

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, March 3, 2011 — 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

Ms. Hanson: Before I offer a tribute today, I'd like to introduce visitors to this House. I'd like to introduce Betty Irwin, one of the founding members of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, currently the secretary, and a city councillor; Lynn Lebarge, who is the vice-president of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, and Patricia Curtiss, who is the program coordinator. Join us in welcoming them to the House.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology 10th anniversary

Ms. Hanson: It is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to the 10th anniversary of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, which will take place tomorrow. YWITT, or Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, is presenting a trades career fair to celebrate their 10th anniversary, which will be attended by over 60 young women.

Women who consider careers or education in the trades face barriers that men do not. Whether we like it or not, there is still discrimination toward women doing what is traditionally considered men's work. There are few women role models in trades and technological careers to encourage young girls to consider trades and technology work. Although apprenticeship programs have nearly doubled in popularity in Canada in the 10 years since the beginning of YWITT, the proportion of women in major trade groups is very low, between one and two percent across Canada.

Women make up about 11 percent of total apprenticeships, but they are concentrated in traditionally female-dominated industries, such as hairstyling and food services, where there is about 80 percent women. There is always the need for a social network in any career. Because there are few women in the trades, women are concerned about how they are going to fit in with "the boys". So it is a catch-22 — women will feel more comfortable entering non-traditional industries when there are more women in non-traditional industries.

The low numbers of women in trades and technology is no longer a problem of brute strength. Many trades make use of new technologies, such as computers, that make muscle power

a thing of the past. The problem is one of public education and perception.

This is where Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, and other similar organizations, are invaluable. Some current activities include the annual Young Women Exploring Trades Conference, hands-on experience in carpentry, electrical, sheet metal, welding and professional painting, and community school visits to do workshops for girls in grades 5 to 8. They also sponsor a bursary for two women per year to begin or continue an apprenticeship.

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology believes that gender should not be a barrier to pursuing opportunities in a workplace that needs highly skilled and technologically literate employees. With a diverse economy, supports in the educational system, adequate planning on the social side for flexible daycare and equitable wages, Yukon women are poised to play a significant role in the many trades that are the foundations of Yukon's emerging economy.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I rise today to pay tribute to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, or YWITT. YWITT is an education and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting and assisting in the recruitment, training and retention of women in the skilled trades and technology sectors.

YWITT was founded on the experiences of women working in the trades or who have tried to enter the trades but found they faced barriers that men do not — discrimination toward women doing "men's work", few role models, employers' attitudes and a lack of information about work trades in general.

Women make up nearly half the Yukon's paid labour force, but tend to be concentrated in lower paying jobs. I want to ensure that women of all ages are aware that the skilled trades have high hourly wages and that it is possible to earn while you learn. This information will help contribute to their making choices that will enhance their life skills and employability. YWITT believes that gender should not be a barrier to pursuing opportunities in a workplace that needs highly skilled and technologically literate employees. The goals of YWITT are to increase the participation of women in well-paying, in-demand and respected trades and technology jobs through ongoing projects and workshops. These projects and workshops are designed by women for women, thus exposing them to the lucrative and exciting fields of trades.

To that end, YWITT is presenting a one-day conference tomorrow called, "Discover Your Future". "Discover Your Future" is an inspirational career fair for grade 9 and 10 girls from Whitehorse and rural communities to encourage them to continue studies in math and sciences. The one-day, interactive conference provides hands-on workshops in vocations needing science and math skills. It also provides role models through women working with math and science in their professions. "Discover Your Future" at Yukon College will present workshops on carpentry, culinary skills and geology. There will also be a geomatics workshop that involves a treasure hunt using GPS.

Please join me in praising Betty Irwin and staff for YWITT's continuing effort to encourage women and girls to-

ward lucrative and rewarding careers. Günilschish. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Returns or documents for tabling.
Reports of committees.
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure the promised education campaign regarding the legislative ban on the use of handheld electronic devices while driving be in place prior to April 1, 2011. The education campaign should include, but not be limited to:

- (1) signs being posted at visitor entry points to inform drivers of the ban;
- (2) a banned devices list;
- (3) a permitted devices list;
- (4) restrictions for graduated driver's licence holders; and
- (5) information on the use of electronic devices by drivers being permitted if vehicles are parked legally and safely.

Ms. Hanson: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Yukon government to show strong leadership toward women's participation in trades and technology by:

- (1) ensuring legislative employment equity principles in recruitment and selection, training, career development and promotions, terminations and layoffs;
- (2) mounting public awareness and acknowledgement programs of the valuable services that tradespeople provide;
- (3) increase funding for educational programs to encourage women and girls to consider non-traditional training; and
- (4) work with the private sector to encourage a positive approach to training and hiring women in non-traditional positions in order to achieve an equitable presence of women in the industrial trades.

Further, I give notice of the following motion:

WHEREAS, while in opposition, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called the Canadian Senate, "a relic of the 19th century";

WHEREAS Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed that if he ever became Prime Minister, he would not appoint unelected senators, but broke that promise within weeks of being elected;

WHEREAS the Senate's Conservative majority recently defeated the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, which had been passed by elected Members of Parliament;

WHEREAS both the Liberals and the Conservatives stacked the Senate to maintain a grip on power; and

THAT this House supports the proposals by the federal NDP to:

- (1) remove all failed candidates and party insiders from the Senate;

- (2) make rules to prevent all senators from fundraising for political parties; and

- (3) stage a referendum on whether the Senate should be abolished.

Mr. Cathers: I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Leader of the Liberal Party to explain his party's new position on the increase to the medical travel subsidy implemented in July 1, 2006, including:

- (1) why the Liberals supported the increase and even tried to claim it was their idea, but now oppose the increase;

- (2) whether a Liberal government would have tried to use the medical travel fund portion of the territorial health access fund and the territorial health system sustainability initiative to fund something other than medical travel, or if they would have sent the cheque back to Ottawa unspent;

- (3) if elected to government, whether the Liberal Party plans to roll back the out-of-territory travel subsidy from its current level of \$75 per day starting on the second day of travel to the previous level of \$30 per day starting on the fourth day of travel, or eliminate the subsidy completely; and

- (4) if elected to government, whether the Liberal Party plans to roll back the mileage subsidy for travel from rural Yukon for medical purposes from its current level of 30 cents per kilometre to the previous level of 18.5 cents per kilometre or eliminate the subsidy completely.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before I go on, every member has a right in this House to speak without being harassed by other members. Please keep that in mind.

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Emergency medical services building

Mr. Elias: Last month, the Minister of Community Services told us about a new emergency medical services building that this government is in the process of developing at the top of Two Mile Hill. The budget documents for this building say it will cost taxpayers \$8.7 million over two years. Will the minister confirm that the total cost of the new EMS building is the amount that is reflected in the budget documents?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, we are building a new EMS building at the top of Two Mile Hill and, yes, we have budgeted for it.

Mr. Elias: He didn't answer the question. When this government brought forward the idea of developing a new EMS building, it did so as a 2006 campaign promise. In a Yukon Party campaign release from October 4, 2006 — and I'll file that now — the Premier stated: "A re-elected Yukon Party government will move quickly to advance a joint planning initiative with the City of Whitehorse to co-locate emergency medical services and city fire response services. The purpose would be to reduce response times and improve the

broad range of emergency services by realizing efficiencies in a shared facility.” This government has neither moved quickly on this, nor has it included the City of Whitehorse in its plan.

Why did the government not work with the City of Whitehorse in developing a joint EMS building, as originally planned?

Hon. Mr. Lang: There is already an EMS detachment at the top of the Two Mile Hill to service the growing population on the north highway and into the subdivisions on Hamilton Boulevard. We do have a presence on top of the Two Mile Hill. We are building a new EMS building on location there and it is in the budget.

Mr. Elias: This is about broken promises and the efficient use of taxpayers’ dollars. The Yukon Party has broken promises before and they will do it again. The simple fact of the matter is this: in this year’s budget there is a total of \$8.7 million, but they don’t tell us if that’s the total cost.

It would have been more cost-effective to put emergency medical services, the ambulance building and the new fire hall, or the public safety building, in one location. Now Yukoners are going to have to pay for two buildings instead of one. On top of this, the Yukon Party promised to move quickly on this and they haven’t.

Why does this government always take the path that is best for the Yukon Party and not the path that’s best for Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We did work with our stakeholders on integrating EMO — Emergency Measures Organization — and Wildland Fire Management, and that’s exactly why we’re building the new ambulance investment on top of the Two Mile Hill. It will be integrated with the EMO and Wildland Fire Management, and it’s the best bang for the buck for the taxpayers of the Yukon.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre, rebuild budget

Mr. Inverarity: I have a question for the Minister of Justice. It’s on the cost overruns of the new corrections centre. This is a major initiative of her department, and I’m sure she can answer the questions.

The minister insists the project is on time and on budget. A Vancouver architect has been working on the project for several years and the contract for designing the new building continues to rise year after year. It started at \$400,000 and now sits at \$1.8 million.

The reason it keeps changing is because the government began construction on the new facility without having a final design in place. Will the Minister of Justice confirm that the project was started with no final design in place, and that the design contract is now close to \$2 million?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The new Whitehorse Correctional Centre is on time and on budget, regardless of the member’s comments on the floor this afternoon. Property Management oversees it for the Justice department. It is on time and it is on budget.

Mr. Inverarity: It is very disappointing to see that the Minister of Justice refuses to be accountable for a \$67-million project that’s in her department’s name.

The new corrections centre was announced by this government with a \$67-million budget. We don’t believe the government will meet this target. The Auditor General of Canada has been very critical of how this government manages large projects, and with good reason. The project is now approximately 80 percent complete. How much of the \$67-million budget has already been spent?

Hon. Mr. Lang: As I said before, Property Management is overseeing the project for the Justice department. At this moment, I am informed that it is on time. In fact, it is a bit ahead of time, Mr. Speaker, and it’s on budget.

Mr. Inverarity: Once again, the question isn’t answered and it isn’t answered by the Minister of Justice. In recent briefings, officials confirmed that there are changes being made all the way along during the construction of the new facility. They also told us there are negotiations to decide who will pay for these changes. Yukoners don’t trust this government to manage capital projects and we’ve seen project after project go over budget, and this will be one of the biggest.

When are these additional costs going to be added to the \$67-million budget?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We don’t want to turn the clock back to the members opposite on their management of the power line between Mayo and Dawson, lest we forget.

I’m saying to the House here today that the project, which is the responsibility of the Department of Highways and Public Works to oversee for the Department of Justice, is on time and on budget.

Question re: Women in trades and technology

Ms. Hanson: Today we paid tribute to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology. Tomorrow they’ll be bringing together over 60 girls from all over the Yukon to Whitehorse to attend the Discover Your Future Career Fair. They will learn that training and working in the trades and technology field requires a facility in math and science. Yukon achievement tests have shown that our school system could do better in these areas. They are not subject areas that girls are often encouraged to succeed in.

Can the minister assure us that there are sufficient programs for girls in the school system, especially in rural Yukon, to acquire the necessary skills to enter trades and technology?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Government of Yukon takes pride in the work that our teachers do, whether it is in the City of Whitehorse or throughout the communities around the territory. We have a wide variety of different math programs, different literacy programs throughout our public school system, as well as in the high school system, to ensure that there are a variety of different skill levels or different intensity levels of education.

Also, members will remember that it was in one of our previous budgets where we increased expenditures for experiential learning and for vocational learning, and we’ve carried those expenditures through. We’ll see those in the budget debate later today, and I trust we’ll see support from all members for the budget when they pay for all the great programs that we have in education here in the territory.

Ms. Hanson: Women are marginalized in most skilled trades. They make up only 11 percent of the total apprenticeships completed across Canada. Most of those numbers are highly concentrated in traditionally female-dominated industries, such as hairstyling and food services. In fact, only 0.1 percent of people certified in the construction trades are women and 0.8 percent of people certified in the automotive trades are women. Statistics are only slightly higher in the Yukon for women training and working in trades and technology.

Can the minister tell us what he is doing, apart from the school system, to encourage girls and women to take part in careers in the trades and technology fields?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: That is a great question. There are a number of different programs that are going on outside of the school system. They include support for Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, which this government has supported for years, and I expect will continue to do so for years. There is work with Skills Canada Yukon and the great work that they do not only here in Whitehorse, but throughout the territory.

For the member opposite, we have seen the number of apprentices in the territory grow by leaps and bounds in recent years. We have gone from some 200 apprentices a couple of years to now having over 460 apprentices, of which we have — let's see there are 37 people of female gender in non-traditional trades. We have 49 women registered as bakers, carpenters, electricians, cooks, industrial electricians, oil burner mechanics, painters, decorators, parts people, plumbers — there are six sheet-metal workers — sprinkler-system installers, and welders. I should add one of the welders has really done Yukon proud at a recent Skills Canada competition where she was again an award winner.

Mr. Speaker, we have a wide variety of programs that the Government of Yukon will support, not only through Education, but through Community Services and the Women's Directorate. We want to encourage all Yukoners to become all that they can be and prepare Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, we certainly do support that. The New Democrats do believe in planning and preparing for the future, and we believe this government is putting a lot of its faith in a bright new future, primarily focused on mining. Many women and men in the Yukon look forward to working for the new mines that may open soon. As we anticipate the riches that will flow, the Yukon must begin now to put in place both the training and the support systems that will allow Yukoners to fully participate and benefit from a growing economy.

Women have a proven track record across the workforce. Yukon needs to ensure that women can be full partners in the economy by recognizing the need for and supply of flexible daycare arrangements for those who must do shift work. Although it may seem obvious, there is still a need for equitable wage regulations allowing women to earn equal pay for equal work. What is this government doing to prepare for the necessary changes across the board to make sure all Yukoners can benefit from the new job opportunities it claims are just around the corner?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide the member opposite with a number of different initia-

tives. It's all part of the Yukon Party's vision of preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities. We just have to take a look at the Yukon student grant. When we took office, that was increased and indexed.

