were forced to either drive all the way in from Atlin or, for some regulatory things, would literally have to bring in a veterinarian from 1,200 kilometres south in British Columbia. It makes no sense — it simply makes no sense.

Under the AIT, Yukon or any jurisdiction can't maintain unnecessary barriers to trade or the movement of workers. For example, if accredited workers are there, we are required to recognize the credentials of professionals or trades from elsewhere in Canada, unless there is a valid reason for not doing so and that has come up. For the member opposite, I think the stack of books is over two feet in terms of the exact agreement and all the various things on that. It does recognize the government's ability to act in the public good. Depending on what is negotiated in that and negotiations are going on all the time — for instance, the business incentive policy or the BIP program for construction, which favours Yukon workers, was negotiated out of the *Agreement on Internal Trade* when we signed on.

If there are legitimate objectives, such as protection of the environment or the protection of the health, safety and well-

being of workers, it's recognized that would put it outside. The agreement does not involve or apply to First Nation people. It doesn't apply to cultural industries and it doesn't give any influence to government's ability to raise monies through taxation, so all these things can be negotiated out.

Where it does bring in its dispute resolution — every jurisdiction has people appointed to the dispute resolution panel and there have been a number of these. There is a fine mechanism; the maximum penalty is \$5 million. For the Yukon and other small jurisdictions, we've negotiated that down to \$250,000. We've completed — or at least are trying to compete — the energy chapter. Some of these things have to be approved by Cabinets in their own jurisdictions. We're getting close to completing the agricultural chapter and harmonizing the regulations.

What it really means is that one jurisdiction cannot do something that would give an unfair advantage. An example I give, without mentioning the jurisdiction, which resolved rather quickly, is one province which produced a margarine that was coloured in such a way that it looked, smelled, tasted, et cetera, like butter. The Dairy Council in the second jurisdiction said, "Wait a minute, this isn't really fair. You're going out of your way to produce a product that is going to influence our workers and our farmers." That sat there until the dispute resolution mechanism was stabilized and the penalties would have started kicking in. Amazingly, it was all solved very quickly right after that.

There are a number of different ways. I won't bore the member opposite with all the details. It's not an agreement that is going to simply put an unfair onus on one jurisdiction or another; it's a pretty flexible system.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister; he actually answered a couple of questions on my list when it comes to the penalties portion, but I do have some other questions I'll be asking. I just want to be clear: does the *Agreement on Internal Trade* apply to municipal government regulations? Does it apply to Crown corporations or school boards or school councils — other non-governmental bodies? If so, could we get a list?

I guess one of the concerns I have is — I'm going to just use this as an example, because I've seen where this has happened where things like this have happened in the past. You have huge corporations like soft drink companies and you have school councils or school boards who, for the benefit — because they think they're making the right decision for their children in their school and decide they want to have healthy food. So they promote having salads and healthy fruits, and that's great for the agricultural industry but it's not so good for the soft drink companies and those that are producing what some call junk food — chocolate bars and potato chips that have high sodium content and high sugar content. Consequently, what happens is they actually ban them from the school.

Through the dispute resolution panel, there's a possibility — and we've seen things like this under NAFTA before, where Canada tried to ban additives to gasoline and it cost Canadian taxpayers millions and millions of dollars, and we still have the

additive. We were forced to keep buying the additive and putting it in the product.

What I'm concerned about — and I will say that it's nice that we've negotiated down the maximum penalty to \$250,000, but it wouldn't be a stretch to say that a complaint could be brought against a school council or school board or the department, for that matter, if they were to ban or restrict soft drinks and some foods in schools. So that's my concern — that and if he can list the bodies that the AIT applies to.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I threw out some of the things a few minutes ago a little quickly. So, just to repeat myself, the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, the AIT, does recognize the government's ability to act in the public good. To this end, legitimate objectives such as protection of the environment and protection of the health, safety and well-being of workers — and that would include students — are recognized.

