

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 28, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Just before we start, I'd just like to let members know that sometimes when the microphones don't seem to work it's because you're pushing your paperwork and your books up and hitting the mute button, so the first action if your microphone doesn't seem to come on is to just slide the books back off the mute button and that might help correct it. It's not always the problem, but we're looking for possible problems there.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Sports Day in Canada

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today to pay tribute to sport and its importance to our territory and our country and to call on all Yukoners to participate in the 4th annual Sports Day in Canada. Sports Day in Canada is presented by ParticipACTION, CBC and True Sport in cooperation with RBC. It will be held Saturday, November 30 in communities from coast to coast to coast. This national celebration of sport from grassroots to high performance levels is an opportunity for all Canadians to celebrate the power of sport, build community and national spirit and facilitate healthy, active living.

RBC Sports Day in Canada will be broadcast on CBC on November 30, but events for Sports Day in Canada are taking place all week long. Tomorrow, November 29, is National Jersey Day. I encourage all Yukoners to show their support for sport by wearing a jersey, team or club uniform to work, school or play.

Canadians believe in the benefits of sport. We believe that it can help build self-esteem and social skills and can help strengthen communities and foster a better and stronger society. Sport inspires us all. Every day in every province and territory across Canada, millions of people come together through sport. Yet fewer and fewer people are participating in sport as a percentage of the population. In fact, participation in sport by those 15 and older has dropped from 45 percent in 1992 to just 26 percent in 2010. Only half of adult Canadians are as active as they should be for the health benefits and a quarter of children are overweight or obese.

Here in Yukon we're working to change these statistics. Our active living strategy and many after-school programs

demonstrate our commitment to a Yukon that is healthy, vibrant and sustainable.

Earlier this week, I had the privilege of attending the official opening of Yukon's first sport school program at F.H. Collins Secondary. This is a very exciting new option for young athletes. Our government, along with Sport Yukon, launched this pilot project for students who would like to focus on physical development and academics.

Yukon's own Olympic athlete, weightlifter Jeane Lassen, who is in the gallery here today, has been named the program's physical literacy coordinator. She'll be working with students at the sport school as well making physical literacy awareness in education available to schools throughout Yukon.

I'd also like to acknowledge the work being done by the physical literacy program in the Yukon and encourage Yukoners to go on to their Facebook page and find out information about how to participate personally in the events of this week leading up Sports Day in Canada as well as taking personal steps to meet the challenge of being higher, faster, stronger that's promoted through Sports Day in Canada.

As I noted, the theme for Sports Day in Canada is "Higher, Faster, Stronger", and schools and organizations in every community are hosting sporting events and activities, open houses and tryout days that showcase sports at all levels.

I encourage everyone to join in this Saturday and participate this week. I would also like to ask members to join me in welcoming to the gallery former Olympic weightlifter, Jeane Lassen, Olympic cyclist Zach Bell, and Britta Andreas — I hope I pronounced your name correctly — coordinator in Canada for community outreach and, I believe, the kids recreation fund as well.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon College

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House on behalf of the Yukon government to pay tribute to Yukon College as it celebrates its 50th year as a post-secondary education institution.

Since its inception in 1963 as the Whitehorse Vocational Training School, Yukon College has very much provided Yukoners with quality northern education. It has graduated from offering a small number of programs to offering bachelor's degrees, diplomas and certificates as well as teaching university transfer courses that are accepted and welcomed at universities within the B.C. and Alberta systems and well beyond.

Yukon College continues to offer relevant training, engaging the interest and meeting the educational needs of Yukoners today just as it did some 50 years ago. Yukon College has been and will continue to be a great source of pride for education in the Yukon and among us as Yukoners. The number of people impacted by the wide-ranging and comprehensive training offerings is great and encompasses a diverse range of people from recent high school graduates preparing for university outside of the territory, to Yukoners

undertaking one of the many certificate and diploma programs, to locals training for employment in one of the many trades offered. Yukon College has always appealed to a very wide audience.

The 2012-13 school year had over 6,000 students enrolled at Yukon College and over 150 certificates, diplomas and degrees were granted this year. Graduates who understand Yukon issues, having been educated within a northern context, are valuable to Yukon employers, making Yukon College grads very desirable to employers.

For so many Yukoners, Yukon College has helped to shape their education, their employment and further their interests and options. For the past 50 years there have been countless accomplishments by Yukon College, many of which are referenced in the college's historical vault and illustrate the community and individual impact of Yukon College on Yukoners since its very inception.

Training for Yukon health workers, for example, was first established at Whitehorse Vocational Training School and continues today at Yukon College. Since the mid-1960s hundreds of graduates from the certified nursing assistant, practical nurse, home support worker and home and community care programs have cared for many Yukon people in our hospitals, seniors, elders and continuing care facilities.

In the early 1970s, Ted Harrison was the art instructor at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre. Doris McLean was working at Skookum Jim Friendship Centre and together they organized a carving project for First Nation students to produce the beautiful totem pole that is still on display at Rotary Peace Park for all to enjoy.

The Northern Research Centre was established at the new Yukon College campus in the 1990s to support research by the north, for the north, in the north. Programs administered by the Yukon Research Centre today include cutting-edge research and technological innovations that capitalize on issues of importance to northerners as we know it today: mine reclamation, cold climate construction, climate change impacts and community health and economic diversification.

As I alluded to yesterday during our motion debate in support of Yukon College and its continued growth, from a personal perspective, my entire family has also been touched by Yukon College in some form or way.

My mother — I'm very proud to report — received her business administration certificate, albeit some years ago — but was very proud to do so because it has served her so very well as she carries on her education and her profession on a whole variety of levels. Likewise, my father, who was a lifelong building contractor, never received any formal training. He went back to school and received his journey level in carpentry from Yukon College after some 35 years of being in the industry. Soon thereafter, my brother also took to the profession and earned his journey level in carpentry, also with the assistance of Yukon College.

I have also subscribed to many courses over the years at Yukon College. I have always been impressed by the professionalism delivered, by the calibre of teachers and

instructors and by the variety of courses and programs being offered by Yukon College over the years.

As I mentioned yesterday, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention my son, who also attended Yukon College — preschool, I should add. I wanted to put in that additional say though, for the preschool and the quality child care centre at Yukon College and how it has set the stage for his lifelong learning as he approaches grade four.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon College has grown and evolved immensely since 1963 and I have very strong faith that it will continue to do so — today and well into the future. I'd like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the many educators who support staff and the volunteers over the past 50 years and who have made this notable anniversary a possibility and a success. To all of Yukon College's former students, I recognize their achievements — academic and otherwise — who have helped to bring recognition to Yukon College in such a positive way and have helped bring the territory to what it is today.

I was also asked by my colleague the MLA for Porter Creek North and the Minister of Health and Social Services to put in a special plug on his behalf in recognition of his thanks. As we're very much aware, this particular member served some 29 years with the Yukon College and is very much a true champion of Yukon College and its continued work.

I encourage everyone to attend Yukon College's 50th anniversary party and alumni reunion tomorrow night, whether you've attended Yukon College or not. Everyone is welcome to attend and acknowledge the value of this very important educational institution to Yukon. I was reminded that certainly to come in 1960s, but it could be in 1970s or 1980s, attire — whatever you choose. Just come one and come all and join in the festivities tomorrow night at seven o'clock.

Last but not least, I know we're not allowed to present props in this Assembly, but I did want to take a couple of moments just to extend thanks to Yukon College. They have actually gifted to each of us as MLAs of this Assembly one of these — sorry about the prop — in my opinion, great toques in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Yukon College. Thank you to Yukon College for that gift and, again, for your contributions.

I would like to also extend a warm welcome to a number of individuals who have continued to contribute to the Yukon College — what it is today — who have joined us here in the gallery. Starting with Dr. Karen Barnes, President; Dr. Deb Bartlette, vice-president of academic and student services; Dr. Chris Hawkins, Vice-president Research and Community Engagement, Colleen Wirth, the Director of Student Infrastructure Support; Jacqueline Bedard, Director, College Relations; Joanne Lewis, Executive Director for the Northern Institute of Social Justice; Kathryn dePrinse, Department Head, Center for Teaching and Learning; Kyla Piper, Executive Assistant, President's Office; Fabiana Naves, Administrative Assistant, President's Office; and Clint Sawicki, Director, Office of Research Services. I would ask

all members to join with me in extending a warm welcome to all these individuals and to thank them for their contributions.

Applause

Ms. Moorcroft: It is a great pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Yukon College. Congratulations.

I want to begin by expressing our thanks to all of the faculty and staff at Yukon College Ayamdigut Campus and at community campuses in Faro, Teslin, Ross River, Kwanlin Dun, Dawson City, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Haines Junction, Carcross, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Old Crow and Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I also want to recognize all the past, present and future students and the contributions they make to their academic environment and in their communities. Graduates of Yukon College can be found here in this Legislature and in diverse workplaces throughout the Yukon.

As I said in motion debate yesterday, Yukon College does indeed touch the lives of us all. A brief tribute will not allow time to speak about the many contributions Yukon College has made over the last 50 years, so I would like to touch on a few highlights.

Yukon College has appealed to many people since its humble beginnings in 1963 as the Whitehorse Vocational Training School — later Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre — when the range of programs included food services, drafting, fine arts, trades, practical nursing and hairdressing. The range of programs has expanded over the years to include bachelor and graduate degrees in education, social work, public administration, and environmental and conservation sciences in partnership with the University of Regina, University of Northern British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Alaska Southeast and University of Alberta.

The Yukon Native Teacher Education Program was initiated to address some of the challenges that continue to face us today with the low graduation rates of First Nation students. Educating First Nation students to be classroom teachers was a dream of the late Chief Elijah Smith and other First Nation leaders, shared by the Yukon government of the day. As a result of successful decades of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program, there are many First Nation teachers in Yukon schools who are positive role models for aboriginal and non-aboriginal students alike.

A significant milestone for Yukon College was moving to the Yukon Place complex with the Yukon Arts Centre and Yukon Archives. Tagish elder Angela Sidney gave the Tlingit name “Ayamdigut” — which means “she got up and went” — to the Whitehorse campus. At the opening ceremony and potlatch in October 1988, Mrs. Sidney described how her father’s people had built a killer whale house on the banks of a river and then had to move it when they discovered that the house was too close to the riverbank.

As we were planning to move to the new college, I was fortunate to be part of an employee advisory committee involved in the planning of the new Ayamdigut Campus. On behalf of working parents and student parents, we were

adamant that a childcare centre was an essential feature of a successful post-secondary education institution designed for the Yukon College community. As the Minister of Education has just mentioned, the childcare centre is still a success. I certainly felt fortunate to have a daycare centre on-site.

So Yukon College is indeed a cradle-to-grave learning experience with its on-site childcare centre, as well as early childhood development program, liberal arts, mineral resources, circumpolar studies, business administration, multi-media communications, nursing, multiple trade programs, professional and personal development and programs for seniors. Just yesterday I was talking to a senior who was looking forward to celebrating the achievement of her 65th birthday by planning to take advantage of the free tuition for seniors.

The Yukon Research Centre brings local, national and international students here to do research. It’s a great feature and it’s partnering with many agencies in the study of climate change in the Yukon and supporting research into the social sciences, as well as permafrost, in many other areas.

The Northern Institute for Social Justice is another addition to the mix of programs at Yukon College. Yukon College is now privileged to have a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada research chair in mine life cycles. This is quite a feat for a small northern college. Again, congratulations.

The research chair, Dr. Amelie Janin, will focus on two research streams. The first will discharge water treatment, the bioremediation project and processing effluent treatment buildup project and the second is on soils reclamation and land revegetation in northern conditions. Beginning in 2012, under the leadership of Dr. Karen Barnes and the Yukon College Board of Governors, Yukon College held a broad-based community consultation to develop a vision for the next few years. Public meetings were held in Whitehorse and in every community.

Yukoners do this work well. After much input, the college released a focused three-year strategic plan for 2013 to 2016 with directions and goals to: design a unique and post-secondary educational model; collaborate with First Nations to strengthen relationships and enhance capacity; engage Yukon communities to enhance their educational opportunities; ensure quality to attract and retain students; and expand northern research and innovation opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have time to speak about all of the full-time programs and continuing education and training opportunities that are available from Yukon College for the Yukon public. Master gardeners, industry training, poetry and fiction writing, wilderness first aid — there is something for everyone at Yukon College and its 13 community campuses, which are such an important feature of its past and present work.