We then took a look at the programs offered at Yukon College — we've seen those increased. We've seen the Yukon College now empowered to become a degree-granting institution. We've seen additional residences built at Yukon College. Those are family residences to encourage people from Yukon's communities who might have kids — and I think that falls into the category the member opposite is talking about — to come to Whitehorse and be provided with accommodation so that they can conduct their studies.

As well, this Yukon Party government has worked with the federal government and Yukon College to re-build campuses in Pelly Crossing and Dawson City so people don't have to leave their community in order to further their education. As well, the government will continue to work with other organizations like the Yukon Mine Training Association, which is a great organization brought together by First Nations and industry, and with the support of the federal government, to prepare people for many opportunities.

The Government of Yukon sees a bright future ahead of us and the people of the Yukon are certainly the foundation for that. We have certainly made education, training and skills development an important part of our platform, and it is something we will continue to work toward and put efforts and energy into.

Question re: Food production

Ms. Hanson: Over the Christmas season and with increasing frequency, we are seeing that shipments of food don't make it up the Alaska Highway. The result is that there are limited food supplies on the shelves of local supermarkets. In the past, more food was stockpiled in the Yukon at local warehouses.

Today, most of our food is shipped up in trucks every two or three days in the "just in time" kind of supply chain. This approach means we're always vulnerable in the event that there are delays in that supply chain. Has the Yukon government explored this issue with food retailers?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We have a very extensive highway system throughout the territory, and that's one of the gifts the Yukon has. Most of our communities are accessed by highway traffic and that certainly benefits all our Yukon communities, except for Old Crow, of course. But we certainly work with all our partners and we try to minimize any issues we have on our highway system, but certainly there are incidents where trucks are limited coming in the territory, but never for any length of time.

Ms. Hanson: The NDP believes that we need to start a conversation about local food self-sufficiency. We believe the government should be talking to food retailers, to growers, to citizens about how prepared we are for gaps in the supply chain in an emergency sense and how we make the transition to a society that is less dependent on importing food from far away. It's absolutely vital from a public health perspective, not to mention from an energy and climate change perspective. We

know that many Yukon communities do localized disaster planning — say, if there's a power outage or potential plane crash or major contaminant spill.

But does the Yukon have a comprehensive plan in the event that there is a longer gap in food shipments?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and, in particular, the Agriculture branch, plays a very important role in this. We believe in recognizing the resources that we have here in the territory and maximizing the use of them. One of those ways is, of course, to increase the products in our agriculture industry — whether that's from commercial farmers, whether that's from market gardens or whether that's assisting Yukoners to grow their own produce.

One of the ways that we can decrease the reliance on outside shipments of foods is by producing more. We only have to look back 100 years ago to the area of Dawson to see that a great majority of Yukon's food was produced here in the territory.

We'll continue to work with organizations like the Yukon Agricultural Association, with the Yukon organic growers — the growers of organics — I'm trying to remember their goofy acronym, if you'll excuse me — but organizations such as that in order to help promote sustainable farming here in the territory, to increase the number of products that we have available, whether they're potatoes or vegetables or some of the other staples that we've seen grown here in the territory. Farmers are an important part of the future and the government will continue to work with them.

Ms. Hanson: In fact, only one percent of the food we consume in the Yukon is grown or raised here. We are extremely dependent on shipping from down south. Gas prices in Whitehorse are \$1.25 a litre — more in the communities — and they are expected to rise more. This will have a direct impact on the price of food. There is a growing movement, as the minister has acknowledged, of Yukoners who are looking at how we build food self-sufficiency and resiliency. I would like to know from the minister what concrete measures he is doing to not only assist in the nurturing of this growing movement to grow our own food, but the storage and distribution of those foods.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: There are a number of different programs within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and, in particular, our Agriculture branch. There are programs in our Growing Forward fund that are also done in conjunction with the federal government to provide assistance to Yukon's farmers to do things like — potato storage is one example I can think of. Another example is the work that the government did with the mobile abattoir to ensure that not only are we working on some of the growing industries, but also that we have beef or chicken opportunities as well — so that we can diversify our farm ventures that are out there. In fact, the Yukon Agricultural Association has a conference going on this weekend, and I expect many of these different opportunities will be discussed with them, and some of the ways that we can overcome some of the challenges that we face here north of 60 in the preparation of agricultural products.

The Government of Yukon will continue to work with farmers in the territory, whether it is through the community development fund or whether it is through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, to ensure that we have a growing economy.

Question re: RCMP funding

Mr. Inverarity: The Minister of Justice has repeatedly expressed her concern for victims of crime, especially violent crime against women. The minister has also repeatedly claimed that the major crimes unit is adequately funded. There are still a number of serious crimes that remain unsolved in the Yukon. I asked the minister last fall to ensure that there was adequate funding, but I see that there was no additional funding money in the budget to specifically address these outstanding issues.

Does the minister expect these unsolved crimes to be solved without adequate funding?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said in this House before, we cover expenses as the RCMP puts them through. They give us an annual amount of funding they require and we cover those expenses after we go over them. For any unsolved crimes in the Yukon, as I've said before, all these files are still active. We do not underfund the RCMP when it comes to investigations.

Mr. Inverarity: This is a serious issue. Yukoners want to know that their communities are safe. The last time I asked the minister about this issue, she said, "I feel our Yukon citizens do feel safe with this government in control." The minister should tell that to the friends and families of the victims, who are still waiting for justice. Some of the major crimes in Yukon have gone unsolved for years.

The problem is there's not enough funding to investigate all the outstanding major crimes. The minister is already aware of that. What's the plan to solve these serious crimes if the investigations are not going to be adequately funded?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said a few minutes ago, we cover costs for any investigations that are unsolved. It's very important to this government. We have the Women's Directorate and we advocate for non-violence toward women. Right across Canada, we work with the women's groups. We must cut down violence against women. We must have equality for women.

The member can rest assured that the RCMP are still investigating these unsolved crimes. They are still active and they work on them and we fund them when required.

Mr. Inverarity: This is not the first time I have raised concerns about unsolved major crimes in the Yukon. Last summer I wrote the minister asking her to review the funding available for solving the outstanding major crimes that still remain unsolved. I have asked the minister questions and voiced my concerns in debate. In every response, the minister has flatly denied that there is anything to be concerned about. Why is this minister so confident that she can get results — that is, major crimes solved — using the same resources and the same tactics that haven't solved them in the past?

Hon. Ms. Horne: It doesn't take a letter from the opposition for us to work on unsolved crime or to provide funding to the RCMP. I have regular meetings with the commanding officer of M Division, and I have spoken to the unsolved major

crimes department. I can assure the member opposite that every time the RCMP has approached us for additional funding to conduct major investigations, we have responded. I can assure the member opposite that the investigation into Angel Carlick's death is ongoing. It is open. It concerns us just as much as the opposition. We want these unsolved crimes solved. We want the families to have consolation that they have been solved. They are active, I assure the member opposite.

Question re: RCMP funding

Mr. Inverarity: I would like to follow up on the previous question, and I am glad the minister is following along in the terms of the other side of this issue, which is not necessarily just money.

Victims of crimes are still waiting for resolution to some of the worst unsolved crimes in the Yukon. The Minister of Justice has repeatedly expressed her concerns about violent crimes against women. Unfortunately, there are still a number of violent crimes against women that remain unsolved in the Yukon. The Justice minister says she is concerned. I am sure that Yukoners who have been waiting for justice for many years will take comfort in the minister's comments. The friends and families of the victims of those unsolved crimes have been waiting a long time for closure. All Yukoners are affected by this; these crimes need to be solved and the Justice minister needs to take the lead.

What is the minister's plan for solving these outstanding, serious crimes?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The Minister of Justice does not solve these crimes. It is the RCMP that investigates crimes. One of the reasons this government has worked so diligently to develop the *Victims of Crime Act* and *Victims of Crime Strategy* is to work with these people, the families who have the unsolved crimes. That is why we work so hard. We support our national counterparts. We fund the national Sisters in Spirit project. While it is unfortunate that these crimes have not been solved, I can assure the member opposite the RCMP is doing its diligent work on these unsolved cases.

Mr. Inverarity: It's very difficult to feel safe in the face of all these unsolved serious crimes. Some of the major crimes in the Yukon have gone unsolved for years. The longer these serious crimes remain unsolved, the harder it is for people who have to deal with the enormous loss and uncertainty. Victims of crime do not need to be further victimized by fear and uncertainty that a serious offender has not been brought to justice.

This is a serious Justice issue and we need a minister to take it seriously. When will she bring forward a plan to solve all the outstanding serious crimes in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I don't know how to reiterate that we do provide the funding for investigations.

We are concerned. We work with our national counterparts for the safety of victims. I just don't know what else to say. The RCMP are doing their work and the protection of Yukoners is of utmost importance to this government. We are working diligently to ensure that Yukoners can feel safe in their homes and their communities.

Mr. Inverarity: The minister has a serious role to play in this issue. I've written letters; I've asked questions and I've voiced my concerns in debate. The minister has flatly denied that there is anything she can do, other than be concerned about it. I don't know what more I can do to get the minister to give this issue the seriousness that it deserves. She blissfully states that Yukoners feel safe and this government is in control. Well, I'm not so sure.

I know this is not an easy issue to deal with, but the minister's denials are not helping. The unsolved major crimes in Yukon need to be moved up on the minister's priority list and acted on. When will the minister drop the denial and take some action on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: What we are witnessing here is really quite astounding. The Member for Porter Creek South has just implied that the Minister of Justice is denying something, and that's not what the minister has responded with at all.

We have a very detailed, complex and significant agreement with the RCMP, the police force of record here in the Yukon, which is conducting all investigations. Let's just expand this a little bit. You know, the RCMP do have unsolved crimes. Do you know the FBI has unsolved crimes? Scotland Yard has unsolved crimes. Interpol has unsolved crimes. The DEA has unsolved crimes. The ATS has unsolved crimes. That's why we have a police force and that's why we have the agreement that we do with the RCMP — to keep investigating unsolved crimes.

Question re: Energy policy

Ms. Hanson: The NDP understands that it is ultimately taxpayers and ratepayers and the environment that pay for the decisions about our energy resources, and it is the future generations who will live with the consequences. In 2009 the government launched a consultation on independent power production, after the Mineral Advisory Board suggested it do so, and enable private companies like mines to be able to generate power and sell it back to the grid. The NDP participated in the consultation, and we also held a public meeting on the topic. In May of last year, the government said it would bring forward its independent power production policy for further review and consultation in a few months. It is well past a few months.

Can the minister provide an update? When will the public be able to see and comment on the draft independent power production policy?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The energy strategy for Yukon was released in January 2009, and it provides a foundation about many of these different issues. It goes into issues such as alternative methods of electrical generation, of power generation — additionally, looking at other options, such as net metering and independent power production. We've also made a commitment to come forward with additional information on both of these areas of issue and to develop policies around them. The issue that is currently on the table, or at least out for public consultation now, is the one of net metering. This is an important issue that allows homeowners or small power users to generate their own renewable energy and then provide that into the

grid system when they have a surplus of it. That policy is out for public consultation currently. I look forward to hearing the constructive criticisms from members opposite on that one and, additionally, the good ideas coming forward from Yukon's public.

We will also be launching the independent power production policy in the short term, once our other policy issues have had a chance to go through some of the public consultation and to get feedback from Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The NDP encourages and supports the use of local renewable sources of energy, such as small-scale hydro, geothermal, solar, wind and biomass, and believes that we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors of the economy, and prepare the territory for a low-carbon future with meaningful and verifiable targets and a concrete action plan with incentives and penalties.

We also believe independent power production can only go two ways. In the best case scenario, it can democratize our energy resources and enable communities, First Nations and citizens to participate in creating more renewable energy and reducing our consumption of costly fossil fuels. In the worst case scenario, it amounts to de facto privatization and a glut of environmentally destructive projects without clear planning. We need to look no further than our neighbours in British Columbia to see this is the worst case scenario.

I know the minister doesn't have the policy to unveil yet — he has just said so — but we and Yukoners are interested and curious about the principles that guide the development of this policy.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I think all Yukoners are aware of the huge investment the Government of Yukon and the Energy Corporation have just made in expanding renewable energy here in the territory. The proof is in the actions of the government. We've invested significantly in expanding our hydro resources, whether it's the Mayo B or the expansions at Aishihik. These are important steps in ensuring that we have an increase in responsible, renewable energy.

The proof is in the pudding. It's there in the investments that the government has made, and I'd ask members opposite to judge us based on the decisions that we've made rather than all the available options that are out there. We also recognize that there are other avenues for increasing the amount of renewable responsible energy in the territory. That's why we are working with Yukoners on establishing processes and policies around net metering and independent power production. We're seeing the responsible growth in Yukon's economy. That's something I want to continue working toward, and we're going to need additional power. For that, we've got to work with all Yukoners on innovative ways of generating that.

Ms. Hanson: I'll try another way to get at some underlying principles here. There are a lot of mixed messages coming out about how Yukon will meet its future energy needs. Our Crown corporation, the Yukon Energy Corporation, has said we face rising demands in a rather short period of time, and it appears to be scrabbling. We've heard about the Gladstone project diversion, about liquefied natural gas and about wind energy, which it had previously dismissed. Meanwhile,

without knowing how it is going to generate more power, it signed a deal to supply a major mine with power, and the CEO of the Energy Corporation has said Selwyn and Casino mining projects are looking at generating their own power. Yukoners have a right to be extremely worried about this government's handling of the energy file. After all, we've already seen an attempt to privatize our resources.

Will this government guarantee that the IPP policy will not pave the way for privatization and environmentally destructive projects of questionable value to the ratepayer?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The issue for the NDP about privatization is based on a lack of substance whatsoever. In the first place, IPP, or independent power production, or whatever the case may be policy-wise, still has the issue of going before the Yukon Utilities Board. Secondly, the Third Party leader brought up the mining industry. Will at least the Third Party leader admit that the mining industry, such as Capstone, invested millions of dollars into our public utilities infrastructure and has paid that bill and is paying a rate, as set by the Yukon Utilities Board? This has nothing to do with privatization. It has everything to do with meeting the demand-side management of our electrical needs going forward. So, alternatives like independent power production, net metering, geothermal, wind, biomass, natural gas, hydro — whatever the optional alternative may be — will be researched and looked into by the Yukon Energy Corporation, our public utility.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 24: First Appropriation Act, 2011-12 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now resume general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education. Mr. Fairclough, you have about eight minutes left.