So the things that he is looking at as possibilities are really not covered on this. Does that mean that no one could put a dispute in? Well, they probably could, but I would suggest that they wouldn't get very far with it, because it is specifically exempt from the agreement.

Mr. Cardiff: I gave the minister the other example of what happened through NAFTA where the reason for banning MMT from gasoline was there was a good environmental argument for doing so. Yet it still cost Canadian taxpayers millions and millions of dollars. They had to settle out of court and in the end we still have the environmental degradation going on.

I will move on from that. I am glad the minister is reassured that the government can act and that these bodies can act for the benefit of the environment and of workers; that is good.

I would like to know who sits on the Yukon Dispute Resolution Board and how was that person appointed? I am assuming that the rules that govern decisions of the panel are contained within the agreement itself.

It's my understanding that the dispute resolution process takes place in a closed environment and that the proceedings aren't public. It's my belief that — I mean, given that this affects the government, it affects the public at large, the taxpayers, and is at a cost to taxpayers — the dispute resolution process should be public. It should be open and transparent and I'm just wondering if the minister can give us the rationale for why it isn't.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: To sort of pick up on the other one; my apologies for stopping a little short there. The gasoline additive example that the member gives is actually a very good one, but it starts crossing into NAFTA and international agreements and that is quite separate from this. In other words, if you wanted to produce or not produce, or add or not add something within Canada, it would be covered with this. As soon as you go outside the bounds of Canada, you're into a totally different agreement and totally different mechanism. The difficulty with that of course are economies of scale; I know before the member opposite gets up and throws that at me.

If something is going to be 100 units on one side of the border and one on the other, the economy of scale may mean that something can't be produced.

These things do come true. It's interesting — I wasn't aware of the facts, and I think most Canadians aren't aware of the fact that, when you talk about high-grade steel for pipelines as a good example, virtually all if not all of that steel will come from Africa and Asia, because the environmental standards are so high in North America, we can't produce it. So that's going to be another challenge. That's international and I'll stay right out of it. But that's always a thing.

The *Agreement on Internal Trade* asks that each jurisdiction appoint someone to a panel and then panels are empowered with each resolution, so I'm not sure that the Yukon appointee has had the opportunity to get involved in it, but if she has, it would depend on the individual things. Leslie McRae, who is general counsel for Northwestel, was my appointment to that. As I say, I don't know if she has been called upon to serve, but I have every faith in her good work. I've known her for a number of years and would have a great deal of faith in that.

Each jurisdiction would then produce a report; whether they would have some in-camera meetings or not, I don't know. I think that some in-camera meetings might be worthwhile. But it still is important that report come out and all the reasons for that decision would be made. We do run with a secretariat in Winnipeg with a staff of about four or five. The executive director is a very skilled international trade lawyer. I won't give her name because *Hansard* will probably come out and throw something at me. Certainly, I can provide for the member opposite or anyone else who that is.

It gives us the ability so that when we have our meetings, much of that work is done ahead of time. The actual ministerial meetings are very short, but the negotiating, debating, and everything else that goes on in the background — according to staff in our department who hold that file — is very long, involved, frustrating and detailed. But we've been very happy with things that have come out of this.

The main thing we're trying to do with the *Agreement on Internal Trade* is to get compliance, not punishment. If we're doing everything right, there might be a little sabre-waving, but if we never come to face a dispute resolution, then we're doing something right — if we can force people into coming to the table and talking it over — and that's certainly what we have been able to do so far. All parties at the table are there and talking and smiling. Hopefully, we can keep doing things that way and do it right.

Mr. Cardiff: I asked a question in Community Services and it is my recollection that in Community Services there was \$85,000 to do some work to ensure compliance of legislation and regulations with the AIT. For certain policies like the business incentive program, there used to be local-hire provisions in some of the contracting. Is the minister aware if each department is hiring lawyers to ensure compliance? Is this going to affect other departments like Health and Social Services, the Department of Highways and Public Works, the Education department?