I will close by saying thank you and well done and wishing the entire Yukon College community all the very best over the next 50 years as all the people involved with the college continue to offer stellar public service.

I, too, would like to recognize the many guests from Yukon College who are here in the gallery today. We look forward to the celebration tomorrow night.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to thank my colleagues for their very thorough tributes. There's not much more really to say, but it's definitely worth standing up and showing support from the Liberal Party for Yukon College and to acknowledge them on their 50th anniversary.

It has grown quite considerably from its humble beginnings in 1963 with the opening of the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre on the banks of the Yukon River to where it is today — it's amazing, the progress.

It has been a year of celebration and it culminates this Friday night, November 29 with the 50th anniversary birthday bash and the student reunion. Yesterday in this chamber we debated the motion and there was a salute to the college and a trip down memory lane from a lot of the different members as members shared stories of the role that Yukon College has played in their lives and in shaping the history of our territory.

An investment in education, as I said yesterday, has to be one of the most important things that we can do. It's definitely one of the most important things that we can talk about in this Legislative Assembly. There are no limits to education's ability to improve our life circumstances. By improving educational opportunities for Yukoners, we improve the overall economy and the overall well-being of this amazing territory.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years, Yukon College has the potential to lead the nation in several fields — absolutely. It will need more government support to do so. The college has unparalleled access to a wealth of knowledge on First Nation self-government. They are at the forefront for climate change adaptation innovation and, finally, I think we have a unique opportunity to embrace a management of mines throughout that mine life cycle.

As Yukon College celebrates 50 years of academia, I urge anyone in the educational community at large — parents, teachers, students, all sectors of our territory that benefit — to come and to celebrate higher education and an enriched life of continual education with the staff at the Yukon College tomorrow night at the campus.

Just on a personal note, it would be easier for me to list in Dawson the people who have not taken courses at Yukon College. Anywhere you go in the community, its presence is known. Personally, I've taken in students for their practicum for YNTEP. I've taken courses myself and I couldn't be prouder of the academic fraternity up in the Dawson campus as well, so many thanks to the Yukon College.

Speaker: I would like to thank Yukon College as well, because over 13 years ago I was taking a true beginner course and I met my wife there. I don't know how much French I learned though.

Introduction of visitors, please.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'd like everyone in the Legislature to welcome a former colleague of mine and the Member for Riverdale South, the former mayor of Whitehorse, Bev Buckway. Welcome to the Legislature.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I too would like to extend a great welcome to Renate Schmidt, who is the teacher for the grade 10-11 social studies class that has joined us here today in the gallery for Question Period and the proceedings of today's Assembly. Welcome.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I'd like to rise and ask everybody to help me in introducing Mr. Devin Bailey. He's an EMS practitioner, and a long-time Yukoner and previous Dawsonite as well, so thank you Devin for coming in.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 16 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 16 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes on November 27, 2013. The petition meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 16 read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation. Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 16 shall be provided on or before Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to provide funding to Yukon College to support implementation of the directions and goals in their community-based 2013-16 strategic plan which includes the following actions:

(1) design a unique post-secondary education model;

(2) collaborate with First Nations to strengthen relationships and enhance capacity;

(3) engage Yukon communities to enhance their educational opportunities;

(4) ensure quality to attract and retain students; and

(5) expand northern research and innovation opportunities.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, we know the Yukon Party has already spent nearly \$6 million on the F.H. Collins reconstruction. What do we have to show for this? Geothermal heating was added to the project, then cancelled, then in again, then out, and now maybe. There was the temporary gym fiasco. Let's build over here. No, let's build over there. Where are we going to dig?

Now we have a redesign of the whole project. Oops — a substantial new addendum has been added.

As the Minister of Highways and Public Works noted, it is not easy building a school. Clearly it is not easy for the Yukon Party.

How can the public have any confidence in this government's ability to provide direction and build the F.H. Collins school?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question, but I kind of think that the member is losing the forest through the trees.

I spoke about this yesterday. Forty percent of the Yukon government budget is expended through contracts. Yukon government issued over 65,000 annually and lots of Yukoners are working.

Professionals working in the department are flexible and responsive to the input of the local contracting community. The member opposite mentioned the addenda — addenda to contracts, including the changing of timelines, are not uncommon. Such changes simply reflect that the government's priority is to ensure that projects are done well in a fiscally responsible manner, even if that requires some flexibility.

Mr. Tredger: Ten years and waiting — the school we are buying off the shelf from Alberta is 2,500 square metres smaller than the previously tendered design. There are increasing concerns that Yukon Party's latest redesign of the latest redesign of F.H. Collins will be inadequate to meet the curriculum and programming needs of students at F.H. Collins.

The Alberta school, Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School, is occupied by 430 students. Current enrollment at F.H. Collins is over 700 students and the number is growing. That is a difference of almost 300 students. Will this minister tell this House how a school that is modeled for 430 students will meet the needs of over 700 Yukon students and meet the education requirements of the 21st century?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have to correct the record again and again and again for the members opposite. For one thing, the school that the member opposite refers to actually has a capacity of 750 students. The Mother Margaret Mary school that the member opposite made reference to — and which I had the opportunity to take a tour of with students and members of the student population, school council and administration earlier this fall — is for a capacity of 750 people.

As I said the other day, the new F.H. Collins is going to provide a very positive learning environment that meets current as well as long-term needs of the school population, a school population that currently has a population at F.H. Collins of 640-plus students. It will indeed meet the needs of today as well as the future. It is based on a design that has been successfully built and it has also been modified to reflect the specific needs identified by Yukoners over the past five years.

We look forward to getting on with building the school and having a school that certainly meets the 21st century learning needs and student population.

Mr. Tredger: The capacity that the minister is alluding to is based on every classroom filled to capacity, with every space — every nook and cranny — being occupied. We are now talking students — not sardines. There is a reason Mother Margaret Mary school has 430 students.

Let me use one example to show why it is not easy for the Yukon Party government to build a school. The newly proposed and smaller gym, Mr. Speaker, can be divided into two spaces to accommodate two classes. Yet F.H. Collins has three gym classes at a time with a total of 75 students. Is the third class supposed to walk around the block? This is one more example of the Yukon Party's mismanagement and bad planning. Will the minister explain to the House how a smaller gym that is capable of holding two classes can be expanded to hold three?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We know what the answer to this question is. The members on the opposite side of this House would have just built the school that was initially designed — regardless of the fact that it was almost \$10-million overbudget before we even turned a spade, Mr. Speaker — not sure what the total amount the school would have been overbudget.

We took a school design that was given to us by the Government of Alberta and made modifications. We used input from the building committee and through consultations with school administration, the teachers, tours — as the Minister of Education spoke about. The end result is that we will create a beautiful school at F.H. Collins that will be the pride of all of those students, their parents and the administration of that school.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Tredger: There is a difference between being fiscally responsible and building on the cheap. Schools are an investment in our children and the future.

Last spring, the Yukon Party government was weeks away from tearing down the F.H. Collins gym. Only through the last-minute efforts of students, parents, teachers and the public did the Yukon Party relent. Learning from his mistakes, the previous minister committed to keeping the community, students, parents and teachers informed and to solicit their hands-on experience and knowledge to make a better school.

Why has the current Minister of Education not met directly with the community, students, parents and teachers to hear their concerns and gather input?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the past five years, the Yukon government has actually been having discussions with the community, starting with the school administration, with the school community, the school council, students and other members of the public. As the member opposite is very much aware, the most important features from the building advisory committee, developed through consultations, have actually been adapted to this particular design. Examples of this include flexible learning spaces, of which I might add there are actually seven additional learning spaces than in the original F.H. Collins first initial concept. It also includes a school-wide wireless network, a fitness studio, improved First Nation program areas, and an industrial kitchen and food service area which also develops into a multipurpose common area.

As I mentioned, there have been a number of school tours to the actual facility in Edmonton and, again, we look forward to implementing the design that has been reflected to meet the needs of our student learners of today, as well as into the future, and look forward to opening up this great school.

Mr. Tredger: The building advisory committee has not met for over two years. Last January, a memo went out to schools informing teachers that they were not allowed to speak out on issues relating to education, like the Vanier same-sex policy and the construction plans for F.H. Collins. Instead of seeking their valuable input, teachers were essentially muzzled to protect the government from further embarrassment. The minister speaks of valuing all opinions, including that of teachers, but teachers still have not received notification that the policy is not in place.

Will the minister publicly ensure that teachers know their jobs and careers will not be threatened if they voice their opinions, and will she ask staff and teachers for their public input on the space needs at the redesigned F.H. Collins school?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, just to correct the record, this member and members opposite have continued to put a number of interesting facts on the table, starting with — I believe that earlier this year, there was a clip on the news media saying that it actually wasn't going to go out to tender until next year. It actually is out for tender right now. Starting with number two — the second error in fact — which is, in fact, this school will be built for a capacity of up to 750 students, unlike the 430 student mark that the member opposite used. The member opposite also put on the floor about dimensions of the gymnasium going forward.

We value the input of all of our student population — of our school community — and have in fact reflected the design to meet the needs of our student learners today, but also well into the future.

I just made reference to a number of things, including additional learning spaces — seven new spaces — that are actually in addition to the original design. We have enhanced the science facilities. We have the increased wireless network capacity. We have two First Nation language labs and an elders lounge. We have three community education liaison coordinator offices. Of course I have utmost confidence —

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Tredger: Despite the previous minister's promises and current minister's round-about commitments, parents, teachers, students and the community have been effectively sidelined in the design process. There has been no serious public engagement in the redesign of F.H. Collins. Instead, we have a government that quietly went about sourcing a million-dollar contract to an Alberta company for an Alberta school that clearly doesn't meet the programming needs of F.H. Collins school. This is an investment in our children and our future.

Will the minister commit to hosting a public forum with staff, teachers, parents, students and the community for her to explain her position and to hear their concerns and possible solutions?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we continue to hear from the members opposite is really — what I hear in the community — are questions that are implying that we aren't doing things the right way. What I mean is, when the Leader of the NDP goes on the radio and says, "Oh, this school's only built for 450 students. The tender's not going to go out until 2014."

What else did we hear? "Oh, you're not going to build the school to the building code" — like we're not going to meet the building codes — "and you're not going to have enough classrooms."

What we hear, day in and day out, are accusations that are based in no facts and really, quite honestly, the Opposition needs to do is their homework before they come to Question Period so that they can ask some questions that have relevance.

Question re: Economic growth

Mr. Silver: The Yukon Party government has a little bit of a problem. Our economy is heading in the wrong direction and it has done very little to prepare for it. This year, we are 11th out of 13 places in Canada in terms of economic growth. A spokesperson for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently said there is a drop in optimism that they have found in their membership in the Whitehorse area over the past year.

In this year's budget speech, the Premier said, "Our objective has been and continues to be to develop an economy that is less dependent upon government spending and more reliant on the private sector." Can the Minister of Economic Development confirm that, in the last 12 months, private

sector employment was down by 700 jobs, or 5.7 percent, from October of 2012?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What I can confirm is that both the economic forecast put forward by the Government of Yukon, as well as the economic forecast put forward by the Conference Board of Canada, project Yukon's economy to grow this year for the 10th consecutive year in a row.

This is in a climate of a fairly down economy, with weak mineral prices and a soft investment climate for mining companies. For that climate to still produce growth is a testament to the resilience of the economy here in the Yukon. We've continued to make strategic investments throughout the territory to grow our economy and to diversify it.

What is particularly disappointing is when we see the members opposite — and particularly the Liberal Party — cheer against those projects and root against economic projects in this territory because they see a political gain in it.

I think what we will continue to do is focus on growing the private sector in this territory, allowing the development of a healthy mining industry, diversifying through investing in tourism and the knowledge sector and creating opportunities for Yukoners right here at home.