Department of Education — continued

Mr. Fairclough: I would like to go back to some of the remarks made a couple of days ago. I know the minister did not finish his opening remarks. I understand he's probably feeling a lot better today than he did a couple of days ago. I do want to make mention again of this government's commitment to F.H. Collins Secondary School, for example. It was very clear in the fall that the minister said that there would be \$24.4 million in the budget to build a new F.H. Collins school, and with the information presented in this House, the budget is much different from what the minister said to the public a matter of months ago. What has taken place now is that we will not be seeing F.H. Collins school replaced this year. It has been moved back. The minister said there were some issues surrounding that.

It just so happens that the \$20 million savings plus that is a result of delay of the F.H. Collins school balances the Government of Yukon's books. The minister said they do work with their partners in education, but the chair of the F.H. Collins school council did not even know that the delay was taking place on building F.H. Collins school. That is a concern to us, and it's a concern to parents and the public that this project is being delayed. Also, the cost of this project seems to have climbed a slight bit from last year until what the minister presented again this year.

To our surprise — maybe not to the surprise of members opposite — this wasn't the decision of the minister. We could see that clearly from our questions during Question Period that this was not the decision of the Education minister, but rather the decision of the Finance minister. So we're having to deal with that problem now. I want to ask questions about F.H. Collins school.

I know the minister still has some opening remarks on the O&M and capital for this department. I'm going to give him the opportunity to complete his remarks.

Also, in the past, we've had commitments by the government side. They were a good thing to say at the time; now they're no longer in the books or in the government's sights at all. One of them was the Burwash school. They had a Minister of Education who defected into independent status and now finds himself back with the Yukon Party, but that promise is gone.

We haven't heard much from the government side on this matter at all. It seems that the government doesn't even want to talk about that so much. Also, I want to bring up something that's important and I'll mention it again. I want to remind the minister about this because I don't think it was his decision either, but rather the Premier's decision. It is a very important one, and it deals with the whole issue of governance. It was debated and talked about, and there was public consultation, all

with regard to the education reform project — recommendations and so on. The Premier said, "It's off the table. There is no discussion on the issue of governance". The minister had to take that and continue to deal with this matter, even though the Premier had his way on it. It continues to be an issue today, and the minister has to deal with this matter. There is a tremendous amount of money, resources and expertise spent on putting together the education reform project. It involved First Nations.

That was a very big stumbling block, I think, for the First Nations. They wanted to have the whole issue of governance included in debate — public consultation included in the report, and the government side decided not to do that. It was a political decision. It wasn't one that they could say, "Well, we worked with our partners in education and we all decided that this was not going to be part of the education reform project any more." It wasn't that at all. It wasn't that the Yukon Party was working with their partners in education on this matter. They made the decision. It was a Yukon Party decision.

I have two minutes left, and I hope that the minister can perhaps identify that, because the whole issue of governance would have made a tremendous change to our education structure in the territory. It was all about a bottom-up approach, and not a top-down approach, that this Yukon Party government wants to see.

Since then, there has been tremendous public pressure on the minister to change things. We've gone from no review of the *Education Act*, as was required in legislation. In the whole two terms of the Yukon Party, that hasn't been done. We have gone from that to the education reform project. Now we have changed the name to New Horizons and who knows what's next. We have a draft strategic plan in place, but nothing finalized at this point. We are just moving from one name to another. People want some answers, and they want a commitment from this Yukon Party government that we are going to see some changes — changes to the *Education Act* and some improvements in the review of the *Education Act*. The minister has an obligation to do that under legislation — to do the review.

In two terms, both ministers have failed to do that; they didn't do it. I haven't heard any ministerial statements from the minister that this is what they were going to do and present it to this House. It is too late now because this is the last sitting of the Yukon Party in their mandate — and who knows, the way the wave is going right now, the Yukon Party will not be sitting on that side of the House. So it is a big difference, and therein lies the problem. We could have made strides, and what we have seen is years and years of delay.

I'm going to allow the minister to continue, perhaps rebutting what I said, or continue with his opening remarks because he only had 10 minutes to do it.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to continue with the opening remarks for the Department of Education. I do have quite a few pages of notes with a considerable amount of information that I believe will address many of the questions of members opposite before they're actually asked. Following that, I look forward to an opportunity to provide some current information about where

the Department of Education is at and to have an opportunity to clarify some of the misunderstandings or conjecture that are apparent out there.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$145,388,000. I've had an opportunity to provide a breakdown regarding the capital side of things and now I'd like to go into some details regarding the operation and maintenance budget.

The \$136,011,000 budget is dedicated to the Department of Education under this year's operation and maintenance. This will help the department to support Yukoners on their journey of lifelong learning. First I'd like to address the funds the department is seeking on behalf of Education Support Services.

In this area, an environmental stewardship program is being established to improve the environmental performance of department operations and to increase environmental education in the classroom. We've had a number of different questions in the Assembly so far this session on where we're at with the *Climate Change Action Plan*. I just want to remind members that it's not just the Department of Environment that is responsible for implementing this, but indeed it's a shared responsibility throughout the government and the Department of Education will be working very closely with the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works and others on our environmental stewardship program. This is not only to ensure that we are improving the operational efficiency of some of our operations, but also to increase environmental education in the classroom.

As part of this initiative, the department is working in partnership with the Department of Environment to increase waste diversion in schools through recycling and composting programs. \$75,000 is being transferred from the Department of Environment through this budget. The department is currently developing a five-year strategic plan to maximize the benefits of this funding.

I'd also like to address the funds the department is seeking on behalf of Advanced Education. As I mentioned earlier, the Yukon government signed both the labour market agreement and the labour market development agreement with the Government of Canada on July 8, 2009. These two agreements reflect the Yukon government's cooperation with the Government of Canada to enable education, training and skill development for Yukoners so Yukon may respond to opportunities and meet Yukon's labour market needs.

With these agreements, Yukon will enjoy greater flexibility to respond to changes in the local economy and local markets, because these agreements will help train Yukoners to do the work that Yukon businesses need to get done. The labour market development agreement gives Yukon government the authority to provide support services that help eligible Yukoners to upgrade skills, get on-the-job experience, find a job or become self-employed.

The labour market agreement is the second agreement and it took effect last July to help Yukoners find jobs or obtain better jobs. What's exciting about this agreement is that it helps Yukoners who are not necessarily eligible for employment insurance. Over the course of five years, the labour market

agreement is bringing in \$5,896,000 from the Government of Canada to help Yukon create new career opportunities for Yukoners.

For businesses to prosper, employers must have staff with the necessary skills. This government is proud to be part of the solution to the skilled labour shortage. Implementation of the labour market framework will also occur during 2011-12. For this, we are requesting \$440,000. This funding is provided through the community development trust. This funding will be used to provide small business training, marketing and the development of labour market information materials and for a staff person to coordinate the implementation of labour market strategies with our many partners. It also includes two positions to support the Yukon nominee program and the immigration strategy.

In addition to supporting programs under these agreements, the Department of Education works in other ways to expand every available labour pool to assist employers in fulfilling their labour market needs. The targeted initiative for older workers provides an opportunity for workers between the ages of 55 and 64 to develop skills to find and retain employment. This program was initiated in 2007 and has been so successful that it is extended to 2011-12, and for 2011-12, \$488,000 is requested to continue this initiative. That amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada.

As of January 2011, a total of 151 participants have enrolled in the program, and 87 percent of past participants were employed or enrolled in either training or college. Government of Yukon is also requesting \$200,000 in funding for the immigration portal. This amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada. The immigration portal provides Yukon-specific information on-line for anyone interested in immigrating to Canada and living in the territory. The government is committed to reducing immigration red tape and fast-tracking immigration applications so that Yukon employers can have access to the workers they need to have their businesses and organizations flourish. All of this is done in a very responsible manner.

We are also requesting \$163,000 for the foreign credential recognition program. This amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada. The foreign credential recognition program will be used to recognize the qualifications of foreign professionals so they can practice in Canada. This funding is for one term position to coordinate Yukon's role in this national initiative.

I'm excited that Advanced Education will also pilot a youth connections program with funding from the youth-at-risk initiative and the labour market agreement. This pilot project involves a youth employment career counselling program to engage youth to further themselves, whether it be through education or work experience, with a final goal of achieving sustainable longer term employment in a community or place of their choice. I'm sure members will agree this is a very exciting initiative.

The Department of Education also supports learners as they make the transition from school to the workplace with programs such as the student training and employment program

and a summer career placement program, which pays students a wage for summer work that can provide them with the skills and experience they need to enter the workforce.

This government also continues to support Yukon College. The total support for Yukon College is approximately \$22 million for 2011-12. The Department of Education works with Yukon College in promoting the skilled trades as a smart career option for both males and females in the territory and works with Yukon employers as they develop skilled trades training opportunities in the workplace. Enrolment in apprenticeship programs has grown over the last four years and levelled off after its peak last year, although I have seen the recent statistics, and they are still very positive. Providing opportunities for Yukoners to gain access to careers in skilled trades plays an important part in ensuring long term health of our economy. We also work with Yukon College to ensure that they have the support that they need to provide the best educational facilities possible for our apprentices. Yukon College is a leader in trades education in the territory and also offers certificates in diploma programs and, in partnership with other post-secondary institutions and with articulation agreements with institutions in both Canada and Alaska, also offers degree-granting programs. \$17,381,000 is requested to support Yukon College for their base operational funding. This includes the \$750,000 in funding that was reallocated from the capital budget. This move reflects our commitment to provide continued flexibility in decision-making.

Members will note that there is a change, but this is not a reduction. It is just a change in increasing the flexibility of the funding for Yukon College so that they can appropriately address their needs. There is also an increase here for collective agreements, connectivity costs and going concern costs for the pension.

Mr. Chair, \$470,000 will be provided to Yukon College to continue operation of the School of Visual Arts in Dawson City; \$471,000 is also being requested for the licensed practical nurse program for the fourth year of this program; \$1.142 million will be provided to Yukon College to support the Research Centre of Excellence. The Research Centre of Excellence is a focal point for research projects that address climate-change challenges and opportunities in the north. It supports northerners working together to facilitate and coordinate national and international expertise while they work on issues having not only a northern but, indeed, a global impact.

Mr. Chair, \$382,000 is also being requested for the Northern Institute of Social Justice. This new institute provides training and education to Yukoners in a wide variety of social justice fields. It also undertakes related research. It was recently created to address challenges in recruitment, development and retention of a qualified workforce to deliver programs and services with a social justice component — again, another example of helping to prepare Yukon for Yukon opportunities.

Now, I'd like to take a moment to speak to a number of initiatives that will support the work of the public schools in the 2011-12 budget. Why don't I give the members opposite an opportunity to respond to some of the issues that I've just

raised, and hopefully it will give me a moment or so to regain my voice.

Mr. Fairclough: I realize the minister is a bit under the weather here, and I'll give him that opportunity to collect himself again and continue with his opening remarks. I know that the minister is getting into the public school issue. I want to ask some questions in regard to F.H. Collins Secondary School. The minister has presented some information to the public. What we found was new is the cost to replace F.H. Collins school from information we had a few months ago — until now.

I can leave that question, if the minister would like to continue with his summary, or if the minister could confirm that, in fact, the number has climbed slightly from \$50 million to \$52.5 million. That was the last number the minister gave. So, if the minister would like to update the House on what the cost is for replacement of the F.H. Collins school, if any different from the past.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In immediate response to the member opposite's question, the project budget submitted as part of the recent Management Board approval process totalled some \$52,523,000 for the F.H. Collins project. That's roughly \$2.5 million more than the original estimate of \$50 million. I will, again, caution members opposite that we are in the design stage — in the estimation stage. We are becoming much more confident about the estimates that are arrived at now.

But we will have to go through a competitive bidding process in order to undertake the project. I'll have a few more comments regarding the F.H. Collins replacement project in some of my additional comments regarding the Public Schools branch.

I'm pleased to say that the operation and maintenance budget for the 2011-12 year will continue to support and maintain all public school initiatives introduced by this government during its mandate, including some of the initiatives that I had an opportunity to mention earlier, including increasing experiential education and vocational learning opportunities.

The Department of Education is committed to continuing its work in New Horizons, the department's follow-up to the education reform project, and additionally to the Auditor General of Canada's report. The initiatives that began in the 2009-10 year continue into 2011-12. In addition to these initiatives, the Department of Education continues with its commitment to ensure student needs and priorities are met. Another example of how we're responding to the issues here: this budget is requesting \$354,000 to support seven educational assistants. Our total professional staff, which includes remedial tutors and educational assistants, has increased from 106.16 FTEs in 2002-03 to 159.15 FTEs beginning April 1, 2010. That's about a 50-percent increase in the paraprofessional staff within the Department of Education. This significant increase in student support during our mandate confirms our continued commitment to address student needs as they arise. We'll also recognize that we've seen a decline in student populations over the same time.

For one of the programs, Resilience in Transitions, we are seeking \$100,000. Critical transitions include from home to school, from grade 3 to grade 4, elementary to secondary

school, grade 9 to grade 10, secondary to post secondary and rural to urban. There are two levels of action planning. One is to provide support for individual students and the other is to provide system-wide support for all students in the transition process. A consultant has been identified to facilitate the school-based team, individual education plan process and inter-agency work for developing plans for individual students. The resilience action committee has representation from various agencies, as well as Health and Social Services and Education. Working groups are reviewing better transition practices at the specific grade levels identified and the school growth process has been designed by a stakeholder advisory committee to encourage and monitor the school improvement process to support individual student success and to ensure system accountability.

To support the school growth process, the Department of Education requests \$361,289. This is another example of a bottom-up type of approach to working with Yukon's education system. The school growth process is a method for all schools to identify the unique needs of their students and make plans based on individual and cohort assessment evidence and identify local resources to address those needs and priorities identified through collaborative decision-making.