Do they need to do their due diligence before June 2010, as well to be compliant, or is it just Community Services?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I'm not familiar with that line item in Community Services. That's not my responsibility. I have no idea. In general, yes, in every department everyone should be doing their due diligence and looking at compliance in this, whether that involves hiring lawyers or anything else. I think that the expertise resides in each department to sit down and say, "Okay, are there areas that we could be in a problem with this?"

Again, we have someone within our department — the member opposite refers to BIP, the business incentive plan, and that is in our department — and, yes, that has been negotiated out of it, so we don't have to worry about it. I think every department has to look at everything from how they post jobs to how they contract. Highways and Public Works, I'm suspicious, has had more of a look at it than others. It would be a local departmental decision on what resources they would put into that. But I'm suspicious that most departments would have the resources internally.

Mr. Cardiff: I appreciate the minister's brevity in giving the answers and trying to get the facts because we're just trying to get the — I don't want to sound like the cartoon character, but we're just looking for the facts so we can go back and analyze them, so we have a better understanding of this at this point. I'd like to know if the minister can tell us what exemptions for the Yukon — he talked about the change in the penalties and negotiating down the maximum penalties. I'm just wondering if there are any other exemptions for policies like the business incentive program, or governing certain professions that have been negotiated through the AIT.

I'm going to tag another concern that I believe I've raised with the minister before, and I may have raised it with the Minister of Education as well at one point. It's about the standards — as a tradesperson, and as someone who has worked with a large number of tradespeople who all worked hard, went to trade school, who did their apprenticeships — and it doesn't just apply to tradespeople because it applies to any profession.

It can apply to nurses; it can apply to medical professionals, chiropractors or physiotherapists. There's a qualification and the minister talked about that a little bit, but there's a certain concern that in some jurisdictions in Canada, the standards for some trades at the very least are becoming less and less stringent. They're allowing a specialization in some trades, but you end up getting a trade certificate. In the end what it becomes is, number one, an issue of fairness in whether or not a person with lesser qualifications is entitled to the same remuneration and benefits if they're not fully qualified or if they don't have the same qualifications as someone from this jurisdiction. I know that the Minister of Education likes to tell us how great the apprenticeship program is doing here in the Yukon and I agree.

I'm really pleased to see that. I'm actually quite disappointed that unfortunately I'm not going to be able to be at the Young Women Exploring Trades workshop tomorrow, because I have other duties associated with the Legislative Assembly tomorrow. It'll be the first time in four years I've missed it, but it's that type of dedication, and we have those kinds of programs that are successful. We're investing taxpayers' dollars in

educating these people and bringing them up to a standard where — so it's about that remuneration and the benefits. It's also about — in the construction of public buildings like the correctional facility, like the airport terminal, like the single-family housing unit, like the Watson Lake hospital — looking at public safety issues. If the standard is lower in other jurisdictions and mobility is granted, then we run the risk of jeopardizing the workmanship.

I'm not saying anything against the inspectors, because the inspections have to be done and the engineer certificates have to be issued, but it is about the ability of the people to do the work and it is taxpayers' dollars that are being spent on doing that.

I think we should be shooting for the top rather than the middle or the bottom. Those are the concerns that I have in that area and I just wonder if the minister could respond.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: These things have all been discussed in great detail, with every jurisdiction having often the same concerns. With recent changes to the labour mobility chapter, provincial and territorial governments — and the federal government — can no longer preferentially hire workers based on residency.

I have to go back to the legitimate objectives such as protection of environment, protection of health, safety, well-being, et cetera. There are certainly many ways of looking at this. Again, that could draw a dispute and again the dispute would probably be resolved Outside.

The way the thing is really set up is to give the maximum mobility. In other words, if you are qualified in one jurisdiction, why shouldn't you be qualified in the other? There are some inequities in there and what we have to do is continually work to make sure all of those jurisdictions come up, perk up and increase their trade.