Mr. Silver: I won't apologize for bringing forth the private sector's concerns. I think the minister is missing the point. For his information, the private sector employment is down 700 jobs or 5.7 percent from October of last year. At the same time, public sector employment has increased by 400 or 5.5 percent. The Premier is failing in his objective to be more reliant on the private sector. Over the last 12 months, we are in fact heading in the opposite direction. Private sector jobs are down almost six percent and public sector ones are up more than five percent. The stat just doesn't back up the government's story that our private sector is growing.

Mr. Speaker, this government coasted for many years on massive upswings in mineral prices. During that time, the Yukon Party refused to take action to diversify our economy to deal with the slowdown that we knew would eventually happen and there is no plan B. Why does the Premier keep saying the private sector is growing when in fact it is shrinking?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What we know from the Liberal Party, and in particular the Leader of the Liberal Party, is that they are vastly out of touch with the economy in this territory. We have heard a number of statements by him in this House and outside of the House that are widely divergent from what we're actually hearing from people in the economy.

For instance, I'll give an example. When the Premier and Minister of Tourism returned from their tourism mission to Europe, the Leader of the Liberal Party suggested that it was a disappointment and it was a wasted opportunity. The next day after that, the president and CEO of Air North said it was a wonderful opportunity and they hailed the government and said the agreements that they signed simply wouldn't have happened if it weren't for the presence of the Premier and the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

We've heard the Liberal leader suggest that a number of the mining projects that are slated to go forward won't go

forward because he doesn't think they will. We've heard him denounce business plans of private companies in this territory. What we have to point out is that the Liberal leader is vastly out of touch with the economy in this territory and really has no validity or basis for the claims he's making.

Mr. Silver: The minister opposite is vastly out of touch with answers in the Legislative Assembly. The Yukon Party government has only been too happy to ride the wave when prices went up. It is now the fault of the global market forces, according to the minister.

For many years, the Yukon Party took credit for a strong economy saying that it was all their doing. Here's a quote from the minister's predecessor, and I quote: "The boom-and-bust swings of the past will be largely mitigated by sound economic planning and investment attraction efforts." The president of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board said this week that we are seeing a slowdown.

We are seeing the effects of the Yukon Party relying solely on high mineral prices to drive our economy. Now that the mineral prices are falling, we will have one of the worst economic growths this year in Canada, only behind Northwest Territories and New Brunswick. What changes is this government making to adjust to this slowdown?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The Liberal Party and the Liberal leader certainly are out of touch with the economy and he continues to show it every day, whether he comes out here and tells us he wants to ban mining in the Peel area and the next day he's in support of mining within Ross River.

This economy has grown for 10 consecutive years in virtually every sector, and the Minister of Economic Development has eloquently on many occasions talked about some of the great diversification that we continue to support in this territory, such as the knowledge network and the IT network, but it doesn't end.

Simply, this is really about Liberal math and I'd like to go back today to a comment that was made this week by the Leader of the Liberal Party when he talked about the hospital expansion being \$15-million overbudget. There has been no budget for the hospital expansion, so I'm not sure how the Liberal leader can assume and make the accusation that it's already \$15-million overbudget when there in fact has never been a budget. We won't have a budget for that hospital until we actually decide what will be in the hospital, and once we know what that will be, we will go forward with a design and we'll be able to estimate exactly what the price will be. As I say, this is another example of Liberal math at work, continuing to show us that they are out of touch with the economy.

Question re: Cancer care navigator

Ms. Stick: In 2009, the Yukon hired its first cancer care navigator. In June of the next year, the government cut the position and there was quite a public outcry. Different funding streams were found, and by September of that year the position was filled again. Public interviews in 2011 indicated the program had good uptake. It was needed.

Over the last year or so we have heard from people that at times there has been a cancer care navigator for patients and at other times not. Yukon patients newly diagnosed with cancer in May reported to us that they appreciated the assistance of the cancer care navigator, but other patients in June reported that they were not even informed about this position. The first thing a person diagnosed with cancer needs is support.

Can the minister responsible tell us this: what is the current status of the cancer care navigator position, and how are people diagnosed with cancer informed about this resource?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm sorry, I don't have that specific information at my fingertips, but I'll be happy to look into issue of the cancer care navigator and get back to the members.

Ms. Stick: I appreciate that answer because cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality in the Yukon. For Yukon patients, cancer treatment is a top priority. There are over 1,800 Yukon patients without a family doctor and some are left to deal with a diagnosis of cancer without the oversight and case management of a health professional who knows their history and knows their circumstances. If you don't have a doctor, who makes the referrals to specialists, interprets results and monitors progress? Patients without doctors deal with a patchwork of different walk-in clinics and emergency department physicians.

The minister is using the language of patient-centred care and that is wonderful, but talk is not enough for these patients without doctors. What actions, Mr. Speaker, will this government take now to ensure that Yukoners without doctors, newly diagnosed with cancer, are immediately provided the option of having a cancer care navigator?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I have already said, I don't have the information with respect to the cancer care navigator at my fingertips but, as I've said on a number of different occasions throughout this session, we have done a number of different things in recruiting medical practitioners to the Yukon.

We've developed and launched the YukonMD website. We're doing recruitment visits around the country. We've included the Yukon Medical Council in those recruitment visits.

We've found that we've already had some successes. We understand that in the coming few months there will be more successes. There will be additional doctors added. The Yukon is a member of the Canadian Association of Staff Physician Recruiters and, as part of that, we recruit physicians from coast to coast.

At the recent Yukon Medical Association meeting, we were introduced to practitioners from the University of Calgary who are coordinating through the Yukon Medical Association to provide locum physicians. We know that's another method of recruiting physicians on a full-time basis to the territory.

There are a number of things that we are doing and we are having results. We will continue to do that.

Question re: Methadone treatment at Whitehorse Correctional Centre

Ms. Moorcroft: The government announced this spring that the Whitehorse Correctional Centre will no longer be providing methadone treatment to inmates who are dependent on drugs like heroin, morphine and OxyContin. The minister explained that the program was cancelled because there is no qualified staff available at the Correctional Centre to administer methadone. Yukon Corrections had a well-functioning methadone treatment program between 2008 and 2012.

How did Yukon Corrections administer methadone during this four-year period? What now prevents health care staff from being qualified to administer methadone at the Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In addressing the member opposite, she is quite correct that there was a methadone program at the old WCC a number of years ago. About two years ago, it was determined that a methadone treatment wasn't necessarily appropriate for WCC for a number of reasons, one of them being that we were accessing contract nursing at that point in time.

What that means is that there are nurses flying in from outside the territory or some within the territory to provide services within Whitehorse Correctional Centre, and there was really a lack of consistency to promote a program such as a methadone treatment program. At that point in time, it was determined that the safest program to use, both for the inmates and for the staff as well as the staff on the floor, was a medical detox model. Over the last couple of years, it has been determined that that model has been fairly successful up there and the number of users who would even fit into a methadone program would be so low that it really may not be worthwhile looking into.

Ms. Moorcroft: Methadone is recognized as an essential medication by the World Health Organization and it's supported by the Yukon Medical Association. This medication significantly reduces withdrawal symptoms from opiates like heroin and OxyContin and helps to stop cravings for these powerful drugs. Methadone treatment contributes to public safety because it reduces the chance that someone who is addicted to these drugs will engage in crime to pay for them once they are released. Instead they continue to receive methadone treatment in the community.

This benefit to public safety is in fact one of the reasons why there are methadone treatment programs for inmates in correctional facilities across Canada. The WCC had a methadone treatment program between 2008 and early 2012 when it was cancelled by this government.

Mr. Speaker, does the government recognize that methadone treatment programs are of benefit to public safety?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I mentioned in my first response, we really do look at safety as a key issue at WCC, for the inmates, for the medical staff and for the staff who are working on the ground.

As I mentioned in my first response, we are following a withdrawal protocol for opiates as the appropriate treatment

for inmates with substance abuse issues. Methadone, I might also add, isn't necessarily appropriate for some inmates. Many inmates who may be considered for a methadone treatment program would be polysubstance users. That means that they don't necessarily only use heroin, but they may use a wide range of different drugs. Using a methadone program for such an inmate could be fatal and that's where the buck stops.

Really the numbers that would fit at WCC would be extremely low — perhaps one or two inmates a year, if that. So we will continue looking at and working with the withdrawal protocol for opiates as the appropriate method at WCC. We see no issues to date with that program.

Ms. Moorcroft: Another reason methadone programs have become widespread in correctional facilities across Canada is that they play an important role in reducing transmission of HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases. Inmates receiving methadone treatment are much less likely to use and share needles and other equipment to inject illicit drugs, a high-risk activity that is a major contributor to the spread of blood-borne diseases. Instead, inmates receive methadone, which is in liquid form, under the supervision of a health care professional. While there are challenges for prison-based methadone programs, strict rules and procedures for the safe administration of methadone are successfully applied in correctional facilities across Canada.

Why has the government chosen to cancel WCC's methadone treatment program when we know this decision will increase the risk of disease transmission, putting inmates, staff and the community at greater risk?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This is another clear case where we see the members opposite really failing to listen to the information that we're providing, especially on the floor of this Legislature. The member opposite is bringing forward the question about a methadone program at WCC.

We did get away from that a number of years ago, as I stated, for a number of different reasons, one being the contract nursing. Two, another thing that needs to be taken into consideration with methadone is, even though there's a low number of people who might fall into that category, it can potentially become a currency within the correction population. That puts staff and inmates at risk. That's another reason why we went to a withdrawal protocol for opiates as the appropriate treatment for inmates with substance abuse issues.

WCC does have an appropriate treatment in place to ensure the good health of inmates dealing with substance abuse issues and I'm confident of that. The medical staff follows the withdrawal protocol for opiates and that protocol was established by a doctor at WCC and is administered by health professionals. Moving forward with the withdrawal protocol for opiates, we are confident — I am confident — that the staff at WCC is doing a terrific job.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 11: *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the fall 2013 supplementary budget — or 2013-14 supplementary budget, forgive me — and in particular the Department of Economic Development's portion of that budget. I'm joined today by my deputy minister, Murray Arsenault. I believe this is his first time in the Yukon Legislature, so I'm going to ask members to be gentle on him and, in turn, on me as well. Although he's joined of course by our assistant deputy minister, Steve Rose, who is no stranger, so we can balance some of the more difficult questions with that then as well.

As I said, it's a pleasure to rise and speak to this budget. I'm going to start by talking a little bit about some of the sectors that we work in through the department, and then I'll turn ultimately and discuss the actual budget itself and describe some of the items that are in it and some of the activities that we have underway as a result of the budget items in there.

I want to start out by talking about the economy in general, but in particular a few different sectors. We often, when discussing the economy in the territory, turn, of course, to the mining industry. But I wanted to start off by discussing some of the positives we've seen in the tourism industry. I would like to start off by talking a little bit about some of the

things that have gone on this year and some of the ways that Economic Development factors into the tourism economy here in Yukon.

Part of the reason I wanted to do that — and I know that we've already debated the Tourism budget, so there has been some discussion about some of the details within that sector. But I felt in listening to that debate that I believe that both the Premier and Minister of Tourism and Culture have been a bit too modest in their appraisal of some of the work that has been done through that department. In particular, I wanted talk a little bit about the tourism mission — the unprecedented tourism mission — that the Premier and the minister led to Europe earlier this year.

As we all know, the Premier and the minister, along with a number of officials from the Department of Tourism and Culture, led a delegation to Europe to promote increased activity in the tourism sector between Europe and Yukon. The delegation included representatives from Air North, CanaDream RV Rentals, Harper Street Publishing, Holland America, Northern Tales, Northern Vision, Outside the Cube, the Skky Hotel and a number of non-governmental organizations including TIA — the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon — the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association, the Yukon Historical and Museums Association, KVA, the Yukon Outfitters Association, Yukon Quest and the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. While I wasn't on the mission, I did hear from a number of folks who were and I know that it was fairly well regarded as an overwhelming success. Following that trip, Madam Chair, we heard a number of announcements made — a number of agreements that were negotiated and settled on this trip and a number of positive steps taken that spell out positive things for the tourism industry here in the Yukon.