The school growth process is an important means to ensure that First Nations, school councils and community members participate in a collaborative process to identify and address school priorities. The funding we request to support capacity development to ensure the school growth process best supports student learning. It also supports the \$75,000 leaders in education/innovation fund.

Members in here I'm sure will recognize the leaders in education/innovation fund; we've discussed this a number of times. It is an opportunity for schools, school councils, teachers, administrators, or others to identify innovative ideas, to find additional resources to examine the idea, to fund it and to turn ideas into good ideas and then into best practices.

Finally, we are seeking \$150,000 for community engagement. The community engagement process has been designed as part of New Horizons to support communities in more broadly identifying and addressing local needs to support lifelong learning and facilitate the sharing of responsibility to support the academic, physical, social and emotional development of healthy students. As it is becoming increasingly apparent that our schools cannot address some of these issues in isolation from the rest of the community, this funding is intended to provide facilitation skills and training to build capacity for developing healthy communities. The Department of Education relies on its stakeholders to provide input to ensure the education system works in the best interests of students. This budget reflects our work to ensure that our stakeholders are engaged at the territorial and the local community levels.

As part of the department's work on community engagement, it will also be working this year to develop a focused rural strategy to move forward the recommendations from the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways* report on secondary school programming. The rural strategy will recognize the realities of declining enrolments in our communities and the unique as-

pects of addressing student needs in a smaller context within varying social and First Nation contexts.

The Department of Education has other stellar public school programs to promote successful learning. The Individual Learning Centre launched in February 2005. I must say that I would certainly like to thank the Minister of Environment for his dedication and strong work on this project back in 2005. It continues to be successful in providing the flexibility required by some students, so that they can engage in lifelong learning.

Our data demonstrates that more students are staying in school than in the past. The full-day kindergarten and the home tutor program will continue to receive support under this year's budget. These initiatives have proven to be very important and meaningful for people throughout the Yukon.

Under the northern strategy initiative, \$63,000 is being requested for the Four Winds family and community literacy project delivered by the Family Literacy Centre, which opened its doors at the Canada Games Centre on January 27, 2010. This project will work on the further development and operation of a culturally inclusive Family Literacy Centre that helps to meet family, community and workplace literacy needs across the Yukon.

\$100,000 is also being requested to continue the early years transition learning program. This program targets pre-kindergarten to grade 3 students and will help to improve performance of both First Nation and other Yukon children.

Funding for initiatives to support the increasing number of vulnerable students will also continue in 2011-12. \$150,000 will provide training for counsellors, learning assistants, and educational assistants in specific areas related to the socio-emotional well-being of vulnerable students. \$140,000 is also being requested to continue with assistive technology software and related training program. This will provide support for special needs students, enabling an inclusive model for individual education planned goals and objectives to be met.

\$354,000 has recently been added to provide an increase in the number of educational assistants. Seven additional educational assistants have been added for the 2011-12 school year. We continue to receive positive feedback on all of these programs.

The experiential education initiative continues in 2011-12 with \$385,000. This money provides more flexibility for schools to access experiential and outdoor educational opportunities.

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

We continue to have a very good working relationship with the Council of Yukon First Nations, which collaborated with our department through the education reform projects and the New Horizons initiatives. The Department of Education is

currently working with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the federal government to draft a memorandum of understanding that could attract further national funding to address the gap between First Nation and non-First Nation learners, which is a priority not only for this government, but for all governments across Canada.

While continuing to support the development of First Nation language and cultural programs and curricula, the department is increasingly being responsive to the priorities, as identified by individual First Nations. This work should be expanded through the signing off of the tripartite memorandum of understanding between governments.

Currently, members of the Public Schools branch are working with support-specific initiatives in partnerships with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation to provide more support for social and emotional development of school-aged children; with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to provide a comprehensive First Nation language and culture program for primary-aged students; with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to support an on-the-land experiential program; with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to provide more apprenticeship programming, more First Nation language and cultural programming, and more flexibility for individual student plans.

What is learned through this is that partnerships can, in the future, better help to inform programming for all students in all of our communities, and also assist individual First Nations identify projects, which can be addressed through the tripartite memorandum of understanding at an individual First Nation level.

The Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee has been in operation for five years and has been instrumental in providing advice and direction to the Department of Education through the strategic plan, *Helping Students Succeed*, and by providing input into several advisory committees on various programming issues.

These kinds of connections have greatly benefited both Council of Yukon First Nations and the Department of Education because the lines of communication are open as we work toward reaching a common goal — that of increased success for First Nation students.

This year we will be requesting approximately \$2 million in funding to support the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit at the Department of Education. I'm pleased to say this unit continues to grow and provide a unique and helpful service to the Department of Education and the larger education community in the territory. Included in the \$2 million is funding for two specific initiatives approved under New Horizons.

The Southern Tutchone bicultural program at St. Elias school in Haines Junction has been budgeted for \$258,000. Implementation of this program is an important milestone for the Department of Education, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the school. It brings local wisdom, language and culture to this school's kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms. It supports preservation of the Southern Tutchone language and culture by integrating it into the classroom. It promotes students' intellectual development and improves their motivation.

The Yukon First Nations experiential program is budgeted at \$153,000 for 2011-12.

This program is an opportunity for the department to enhance opportunities for First Nation students in the secondary system and to meet the recommendations we received in the education reform project final report, the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways* report and the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee's strategic plan. To ensure Yukon students have access to the best possible opportunities to learn aboriginal languages, the government is seeking \$3 million to cover the salaries of aboriginal language teachers in Yukon schools and at the Yukon Native Language Centre.

This year we are continuing funding of the First Nation elders in the school program for \$50,000. Elders in the school program provides elders with the opportunity to share their cultural experiences, knowledge, skills and perspectives with the school, staff and students, and it is jointly sponsored by the Department of Education and participating Yukon First Nations. This program is important to bring the model of traditional learning into the Yukon classroom, making the classroom a more relevant place for all Yukon students.

In order to develop and expand First Nation curriculum and have resources developed, including the First Voices program, we have committed \$285,705 for this year. The First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit releases annually a teacher resource handbook of Yukon First Nation education resources in public schools to help teachers include a First Nation perspective throughout the curriculum. This is an annual project and it is distributed to all new teachers in the Yukon every year.

In addition, there have been a number of Department of Education initiatives over the past few years that are improving how we incorporate First Nation culture and values into the classroom. Two new NorthWind books were printed in January 2011 as part of the NorthWind Books series for grade 1 students. *Hunting with Dad* features a Vuntut Gwitchin student preparing to go hunting with his father in Old Crow. This is a level 3 to 4 book. *A Winter Camp* features students and elders at a winter cultural camp at Elijah Smith Secondary School.

With this printing, there are now 18 titles available for grade 1 students in Yukon schools. Just to touch on the winter camping at Elijah Smith Elementary School, I do want to note that my deputy in the Department of Education staff will be away in the very near future as they join Elijah Smith students and community members, and also the president of the Yukon Teachers Association, on their annual bison hunt, so I'm sure all members would like to wish the school, the staff and the volunteers safe and successful travels.

In addition, \$19,000 is dedicated to train all new Yukon teachers in Yukon First Nation culture during our new teacher orientation that's held in August every year. To provide cultural enhancement programs for Yukon schools, we continue to provide \$255,000 a year in funding. This funding supports a wide range of cultural activities, including everything from making mukluks to schools undertaking bison hunts.

Under the northern strategy initiative, \$30,000 is being requested for the land-based experiential education program in

Old Crow. This project has provided a rural First Nation experiential model for kindergarten to grade 9 that will be unique in Yukon, with an emphasis on First Nation culture while meeting the specific educational needs using a collaborative process. The project has provided the students, staff and Old Crow community members an opportunity to grow and learn history and understand culture, language and history.

I do have a couple more comments — about two more pages of notes — that I would like to share with members opposite, but I see that my time has now expired.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that information. A lot of information has been provided, and I appreciate that. You might find that some of our questions are touching on some of the information that the minister has provided. Perhaps we would look at more detail when it comes to information. I want to continue on with the F.H. Collins Secondary School and just try to finish up some of that. I know the minister wants to also complete his introductions on the department, and he'll have that opportunity.

I asked the minister about the total cost, the increase of the F.H. Collins school project being \$52.5 million, or just over that now, but this could change. The minister said that he is confident that the price of the replacement of the school will be what the Government of Yukon identified in the budget and here on the floor, but a contractor who looks at a dollar amount identified for a capital project like this probably would not bid anything under what has been booked. I guess the question would be then, is the government going to be waiting for the tenders to see what the final outcome will be, or is the government sticking to the dollar amount they have identified so far — the \$52.5 million?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's challenging to respond to this question. The Government of Yukon has a responsibility and obligation to be open, accountable, transparent — especially in our budgeting process — and to identify what we expect a project to cost. I don't believe it would be prudent to pass a secret budget and then say we don't want the contractors to know how much we're planning to spend on this. That's just not how we in the Yukon Party would run things. Maybe the member opposite has a different approach on this one.

This certainly isn't new — capital projects, capital budgeting and working with the contracting community is something that governments have done ever since governments began. We will work on this project, of course, with the contracting community. Yes, we have a target amount. I went through the amount that was approved through the budgeting processes we have in place, the implementation phase process.

We have seen implementation phase approval by Management Board on the project scope, the target completion dates and the total cost. They're laid out for members here. I don't want to come forward and say that we have blacked out numbers in the budget because we don't want people to know how much we're planning to spend. Of course this will be done in a competitive bidding process. It does include a number of different areas, as well as the school construction. I'm not sure where else we can go on that one for the member opposite.

I appreciate he has given me the opportunity to conclude my opening comments and, again, once I have provided a few more answers to questions that have yet to be asked, we can then get into some of the more specific debate, whether it is on the goals, objectives, purposes or the direction of the Department of Education or on some of our more specific budgetary items.

I was going through some examples of some of the commitments that the Department of Education has undertaken with Yukon First Nations. I would also like to let members know that the department will also be working with the Ta'an First Nation in order to address the needs for more support of urban First Nation students.

Promoting and supporting French language and culture is also very important to the Department of Education. French first language and French second language education are important options available to Yukon students. The Department of Education remains committed to supporting French programs in our schools.

French language programs, such as the early and late immersion programs at Whitehorse Elementary School, have consistently high enrolment rates, and enrolment in French first language education at l'École Émilie Tremblay is showing an increase as well. In recognition of the value of being fluent in Canada's two official languages, the Department of Education completed a comprehensive review of French second language programs to identify how to better support and coordinate programs throughout the territory to ensure equity. A stakeholder advisory committee has been established and is overseeing this work of three working groups that are reviewing the recommendations and identifying priorities and next steps for future program planning and changes.

I'd like to recognize the hard work of my Cabinet colleagues and the Department of Education staff for their work in crafting this blueprint for learning in the territory. I'd also like to thank all the Yukoners who are contributing to the evolution of the education system in the territory. With their participation, as school council members, as committee members and as individuals who have provided comments about the needs and aspirations of education in the territory, we will indeed build a better system.

The government is listening to the feedback on education and we are constantly making improvements and changes to ensure that Yukon's education system reflects the values and goals of all Yukoners.

I appreciate members' patience in providing the opening comments. I recognize there were quite a few of them. The Department of Education is a very large branch with a tremendous breadth and depth of responsibility and sometimes it does take a bit longer than 20 minutes just to provide a basic introduction as to what we're planning to be working on for the coming year.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to continue on with the F.H. Collins school replacement. The minister identified \$52.5 million for this replacement and said those are the numbers to the best of their ability. The Yukon Party has demonstrated on the floor of this House that their numbers are quite far off. I'll give

the minister an example. The Premier said in his budget speeches in the past that the extended care facilities in Watson Lake, for example, will cost \$5 million to replace and it ballooned to \$25 million and who knows, perhaps higher.

We've seen the Government of Yukon replacement of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It was once a \$30-million project and went from there to \$40 million, and from \$40 million to \$50 million. This is all under the Yukon Party government. It went from \$50 million to \$60 million, and it continued to climb from \$60 million to over \$70 million. That's a capital project.

I'm concerned about this and I want the minister to be concerned about this too, because it was the Auditor General of Canada who pointed out that this Yukon Party government does not have a grip on large capital projects. I'm concerned about it. It means a lot to the public and to the public purse how much money could be coming from the taxpayers to replace the school.

For one, the price of fuel is going up and, in 2012, when the tenders are put out and construction to be in 2012, we could have an increase in fuel again, for example, just in trucking materials up — and a 2013 construction season, 2012 and 2013.

It is an issue to us. One of the issues that was also raised in the education briefing was the technical wing of F.H. Collins school. I believe that, rather than replacing the technical wing, there is going to be a retrofit of this technical wing, and it is a saving of some \$10 million to \$12 million. So it's not a replacement of the F.H. Collins school; it is renovations to the technical wing. It is, according to government, a tremendous savings. Is that savings reflected in the \$52.5 million?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As always, the Government of Yukon has a responsibility to Yukoners, to taxpayers, and everyone involved, to ensure that we have appropriate, responsible mechanisms in place to ensure that we are providing appropriate value for the projects that are undertaken.

We work very hard with all the officials throughout government to establish budgets, to establish estimates, that are accurate to the best of all our abilities. We're going through a very responsible process on this project, ensuring that we started by identifying the needs of Yukon students, looking at how education has been changing and how it's likely to change in the future. We worked very closely with our educators, our advisors, the parents and school councils in coming up with objectives for the new F.H. Collins school building that would meet the needs of students for decades to come. We've gone to work with our engineering and technical advisors to ensure we're building a building that is efficient, that isn't a waste of space, to build a building that doesn't waste energy, that uses energy — whether it's heat or light — efficiently.