For instance, if a particular province is training certain red seal trades and finding out that other jurisdictions are not, they have to recognize it, but they're throwing on the additional environmental, social or health aspects of it. It's only in their own interests that they start upgrading real quick and get that, because they're going to find that training people from here are going to look awfully good, because they're better trained than the people out there. So it really will bring everyone up. Again, it's looking at keeping everyone at the higher level and complying with this, rather than punishing someone who is not complying with it. I think most jurisdictions have been pretty good on that.

I'll give the member another good example in my own profession. There was a case a number of years ago — a very great tragedy — where a young girl was killed by a pack of dogs in Atlin. The jurisdiction of British Columbia — the coroner's jury — ruled that they should institute a spay/neuter program, which I was happy to go down and do, at which point I was promptly told by the B.C. Veterinary Medical Association that I would be charged should I cross that border and do anything. It got to be a rather heated discussion, needless to say, and, in fact, that program was never conducted. Under the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and some of the agreements leading up to that, I would now be fully qualified to practise in Brit-

ish Columbia. What they did was they tacked on and said, "Well, you have to have a three-day course in ethics, and then you have to have a special meeting with the registrar. And that's all going to cost you another \$2,400." Could I appeal that and go to a dispute resolution mechanism? I'm suspicious that I'd win in a second, but now it comes down to the economics of doing it, and what can you say? So there are problems within that. But, again, it's starting to bring all of the jurisdictions back into the same mechanism.

Just to throw something back because I've stumbled on to some better information here — the member opposite asks about interdepartmental considerations under AIT. We have the lead on internal trade; however, in direct labour mobility — the Federation of Ministers responsible for labour mobility — that falls under the Department of Education. If that makes no sense to the member opposite, welcome aboard, because it makes no sense to me, either, but that's the way it is.

Department staff is working — and we cover the *Agreement on Internal Trade* through our policy branch. We have someone who is dedicated pretty heavily to it, but it's not a separate budget item.

Education — as I say, when you start looking at labour mobility, Energy, Mines and Resources on the energy and agriculture chapters — and the energy chapter is turning out to be a very frustrating and disheartening way to bring groups together, but it'll come over years — and Highways and Public Works, as I was suspicious with harmonization of transportation regulations and standards. Also, we have had to have many consultations with the Department of Finance on that dispute resolution mechanism and the financial penalties, et cetera, which to date have not been levied or had anything to do with the Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm just making notes to ask questions about this in other departments as well. It obviously has some effect and impact on them and it will be interesting to find out what progress is being made in other departments on this.

I'm wondering if there is an overall strategy, I guess, on the part of the government and if the Department of Economic Development is the lead on it — if there's a strategy to manage the challenges of some of the dispute resolution that may come forward.

In conjunction with that — I know that it's fairly recently that we've signed on with it — if there have been any challenges to date.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Actually, just to correct the member opposite, it's not something that we recently signed in on. It's something that has perked its way up because of the honour of being the chair of it this year. In fact, it has been in existence and Yukon signed on to it I believe in 1991, so it has been around for awhile. As I say, each time as we move along, the pile of regulations and agreements and such get higher and higher.

There have been no dispute resolutions involving the Yukon. I'm not even aware of any disputes that we've settled outside of the mechanism. Have there been in other jurisdictions? Yes, and the margarine one that I referred to earlier is perhaps the most famous and took the longest to settle, but

there have been a number of other disputes. I think there are three or four outstanding and they're progressing and I'm sure they will be settled by the end of the year.

Mr. Cardiff: I understand it's the labour mobility — the recent changes that are new — that seem to be of concern to some people here in the Yukon. I am just wondering if the minister can tell us if there is any relationship or link between the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and any of the other international agreements, like NAFTA or the free trade agreement of the Americas or any of those other free trade agreements that have been signed on to?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I am just getting a bit of information on that.