There was, however, unfortunately, one individual who didn't seem to think it was a success and had some rather disparaging comments for the initiative. That, of course, was the Liberal Leader, the Klondike MLA, who had a number of disparaging comments. He indicated that the mission was "a missed opportunity" and, as well, it was a "disappointment." Those are his two comments about that particular initiative. That was unfortunate because, later that day that he made those comments, we had a number of announcements pursuant to that trip and that initiative.

The first — I don't mean to put these in order, but the first I will speak of today — was the agreement that Air North signed with Condor, the details of which I'll let members refer to the press release to find.

What I found the most interesting was the quote from Joe Sparling, the President of Air North, and I would like to read it now. On September 5, he said, "From the Air North perspective, the signed co-operative accord between our airline, Condor and the Yukon government is a huge benefit. The agreement Air North reached with Condor has the potential to be even bigger. Both were greatly facilitated and perhaps even made possible through the efforts of the Premier and the Minister of Tourism, as well as their support staff." So, Madam Chair, you note that there is a bit of dissonance

between what the Liberal leader and what the industry folks are actually saying.

Further, a few weeks later, Neil Hartling, the head of TIA, had an interview on CBC Radio where he discussed in general the tourism industry and, more specifically, this particular initiative. I'll quote from Mr. Hartling as well: "At the end of August, with the Premier and minister who led a tourism marketing mission to Germany and the U.K., we returned with stronger relationships in the marketplace and tremendous advancement for Air North and a new agreement with Condor which will benefit us all."

Previous to that interview, Mr. Sparling, the president of Air North, did an interview as well. He indicated some stats and some indications as to what this agreement would mean for Yukon and elaborated a little bit on what Mr. Hartling has said. I would like to quote from Mr. Sparling again. "Well, I think it's going to mean more European visitors coming to the Yukon; it's going to mean more opportunities for Yukoners to go to Europe. Quite simply, more choices for access between the Yukon and Europe and Europe and Yukon."

You see across the board some fairly wide diversions between what the Liberal Party is saying and what the actual folks in the industry are saying. We've heard a number of other comments out of this particular initiative including the very positive announcements that the Yukon Quest was able to make. I saw a letter from the Yukon Wildlife Preserve to the Premier thanking him for the initiative and indicating that the Yukon Wildlife Preserve thought that it was a resounding success.

Across the board you see that those in the industry thought this particular initiative was a resounding success. It must have been rather embarrassing for the Liberal leader to hear these comments so shortly after making such negative comments about the trip and indicating that they were a terrible disappointment and a missed opportunity. I guess the only ones who thought that that was a missed opportunity were, in fact, those in the Liberal Party.

I am discussing this in the context of our economy today and, as we know, we've seen a bit of a change lately in some of the market conditions that influence our mining industry. It's very positive to see some positive initiatives and positive steps forward for other industries, like the Tourism Industry.

Of course, I will be discussing other sectors today — the telecommunications sector, the knowledge sector, the research and innovation sector — but I wanted to start with that little bit on the tourism sector.

Turning now, if I may, to the mining industry, there are some fairly difficult market conditions that are plaguing the industry currently. We have a fairly weak investment market and soft mineral prices, which are making it difficult for mining companies to attract investment capital to the territory.

In my opinion, this heightens the necessity and the role of the Department of Economic Development in getting out and attracting investment capital to the territory. As the department that promotes the mining industry in this territory, I think it is important to note some of the activities that the department has undertaken in the past number of years, but

especially in the past year. Those include getting out and working with individual companies, working with industry organizations, and working on our own — getting out and, as I like to say, hitting the pavement and having department officials go out and go to key markets around the world to raise the profile of Yukon as a positive place to invest.

Our investment attraction activities tend to focus on three general areas: Europe, North America and Asia. We've seen activity here in Canada as well. In the North American context, of course, we tend to focus on the United States as a key financial market, but there are positive signs here in Canada that there is more we could be doing to attract investment from right here, within our borders, to the Yukon.

I, as well as other officials in the department, have undertaken activities and initiatives outside the borders. Last week, our assistant deputy minister returned from China after leading a delegation to the China mining and Beijing investment forum. A week before that, our deputy minister was in Europe — in London and Zurich — with a number of companies from the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance.

A few weeks before that, I was with the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance doing one of their road tours to the investment hubs in the United States — Atlanta, Boston and New York. Meanwhile, other officials from the department attended investment conferences in Denver, Colorado, as well as in San Francisco more recently.

Further to that, over the course of the geoscience week, which was a week or 10 days ago, I had the chance to speak at a few events. At one of those events, I committed, as I have before, to working with the industry and industry organizations to review and potentially redevelop our mineral investment attraction strategy that we have with the Yukon government.

I look forward to hearing from industry representatives, both from the mining industry and other mineral investment companies — exploration companies included — about how we can do a better job and have a more coordinated effort toward attracting investment to the territory. We know, of course, that in order for economic projects in the territory to go forward, we need to attract investment capital from outside our borders. As I said before, the Department of Economic Development leads these initiatives.

Pursuant to that work, we also provide funding to specific organizations, both through our strategic industries development program and our enterprise trade fund. The enterprise trade fund is, of course, available to companies in all sectors and is something that we have to encourage companies to get out and market both their own companies and their projects, but also the Yukon as a whole as a positive place to invest.

I know I'll get into more details throughout the course of today's debate about the budget and about the specific initiatives within the department, but those are some of the things I wanted to highlight first of all.

I'll turn now to some more general comments about the department and about the supplementary budget that is before us today.

The department's strategic plan focuses on enabling strategic and responsible economic projects, increasing the benefits that Yukoners, businesses, First Nations and communities receive from economic projects and activities, and enhancing the competitiveness of the Yukon business environment. This budget will continue our approach to economic development and is directly linked to our vision for building a sustainable and diversified economy focusing on prosperity for all Yukoners.

The work of the department continues to support all sectors of Yukon's economy. For example, there are currently several film productions taking place in the Yukon, made possible through the assistance of the Yukon Film and Sound Commission and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission's programs, which are geared toward encouraging investment in our film industry and diversifying our economy.

From April 1, 2013 to September 5, 2013, the Yukon Film and Sound Commission approved nine projects for funding under the film incentive programs, providing approximately \$308,210 in support to filmmakers. During this time the department also provided approximately \$12,000 to five Yukon film producers to attend marketing events to advance their projects through the enterprise trade fund.

The department also supports a variety of small- and medium-sized businesses through its funding programs and provides opportunities for business development and market expansion. For example, in partnership with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the department continues to support the Yukon business development program, which is assisting a number of Yukon businesses to substantially increase their business and export revenues.

To touch on one of our economic cornerstones, while our mining sector is currently facing challenges, it is important to recognize the underlying factors for global demand for our mineral resources remain. The Department of Economic Development continues to work cooperatively with industry groups and the mining industry to market Yukon precious metal and base metal properties as attractive investment opportunities. As I indicated earlier, we are working closely with the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance and other industry stakeholders to identify strategic investment attraction events where industry and government representatives have the opportunity to network with international investors in an effort to develop Yukon's mining sector.

Emerging economies still require our minerals, and the spinoff benefits for our private sector remain as mining projects advance through the various stages of exploration, development and production. These are only a few examples of progress we are making as we continue building a prosperous and diverse Yukon economy by creating and fostering development opportunities.

To continue our progress, this budget seeks approval for revote dollars in the approximate amount of \$2.2 million. This will support the department and its projects with timeframes that carry over from last fiscal year into this fiscal year. We are requesting \$175,000 for retroactive pay and increases for

management and bargaining unit employees as a result of the new collective agreement ratified on July 22 of this year.

We are also requesting a revote of \$312,000 for the pan-northern telecommunications strategic plan, with \$292,000 recoverable from CanNor. In addition, a request for \$100,000 for the Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre, which is 100-percent recoverable from CanNor, is being sought.

A number of funding programs and projects have third party contribution agreements that were approved in 2012 and 2013, but were unable to be completed by fiscal year-end. We are asking for revote dollars for the departmental operations and maintenance budget in the approximate amount of \$1.6 million for the following programs and projects: the regional economic development fund, the community development fund, the enterprise trade fund, the strategic industries development fund, the film and sound incentive program, the community access program and business development projects.

On the capital side of the budget, there is a request for a total expenditure increase of \$88,000. This is comprised of a transfer of \$10,000 from ONM for a multi-function unit, better known as a photocopier, which is scheduled for replacement in the Regional Economic Development branch. Commitments under Dana Naye Ventures business development program of \$7,000 and a revote of \$69,000 for the community development trust, Yukon entrepreneurs support program in support of training and assistance to businesses or individuals in the early planning stages of their business and \$2,000 for salary increases for the business incentive program staff.

We are furthering the mandate and objectives of the Department of Economic Development through our request in this budget. The objectives of the department include the continued development of a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy that will enrich the quality of life of all Yukoners. The department continues to pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovation.

The department is also committed to forging partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of the territory. The Government of Yukon continues to strive for a prosperous Yukon that includes the capture of external investments capitalizing on our geographic proximity to Pacific Rim markets. Economic Development looks forward to contributing its part, working with many partners as we collectively move forward toward an even more prosperous Yukon.

You're indicating to me that my time has elapsed for this portion, Madam Chair, so I look forward to answering questions from the members opposite and to discussing some other sectors of the economy that I haven't yet touched on.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his comments and I just want to say at the outset that the minister may be disappointed or perhaps relieved to hear that I do not intend to revisit the substance of the matters identified in a private members' debate or motion that I brought forward to this Assembly on November 6, which had as an objective — one I

am sure that the minister shares — that is to build an inclusive, diversified and strong economy with good jobs and opportunities for all. While I will not this afternoon review the 12 substantive matters identified in that motion today, the minister can anticipate —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Chair: Order please.

Ms. Hanson: While I will not be reviewing those 12 substantive matters today, Madam Chair, I think the minister can anticipate and knows already that the matters that the Official Opposition raises in terms of how we work together in this Legislative Assembly to build that strong, diversified and inclusive economy is very important. It's not just important for the lofty words that are spoken in this Chamber, but it's really important to the ordinary person living in the communities throughout the territory and in Whitehorse.

You can anticipate that I will return — that we will return — as opposition — to questions and elements of those over the course of this sitting and future sittings because they are integral to how this territory moves forward.

The primary focus of our discussions today is, as the minister just pointed out at the end of his opening comments — the primary focus is the supplementary budget. I thank the officials for their recent briefing. I would note, just to prove to the minister that I was listening, that the revote references about \$781,000 of the \$2.2 million — at least according to the briefing — so the total increase that is being sought by the Economic Development department, as I understand it, is \$2.2 million for a total budget of \$17 million—some from \$15 million, of which \$781,000 is a revote. That was the briefing we were given the other day. We will come back to that later.

I will come back to the substance of the briefing in a bit. I would like to ensure that — there was a number of — in the budget debate last spring — the budget really set the tone and the course for what the minister plans to do with his department over the course of this fiscal year.

We had quite a long and informative debate — discussion, I suppose you could call it — last spring and there were a number of matters that were touched upon. I just wanted to go back and sort of touch with the minister — this is a bit more than midstream — with respect to how he is stewarding a number of activities through his department and find out from the minister where we stand and what follow-up perhaps has been done on some.

I think it took us like 20 pages of budget debate before we got into substantive — that was more like the speech part. One of the areas that I know is near and dear to the minister's heart, and certainly one that I share, is the whole ICT sector. In preparation for our discussion this afternoon, I went back and looked at a couple of documents that were prepared last February and then following up — so the ICT sector strategy and the strategic plan. So one was in February of 2013 and one was in March. So the strategic plan — the more detailed document — was in March. At the time of the budget debate, I think we were talking about the ICT sector strategy. That was in May. At that time, I believe, the office had just been set up

and I think we were introduced at one of the Chamber luncheons to the staff and work was to commence.

I just want to follow up with the minister on a couple of brief questions with respect to that area because, as both the strategic plan and the strategy —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: It would be really helpful if they weren't talking. It would be helpful, Madam Chair, if you would do the same thing you would do with us. I have the floor. I am just commenting that it would be helpful if the members opposite would actually not kibbitz in the back row, but actually would either leave the room and allow the people who are speaking to speak. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The industry sector strategy noted — as the minister talked about in terms of the various sectors of the economy we as a territory are trying to grow — that the ICT industry is — and I quote this from identification of the assets of this sector as a local industry: "...is also relatively stable and non-cyclical, providing a counterbalance to the highly cyclical natural resources industries that have driven recent economic growth in the Yukon..."