We have gone to work with Yukon First Nations and have heard their concerns, and indeed have heard their concerns that have been voiced repeatedly in the past, concerns that we have facilities that help to meet some of the unique cultural needs of our students. We have really gone to work to build the best possible school at the best possible price, of course, with the best possible involvement of Yukon labour in order to meet the

long-term education needs of Yukoners. Now, if the member opposite doesn't trust the information that is provided in the budget documents, if the member opposite doesn't trust the information that is provided in briefings — and indeed we have offered to provide a more detailed briefing on the F.H. Collins project jointly with Highways and Public Works — I don't know what more I can say. If the opposition doesn't have any trust in what is in the budget document, then let's just save ourselves a lot of trouble and a lot of time and a lot of expense. Why don't they just say, "No, we don't believe it. We're not interested in approving it. Bring this whole budget to a close right now." We'll vote on it and then the members can go off and do whatever the opposition members do when we're not in session.

The Government of Yukon has faith in the work that officials have put into preparing the budget document. We work with all our departments to ensure that there's accuracy, integrity in the expectations that we have here in the documents. That's the whole budget process. I don't share the same view or opinion as the member opposite. I have faith in the Department of Education to carry out the objectives that have been established, to carry out the plan that has been established. I've worked very closely with my staff to ensure that the political direction that we have been given from the citizens of Yukon, the platform that was endorsed by Yukon citizens and the direction that has been provided to me, is carried out in the direction that is provided to the department. I have faith in the goals and objectives of the Department of Education. I have faith in the vision that has been put forward and the work that we've done to collaborate on that with Yukon stakeholders and partners in education.

I'm very pleased and gratified to see the growth and development in our strategic planning process and how that has involved others. We have had a responsibility not just for setting the strategic direction of education, but ensuring that we have worked with Yukoners to ensure that we have the best strategic direction. It hasn't been my job just to sit in my office and dream up the vision, direction, goals and objectives of the department, but indeed to work with others to ensure that we have the best vision, goals, objectives and programming to ensure that we are meeting the needs of Yukoners now and into the future.

That's how we have approached this process. That's how we have approached working with Yukoners. That's how we have approached working with the departments. That is why we have put together the different budgetary allocations that we see before us. The Department of Education is a large department that really addresses lifelong learning needs. It provides opportunities from one end of the territory to the other.

We're very excited about working to ensure that the programs we have identified are implemented efficiently and effectively in order to help Yukoners get the best out of Yukon's education system and to be all that they can be. We'll continue to work with the Department of Highways and Public Works. As I'm sure members realize, there is a responsibility from the Property Management division, which is the contracting arm of the Government of Yukon. We are a client working with PMD.

PMD does the contracting, the negotiations, and the property management of the project with the Department of Education's involvement.

I'm curious about some of the approaches taken by the Liberal Party in Question Period, where they were asking questions of Justice, when it was really more appropriate to ask the question of Highways and Public Works, as it's Highways and Public Works that is actually undertaking the project management of the project.

I've tried to provide some appropriate responses to the member opposite on the F.H. Collins project. It's one that we're very much committed to. Again, we are dealing with estimates, as is really the title of the bill that we're working on right now. This is what is estimated to be expended. We won't know the actuals, the as-builts or the as-dones or the final numbers until the public accounts are duly audited. That's how this process works. We're providing an estimate on the allocation of our budget in order to meet the needs that have been identified. We trust the work that our department staff has put into preparing these budgets and we're committed to working with them to ensure that they are implemented in order to meet the identified needs of Yukoners.

Mr. Fairclough: I don't know how the minister arrived at his speech, but I asked him whether or not the technical wing, the retrofit, the \$10 million to \$12 million saving, is reflected in the \$52 million. That was my question to the minister. He went off in a number of different directions. I'm not sure exactly why the minister has gone there. When we do ask questions in this House, say of the Justice minister, then we ask that minister. If there is a line item in the budget for a project, then we ask the minister. It is a prerogative of government to have any minister stand up and answer a question, and that's what takes place here and it gets increasingly frustrating to ask the minister a question and some other minister answers it. It is frustrating on our part. For example, we would ask the Minister of Environment an environment question and some other minister answers it. That is the frustration level that we have on this side of the House, and perhaps it is a political and well-thought-out decision on the part of the Yukon Party to do that.

Many of the directions that the department takes are politically driven. The minister says he has confidence in the department's numbers. Well, we have confidence too. I know that they have worked hard at this. It is not just the department, but committees have worked to develop and design the school to bring forward the dollar amount, but things change. When it is a politically driven project, like the extended care facility in Watson Lake, you see the dollar amount balloon from \$5 million identified by the Premier, the Finance minister, up to \$25 million. That's a huge increase.

We've seen the same thing with the corrections centre, which is now called a "healing centre" by the minister, and we've seen that balloon out of control. I bring this issue up because it is the Auditor General of Canada's opinion that this Yukon Party government does not have a grip on large capital projects. The minister has read it; every minister has read her comments, and yes, it is her opinion, but I value the opinion of the Auditor General over the opinion of the Premier any day,

because she puts a lot of thought into it, seeks evidence, and brings forward her opinion. That is why I ask about the \$10 million to \$12 million. The \$10 million to \$12 million is the savings rather than replacement of this technical wing of F.H. Collins school. So, I'll give the minister an opportunity to answer that again. He can go off in a different direction, and I'll rebut him again if he does. But I'll give him the opportunity to answer that question again — the \$10 million to \$12 million retrofit, the renovations. That is identified savings for the department. Is that money reflected in the replacement of F.H. Collins school for \$52.5 million?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Technical and vocational training is very important to the high school experience, to developing students who have the skills that are needed in Yukon, to prepare students for skills in the future, to prepare them for occupations in the skilled trades. We recognize the great asset that we have with the skills and trades wing at F.H. Collins school. It is an important part of the facility and it is part of the facility that has a future life ahead of it. That has been considered in this project and has been considered in the decision in order to keep the existing structure.

We have to do significant renovations on it. Those renovation costs are part of the overall budget for the F.H. Collins project. We have a whole budget for the project, so that addresses many of the issues that the member opposite has been asking questions about. As the member would see from the drawings that are posted in the school and posted other places — we intend to utilize that very important structure, to ensure that it is built to meet the ongoing needs and requirements of it, and to be included in the new facility. The renovation work necessary is part of the budget estimate for the total project.

Now, I want to just again emphasize for members opposite that this is a very large and very complex project. It's not one of those things that can be identified, initiated, started and constructed all in one construction season. This is something that the community has been looking for, for a number of years — we have been working on it for a number of years and it will continue for a number of years of construction as well.

Because of the nature of construction of a project like this and of some of the regulatory and other steps to go through — there has to be a YESAA assessment of a project of this nature — we have gone through a partial implementation approval so that the design of the school could proceed and thus confirm the cost estimate that is put forward. If members take a look at the multi-year capital plan and the project listing that is part of the budget documents, they'll see F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement; they'll see the \$2.7-million allocation for this year; they'll see the future years expenditures.

They'll also see the note there that says that the project scope target completion date and target total cost are subject to the implementation phase approval from Management Board. We're still going through the design process now. Once that has been concluded, we will be able to go on to the next steps in this project.

I emphasize this because it further illustrates the very responsible and planned approach that has been taken on this. I look forward to seeing the site improvements or the site work

starting this summer and the project continuing. We have put significant up-front energy into the design of this project, of working with the community. The schematic design on the project has been completed. We are now working with the architect to ensure that the full series of engineered and architectural drawings — the full tender package — is available. That's not done at this stage. Architects and engineers are still doing this work right now.

Members will recognize that we had a budget allocation in last year's budget that we did not fully expend. We had expected to expend all of those resources on the architectural and engineering work. Unfortunately, due to circumstances that I certainly don't have any control over, those drawings were not completed. We are not in a stage of being able to go out to tender on this. There is still architectural and engineering work that needs to conclude so that we can then come to the full implementation approval stage, so that we can then continue on with the project.

We are taking a responsible approach. We are working with all the affected people on this project. Government of Yukon is committed to doing it. Yes, we want to see the trades and technical wing incorporated in a seamless way into the new F.H. Collins structure. That has been part of the design work and is part of the process that we're going through. I trust that answers the member opposite's question.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister did say that the \$10 million to \$12-million savings is reflected in the \$52.5 million. That's what the minister said. If the department was to replace this technical wing, it would have been a larger budget amount by some \$12 million — that's what the minister is saying.

When the tenders are let out in January 2012, it will involve the replacement of F.H. Collins school. Are the renovations to the technical wing part of the tendering process, or is there a separate tendering process that will take place for the renovations of the technical wing?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Once we have the project scope completed and full implementation phase approval on the project, the Department of Education will certainly be working very closely with the Department of Highways and Public Works. At this stage, I can't make a commitment or give the member a reason about how the tender will be contracted — if it will be part of the overall construction contract, if there will be a subcontract for the school, if it will be tendered a different way. I don't have the details about that kind of project management right now.

What I have told the member opposite is that our budget envelope for this project includes the expected allocation for the renovations to the vocational wing. I do not have the nuts and bolts about how the contracts will be awarded, or how they will be bundled, or that type of information. Frankly, that's not the type of information that's pertinent at a political level or is part of the budget process before us.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, it is certainly information the public would like to have. The minister responsible should have that type of information. If the \$10 million to \$12 million that is needed for the renovations, or the savings for the renovations, is going to be separate from the main tender, then of

course the public would like to know. So the minister said that we are waiting for the engineering and architectural work to be completed.

When does he expect it to be completed, and will he then update the public as to any changes to the cost of the replacement of this school? Will he then make that information public?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The detailed design and construction documents are expected in the fall of 2011. Once we have that completed — the design review — it will then go out to tender. We expect that to happen in January of 2012. I trust that answers the member opposite's questions.

Mr. Fairclough: There is one issue that the minister didn't commit to, but is looking at. That is in regard to the heating of the school. Many have identified the possibility of having geothermal heating in F.H. Collins school. The area around F.H. Collins is identified as one of the best places to provide heat through geothermal technology.

Is this part of the \$52.5 million? Right now, I hear the minister saying, "Well, we don't know what it will look like, what the design is, or what the cost is." Is this additional cost? And when will the public know about whether or not this is going to be included, and what the cost is to taxpayers to include this as part of the design of the school?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Factors such as the cost of the heating system or the roofing system or the window glazing or the plumbing are all part of the costs of the project that we have before us. I'm not sure where the member opposite is coming from with the question of: would you come up with a budget that does not include the cost of the facilities and the heating system?

Yes, the cost of the heating system is factored into the budget that we have before us. We are still waiting for a full evaluation on the cost benefits of the variety of different heating systems that we have discussed repeatedly in the Assembly previously. Previously we've discussed the open loop geothermal heating system, the closed loop geothermal heating system, the geothermal heating system, in which the Department of Education building takes the change of temperature out of the water and then pumps the water into the City of Whitehorse system. We've discussed other types of heating systems, whether they are biomass heating systems or types of pellet heating systems. We've gone over these things a number of times.

I'm in the business of educating Yukoners and preparing them for Yukon opportunities. If the member opposite wants to have a debate with someone regarding the merits of a heating system, I encourage him to go and have those discussions with an engineer. I have a responsibility to prepare Yukoners to lead happy, healthy, productive lives in our community.

I have a responsibility toward K to 12 education in ensuring young students in our primary schools are learning and developing. I have a responsibility in our secondary school system to ensure that Yukon students are building upon their skills and are preparing for their future, that they are being made aware of the opportunities that are before them so that they can make wise choices on their future and so they can

grow up and become happy, productive members of our society.

I have a responsibility under Advanced Education to provide additional support for Yukon students so that they can engage in post-secondary education, whether it is here at Yukon College or throughout North America for that matter, to ensure that Yukoners are being trained and prepared for opportunities that we have in the territory so that people are being educated in areas that there is a demand for, and in order to help them grow up and lead happy, productive, contributing, meaningful lives in the territory.

I have a responsibility to work on labour market initiatives to ensure that we are working with our employers and our trainers and our employees in the territory. I have a responsibility in the Department of Immigration to ensure that where our needs can't be met through working with Yukoners — can't be filled — that we work in a responsible manner with the Government of Canada and with others to ensure that we have appropriate immigration strategies and programs.

I don't have a degree in civil engineering. I don't have my apprentice papers in heating design, but I do have faith in the Department of Education staff, with the work that they're doing with Highways and Public Works to ensure that they are designing an appropriate building with appropriate heating systems that meet a variety of objectives. We've established that we want this to be a lead standard building. We have established that we want to maximize energy efficiency. We have also recognized that we do not have an unlimited public purse to address these issues, so we have recognized that we need to work with appropriate people who have the skills and background to advise us on these types of things.

The Department of Highways and Public Works and Department of Education Property Management staff are working with our architects and with our engineers to ensure that we have an appropriate heating system in place in the building that will keep the building warm and will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We want to be able to maximize the use of greener technologies, but we have to ensure that they will efficiently and effectively work.

The department is doing the work right now. We're waiting for the final conclusions and the recommendations on this. They will, of course, form part of the final project scope on this and, from that, we will be able to go forward.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, it's too bad the Minister of Education feels he needs a degree to pass on information from the department to the public on the design of a school. He is the Minister of Education; it is his project and we've seen the minister, the Premier, others on that side of the House talk up a big storm when it comes to building an F.H. Collins school replacement. We've seen that — so why can't the minister just answer the question instead of using an excuse that he doesn't have a degree so he can't answer the question. He must have a degree in teaching, because he did say that he's in the business of educating Yukoners.

I asked a question about geothermal heating. The minister said, "Of course, it's part of the \$52.5 million." We've seen that number climb up just in a matter of one month, from \$50

million to \$52.5 million. The minister says he doesn't know what it looks like, but they threw money in for design of a heating system. He doesn't know what it looks like.

If he looked back at perhaps one project in the Yukon that has geothermal heating, perhaps he would learn from that, and that is the Na Cho Nyäk Dun building that was recently built. It was designed for geothermal heating. It had a big up-front cost to provide this heating system, but the payoff is incredible. In 10 years, you're basically not paying for heat any more.

I'm surprised in today's world we're not doing this more often in big projects such as this. It should always be considered, even though the cost may be a bit higher. The minister says he doesn't know what the design is — it could be biomass, it could be oil, it could be geothermal — "Well, we'll throw a price in there and include it in the total cost of the school."