It depends on sort of what level you want to say "relationship." Is there a direct relationship? No, not with the international. However, it is the same people who are working with international and internal trade, and internal trade decisions have to be done within the North American free trade framework, as the NAFTA agreements also have to be done within the AIT. So they interrelate in that sense but, other than that, there is not a direct relationship.

Mr. Cardiff: I won't keep the minister and the officials much longer here. It's my understanding — the minister mentioned agriculture and energy. It's my understanding that natural resource processing is one of the sectors that is covered by the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. The government's policy, or direction, seems to be so far on exporting raw resources — mineral resources — and to some extent, forest resources. We're hoping not. It becomes pretty carbon-intensive, because you're transporting all these materials over here; you're doing something to them. Formerly, we were shipping concentrate to British Columbia and other jurisdictions.

I'm just wondering — so the processing goes on in one other place; the manufacturing could go on in another jurisdiction. I'm just wondering if, by signing on to the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and the labour mobility part of it — if it's being done over here and we decide to do it here, is there any impact on our options for economic development, such as processing minerals or forest products or actually manufacturing? If we were doing it previously this way, can we change the way we do it without being penalized?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Things can be changed and that's not difficult to do. This thing is a living document; that's why I keep referring to the height of the stack of agreements on this. It's a living document; it's not something that's stagnant.

We have to recognize that there are two aspects to that. First of all, we don't have the wherewithal of production. We're not going to put a car plant in Carcross or something like that. We don't have the resources, we don't have the people, we don't have a lot of things. So it makes sense to ship the raw materials out to wherever. At the same time, you have to look at how you do that and the carbon imprint is a part of it.

One of the reasons for the rail study and looking at that as an option — because it has been well recognized the carbon footprint of a rail system would be so much less. It's part of our argument to say, "Well, this is a better place to get your products, because Skagway is five sailing days closer to Asia than

Los Angeles — or three-and-a-half or something like that better than Vancouver or SeaTac."

I think one thing that a lot of people — and it caught me off guard and I wasn't aware of it — is that much, if not most, of the pollution through the Fraser Valley in the Vancouver area is due to the ships; it has nothing to do with cars. I mean, the cars contribute, obviously, but it's the ships. So if we can cut down on the shipping time, it would make a cleaner way to get that raw material to its destination and we're in better shape to do that.

So these are all things that are possible to do. As I say, it's a living document and it's always changing and that's a good thing. I think that's an excellent thing.

Mr. Cardiff: It raises another question. I'm done with the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and everybody can rest easy. I think I've got enough to go back, look, analyze and learn from.

But the minister brought up an interesting point about the fact that we're not going to put a car plant in Carcross and I agree. Maybe we won't be manufacturing minivans in Carcross or even in Whitehorse, but we shouldn't rule out manufacturing other products. I know in the media, and it seems to be one of the primary focuses, I guess — and I know it's not the only focus. I know there's lots of other good stuff going on in the Department of Economic Development, but when the minister is in China looking for investment in the mineral sector, what we're doing is promoting the extraction and shipping of a raw material. I'm wondering whether or not he's actually, or if he shouldn't be, looking at investment from China in processing and manufacturing — that would have a far greater economic impact on the territory.

We've always recognized that it would be far better to have a value-added product here in the territory, whether it's furniture or the bear-proof garbage cans. There are all kinds of products that are being manufactured here in the territory — the windows that are being manufactured, the mining equipment that's being manufactured. There is a multitude of products that can be made here.

We have raw materials — mineral materials — and I'm just wondering why we're not pursuing larger scale investment, whether it be from offshore or from within Canada. If we've got the materials, it makes sense to process and manufacture them here, or at least get them to a stage where they can be prepared for the manufacturing industry.

I'm just wondering if the minister would consider looking for investors to pursue that type of economic activity as opposed to just an extraction-type industry.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The value added is part of the equation in any of these decisions and that's always something that has to be looked at — the raw materials and what are we going to do with them. That's why we have economists within the department and that's why we do the business analysis and business plan and probably drive a lot of people crazy sometimes doing all these detailed business plan analyses, but it's worthwhile. The member is quite right: you have to look at that.