What I thought was most interesting about both the strategy and the strategic plan was the identification of both opportunities and challenges for the growth of this sector and the recognition that, although there are — at the time of the study, and they were relying on data that was several years old, that there were — about 80 businesses with close to 600 employees, that have ICT as their primary or secondary drivers, and obviously that is heavily skewed by Northwestel.

In an endeavour to enhance this industry, there were a couple of suggestions — recommendations — made and I wanted to hear from the minister what his response is and what his direction has been on the two that seem to me most immediately available to the government.

One was in terms of investment in the sector. In the sector strategy, it spoke to the creation of an industry-specific innovation fund to encourage businesses to invest in ICT product and service development. One was sort of a definite investment piece — actual money. The second part was to consider tax policies to promote the investment in the Yukon ICT sector. That struck me as being something that is certainly possible and plausible. We've seen the benefits — even the reference that the minister spoke of — the success of Air North, which came as a result of the successful uptake through the small business investment tax credit that was put in place by a New Democrat government.

I'm wondering if the minister could speak to those two recommendations or suggestions that came from the planning process that he directed, as minister, for his department. I would be interested if he would share with us any ideas that he has, or if he has given any direction with respect to the development of any policy on either the creation of some sort of an industry-specific innovation fund, and/or the consideration of tax policies to promote investment in the Yukon ICT sector.

I'll come back to other questions afterward.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite for the excellent question. She has correctly noted that the ICT sector is one that I, as minister, and we, as the department, have identified as one that we think has a significant potential for growth. We would like to see that sector of our economy contribute in an increasing fashion to our overall economy. Its contribution to our economy so far has been significant and strong, but we would like to see more. We think that more is possible and there is potential for significant growth. To that end, the member correctly noted that we initiated a number of planning initiatives some time ago, and she referenced two particular documents.

I would just make sure that we are talking about the same ones. One is the *Yukon ICT Sector Strategic Plan*, which was done in collaboration with the Yukon Information Technology and Industry Society. Another was the Yukon telecommunications development report. There were two reports done. One is a sector strategy to guide both government and industry forward in how to grow that particular sector of the economy. Recommendations were made therein, both for industry and for the Yukon government. The other one I referenced is the *Technology and Telecommunications Development Report*, which was done by a consultant at the request of the Department of Economic Development to give Yukon government a better sense of the lay of the land, I guess you could say, in terms of the telecommunications infrastructure needs throughout the territory. I think it's worth reiterating both of those.

The sector strategy, which as I said was done in collaboration with YITIS, the Yukon Information Technology and Industry Society, identified a number of opportunities and constraints, and it ultimately made some recommendations to government and industry about how they can better work together to ensure that this sector grows and this sector takes the next step. Essentially one of the issues it identifies is that, in a general sense, the information communications technology sector in Yukon is proportionately smaller than the corresponding sectors in other Canadian jurisdictions and it is growing at a slower pace. Within the broader Canadian economy, this sector is seen as having great growth potential and as being an important contributor and influencer of economic potential. This report seeks to identify the key opportunities and constraints, which the government and industry may be able to influence in order to maximize the potential for this industry sector in Yukon.

It notes that the ICT sector is important to the Yukon economy in two ways. Firstly, it brings high-paying and highly skilled job opportunities to the territory. Secondly, the industry can bring increased efficiencies to other businesses and organizations in the territory, reducing their costs and increasing Yukon's competitiveness.

I think that second one is important because, as we know, in today's world with a fairly heightened level of communication between people and businesses through a number of mediums, this kind of technology is important to just about any business out there — whether it's the mining industry, the tourism industry or government, or whether it's

the folks at Yukon College trying to deliver programming to community college campuses, or the Education department trying to further examine possibilities for reaching out to schools in the communities through telecommunication-based learning, or the health care system using telecommunications to deliver telehealth. We know that the telecommunications industry and the telecommunications infrastructure are increasingly critical to having success in today's world.

The sector strategy report identified, as the member noted, a fairly good overview of the sector itself. I won't describe it again because I think she actually did a fairly good job of explaining the number of professionals and the maturing nature of some of those companies, even though there is still a certain level of nascent development going on in some of the sectors.

It also identifies some of the constraints. It identified a limited telecommunications infrastructure, including both high-speed broadband services and current-generation mobile services. It identified the cost of existing voice and data services, which make it more difficult for local companies to compete with organizations based in the south.

It also identified the reliance on the Yukon government as a customer which is one of the largest consumers of ICT products and services.

Further to that, the study notes the lack of availability of local education and training resources that are specific to this industry, which makes it more difficult to maintain up-to-date skills and capacity. It identifies a lack of scale — the fact that we are fairly small in the Yukon and that makes it difficult for local businesses to plan and execute effective long-term strategies and investments.

The challenges are real and significant, but there are ways that we can meet them. The sector strategy suggests a number of recommendations that could inform how we might do that. They include: setting specific targets and standards for broadband speeds and cellphone coverage; encouraging the development of additional capacity or redundancy in the telecommunications infrastructure; establishing a focal point within Yukon government to coordinate the strategy for the sector and to provide oversight for its implementation — that's an important one that we'll return to because the question was about how we are implementing: strengthening the YITIS, or the Yukon Information Technology and Industry Society, in its role as industry advocate and subject expert; establishing a cross-industry focus group to look at the demand for ICT products and services within Yukon and to examine new approaches to addressing that demand; creating an industry-specific innovation fund to encourage businesses to invest in ICT products and services; promoting ICT sector products in domestic and export markets; leveraging the Yukon Research Centre to look at ways to increase the digital diversity of the Yukon population; creating a more robust industry base; continuing to advocate for more competitive telecommunications pricing through the regulatory framework; and promoting the development of the capability to deliver ICT education and training locally.

Rather than going to the telecommunications development report, which I don't think I'll have time to in this response, I'll now move to some of the ways that we've engaged to implement these recommendations.

First of all, one of the key things that we did was act on the recommendation to strengthen YITIS and its role as industry advocate and subject expert. In this year's budget, members may note there is funding provided for YITIS — off the top of my head, I believe it is \$50,000 — to provide it with the financial resources it needs to organize on behalf of industry and advocate on behalf of industry as recommended by this report. My understanding is that with that core funding that we've provided to YITIS, they've hired an executive director, who is now coordinating their efforts and coordinating the activities of YITIS and its members. Right now the chair of YITIS, or the president — I'm not sure what the title is exactly — is Chris May of the software development company. And YITIS, so far, continues to work with our department to implement the other aspects of these recommendations.

Having supported YITIS and provided some core funding to that group to allow them to advocate and do work on behalf of industry, we also responded to one of the other recommendations, which was to establish a focal point within Yukon government to coordinate the strategy for the sector and to provide oversight for its implementation. To that end, within the Department of Economic Development we established the Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate.

I need to correct myself. I said that Chris May was the president of YITIS. It's actually Chris Lane who is the president of YITIS. Chris May is another industry representative and a member of YITIS, but not the president.

The Leader of the Official Opposition noted that when we spoke about this last, we had just opened the Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate and that was correct. Since then, work has gone underway in terms of staffing that branch and providing them with the direction that they need to get their work done. The new directorate's initial focus is on improving Yukon's telecommunications environment in a general sense, and through this directorate the Government of Yukon is supporting major contributors to the evolution of Yukon's ICT environment, including cold climate innovation, the work done by YITIS, the technology innovation, and the northern communications and information systems working group.

The Government of Yukon believes in an ongoing program to ensure modern telecommunications infrastructure in the north. It is crucial to ensure that northern Canadians not only achieve parity with other Canadians in terms of access to high quality ICT service, but are also able to sustain parity in innovation and services, quality and prices.

As I noted and as the member noted, the directorate was established on May 22, 2013, and is currently fully staffed with one director and two senior business development advisors. The mandate of the new directorate includes: working on a project to develop an alternate fibre route for

Yukon; participating in the northern communications and information systems working group, which is a subgroup of the Arctic security working group; providing a focal point for government to participate in a more fulsome manner in the CRTC proceedings, to implement the Yukon ICT sector strategy, and to implement and advance the recommendations of the Yukon telecommunications development study.

The directorate is a two-year pilot project. It may be that its mandate needs to be extended or it may be that, as the projects develop and the industry matures, the efforts can be integrated back into the other machinations of the department. That's what is going on, on that front.

As well, we continue to work and support the Yukon Research Centre in its work with the Cold Climate Innovation and Technology Innovation centres therein and to develop that research centre — as diverse as it is — into, as best we can, a hub for the industry so that folks in the industry — if they have an idea, if they have an innovation that they want to bring forward, if they have a telecommunications project that they think might need some seed money or some general early-stage support to help get to the next level — can approach the Technology Innovation Centre or, if it's related to cold climate, the Cold Climate Innovation Centre.

The next piece that I think is important to recognize is the recommendation that relates to the development — or encouraging the development — of additional capacity and redundancy in the telecommunications infrastructure. The telecommunications infrastructure, as we know and as we've discussed previously, in Yukon is good, but there are some ways that it is lacking.

The fact that we have a single-fibre route to the south is one case where we do have a certain degree of vulnerability, not only in the case of outages as a result of that line being pierced, but it also limits the overall capacity. We are excited about the prospect of an alternate fibre project in the Yukon, which would see a redundant, or alternate, fibre link from Yukon into the bigger global system — particularly the North American system.

There are a number of potential routes and opportunities for that. There are a number of projects that are being advanced by other governments and other businesses. There is the Arctic fibre route that is being proposed to run through the Northwest Passage, which is being considered currently. As far as I can tell, it is intended to increase the connection between Asia and Europe with regard to connectivity.

There is also the Northwest Territories MacKenzie Valley line, which is being proposed and promoted by the Government of the Northwest Territories. That is a project that would see a fibre line extended from the southern part of the Northwest Territories down the McKenzie Valley to the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk area. It could either terminate in Inuvik or, potentially, one day join in with the Arctic fibre route in the Northwest Passage.

There is also the discussion about the possibility of connecting to Alaska, either along the Alaska Highway or south through the Carcross area, down through Skagway and then underwater to Juneau, which is a project that we are not

the first to consider. Of course, there have been other private sector companies and initiatives that have looked at that particular project. Those include — the ones that come to mind — I know Total North has looked at this previously. That, I would say, is the most likely option and the most likely route that we'll be undertaking.

We've considered all the options thoroughly, but we think that connecting south from Whitehorse through Skagway and underwater to Juneau, and connecting then through Juneau to the main trunk fibre lines that run from Alaska down to the Seattle/Vancouver area would be the most attractive option.

Interestingly, earlier this year, we were approached by a group of First Nation development corporations — the Dempster Energy Services group, which represents the three northern First Nations — the Na Cho Nyäk Dun development corporation, the Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Development Corporation, and I believe the Gwich'in Tribal Council, or the development corporation representing the Gwich'in citizens in northern Northwest Territories. With that group of First Nations, we are undertaking a study to provide an understanding of the bankable feasibility of that project. This is a project that is led by the development corporations and they approached us requesting some support to do this study because they knew that we were interested in it as well.

We provided funding to that group and earlier this year we had an announcement through a press release with the Dempster Energy Services that we'd be partnering on this project. We're interested to hear from all First Nations development corporations or even private companies who are interested in this kind of project and look forward to advancing that work.

The Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate, Dempster Energy Services and a consultant company will be actively seeking input from stakeholders in Yukon, Alaska and B.C. The study will explore the business and technical feasibility of providing a diverse fibre optic telecommunications line from Yukon to the south. It will consist of an in-depth analysis of permitting issues, a demand forecast for services including CRTC decision impacts on the business cases and interest of telecommunications carriers in Yukon, B.C. and Alaska, a detailed design of the routes and route selection, and a business case and recommended business structure.

Along with the Juneau through Skagway link, I also indicated that they would be considering other options, including the Mackenzie Valley fibre in the Northwest Territories, but as I said, I think our preferred option and the one that we think is probably the most likely is this line to Juneau through Skagway.