I don't think that's good enough, because when we see the Yukon Party government design a project like the extended care facility in Watson Lake, we see these projects balloon from \$5 million to \$25 million. That's not right. The Premier called it good, prudent financial management. That's what he called this extended care facility. That's what he called the Whitehorse Correctional Centre replacement — good, prudent financial management — and it ballooned from \$30 million to \$70 million.

I want the minister to take this matter seriously. He doesn't need a degree to present information in this House. If there is an issue with the geothermal heating costing a bit more, I'm sure the minister has that information. He can just ask the department.

I'm sure that there is a breakdown on the cost of the school. We've already seen one of them. The minister and the department provided that information, and that is the \$10 million to \$12-million savings in retrofitting the technical wing of F.H. Collins school. So, could the minister then tell us what the cost would be of putting geothermal heating into F.H. Collins school?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: To be perfectly clear for the member opposite, once the final design is concluded, we will confirm the heating system and the other special features that we intend to put in place in the new building to achieve lead standards and other features of the building.

Mr. Fairclough: That's interesting that the minister said that, because he's basically saying that the cost could go up. It's not built in. He doesn't know what it is. If it is \$10 million, then say it is \$10 million. I'm sure that he has a ballpark estimate of what it could cost for geothermal heating. I think this is where it's going to go.

I think the decision will be made that F.H. Collins school will have geothermal heating put in. That's where I think it's going to go. Maybe I'm wrong, but I believe that's where it's going. The area that F.H. Collins is sitting on is identified as a prime area to tap into geothermal heating. I think that's where it's going.

If we ever had a fall sitting and we had a supplementary budget come forward, perhaps with geothermal being identified as the heat source for F.H. Collins school, we may see an increase in the \$52.5 million. It's hard to identify a decrease at

this point, seeing as how the Yukon Party government has a tremendously hard time getting a handle on big projects in the Yukon Territory. It never seems to come in on budget.

I don't know if we're going to get too much further. Perhaps the Third Party has a different way of asking the question and getting more information on that. What about the department's plan — its plan B — should the school not be ready in September of 2013? What is plan B?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I trust the members opposite have a calendar handy. I'd like them to circle April 11 to 13 on their calendar. That is the upcoming date for the education summit. This is an annual event that the Department of Education has, where, for several years now, we have engaged with a variety of different Yukon communities with our partners in education — with Yukon First Nations to update them on the status of New Horizons; to work on different initiatives that are coming forward, whether those are the issues related to incorporating First Nation culture or language into the curriculum, or whether it is addressing the issue of transitions — that has been an important theme in past conferences.

The theme for the upcoming conference will be focusing on the rural strategy and how we'll go about increasing the outcomes for our rural students.

So, again, I just want the members in the Liberal Party to circle April 11 to 13 on their calendar because, once again, they have an invitation to attend so that they can become more aware, more informed and more educated about what's going on in Yukon's education system. I know I have done this before, and I know they haven't taken me up on the offer in the past, but — you know what? — I'm going to keep trying. I'm going to keep trying here to offer one more time and another briefing. I know the Third Party has taken the Department of Education up on the briefings in the past, and they've had the opportunity to sit down and have discussions on specific topics with officials. I've made an offer to provide a joint briefing with Highways and Public Works and Education on the F.H. Collins school project.

I'll offer that again — because that, I'm sure, would be much more productive than some of the debate items that we're going through right now.

One of the challenges that we have that we are working through diligently with the students and the staff and the school council on the F.H. Collins project was the early recognition that people wanted to see the school replaced on the same campus or the same area. There was talk early on of other locations throughout Whitehorse. There was talk of having a new high school next to the Canada Games Centre. There was talk of other areas, but the conclusion that was reached through consultation with the community was to build the F.H. Collins replacement project on the existing F.H. Collins campus. It was decided that the existing campus with the trades and technical wing, with the Gadzoosdaa Residence, with the relationship to the river and the other opportunities and benefits that it has would be the place to build the school. Immediately it was recognized that the challenge would be how we go through a multi-year construction project — because a project of this

nature is not done in one season — at the same time right next to the existing school facility.

Now, the member opposite is fully aware that the Yukon Party has history with this. The Yukon Party has a successful history with this. It was the Yukon Party that built the school in the member's riding in Carmacks. So he knows that we have experience in working to build a school in a community. We have experience in the Department of Education and with Highways and Public Works of some of the challenges of building a new facility next to an old one.

Yes, we expect that students will be attending F.H. Collins, the current school, while the new one is under construction. We are taking a very responsible approach through the design, the implementation and the construction of this project. It is always interesting to hear the Liberal Party's contrary position. It always appears that they take a contrary position. If we say we are going to go fast, they say we should go slow; if we go slow, they say we should go fast; if we say we should go to the right, well then they want to go to the left. It's very frustrating to deal with an opposition who believes its only responsibility is to oppose.

But, back to the school: we've talked about the construction going on. We recognize the challenges of building the new school next to an existing school where students are attending. The member opposite has asked the question of what will happen if construction delays happen. Well, I would suggest that the students would then, if we reach that situation — that's an "if"; and again, don't judge us on options, don't jump to unrealistic conclusions. Judge us on performance; judge us on decisions. But if the new facility is not constructed on time, the students would continue to use the facility that they have been using while the new school was being constructed. That would seem to me a responsible approach to how to address a situation like this.

It's not part of the plan. We don't plan to fail. We expect to go through this construction project. We expect to see a successful completion by the appropriate contractor.

If there is a construction delay then, of course, we will have to provide the appropriate classroom space for students. If there are delays of one week or two weeks, I would suggest that we will make some fine tuning. Again, we are dealing with a hypothetical situation here, but rest assured that the Department of Education will respond appropriately, should such a situation arise.

Mr. Fairclough: What is wrong with the minister? I think our questions in regard to F.H. Collins are relevant. I think the public would like to know the answers to the questions we have on the floor of this Legislature. It's not negative. It's not opposing the project — not at all. We're holding this government accountable and this minister doesn't like it. That's why we are getting this attitude from the minister. There is nothing wrong with asking about the total cost of the building, the completion dates, whether there are going to be increased costs because of the retrofit of the technical wing.

There is nothing wrong with asking about plan B. There is nothing negative about that. If the minister has all that information, well, maybe the public would like to know some of that

too. The minister says to circle the dates of April 11 to 13. I know he has a big date circled on his calendar. It is probably with red ink all around that. It's April 16. He is not even thinking of April 11 to 13. He is thinking April 16, as this minister feels he is going to be the next Premier, and he is fighting for the position. He laughs at it now, but let's see April 16.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: The Hon. Member for Southern Lakes, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Oh, I think the member opposite is imputing false or unavowed motives there — Standing Order 19(g).

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: The Hon. Member for Copperbelt, on a point of order.

Mr. Mitchell: I would just point out that there has been no motive imputed.

Chair's ruling

Chair: Do you know, sometimes when members make comments, other members perceive them in a different manner from what the member intended. The Chair sometimes also perceives it maybe in a different manner from what the member intended. I would caution the member to refrain from comments that would be interpreted differently from what I assume the member was trying to get across.

Mr. Fairclough: I wish that minister well on April 16. It's a numbers game — is what members like to refer to — on April 16. Let's get off of this one for a minute.

The Yukon Party committed to building a new school in Burwash. The previous minister — that was his position. Again, the Minister of Education was overruled by the Premier and this didn't happen. It wasn't big enough for that member not to go back to the Yukon Party — he still did. But it was a commitment made by the Yukon Party and the previous Education minister, who is smiling about this.

So I want to hear from the present Minister of Education what his views are and what their commitment is in regard to the building of the school in Burwash.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I certainly appreciate the member opposite's vote of confidence. In fact, I'll send over a membership book so that he can buy a membership and indeed cast his vote to demonstrate his confidence. We'll certainly welcome him over. I know the member opposite has a history of changing his political allegiances, so maybe he wants to come on over.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I hear "careful" from the Leader of the Liberal Party and I guess if he's cautioning me against this, maybe I should heed that warning.

Okay. Again, we've had an opportunity to discuss this issue a number of times in the last four years of budget debate.

I think the member has asked me this question in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and here we are in 2011. He's probably also asked me this same question in the supplementary budgets as

well, so that's another series of times. Well, the answer hasn't changed. The answer has been consistent. I certainly encourage the member to take a look at the responses that have been provided in the past.

There has been work done with the Department of Highways and Public Works — or Community Services, excuse me — on some of the facilities previously identified and budgeted for in Burwash Landing, including the youth and elders facilities. I know there are discussions going on between the Government of Yukon and the Kluane First Nation on some changes to that and some different ideas that they have.

I certainly look forward to working with the Kluane First Nation and continuing the discussions with the Department of Education to work on how to best meet the needs of the community and how to meet the needs of the students at the Kluane Lake School, at the same time using the resources the government has at its disposal in a responsible and equitable manner and working with my colleagues to address the other capital building projects that have been identified throughout the territory. So on that, I don't have any other new information to share with the member opposite, but if he would like to ask me the question again, I will probably say the same answer again, too.

Mr. Fairclough: I guess since the last time I asked a question, the Minister of Environment had no influence on this minister whatsoever, even though the commitment was made when he was the minister. So I guess the answer is no. The answer is no from the Yukon Party government — not much explanation beyond that at all.

I would like to ask the minister — I know he says I ask the same questions in regard to the Burwash school since 2007, but I've been asking questions of the minister about the Carmacks school for so many years, it just doesn't end. It just doesn't end; the school is still not complete. The grounds are still not done. The students have been in the school for awhile. I identified some safety issues to the minister. He got a little angry in that it should have been reported through a different process. I couldn't believe it. Rather than taking it seriously and saying it would be dealt with. Simple as that — the minister could have done that and he didn't do it.

Year after year, I've been asking the minister about the Carmacks school and its completion. I know the minister was proud to have cut the ribbon on the school. There are a lot of issues in regard to that that should have been addressed, even the designing of the school — for example, change rooms off the gym. I mean, with schools like that, any gym should have dressing rooms and change rooms off the gym, but it doesn't.

The minister, year after year, has to be forced to answer questions with regard to the Tantalus School and this year is no different. Those grounds are still not completed. They are not designed, for whatever reason the minister would like to put on the floor of this House. I would like to ask the minister this: the Tantalus School was built around the old existing school, and apparently the plans were flipped upside-down — I don't know how that happened, but they were flipped upside-down — and it was built differently than how it was designed. It is interest-

ing that that would even take place, but it did. You can see that just by driving into town and seeing the school.

It was flipped upside-down. I asked the minister whether or not he would work with the community on designing the grounds around the school. He had a perfect opportunity. The old school was to be torn down and is gone. There is lots of space there and lots of opportunity for government to make some good improvements, other than having a Big Toy and some swings and so on.

What work was done to ensure that a track was built or a soccer field or more than what they have at that school in the past? Can the minister answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: In the member opposite's question, he did reference when I became upset in a previous budget discussion and yes, that was worth getting upset over. It was a situation where the member told me that there was a piece of rebar sticking out of the ground, and I couldn't believe that it took until budget debate to have that brought to my attention. If someone sees a piece of rebar sticking out of the ground on a school playground, wouldn't a reasonable person go to the principal and say that there is a piece of rebar sticking out of the ground? Only the Liberal Party would put that in their back pocket and wait until some time, some politically expedient opportunity, to bring it up in budget debate. Now that's responsible, isn't it? This reminds me of the time the Member for Porter Creek South brought up the issue of fighting on school grounds, but I won't go there.

Now, we've discussed the issue of the Big Toy installation with the member opposite. We discussed it just a couple of days ago during the supplementary budget debate. The member opposite knows full well that the equipment was ordered, a contractor was awarded the contract and then the weather set in and prevented the contractor from doing the installation of the playground equipment.

We've been in here since 1:00, so that's almost three hours now. The last time I checked outside, the ground was still frozen.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Leader of the Liberal Party would like to know if I have a degree in meteorology and I would suggest that no, I don't have a degree in meteorology, but I have excellent powers of observation. I'm also reminded that if he has questions regarding climate or climate change, it'd be appropriate to discuss those with the Minister of Environment or, some of these issues being of an international nature, maybe it is more pertinent for international weather patterns to be discussed with our Member of Parliament.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Leader of the Liberal Party is acknowledging that one doesn't get anywhere talking to the Liberal MP, that you're better off talking to the Senator. I'll take that under advisement too. Indeed, one does get more done, doesn't he?

As soon as the weather permits, the contractor is expected to go in and do the installation of the Big Toy in the school yard. Again, we'll continue to work with people in the community and with Community Services on addressing some of the

other recreation needs and priorities that are identified in that community.

Mr. Fairclough: It's interesting what the member said, that the last time he checked the weather outside, it was still frozen. We just debated a supplementary budget in Highways and Public Works, where they're going to do some resurfacing on roads near Carcross in this cold weather before the end of the fiscal year, which is not that many weeks away. Perhaps, at that time, he should have gone outside and said to the Minister of Highways and Public Works that, hey, the ground is still frozen. But that didn't happen. They threw it in their supplementary budget and they're going to do some resurfacing out near Carcross before the end of the fiscal year — otherwise they wouldn't have thrown it in their supplementary budget.

I'll ask the minister this. It's a really simple question and he probably will say yes to this, and we can take a break. The Big Toy — the school grounds work that needs to be done at the Tantalus School, is that the last of the work that we are going to see, or do the minister and the department have other work that is going to take place — other contracts and more work that has to take place for completion of the school grounds around the Tantalus School?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'll be quick on this one. We will always continue to work with our school councils and administrators on site-based improvements. Just look at the number of different initiatives that are going on — or continuing work on sports fields throughout the territory. Also, as we've discussed in previous debates, Community Services also works with communities on some of their recreation needs.

This project is what is identified in the budget, but future discussions will go on for years and decades to come, I'm sure, about developments, enhancements, changes, improvements and renovations to a school. That's the nature of building a building, so we're pleased to see this work concluding. We're also looking forward to working with the community in Carmacks to address their long-term recreation needs, whether through the Department of Education or through the Department of Community Services.