The wall you run into very quickly, however, is energy. As soon as you start looking with many of our resources of doing

much of the processing here, you start running into huge energy problems. This is why Mayo B is such an important project, which will bring clean power to some of the mining operations and linking the northern grid and the southern grid and reliability — you can go on and on on that.

That sort of capacity and analysis is done with every project, but energy is the big one in there. You have to realize that, for instance, even in Alberta with some of the huge megaprojects and some of the huge equipment there — I was rather taken aback to find out that a large amount of the real big heavy equipment comes from Tennessee. It is cheaper, it is more efficient, it is more energy efficient to have it manufactured there and transported in.

I was told an analogy once that I thought was a rather interesting way to look at it. You take the central part of Canada that produces such massive amounts of wheat and you produce flour. We are going to make this huge pizza and we are going to have greenhouse gardens in the Fraser Valley that produce the tomatoes and the dairy industry and such. By the time you make this enormous pizza, Canada takes a little bite out of the edge of it and what do you do with the rest? It is a world economy that you have to look at. With these things you have to look at the plant.

Many of the places that are developing the materials already have that infrastructure in place so we would be duplicating infrastructure in one place where there is no energy to remove it in another part of the world and I'm not sure that is any better.

To give you an example — and I don't have the statistic for China, but to give you an idea — for instance, in Korea, 97 percent of the raw materials that are used in Korean products — and I mentioned things like Hyundai, Samsung and we can go on with some of their huge operations — 97 percent of the raw materials used in that comes from somewhere other than Korea.

That's why they want our zinc. It's important for us, because zinc is a relatively non-recyclable commodity. You might recycle a car and get the iron out of it, but chances are you're not going to get a heck of a lot of zinc, which is sort of oxidized off the top. So, zinc, to anyone in the automotive industry, is a very important commodity. When you look at gold and rare earth and all the various things that are common in the Yukon, which we have such large capacity for, it becomes probably — and I say probably, because it does have to be analyzed — better to go back and see what other needs are, and how it's going to be used. I had to laugh that in certainly one operation in Yukon, which for many years was considered highly contaminated with selenium — and that was a real problem, and a lot of engineers worked on how to get that selenium out of the lead-zinc. Well, interestingly enough, the company that showed the most interest is the one that realized that there is a worldwide shortage of selenium. Selenium is used in animal health products; it's used in health products of all sorts. It's also, when you look at a high-rise, and you see the sort of green-yellow tinge to the windows for thermal protection from the sun — that's selenium. I asked them if selenium was part of their plan and he just laughed and walked away from me.

It depends on what's needed. It doesn't make any sense for them to do something here, but to take the ore back and do it there, but that is always something that has to be used and it is part of the business analysis. We've got people who spend hours and hours and hours doing what I sure as heck wouldn't want to do and that is tearing these business plans apart and looking at the economics. We're pretty pleased with what comes out. I'm not sure I understand some of the stuff, but it certainly makes sense to do that analysis.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, in the interest of saving time, I have no further questions and it's my understanding that the other critic has no further questions in the line, so I'd request unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines of Vote 7 read or carried as required.

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

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures under-expenditure in the amount of \$9,000 cleared

On Capital Expenditures

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

Department of Economic Development agreed to

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed to Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'm pleased to introduce the 2009-10 supplementary estimates for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

For this supplementary budget, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources requests a \$352,000 reduction of operation and maintenance expenditures and an increase of \$1.624 million for capital expenditures.

Energy, Mines and Resources is working on a range of initiatives across a number of different resource areas to contribute to the Yukon government's goal of building a strong and diversified economy that will benefit all Yukoners. In forest resources, a forest resource management plan has been completed for Haines Junction and Teslin and a draft plan received from the Kaska Forest Resources Stewardship Council in Watson Lake.