Work continues on that project, as well. One of the aspects of the way the Yukon government operates — I think you're gesturing my time has concluded, so I will return to the role of the envelope of funding that's available through Yukon government for technology and infrastructure projects related to telecommunications in my next response.

Ms. Hanson: The minister opposite — just for his information, we do read the press releases. We do read the documents on-line. That's why I ask the questions. I'm attempting to find out and attempting to work in a cooperative way to move this debate forward so that we're not just spending 20 minutes at a time hearing the same speaking points.

I asked two questions, said in only a context with respect to how I got to those two questions. I will repeat the two questions. I will add two more, if I may. I asked the minister whether, as one of the recommendations — the first one came out of a comment or suggestion from the ICT sector strategy and was with respect to investment in the sector. The recommendation there was to create an industry-specific innovation fund to encourage business to invest in ICT product and services development. The second was to consider tax policies to promote investment in the Yukon ICT sector — such as an expansion of the Yukon small business investment tax credit, which is currently limited to a total of \$1 million in credits per year, which does give the potential to raise \$4 million of financing for Yukon corporations annually.

I'm not sure whether that's adequate for the kind of ICT expansion that industry and the minister, through his department, were anticipating, but that's the kind of discussion that would be productive.

Secondly, the minister spoke at length about the organizational structure and how all these things are going on. Very much of that was focused internally to government and what government's doing in terms of its organization and making decisions. One of the other recommendations that was contained in the strategic plan of March 2013 was the appointment of a cross-sector task force — that the Yukon government should also support the appointment of a task force comprised of representatives from government, the ICT sector, First Nations and education and research to provide integrated advice and recommendations to government and YITIS on all aspects of implementing the plan.

I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the first question about whether or not we would consider a specific fund that would be specifically tailored to industry or the technology innovation sector, I think what we determined through working with the industry and through working with YITIS — actually that's the first point I should make, in reviewing these recommendations and determining how best we would be responding to them — we work very closely with YITIS.

This is a sector strategy that is not just for Yukon government, but for industry as well. In collaboration and consultation discussion with YITIS, we've determined that we were going to take a number of actions. I've listed some of those already and I know that the NDP, of course, review the press releases that are put out, but I did want to note that there are some important steps that have been taken and I think it's important to recognize those steps.

In discussions with YITIS, we've determined that we feel that there are a number of funding opportunities already defined and already identified for the promotion and

development of innovation or technology innovation. With the recommendation of creating an industry-specific innovation fund, we feel that we already meet that need through a number of the funding programs that we have. For instance, the strategic industries fund is a fund that, in its mandate, provides funding to projects focused on natural resources, tourism and culture, research, innovation and commercialization projects in the Yukon. The funding is intended to assist the private sector to address the barriers to development in their respective sectors and to improve the competitiveness of their businesses, so of course the strategic industries fund would apply to the technology or the telecommunications industry. We feel that the strategic industries development fund meets the need of that recommendation already.

As well, as I noted, we have in place established funding for the Cold Climate Innovation and the Technology Innovation centres at the Yukon Research Centre which, as I indicated, are points that folks in the private sector — companies or individuals — can approach if they have an innovation, idea or technology that they want to test out, develop and potentially commercialize.

That funding is provided by the Department of Economic Development, as well as the Department of Education, to the Yukon Research Centre for the implementation of those programs. We see the development of the Yukon Research Centre as an opportunity to increase its ability to liaise with the IT — the information and communications technology — industry and provide those kinds of services, becoming what I would call a hub for that industry. I know that a number of companies have already tapped into that. I know that companies like Total North and companies like Northwestel have approached the folks at the Technology Innovation Centre and the folks at the Cold Climate Innovation Centre and have undertaken projects for which they receive funding from both — funding that's identified for Technology Innovation or the Cold Climate Innovation centres — but also direct funding from the department through the strategic industries fund.

I would argue that an industry-specific innovation fund as a recommendation provided by the strategic plan is something that already exists. Although it's not as specific as probably is suggested in this strategic plan, we feel that it is sufficient. I think YITIS and the folks in the industry would agree — and have agreed, by virtue of the fact that they continue to access these programs and these funding opportunities.

When I say that we are working with industry to identify actions and determine how we implement the recommendations, that is an example. We sit down with folks and say, "How do you want to address these?" We review the programs, funding opportunities and initiatives that already exist. We determine what we need to prioritize and what we need to focus on. Because we have these funding opportunities already in place, we thought that this particular one would fall a little lower on the priority list, compared to some of the other activities that I mentioned earlier we are actually doing.

That comment, I think, applies as well to the establishment of a cross-industry focus group to look at the demand for ICT products and services within Yukon and to examine new approaches to addressing that demand, as well as the recommendation to promote ICT sector products in domestic and export markets.

To promote ICT products in domestic and export markets, we work, again, both with individual companies, as well as with industry organizations like YITIS, to promote investment in these products in the territory, but also to invest in improving the export markets for products.

We've seen a couple of very successful initiatives taken recently. I would point to the Interpretour technology that was developed by a subsidiary of Mid Arctic Technology. It was done with a very innovative partnership with the MacBride Museum, where a locally developed technology is now being shopped around the country and, indeed, the globe and is seeking those export markets that we're discussing.

The way they do that is by receiving some funding support from the Department of Economic Development both through the enterprise trade fund — which, as I said earlier, is identified for promoting and marketing Yukon products and Yukon companies — and through the strategic industries fund, which allows for projects to identify barriers to their growth, meet them and challenge those barriers.

Those recommendations identified in the strategic plan — the sector strategy report — I feel are being addressed. Industry I would think — I certainly can't speak for industry, but I know that in our discussions with YITIS that they agreed with our implementation priorities and those priorities include the projects that I listed in my previous response. We, of course, as I said, work with YITIS on developing an implementation strategy and that's underway right now. We're responding — in the items that we respond to and the priority which we attach to those recommendations, we make those decisions based on what we hear from industry and that's what we've been doing.

Ms. Hanson: I take it that no, we're not looking at any investment in an industry-specific innovation fund for the ICT sector and there was no answer with respect to consideration of tax policies to promote investment in the Yukon ICT sector. I didn't get a response.

It was not a focus group that made recommendations. A focus group is used specifically when you're looking at a particular idea and it's time-limited and usually has a very specific kind of demographic that you'd be focusing on. They were talking about a task force that was representative of the government, the ICT sector, First Nations, education and research that would provide recommendations to both the Yukon government and YITIS. It was to ensure, I think — when I read the document — that we don't get into the how-you-know and who-you-know, but it actually has some evidence-based approach that when you take the advice of a task force, or something that's representative of a broader sector, including those who have that experience, you might come up with a better product.

Rather than belabour that, Madam Chair, I think I'd like to move on to another issue that we touched on during the discussions last May that are certainly — we've changed gender at the helm of the Table; I'm sorry, Mr. Deputy Chair. It's topical because in the spring we had a general discussion on questions I raised to the minister responsible for Economic Development, trying to ascertain the position of the Government of Yukon with respect to the CETA, the Canada-European Union trade agreement.

I have raised this because there had been issues raised over the last number of years by provincial and municipal governments across the country about the terms and various industry sectors about the terms and conditions of an agreement that, as the Prime Minister and the federal minister of trade have made clear, are precedent-setting. I raise it again today because the Prime Minister announced after he went to Europe after the throne speech to announce the conclusion of — in any treaty negotiations you sort of come to a stage of conclusions. It's hard to know exactly how concluded it is, but the undertaking was, I would assume, that provinces and territories would have to opportunity to review these documents — massive as it is — to ensure that the — well, I'm not sure what undertaking. I'll certainly be looking forward to the minister's explanation of what undertaking has been given to provinces and territories.

As the minister said in May, and I'll quote — “The governments of Canada and the European Union launched these negotiations for this *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* in 2009” and, as he said, “for the first time in the history of trade negotiations”, to his knowledge, that “provinces and territories were invited as part of the Canadian negotiating team to attend the negotiating sessions relating to issues within their jurisdictions.” That is why having the opportunity to be present there — why we anticipated that the minister would be able to respond to provide assurances to Yukon businesses and Yukon governments — First Nations and municipal in particular.

As he said, this is partly because, as far as he could tell, Canada recognized that a number of topics to be discussed would have impacts on the provinces and territories and that Europe — and wanted the provinces and territories to be included the same way they wanted their member states to be included.

As our conversation went on, we had identified that there had been some analysis done by, in particular, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. In questions, the minister had suggested to the Opposition that we were perhaps conflating information or misunderstanding the facts, but in fact, when I asked — and it's even more pertinent today — the question then was: has the Government of Yukon consulted with the Association of Yukon Communities and with Yukon First Nation governments with respect to the notion of negatives listing? Has Yukon, in line with his comments about seeking — or willingness of this government to try to foster and support local businesses, sought areas that could be exempted from the comprehensive agreement? As I said last spring, those kinds of exemptions might be the kinds

of protectors that give comfort to municipal governments and potentially Crown corporations.

We've heard debate in this Legislature this week and announcements by the Premier through the *Globe and Mail* that we're going to spend \$100 million or \$1 billion or \$3 billion on a major hydro facility.

It is great news to hear we're finally getting to planning it, but it would be nice to know what the implications are for Canada and for Yukon and for First Nation government corporate entities, as well. The thresholds that were identified — and where the British Columbia municipalities were seeking clarification and exemption — and under the arrangements as they were last spring, municipal purchases of services over \$300,000 and construction contracts over \$8 million would be open to EU companies.

I understand that the minister went on to say later on that, yes, we allow outside companies to bid on contracts — of course we do, he said. He said, companies from outside Yukon can still bid on contracts here. Does it make a difference locally if a company is from Toronto or from France?

They are not a Yukon company, so that's the point that needs to be made. We are already open to outside competition, which isn't a bad thing. It is not a bad thing, but it's difficult if you don't have a choice and that's the challenge that we're making here. These agreements do not provide a choice. As he referenced in his comments earlier in the spring, we have other agreements that limit the choices that governments have.

What we're looking for is, what is the minister's understanding of the protections that will be provided to him as the Minister of Economic Development — to his Cabinet — as they go forward — as we go forward — as a Yukon government? Looking at the construction of major projects in this territory that involve our Crown corporations — that we will have the opportunity to ensure that, first of all, local businesses benefit from those, that local workers benefit from those, that we will not see or will not be forced into situations where these — the municipal building that the City of Whitehorse is planning now, which is far in excess of \$8 million, would necessarily be — that our local construction companies would then be pushed out of that one, as well as other ones that they've been pushed out of more recently.

I don't have — and this is why I'm raising this today — access to the information that I'm sure that the minister, as the minister responsible for Economic Development, must have with respect to the current status of the CETA negotiations. I would hope that he would be able to provide that information and then, in line with what the Prime Minister's comments were with respect to how provinces and territories would be further consulted — what he as minister or what the Government of Yukon plans to do with respect to providing information to the citizens of Yukon — and in particular to share the information — as the government with the access to that table — to First Nation governments and their corporate entities — so the municipal governments, First Nation governments' corporate entities and then citizens. What are CETA's implications for us now in terms of binding decisions

made by the legislative assemblies — and also the implications for us, because it is a broad-scoped agreement?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I want to first respond to the member opposite's first comments in that round of questions about the recommendations of the sector strategy. She asked whether or not we had considered establishing a specific innovation fund identified for the technology, or ICT, sector. I want to reiterate in my answer that we determined, through consultation and discussions with YITIS, that effective and available funds were already in place that would meet that need. I suggested that the strategic industries fund, the enterprise trade fund and the funding opportunities through the Cold Climate Innovation and the Technology Innovation centres were adequate and that industry concluded as well that the establishment of a fund wouldn't be a priority compared to some of the other things we needed to do.

Further to that, on the notion of whether or not we need to set up a focus group for some particular subject — a task force, a focus group — I mean, the recommendation says focus group; the member opposite says task force — in any event, if we needed to involve industry in the decision and the review of these sorts of things. I would note that industry is, of course, involved and the Department of Economic Development is involved in the oversight of the Cold Climate Innovation and the Technology Innovation centres. There is an availability there to engage the private sector and industry to help provide input on projects and discuss them.