Chair: Order. 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. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*. We will now continue with Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Fairclough: I do have more questions for the minister on this department.

I would like to follow up on a couple from the briefing that we had way back when — from February 14. I raised this in the supplementary budget about the francophone school board and the fact that it has cost government \$750,000 to defend itself. I also wanted to ask a question in regard to that, because this is about languages and aboriginal languages. The question stems from that. We did ask about whether First Nation languages and history programs are being looked at. I believe the minister

said that it could be part of the rural strategy. This has been an ongoing issue. The previous Minister of Education had some commitment to ensure that there is more aboriginal instructors teaching the language in schools. So I'll give the minister free range here to update us and tell us what the Yukon Party's direction is in ensuring there are more and better aboriginal languages being taught in our public schools and also with local history being provided through materials and books and so on.

As I understand it right now, that is not the case. For example, if you are studying aboriginal people, as far as history goes, we are looking at studying the Tlingits in B.C. I'll let the minister answer that question.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm always amazed about the amount of learning the department continues to do and its growth and development and the changes within the department — from a kind of holistic approach. We've gone to work with Yukoners on a number of different initiatives — whether it was through the *Education Act* review that the Liberal Party started, or through education reform that was done in conjunction with the Council of Yukon First Nations, and now the implementation stage of what we've learned from many of those things with New Horizons.

I can synthesize part of what we've learned and by no means is it the only conclusion there. One of the things that we've heard was that people wanted to see academic excellence in a culturally appropriate manner. That is an expectation that I think is shared not only by First Nation people, but also people in the French first language school system, in the mainstream system, the Catholic system, and in some of our different community schools. Identifying what a culturally appropriate standard is is a difficult thing to do and, in some instances, that's done on an individual basis.

That really brings into play the whole issue of the school growth plan — of working with an individual school community, and the broader community, to identify some of the priorities for that community and to identify some of the aspects that are unique to them, whether it's Carcross, or Pelly, or Old Crow, or Hidden Valley, or Selkirk.

We've done a lot of work on the school growth planning and tried to create that sense of excellence in the school, of excellence in a culturally appropriate manner, and ensured that we have an equitable distribution of resources throughout the territory. We've gone into what it means to be equitable in some detail in the past. Does it mean exactly the same? Does it mean the same dollar amount? Does it mean working toward the same outcome? So I won't go into that right now.

We have worked to ensure that we're being responsive to needs in the community.

In answering the member's questions about what we've done to respond to some of the First Nation-specific issues that have been brought forward, what we have built upon and what we have learned through the *Education Act* review, through education reform and indeed New Horizons — indeed the working relationships that have been created since then and the constant work that we do at the annual education summits, for example — we have seen changes within the department with the creation of the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit.

I talked about the budget allocations that have been identified for some of the specific projects that are highlighted in this budget. We have talked about the primary school curriculum for First Nation education. I think it was the grade 4, grade 5 program — I don't have it right at my fingertips — and then the grade 12 program, or the high school program. We have introduced other relevant cultural materials, whether it is the NorthWind books or some of the other programs that I discussed earlier, which were the Carcross-Tagish programs, to provide more support for social and emotional development for school-aged children and to work specifically with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on comprehensive First Nation language and culture programs.

We have discussed many times the work with the Vuntut Gwitchin on a northern strategy program for an experiential land-based education program. We have a number of different programs; many of them are highlighted on the Department of Education's website through the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit. I can provide a list of these if members opposite would like it, but I will try to expedite a bit of the debate today.

We have talked about the support the Government of Yukon has provided through the First Nation language centre at Yukon College. We have talked in the past about how it's important not only to train our First Nation language trainers — or teach a First Nation language speaker how to teach the pedagogical practices — but now we are also working to teach teachers how to speak the language. So there is a tremendous amount of work that goes on at the Native Language Centre at Yukon College. They do a lot of work, too, with other jurisdictions.

There are people from Alaska that come to Yukon either to learn some of the teaching techniques or to learn some of the languages. We're trying to incorporate more of those into Yukon's education system. One of the challenges we face, though, is providing enough or finding enough fluent speakers that would fit the needs in our school system. Again, we're working with the college on providing training for people to fill who type of employment situation. There are a number of different language programs throughout the territory. In 2010-11, the Department of Education is contributing approximately \$2.8 million to provide Yukon First Nation second language programs. That includes curriculum development and teacher training through an agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations that funds the Yukon Native Language Centre staff that I mentioned and salaries of the 28 Yukon First Nation language teachers that we have throughout our system. So that's a bit about what we're doing on the language side of things.

We've provided additional curriculum through the curriculum branch. That has been influenced by the First Nation Education Advisory Committee. That is a strong committee that the Department of Education works with on a very regular basis.

Indeed, we've also provided additional resources to schools to respond to some of their unique cultural needs and have supported cultural inclusion funding to be used for things like the bison hunt that I mentioned earlier. I wish Ms. Hine and Ms. Mackwood and all the students from Elijah Smith

Elementary and all the volunteers on that project a safe and successful trip. I think it's great to see the department staff and YTA folks getting involved in this and I'm very encouraged by that.

There are tremendous resources that we have also put into this type of program, whether bison hunts or reading materials or language materials. Again, the best summary I would suggest is probably in the Department of Education's annual report, which summarizes many of the initiatives taken by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit, and also the information provided on the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit website. I don't think the member opposite needs me to go into detail about all the programming, but if there are any specific budget items or budget items I've indicated through my comments earlier that he's looking for greater clarification on, I'd be pleased to provide that.

Mr. Fairclough: I didn't see that reflected in the annual report that the minister tabled, but this was part of the briefing we had with department personnel. The minister did make reference to the fact that of course we're trying to make improvements to ensure aboriginal languages are being taught in the schools. I might be corrected here by the Minister of Education; he's looking through the annual report right now.

There were two questions I asked. One was about aboriginal languages and history programs. A lot has to do with the material that is being provided to the teachers to be able to teach the history. That still, of course, is an area of interest in the communities and even here in Whitehorse. I know there are challenges there. That's why I asked the question. I know there are challenges there. I know the First Nations feel those challenges also, but there is still a desire among the First Nations to ensure aboriginal languages are taught in school — that we do have the instructors.

The minister did say a couple of things, and I want to follow up with aboriginal languages themselves. First of all, there are a lot of schools here in Whitehorse and, because we're in Southern Tutchone territory, you would expect you would learn the language of the territory that you're in. Every other place — Carmacks, Pelly, Mayo — Northern Tutchone — would have those languages taught in school. I know that they are. I know some of the teachers who teach the language. The First Nations are trying to pick up also by teaching their staff members, providing language classes for their staff.

But the minister did say one thing that was interesting — that the department is teaching teachers the aboriginal languages so that they can be passed on. He says the department will teach teachers the aboriginal languages. I would like the minister to perhaps explain that — if it is a correction or something the department is actually doing. I am very interested to know how that is going and whether or not it is even taking place.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: For greater clarity, First Nation language education is provided by the Yukon Native Language Centre. That is housed at Yukon College, and that is a place where First Nation languages are being taught.

I should also note that it was a little over a year ago — it could be a little longer than this. This is an area of jurisdiction

regarding aboriginal languages that was drawn down by Yukon First Nations, which sees federal dollars going directly to Yukon First Nations. However, the Department of Education, whether it's through Advanced Education and Yukon College or through the Public Schools branch, continues to provide many of these language education programs in Yukon.

The annual report, on page 17, provides a breakdown of the First Nation languages that are taught throughout the community. Yes, the member is correct that, here in Whitehorse, it's predominantly Southern Tutchone that's taught. At F.H. Collins Secondary School, we also have a Gwich'in program, but there are other language programs throughout the territory, whether it's in Beaver Creek with Upper Tanana, Tlingit, Northern Tutchone, Han, Southern Tutchone, Gwich'in or Kaska. That does compound the issue, in that there is a variety of different languages, so we do have to do a lot of work to ensure that information that is produced is relevant to the specific First Nation we are working with and done in the appropriate language.

Some of the additional work that the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit has been doing in conjunction with the First Nation Education Advisory Committee is to work on these curricula and materials. They are working very closely to ensure the validity of the information, the accuracy, the authenticity of the materials developed, and that our working groups are representative of each language group in the territory. The First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit has produced 16 books used as part of a guide in a reading program reflecting the life experiences of Yukon First Nation people. In addition to the programs that we have already talked about in the past, the FNPP unit is currently developing a grade 4 program on Yukon First Nation lands — that is proposed right now — and a grade 12 Yukon First Nation studies integrated resource package and additional early primary readers reflecting Yukon First Nation people.

As well — just additional background on this — 20 Yukon First Nation language programs are offered in 20 Yukon schools. Yukon First Nation language programs are offered for seven of the eight Yukon First Nation language groups. I don't have it at my fingertips, but I think it might be Tagish that isn't offered.

We'll continue to provide support from the department of government and work with Yukon First Nations that wish to engage in developing a local culture and language curriculum and incorporating the information developed from elders. As well, there is a new Yukon First Nation experiential program. Starting this school year, the Department of Education is developing a Yukon First Nation experiential program open to Whitehorse secondary school students in grade 9. The program is an opportunity for the department to enhance opportunities for First Nation students in the secondary school system in Whitehorse to meet the recommendations put forward in the variety of different reports that we have talked about previously today.

The first component, a Whitehorse-based experiential program, is ready to implement for grade 9 students in the spring 2011 semester at Porter Creek Secondary School. The program

will focus on community, heritage, arts, outdoors and skills — coming up with a clever acronym of CHAOS 9. This is just building upon what we have learned in the past with experiential programs, whether it has been the TEST program, or the ACES program, or OPES program, or the experiential programming that we've increased in all Yukon schools. I expect that this will be a good one.

I hope that clears up for the member opposite how First Nation language teacher training is done at the Yukon Native Language Centre and where the native language teacher education is being done, which again is at the Yukon Native Language Centre. We also do a considerable amount of work either through in-services or through teacher orientation with Yukon teachers to make them more aware of Yukon's cultural realities and the context in which we all live.

Mr. Fairclough: I do have a question in regard to history programs. I think that our education system has come a long way in providing aboriginal languages in the schools. I know there is a lot to do still, because we lose a lot of our fluent speakers and teachers of aboriginal languages. They are steadily disappearing. I think that there is much that we can do. I thought that maybe the minister was talking about teaching teachers aboriginal languages right in the school. That just struck an interest with me, because, for example, with some of the First Nations, they make it mandatory that, depending on their employees' schedule, employees take an aboriginal language course, even if just 15 minutes a day. It shows quite an improvement in how people communicate with one another. Perhaps this is something that could be looked at more often in our schools.

The minister talked about several materials being used in the schools for teaching history, but we do not have one textbook that all Yukon schools can use in teaching Yukon aboriginal history and culture. It's mixed; some of them have local materials provided to be geared to that First Nation, but there is not — and the textbook being used is aboriginal history in B.C. Perhaps it is because we use the B.C. curriculum here in the territory. How much progress and how much priority have been put on having a textbook created and used in the classrooms for teaching aboriginal history and programs?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I don't have at my fingertips a list of all the curriculum materials that we use in Yukon's school system. I recognize the member's issue and concern — that having one textbook might appear to be the one thing that would address the issue, but I would encourage him not to get too attached to that — that we need one textbook in order to address all the issues throughout the territory. Just as an example, I've taken several courses that didn't have a textbook. They were compilations of journal articles or compilations of other materials. Indeed, that's what we've been focusing on in order to be responsive to the diversity of needs and the diversity of First Nations throughout the territory. Indeed, with having the multiple number of First Nations that we have, each with its own unique history, each with its own unique cultural processes and practices and indeed with the seven different First Nation languages, it's a challenge to incorporate that all in one.

That's where we have put in the efforts to work on a community basis to identify what is important in that community — because some of the history that is important in Old Crow is going to be different from the history in Carcross. However, I do recognize that there are many important milestones, especially in recent history. I'm thinking of issues like the impact of the gold rush, or the impact of residential school, or the impact of the Alaska Highway; or the impact of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, or the impact of the creation of the Council for Yukon Indians, the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the individual self-government agreements — how these are some of what could be construed as common elements, or at least similar elements or issues that might have affected all Yukon First Nations. It's hard to say that these are generic to all First Nations in the territory.

Of course, some of those issues I just mentioned — for example, the building of the Alaska Highway certainly had a different impact on the people in the Kluane First Nation area, as opposed to the people in Dawson. I'm just starting to think through the whole creation of the Alaska Highway, the use of steamboats and the other elements. It sounds like a great exercise to go through and one that I would certainly be interested in reading and being involved in. Perhaps if our opportunities change in the future, the member opposite and I can sit down and look at co-authoring some of these articles and reflecting upon our own experiences with these issues.

Compiling that kind of information and putting it into our educational materials is an important thing to do. I appreciate that the member opposite has recognized that we have come a long way, because indeed we have come a long way in a fairly short amount of time with the inclusion of the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit and the systematic approach to developing curricula and to collecting those types of materials. That has been important.

I should also touch on the work that the Department of Tourism and Culture has done in collecting our history and our heritage. But I want to come back to the whole issue of being responsive to the more immediate needs demonstrated by people in our community, where we have started to systematically collect the information, where we are working both on a territorial approach with the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit and the First Nation Education Advisory Committee to also working on a First Nation-specific issue, such as the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' comprehensive language and culture program — the bicultural program that was launched there. In some cases, we have to come up with community-specific curriculum or community-specific materials.

I know this has probably been a longer answer than the member opposite was expecting. I just want to emphasize that it's not necessarily important that it be collected in one book. What's important is that it be collected.

In this 21st century, textbooks are something that we used last century. In working on our modern education system and in using the modern pedagogical approaches, we're going to change the medium that we use to convey the information to students. I want to ensure that we get that right in our system and I want to ensure that we are being accurate, authentic and

representative of the local community and make that a greater priority, rather than the coalescence of all of this information into one book. So I hope I've answered the intent of the member opposite as to what we are doing to combine and collect all the information, if I haven't satisfied his request to see it all put into the chapters of one document.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, I'm not totally satisfied with the minister's answer.