Planning is also underway in Whitehorse and Dawson. Implementation of the Haines Junction plan is well underway with the first 250,000 cubic metres of wood now available. Yukon's new forest legislation is being finalized with enactment of the *Forest Resources Act* expected in early 2010.

The new *Forest Resources Act* and accompanying regulations feature a regime of forest practice and tenure opportuni-

ties to support forest industries, while protecting diverse forest values. Yukon government has actively engaged with interested members of the public, stakeholders and local industry to obtain input into the new regime. The *Forest Resources Act* and accompanying regulations provides certainty around planning, tenure and enforcement and will enable sound and sustainable forest management that is responsive to the changing conditions.

In Agriculture, we continue to implement the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward policy agreement, providing up to \$987,000 per year on a 60 percent federal and 40 percent territorial cost-shared basis. Growing Forward provides the means to implement programs and initiatives that will support the development of a profitable and sustainable Yukon agricultural industry.

In addition, Energy, Mines and Resources is maintaining emphasis on planned agricultural development to support commercial agriculture. As part of our efforts to increase the farming success rate of planned agricultural land sales, the agriculture branch has developed a value-added tender process for selling agricultural land as an alternative to the lottery system. The value-added tender process allows Yukon to compare farm development plans for a particular parcel and will allow the best projects to proceed to agreement for sale.

In Mineral Resources, we remain committed in these challenging economic times to continue to improve the investment climate by providing regulatory certainty and a streamlined regulatory regime.

Completed amendments to the claims administration and royalty provisions of the *Quartz Mining Act* now enable government to be more responsive to this dynamic and evolving industry and will provide direct benefits to claim holders and mine developers.

Similarly, the finalized amendments to the *Miners Lien Act* modernized the legislation and provided industry with better tools to quantify risk, while at the same time, not diminishing the right of Yukon suppliers to lien mines for unpaid bills.

In addition, the Yukon mining incentive program, YMIP, provided financial and technical assistance to prospectors and junior mining companies for mineral prospecting and exploration activity here in Yukon. For 2009, a total of 106 mineral exploration projects were approved through this program. This year, the Yukon government provided a substantial increase in funding for YMIP. With a one-time increase of \$1.1 million this year, the program totalled \$1.8 million. This provides significant help to prospectors and mineral exploration companies seeking to advance their exploration projects. Supported by the Yukon government, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Placer Secretariat continues its work as a coordinating body for the new system for managing placer mining activity under the *Fisheries Act*.

The new habitat management system is designed to recognize the importance of a sustainable placer mining industry to Yukon and the importance of conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat supporting fisheries.

The Energy Solutions Centre continues to play a key role in helping homeowners, businesses and communities reduce

their energy costs. Delivering a broad range of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, the Energy Solutions Centre shows us how increased energy efficiency can have a real impact on reducing energy costs.

Through the good energy rebate program, the Yukon government is providing \$100 to \$500 rebates for Yukoners upgrading to qualifying appliances, heating appliances and boat motors. At the highest energy efficiency standards available, these items will immediately lower operating costs and, over the long term, will reduce Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions.

For the supplementary estimates, Energy, Mines and Resources' operation and maintenance expenditures are \$352,000 less than the 2009-10 vote to date, bringing the revised 2009-10 budget to \$52,769,000.

There are a number of notable areas within this amount. A reduction of \$105,000 has been applied to Energy, Mines and Resources' corporate services branch. This includes a \$30,000 adjustment to the deputy minister's office as part of the ongoing management of corporate allocations across government. The remaining amount of this reduction is a \$75,000 transfer to Community Services under the changes to the Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources interdepartmental resource-sharing agreement.