This is something that — of all the recommendations we have to prioritize to determine which ones we are going to act on immediately and which ones we are going to consider in the future, we make those decisions based on the input we have from YITIS and other individuals in the sector, and those are the decisions we arrive at.

Finally, with regard to specific tax policies, I would say that is something we may consider, but once we have a more robust opportunity for companies to come to the Yukon, we would consider it. First of all, once we have a redundant line, for instance, it may be prudent for us to consider whether or not we want a specific tax policy to allow for or to encourage other companies from outside the territory to come into the territory.

She did correctly note that we have the Yukon small business investment tax credit. Whether or not that would need to be expanded — at this point I'm aware of only one company ever reaching the upper limit of that, and that's Air North, which is excellent. Other than that, I don't think the demand is quite there yet. That's something we are always willing to consider. If industry comes to us and says, "Look, this is really a problem for us," then we'll take into consideration whether or not that needs to be changed. At this point, I don't think we've heard that. I believe that changes to that particular policy may require legislation change actually, so that's something we have to take into consideration. As we all know, legislative changes take some time and an additional amount of resources compared to policy or regulatory changes.

I'll turn now to the member's questions about CETA and the discussions that are ongoing as to the negotiations and ultimately whether or not we'll be able to complete this deal.

The negotiations for the *Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement* began a few years ago and I should note that for the first time — that we're aware of at least — the provinces and territories were part of the Canadian negotiating team that attended the negotiating sessions relating to issues within their jurisdictions. As we all know, the federal government holds the constitutional responsibility to enter into trade agreements with other nations, and that's something that, of course, is pretty well understood, but for the first time the government recognized that these agreements have implications for the provinces and territories and invited us to the table to participate, which is very positive.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister travelled to Europe and along with the head guy for the EU — I think his last name is Barroso, but I stand to be corrected there. I'll get back to the members on the title of the individual from the EU with whom the Prime Minister signed the agreement in principle — but the point is that the Prime Minister travelled to Europe and signed an agreement in principle for the CETA. While that is a tremendous step forward and a very positive accomplishment for the federal government, there is a lot of detail yet to be determined. The final legal wording of the documents and the agreements has yet to be finalized.

This is a job for, I'm sure, an army of lawyers, but international trade and the legal frameworks within which international trade occurs are fairly complicated, and the devil is in the details. There is still a lot of work being done to finalize those details, and within those details we will learn whether or not, for instance, municipal governments will be exempt, or the levels at which they might be. I speculated at some levels previously, based on the best information I had at the time, but ultimately the devil will be in the details.

To answer one specific question the member had, yes, we met with the City of Whitehorse to discuss the negotiations of this and we also met with the chair of AYC at the time. We haven't met with every single municipality, but we did consult with the City of Whitehorse and with the chair of AYC at the time.

With regard to the member's comments about whether or not this will allow local contractors to be pushed out somehow — the term she used was "pushed out" — as I said — and she even quoted me — currently companies from outside the Yukon can bid on contracts. So, no one is pushed out, but projects are open to more companies being able to bid. Whether or not a company bids on a contract — whether it's government or otherwise — what this means is that European companies will be able to bid on projects here in the territory. If that includes the potential one day for a dam, as the Premier and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have indicated, that would mean that a company from another country in Europe could potentially bid on the contract.

When it comes to the smaller projects that we deal with on a more day-to-day basis and for the things we've discussed in this House — whether it's the building of a bridge or a

highway or a hospital or a school — there is already competition coming from outside of Yukon. To date, we have confidence in Yukon companies to compete. That's a simple fact and it's a simple fact that, as a political position, the NDP doesn't like free trade, and that's fine. They are entitled to that.

Competition, of course, is something they, as well, are uncomfortable with, but that's the nature of the private sector and that's the nature of business. With regard to whether or not CETA will ultimately be good for Yukon and good for Canada is something that we'll have to determine. We expect that CETA will be a net positive for the country and a net positive for Yukon. If the NDP feels differently, that's fine and I'm sure they'll continue to express that through their federal leader and federal party that oversees the work that they do here. I'm sure that they'll have the ability to express that in Parliament and here in Whitehorse, as well.

I think I've covered the questions that she's asked. Like I said, I don't have the details as to what the final text will be because it is still being negotiated, but the agreement in principle is signed. We have that and we know what that says.

I don't have it here in the House, obviously, and I don't even know if I would be allowed to read it. The details are still being hashed out through the legal scrub and the legal revisions that occur with these sorts of things. We ultimately will be privy to those once they're completed.

Ms. Hanson: I would note, just to clarify — to be sure that the minister and I are on the same page and I'm not going to go back into it, but page 23 of the information technology — whatever, the strategy — that's where the words "task force" are used twice and not "focus group." There is a difference.

With respect to — I am familiar with the process of how these treaties are negotiated, and yes, an agreement in principle is an important stage. But if the minister has said that the provinces and territories have been able to be party to these, then I don't know how he can be so assured if he says, "I don't even know if I can have access to it." Whose assurances is he taking? Is it from the federal Tories that he has assurances? I can tell him that the federal Leader of the New Democratic Party has been pretty clear that he is open to this agreement. In the territory, we have been asking some questions as the Official Opposition of this territory, regardless of what the federal Leader of the New Democratic Party — we would think that we would want to ensure — and I'm sure that he would want to ensure — that Canadians are not foreclosed opportunities. Nobody from the New Democratic Party is opposed to competition.

What we are concerned about is the notion that Yukoners would be unable to bid — unable to have preference given to Yukon employers in order to grow our local economy. That's one of the things we saw. The minister is aware that the abilities of the government to have preferential — like local hire provisions — that those have been removed through AIT. He has talked a lot about the fact, and the government has acknowledged — and the Conference Board of Canada in its discussions a few weeks ago — that we are a relatively

isolated in geographic terms region of North America. In order to build the economy here and build the reasons why people would live here, they need to have jobs. So if we have small and medium enterprises that are struggling, and we can't give them some assurances that for quality work they're going to have access to quality jobs — that they can be threatened by SNC Lavalin or others who come in and say, "notwithstanding that you have the competencies and everything else in the territory, we can trump it."

I'm not going to belabour the point. I think it's important that the minister continues to make an undertaking to find out what's in that agreement and to communicate that to all levels of government and to the citizens of Yukon. He spoke about meeting with AYC and the city.

I would hope that once he has had an opportunity — or has been able to get his advisors — to find out what the FAQs on the AIP are, he can provide those and talk about the implications of what he knows with First Nations governments and their corporate entities, keeping in mind because he is the one — until the First Nations are, you know — they share the common jurisdictions with this territorial government — so it's incumbent on the territory, I think, if they have the access as a subnational government to what's being done on an international basis by the federal government that we use that opportunity to further build partnerships with First Nations governments as well so that they never get lost out of this equation.

Another area that was raised — and it's sort of in relationship to some of the issues that arose out of the discussion around CETA and had to do with work that Economic Development — I asked the question of what analysis Economic Development had done on this purchasing scope. Really it's an econometric kind of question. The purchasing done by the four levels of government annually in this territory because — and it goes back to a question I asked earlier in the Legislative Assembly. I happened to run into a local businessman as I was going to a meeting last night on Main Street. We were just talking about the challenges of small and medium enterprises and the struggle — and I heard the Member for Klondike reflecting some of the sobering statistics that there are collateral implications to the downturn in this world and the global economy and it affects small and medium businesses in this territory.

I had referenced previously a study that had been done by the University of British Columbia in May of this year that looked at whether there is a difference in economic impact from buying locally and, if so, to what degree. I had said at that time that study showed that locally owned businesses recirculate 33 percent of its revenue directly to residents and businesses, compared to between 16 percent and 18 percent of the similar business line of a multinational or big box. That represented a 77-percent to 100-percent economic advantage for buying local.

In the province of B.C., when the UBC business school did their economic analysis that translated the provincial multipliers — using the provincial multipliers to translate this into jobs — they showed that this local focus leads to an 80-

percent to 100-percent increase in jobs per \$1 million. I've heard the minister and the Premier speak about the robust health in terms of GDP in this territory.

I believe that many small businesses do — that there are opportunities for Yukon to further develop our strategies to enhance local small and medium enterprises.

I'm wondering if the minister can speak to any analysis that he has directed within Economic Development that would bolster his argument, as minister around the Cabinet table, for policies that would further support whatever initiatives he might want to be developing to ensure that we do have the economic analysis.

We do have the economic analysis. Do we have a comparable analysis in this territory? Have we done comparable studies in the Yukon on the multiplier effect for small and medium enterprises in this territory? If so, could he give us a bit of an elaboration as to what that is?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would agree with some of the sentiment expressed by the member of the Opposition — the Leader of the Official Opposition, forgive me — that of course SMEs — small and medium enterprises — are critically important to the economy. They are the lifeblood of the economy. I'm not familiar with this specific study she referenced. I'd haven't read that particular one, but it's fairly common knowledge that local businesses bring increased benefits to the local area, and in Yukon that would apply to any of the small- and medium-sized businesses that are based here.

We do a number of different things to try to support small- and medium-sized enterprises. We're committed to providing programs and services that support and stimulate the development and growth of Yukon's small- and medium-sized enterprises. We work with others to provide business development support and information and advisory services to Yukon's small- and medium-sized enterprises, through partnerships with non-governmental organizations, industry associations, and through direct assistance.

The Department of Economic Development supports small- and medium-sized enterprises to further maximize benefits from large resource, or other economic, developments and other economic activities. The department continues to support Yukon businesses through programming and funding third-party initiatives.

Some of the initiatives that are aimed at supporting and assisting small- and medium-sized enterprises are the business incentive program, which, of course, promotes the hiring of Yukon residents and the use of Yukon manufactured goods and services. We have the business nominee program, which attracts foreign entrepreneurs planning to start or purchase a business and immigrate to Yukon. We have the Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre, which is a partnership between Economic Development and the federal government, and which will provide strategic advice and resources to small- and medium-sized businesses. That particular service is something we are considering right now as to how best to move forward with it. We look forward to seeking input from others as to how best to provide that particular program.

The Dana Naye Ventures microloan program provides loans for the creation of small and home-based businesses. The Dana Naye Ventures business development program provides loans directly to Yukon businesses, as well. We have the enterprise trade fund, which I've discussed already, but that supports business development and market expansion from Yukon businesses. It also provides touring and showcasing support to Yukon sound-recording professionals and access to markets for Yukon filmmakers. It has been fairly successful since its inception, and over \$3.8 million to support 731 projects has been approved.

The department maintains ongoing consultations with key industry stakeholders to ensure Yukon businesses achieve a competitive advantage in external markets. We have the Yukon small business investment tax credit program — which I know the member opposite is familiar with. It allows Yukoners to invest in eligible Yukon businesses to receive an income tax credit equivalent to 25 percent of their investment costs.

We work with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce to do small- and medium-sized enterprise training and development support projects that provide a business hub for businesses and entrepreneurs seeking information on support programs available in Yukon. We have the Yukon business development program, which is a program delivered by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with CanNor and the Government of Yukon, which provides advisory services to Yukon businesses trying to expand into the export market.

In north Yukon, as a regional program, we have the north Yukon business advisory outreach program, which provides mentorship and guidance in business planning, development, marketing strategies and other related business activities.

We have the Yukon venture loan guarantee program, which is intended to encourage the provision of business financing from commercial lenders by sharing the risk associated with the loan.

These are some of the ways that the Department of Economic Development supports small- and medium-sized enterprises. We know that with small- and medium-sized enterprises, it's important to recognize the impact that other projects in the economy have on these businesses and these SMEs. We know that we could be doing more to ensure that larger natural resource development projects — like mining projects or other larger projects — could be tapped into more by Yukon companies, by SMEs here in the territory. That's why we try to ensure that we have the training and advisory ability to indicate to companies where there are opportunities.

We are in the process of conducting a mine-sector profile, which will explain in a more lengthy way how the supply chain for mining works in the territory and where there are opportunities for increased local involvement. Ultimately, government can't be the ones to start the business, take the risk and get into providing the service or providing the product within that supply chain but, as best as we can, we can identify those areas and highlight them and hope that folks

take notice and identify certain areas where they can make a difference.