I think that right now, for aboriginal history, we use a textbook, but it is B.C. aboriginal history. It is being taught in our schools. We can produce all kinds of different materials, but we can combine all of the First Nations' history and culture into a textbook in the territory and have our students learn about one another's culture and history here in the territory. There is nothing wrong with that, and that is where I was going. The minister in the past has said that this could likely be part of the rural strategy that is taking place now. I am glad that the minister is interested in this matter. I did pick up this textbook and I read through part of it — the one that is being taught in our schools right now — because it was brought to my attention. I had to read through some of it. I didn't go through a lot, but I skimmed through it, and was a bit surprised. I know that this particular student was asking why can't we have our own, and that is why I bring this to the minister's attention again. I know there are a lot of materials out there with recorded history of Yukon aboriginal people.

I know that CYFN has all kinds of documents and studies that have taken place over the years. I know the government could be working with CYFN, with the First Nations, to ensure that this at least is being worked on. I've asked the Education minister in the past whether or not the final agreements will be taught in schools. That's generic to First Nations, but the *Umbrella Final Agreement* is one that I think could be studied and there are plain-speak versions of that.

I'll just leave that for now. The minister has given some good information on this matter. He has shown some interest in regard to having this type of material developed in the territory. Hopefully, down the road we will see this take place. I would be very interested to see it put together and I'm hoping the minister is too.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the comments coming from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and I have to admit, I have never read a textbook where I agreed with everything in it, but maybe that tells more about my personality than about the textbooks that I was reading. What that does do is help to stimulate that critical thinking and I know the student the member opposite — was probably frustrated with what he or she was reading, but having the student go through that kind of compare-and-contrast exercise is an important one of seeing some kind of generic presentation and then comparing and contrasting it to their own situation. I think that's kind of healthy too: them demanding why can't they have their own and then recognizing the pride that that instills and, hopefully, then the drive in the individual to go out and to find that information. By no means is that textbook the only information that is used in these courses, but there are extensive supplemental informa-

tion or materials that are used, including guest speakers or other information.

I did want to add, too, that there is another project that I didn't mention earlier, that the First Nation Programs and Partnerships unit is currently working on with the Council of Yukon First Nations. That is a project that is funded through the northern strategy program and it is called "Revitalizing Culture Through Story and Technology". This is a case where knowledge and experience from elders is being transmitted — I love that word in this context — being shared with youth through the production of an interactive DVD that features Yukon First Nation languages and culture. The project uses the art of storytelling and will create an educational resource responsive to community needs. The DVD will be produced for use in Yukon First Nation language classes. I recognize that this isn't a textbook, but it is an interactive DVD and I have a sneaking suspicion that once we produce something like this in an electronic format, it will go on-line sometime in the future.

The project will also develop a protocol for the collection, ownership and use of traditional knowledge as it relates to the creation of First Nations' teaching resources.

That is an issue that we have faced in other communities where information is produced. It's a question of copyright or ownership of the material, of honouring the originator of the information, and ensuring it continues to be an authentic representation of the situation. This is an issue we're using this project to develop a protocol for. The project will create a model for incorporating Yukon First Nation content and perspectives, and also implement a strategy for preserving Yukon First Nation languages in the most authentic way possible, through a technology that captures the elders' voices. This project is being done with the Yukon First Nation curriculum working group. Additionally, it is budgeted at \$415,000 with in-kind contributions from the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit, the Council of Yukon First Nations and a financial contribution from Northern Strategies of \$345,000.

The project is underway with continuous consultation with the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee and also the Yukon First Nation curriculum working group.

Again, this is a very interesting and worthwhile project, not only from the perspective of working together to collect the materials, but also to create the tool that will be used in Yukon's classrooms for years to come.

When I was speaking about the education of First Nation language speakers, I failed to mention another important program that we have in the territory. It just goes to demonstrate the partnerships that can be built between Yukon College and Outside institutions. We've been working very hard to leverage Yukon College to explore additional educational opportunities, whether they are with Royal Roads University or University of Alberta or University of Northern British Columbia, with the Master of Education program. But another partnership that has been established is with Simon Fraser University. That program is providing a certificate in First Nation language proficiencies.

This is an accelerated and intensive full-time study to complete 30 credits of course work. Language-specific courses

are mentored by fluent speakers from the community, so that's another tool that we have for the development of First Nation language speakers. Also I should add the master and apprentice program that's one-on-one work; the First Voices program that uses a Yukon font and keyboard application — just a sum of the other tools that we continue to use here in the territory to expand on First Nation language teaching, which of course incorporates the cultural aspects that I see as contributing to leading toward academic excellence in a culturally appropriate manner.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that information and no doubt the minister has heard this as an area of concern and interest by his schools and probably has heard it from some students also. I'm looking forward to the outcome of these projects, hopefully in the near future. It will hopefully be sooner than later, because it takes a long time to put things together and have it as part of our teachings in schools.

I'm going to leave this section for now. We had part of the information from the briefing of September 14. We asked about the policy on healthy foods. At that time I don't think the officials thought there was a policy in place. I'm sure, because this was raised, that the department does have an answer to the question now.

Is there a healthy food policy in place for the schools?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, the school nutrition policy is available on the Department of Education's website. To find it, one would go to the Department of Education site, at www.education.gov.yk.ca, follow the links to "policy" and then to "nutrition". There is also another addendum there about home-prepared foods. I think this might lead the member opposite on to the discussion about energy drinks in Yukon schools that we have discussed in the past. In fact, several Yukon school councils, in establishing their own school-driven policies — again, we want to work from a ground-up policy, not a top-down dictum. The school councils have worked with their school administration to look at prohibiting some of the energy drinks, like Monster or Red Bull, from our schools and from sporting events, not things like Gatorade or some of the other sport drinks.

Also, at a recent Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees meeting, I raised the issue with representatives there and urged them to give some attention to the issue and to work with their school administration on developing appropriate school-specific policies.

Mr. Fairclough: Is that the approach the minister will be taking in regard to having a healthy food policy developed — to leave it up to the school? Does the minister not agree that energy drinks are, in fact, dangerous and it has been documented in that manner? Why wouldn't the department ensure that this is included in all the individual schools' healthy food policies?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: One of the criticisms that has frequently been levied against the Department of Education, or even me as minister, is to not take a top-down approach — to not make decisions on high — and to instead involve others in the process.

Forgive me if I have misinterpreted the comments coming from the member opposite on this issue. I have always worked on the philosophy that we should work with our schools to involve them in policy-making, to work with them on making decisions and recommendations specific to their schools. This is another issue, too, where I know the Health minister has also raised it on a national level. There are those two different approaches. One is working with Health Canada to look at this from an overall Canadian safety aspect. If these drinks are as detrimental as the member has made them out to be, then it would seem reasonable that we should have a broader national policy on this one.

Again, we are working on that approach. We are also working to put in place appropriate policies in our schools with our school councils to help them respond to the issues of importance that they see. In addition, we have our nutrition policy in the schools and, as I mentioned, the policy regarding home-prepared foods.

Additionally, we do work with groups like Breakfast for Learning or Food for Learning to ensure that we are encouraging healthy eating habits. I know one of the first steps that I was involved with as minister was working to see an increase — about a doubling — of the funding for that organization that is provided from Health and Social Services, because of the impact that they have in our school system.

Additionally, there is also coursework through our health programs about making healthy lifestyle choices. I've talked about the Drop the Pop campaign that we have established in Yukon schools as well. I could go through the whole other list of programs that we have in place on this one. Certainly, from a policy perspective, it has been my approach to work with Yukoners, to work with Yukon First Nations, to work with the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, and some of our advisors and to work with the Yukon Teachers Association.

One only have to take a look at some of the recent programs that we've put in place, whether it's the staffing advisory group that was formed, where it wasn't a top-down approach. There is another example of working with the Yukon Teachers' Association, working with the school administrators through the Yukon Association of School Administrators, working with the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees, and inviting schools that aren't involved with the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees to be part of that and others to help drive the policy development of government. On that one, we also had one school that felt that their voice wasn't heard appropriately enough in the process when it was first established, so we have invited them to the table to look at it, as we committed to reassessing it. So we've got that perspective in there.

Another example — after British Columbia changed their requirements about high school examinations, it wasn't the situation of making a dictum from one of the offices upstairs. Instead, I again sought out the advice of our high school school councils, and the advice of others related to education, so that we were ensuring that we were making informed and responsive decisions that recognized the unique Yukon context that

we have, and made full and informed decisions that were in the best interests of Yukon students. We have demonstrated this in other areas, whether it is the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit or whether it was the work that was done on the facilities use. This government, and especially the Department of Education, has sought out the input and guidance of our stakeholders and our partners in education. I will continue to work on that philosophy and on that approach.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, I applaud those individual schools that have made it a policy to not have energy drinks in their school. I applaud them. The minister is relying on Health Canada to say that in fact energy drinks could be unsafe for students. I don't know what the minister is waiting for on this. I know they didn't agree with the motion put forward here on the floor, but it is a serious matter. Parents have been bringing this issue to us on this side of the House. I'm sure they're bringing it to the minister's attention. When it comes to the health and safety of students, that should be a priority. And if it was a policy that was implemented through the department for all schools, then it's a good thing. The minister calls that a top-down approach. Health and safety issues — what information did the minister gather to, I guess, announce and solidify his position on energy drinks here and not have a policy go through? Where did he get his information from? Was he seeking advice through Health Canada? Did he look at any of the data that was collected on energy drinks?

Why is the minister so reluctant to bring forward a policy like this and would rather have individual schools create their own?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: As far as I know, all Yukon schools have banned or don't sell these drinks in their schools. We certainly don't support or encourage their consumption by our sports teams. We try to educate students so that they will make healthy, prudent lifestyle choices in the future.

We also work very closely with parents on these issues to ensure that — well, the establishment of a healthy foods policy, so then there is that involvement. I committed previously and during that motion debate too, as the Minister of Health did — there were discussions there about raising this on a national level. I raised it with school councils, the department looked into it, it's not something that we sell in our schools, we don't support this, and in our curriculum we try to discourage people from making poor lifestyle choices in the future. There are other activities that we want to discourage our children and our youth from doing. We want to discourage them from substance abuse, from the use of illegal drugs, from the abuse of alcohol and the abuse of other issues or other substances. We have a wide variety of programs that we put in place on those areas to discourage our youth from making poor life choices.

We want to make them aware of the dangers of things like the date-rape drugs. I want to make the point, too, that we can't put something in place to prohibit students from making all bad choices. Instead, what we want to do is provide education so that when individuals make their own decisions, they make appropriate ones. I mean, we put in place things like the substance misuse prevention curriculum and that is from kindergarten to grade 10. A second-step program is used to reduce

bullying, drug and alcohol abuse. We put in place assets like the Real Game, which is a game that reflects real-life decisions, including the use of alcohol and other drugs. I don't know if a portion of that game deals with the consumption of energy drinks.

We have in place a program to educate students about the challenges of FASD, and that is the Baby Think it Over program, which involves students caring for a computerized doll that may exhibit characteristics of FASD. We have the PARTY program, where high school students are taken to the hospital to observe and participate in the stark reality of the effects of alcohol.

We have the DARE program — that's the drug abuse resistance program — a drug and alcohol program sponsored by the RCMP. It's delivered to grade 5 students and given by the RCMP members. I know I've been to their graduations. The Minister of Justice has been to their graduation — it's about helping to educate our students on making smart decisions in the future.

There are drug and alcohol resources, which include videos and other information, as well as the information that comes out from the health promotions branch of the Department of Health and Social Services. The point I'm trying to make is that the Department of Education provides a broad range and a large number of school-based education and prevention programs aimed at encouraging our kids to make smart decisions in their lives. We recognize that kids are only in school for five and a half to six hours a day, that in the 19 hours that they're not in school, they're also living their lives. We want them to make wise decisions then, and not just when they're in school.

Mr. Fairclough: This is a pretty important issue. We brought it to the government's attention. Parents have been bringing it to our attention and to government's attention that there's in fact a health and safety issue in regard to energy drinks. Part of what we asked the government to do is consider banning the sale of energy drinks to students through any stores and outlets. The minister said he doesn't know what he can do to prevent this from happening.

Well, we made a suggestion to the government to make these energy drinks illegal to buy unless you're over the age of 18, and that wasn't followed through. It's the same with cigarettes and it's a health issue. I think that perhaps more work needs to be done. I'm glad to hear that the minister's tuned in to this, more so than I heard him in the motion debate in regard to energy drinks.

The minister did say that they're doing a number of things in regard to the healthy food policy in schools and, of course, we applaud that. With it, goes the going green policy. One of the things we have also constantly said is that physical education, of course, should be a big part of the students' daily routine. There is nothing like going out on a bison hunt. Officials and teachers who go out on this hunt — I wish them much luck, first of all, because it's not always successful, but it would be an experience for them, and for the students and the school in general. I've never gone on a bison hunt. I really have no desire to do it. I've been asked many times to go out on a

bison hunt. I go out hunting myself for moose and caribou to fill my deepfreeze and to eat, but I understand the excitement that students have in regard to the bison hunt.

Not all schools go through this every year. I've had students ask me about it? "How come our school is not going out on a bison hunt?" They would love to do it. I know a lot of it is partly to do with the administration. One school I'm probably most familiar with is the Tantalus School in Carmacks. Those students go out and do a number of different things, which I think is very healthy. They go ice fishing, for example, together with the principal and the teachers. I haven't heard many complaints about that at all, except when can they do it again. I know that part of this outdoor event is not just the enjoyment of going ice fishing and catching a fish, but they learn how to do things. They're being taught a lot of oral lessons and safety issues that come with it. Also, part of the whole thing is how they go about doing these events and what goes along with it, including things like making different types of fires.

I would like to ask the minister that question: how often do all the schools, I guess, participate in these bison hunts? I would like the minister to think about that. One school that came to mind was Jack Hulland Elementary School. Some of the students have expressed an interest in that.

I know it's almost 5:30 p.m., Mr. Chair, so I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor 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?

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 24, *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12*, and directed me to report progress.

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 stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.