Under the sustainable resource division, \$179,000 has been revoted for forest management branch-led fuel-abatement work. Also with forestry, \$195,000 has been allocated under the Canadian forest pest strategy agreement for a Yukon forest health risk assessment and the development of a Yukon forest health monitoring strategic plan. These initiatives support the work for Energy, Mines and Resources' forest management branch to manage Yukon's forest resources in the face of a regional effect of global climate change. Funds for the forest pest initiative are fully recoverable from the Government of Canada.

Under the energy and corporate policy, \$150,000 has been allocated to implement the memorandum of understanding on the Mayo B project with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun. Mayo B is an important part of this government's commitment to expand renewable energy in Yukon. The memorandum of understanding reflects both governments' desire to work cooperatively, to identify and take advantage of potential opportunities associated with Mayo B.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I don't often get this opportunity but we do have a member in our gallery who is certainly no stranger to our Assembly. I would like all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Patrick Michael, the former Clerk of the Assembly, to our esteemed session today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Lang: The overall O&M expenses under the oil and gas and mineral resources have been reduced by \$790,000. There is a \$346,000 revote for the northern strategy project funds to support the Yukon Mine Training Association.

The Yukon Mine Training Association is actively working to provide training opportunities and support for Yukoners seeking employment in the mining industry. This support of the YMTA demonstrates our commitment to seize the employment opportunity provided by Yukon's mining industry. YMTA is helping Yukoners discover the opportunities and benefits that Yukon's mineral sector can provide.

Employment in the mining sector is providing many Yukoners with real and tangible benefits. Currently, over 500 Yukoners are directly employed by the new hard rock mines in the territory. Hundreds more are working in placer mining operations and mineral exploration projects throughout Yukon.

Also in this area is a \$1.06-million budget decrease for the type 2 mine site project. This aligns the Government of Yukon's budget with the Canada-Yukon funding agreement and work plan. As you know, the Yukon government has assumed responsibility for ongoing care and maintenance services at the Faro mine complex and has secured Denison Environmental Services to act as a care and maintenance provider. Early remediation projects are being undertaken at the Faro mine complex to address specific environmental risks and to provide economic and capacity-building opportunities to affect Yukon First Nations and, of course, Yukoners.

In 2009, the value of these projects will be approximately \$1.5 million. In 2010-11, the value of these projects is anticipated to be between \$6 million to \$9 million. All costs from conducting care and maintenance are provided by the Government of Canada, under the Canada-Yukon type 2 funding agreement.

The supplementary estimates increase Energy, Mines and Resources' capital expenditures by \$1,624,000. There are a number of significant initiatives within the proposed allocation. Under Corporate Services, there is a \$100,000 revote for the development of a forestry information system required to support the Yukon's new *Forest Resources Act* and related regulations. The system will provide a central collection area for electronic information related to forest tenure under the *Forest Resources Act*.

In addition to tracking forest licences and permits, the system will also provide important guidance to the forest management branch staff to ensure all appropriate procedural steps are followed, such as providing timely responses to applicants and timely referral to Yukon First Nations.

The system will also link to Energy, Mines and Resources' geographic information system, GIS, to enable on-line public access to update mapping information when applying for forest tenure.

Also supporting the important work of forest management branch is \$545,000 for planning, design and initial contracting of Yukon's forest resource infrastructure.

Mr. Chair, in recent years heightened interest in the forest industry expansion has coincided with a growing awareness of the impacts of climate change on Yukon's forest ecosystems. To date, changes in the climate have triggered significant ecological responses in Yukon forests, including a large scale spruce bark beetle outbreak that has had a significant effect on many Yukon communities.

This project will allow for upgrading and renovation of greenhouses built in 1989 and the development of a research laboratory at the forest management branch's compound and the research centre at the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest. This project will enhance Yukon government's current research capacity as well as creating new opportunity for northern forest research partners.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Lang that Committee of the Whole report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No.17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following document was filed November 26, 2009:

09-1-129

Yukoners Attitudes on the Environment and Peel Watershed, Final Report (dated September 15, 2009): prepared for Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Chapter; Yukon Conservation Society; and Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon by DataPath Systems (Hardy)