As the members opposite know, we recently conducted a residency study to the end of trying to determine if we can get more of the employees in Yukon's mines who currently may be flying in and flying out to move here to the territory. What that will do is reduce costs for the companies themselves and those folks working in Yukon projects to a greater extent than they are now could be living in the territory. That means they're buying their groceries at the stores and buying their clothes at the local retailers and purchasing their fuel and ATVs and all the other products and services that locals purchase. Work is underway on that front to further the impact locally of the mining industry on the territory.

With regard to the specific question about whether or not we've done a study on multipliers, the answer in general is, no, we haven't. But, in our economic forecasts and in the work we do around any of the studies that we conduct or sector-specific studies, we'll provide for multipliers therein but nothing in a very general sense about the overarching multiplier effect of any spending on anything. We have done some work, and perhaps there is more to be done, but I'll take the comment that perhaps we could be doing more to study multipliers and discuss it with our folks in the Business and Economic Research branch.

They provide me advice as to what studies are needed and how best to do them. I have to lean on those folks for advice as to what multipliers are applied to what, and when we use them and how we use them.

I think that covers off the questions that the member opposite had about small- and medium-sized enterprises, and I don't believe there were additional questions about CETA. I think there were just some more general comments so I think that covers off the questions.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister and —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Barr: I'd like everyone to welcome to the House Mr. Robert Wills.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his comments there and he has a great opportunity to follow up on industry — specific aspect of multiplier effect that I'm sure his colleague, the minister responsible for Tourism and Culture, may have already mentioned to him. I'll go into it in just a second here. At the outset this afternoon, the minister was speaking about the importance of the trade mission to Europe that was led by the Premier and he had a number of anecdotal examples of suggestions of benefits flowing to the Yukon and to businesses as a result of that. I had actually written to myself that I'd like to come back to him. Normally after a trade mission like this there is usually an announcement of deals that are cut or have been structured, and a sense of the scope of the financial implications of those that flow from the trade missions.

In his last comment with respect to the fact that, to date, no, we haven't, in terms of doing that econometric kind of analysis in terms of an industry or sector — the Minister of Tourism and Culture will no doubt recall at the Tourism Industry Association's general meeting this year in Haines, Alaska, the point was made — I'm not sure how many times — that one of the most difficult things that the tourism industry faces is the perception that it has limited economic impact in this territory — that, yes, it is sort of an important piece, but not really as important or as worthy of a significant investment by government as other sectors. That was brought home when it became clear that the only data is what the industry association itself is able to pull together. In terms of economics, they have numbers about different activities within their sector from different members, but there is no data that government has, other than exit data that tells you how many left the territory. The Tourism Industry Association is left to do its own analyses and has come up with a variety of them.

One example that I think I have cited in the Legislature before is that for every dollar spent by a tourist, it touches a different sector of this community 70 times — 70 different touch points. That's a huge multiplier effect; that's significantly higher than what the Sauder School of Business found for the multiplier effect out of the study in British Columbia for local procurement.

The challenge and the opportunity — this is where the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Tourism could be working together with the tourism association to really do that kind of in-depth analysis. Let's look at what the net impact to this economy and the territory is for every tourism dollar that we can attract here and have spent here. Then we begin to look at how we can target where we want to — as the minister responsible for making recommendations to his colleagues, he has a more informed basis for where were going to target our investment dollars and which sectors, because we know that there's competition. There should be competition for the investments from government. But without that data, without that econometric analysis, I don't know how it's happening.

I'm glad that the minister has indicated his openness to this and I would look forward to seeing that collaborative effort being carried out by him in collaboration with his colleague, the Minister of Tourism. I know that the Tourism Industry Association and their members would be thrilled to think that kind of serious attention was being paid to this sector as a real growth opportunity for the Yukon. It's not just anecdotal about how nice things are and how much people like us, but actually what it means to the growth of business in this territory.

Just with respect to trade missions — the first one is not so much a question, because it's clear that there isn't that kind of analysis being done, but there's an opportunity so I would hope that we'd see a take-up on that opportunity.

The minister outlined — he called them "road shows" — I would probably imagine that they're called trade missions or attendance at trade shows rather than road shows, but maybe

he's got a musical background and he's thinking about it that way. He outlined, at minimum, five trips in the last few weeks. I guess my question really is this: what's the return on our investment for those? There was no announcements of any signed deals out of the trade mission to Europe so, as Minister of Economic Development, how does he assess the success of these initiatives versus the costs incurred with respect to the travelling to wherever as minister or deputies or ADMs to China?

My last part of that, he mentioned that he and his department have spent a couple of — supported the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. I'd just be interested in knowing who the Gold Mining Alliance is and how it is resourced. Is it an advocacy group or what is it?

Thank you Madam Chair. That would be the end of my questions and I'll turn it to the Member for Klondike. Thank you.

Chair: Would members like to take a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With the break there, I have to confess I may have missed a few of the comments that the member opposite made in her last question, but I'll try my best to recollect them and respond to each of them.

At first, I believe she was inquiring about the nature of collecting data related specifically to the tourism industry — but not just to the tourism industry — across the spectrum and how we can improve that and what sort of work we do.

I will leave the tourism specifics at the side. I think that falls to the Department of Tourism and Culture to collect that kind of data. I think they do some of that work already, but I don't have the details as to exactly how they measure the data they do collect — for instance, whether or not certain investments have a certain multiplier effect or how many — to use the term the member opposite used, "touches" — how many touches occurs with a particular dollar in a particular sector.

I will note, though, the general difficulty of collecting the kind of data she's talking about with regard specifically to SMEs. The reason for that is because — first of all — it's difficult to collect SME data pretty much anywhere in Canada, but it's particularly difficult in Yukon because, outside of Northwestel — and I guess perhaps some of the mining companies operating mines — I believe just about every business in Yukon is characterized as an SME under the standard that is used nationally, at least. Even bigger companies like Pelly Construction, on a national level, would be considered a medium enterprise.

It's difficult to calculate some of that data, but government understands that SMEs are important and that's

why we'll continue to support them. We could do studies on that which would further confirm our belief, but essentially, I think, at the end of the day, we all understand that SMEs are important, that having a robust small business enterprise sector in the territory is important and that it's important that government do its part to try to support that growth.

I think that covers off the discussion about tourism and some of the questions around the data and metrics that we use.

The one additional point I would make before actually moving away is that the members will note in the economic forecast that the metric we use is tourism border crossings, because that is something that we can measure. I've indicated that it's not perfect. It's certainly not perfect, but it's one of the few statistics that we can measure and we can track and review. It's not a perfect stat and it's not a perfect metric, but it's something we have and we can measure.

The next question, I believe — and if I get these out of order, I apologize — but the next question I recall related to what exactly I meant by road shows, or which investment conferences or precious metals conferences we have attended, and how we measure the impact of those attendances. I would say that also, especially with conferences focused more on the mining industry, they are difficult to measure.

I had this debate early in the mandate with the Member for Riverdale South, when she was the critic for Economic Development. We discussed the return on investment, I guess, of investing in the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. As I said then, it's difficult to tell exactly the impact of a company's, or a minister's, or a department official's attendance at a particular conference and to correlate that to a particular activity.

What we do know is that, in order for economic projects in the territory to move forward, we need to attract investment from outside of our borders. In order to do that, we have to get out and increase Yukon's profile and investors — be they institutional, be they individuals who are high net worth, or retail investors, or larger funds — need to be aware of Yukon in order to invest here.

It is hard to gauge the direct return on investment of a specific event, or a specific conference, or function that we may host or participate in, in a city. We do know there is value to it, and we know that because industry tells us that. They have said to us in numerous instances that it is appreciated that we are willing to go out and promote the Yukon as a positive place to invest.

The return, of course, comes when we see projects advance and those companies that participate with us and access our funding programs and access our support mechanisms invest in the territory and spend money in the territory. I will explain what exactly the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is in a moment, because I know that was a question. For instance, the Gold Mining Alliance companies are all advanced companies that have projects in the Yukon and have all spent significant dollars in the territory in the past number of years.

Some of them are operating mines and some of them are advanced exploration projects, but in the case of all of them

they are spending literally millions and millions of dollars in the territory and that has a very positive effect on our economy.

Let me respond to this specific question as to what the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is and how we support it and how it is resourced.

The Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is essentially — the way I would describe it — a market consortium. There are six companies that are currently members. The members themselves pay a membership due to join and that contributes to their coffers as an NPO. The members currently are Victoria Gold Corporation, Kaminak Gold Corporation, Alexco Resource Corporation, Prophecy Platinum Corporation, Western Copper and Gold Corporation and Northern Freegold Resources. While the name is a bit deceiving, these aren't just gold companies. They are precious metal companies or companies that have precious metal projects in the Yukon. The companies that make up the current composition have changed in the last year. There are three new members: Prophecy Platinum, Kaminak and Western Copper and Gold are all new this year, joining the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance.

As a market consortium of established Yukon companies, they all have known precious metal resources and significant projects expenditures in Yukon and they are all engaged in activities including advanced exploration, mine development, production and reclamation. As that group, they have requested funding in a number of different instances of Yukon government and we have funded a few of their projects.

Their projects are — I characterize them as road shows. Maybe that's not the best way to label them, but they are essentially investment attraction initiatives. The members will go out to various points around the world where they think that there is benefit to go and hold meetings, whether it is a lunch meeting or an afternoon meeting, a breakfast — whatever it is — with investors. Anywhere from 20 to 80 investors could be in a room and each of the companies will do presentations on their specific projects, why their projects are good and why they are deserving of investment.

When we participate — either a representative from Yukon government or I — we will typically give a presentation indicating why we feel that Yukon is a positive place to invest and why we are encouraging investment in the territory.

The order changes as to who goes first, but essentially then the companies will present their project in Yukon and explain why it's a good project to invest in. Our participation is always geared to no specific project or no particular project, but to the general territory as a whole and the fact that we feel that the Yukon is a great place to invest. We explain a little bit about why, a little bit about roads and infrastructure and permitting processes, First Nation involvement and government involvement and a whole range of issues that we get questions about.

I think if anybody from the Yukon were to review a presentation of that nature they would be a little — they would think it was pretty simple because it seems like pretty

obvious things, but the questions we often get in the far-flung reaches of the world are: “Is it too cold to mine?” and “Aren’t you just part of the Arctic tundra? So what does the Yukon actually look like?” Of course we have to dispel some of those myths about the Yukon that are unfortunately out there.

Another feature of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance is hosting tours and events here in Yukon. They’ll bring investors or resource folks from either media or writers and bring them to the Yukon to learn about the Yukon and learn about their projects. They’ll tour them around; they’ll tour them to their projects and show them some of the infrastructure and surrounding settings of those projects.

Finally, one of the things I wanted to note was with regard to the return on investment of these investment attraction activities. A good example is the effort that Yukon government has put in — even before I was elected, going back to the 2004-05 era — attracting investment from Asia. Since Yukon government took the initiative to go to countries in Asia — particularly Korea, Japan and China — we’ve seen significant investment in the territory. Since 2007, we’ve seen — I think the number is just over \$700 million invested in the territory from Asian investors. We know that it’s working. We know that it’s been successful to date. Again, quantifying the return on investment, how many of those would have happened if we hadn’t gone out? It’s impossible to tell. How many investors from New York would have invested in a company if we had or hadn’t gone there and done a presentation for them? Again, it’s impossible to know, but the companies are receiving investment and things appear to be working, so we’re going to continue to attract investment to the territory because we know it’s critical to see projects move forward.

I think there was one more question in that list and I can’t remember what it was. If there was, I will let the member again ask it; if not, I guess we’ll turn to the next set of questions.

Ms. Hanson: I don’t believe there was an additional question, but in the minister’s comments, it just occurred to me that I had left out an element of that question when I asked about the scope and the membership of the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. I appreciate his description of the activities and the membership of that group, because it’s just a phrase that you hear and I’m never quite sure who they are and what they are. So that’s very helpful.

I’m wondering if the minister could tell the Legislature the contribution to date. He made reference to there being contributions made to the alliance for these various projects or activities — so the contributions for this fiscal year to that group. Under what category would it be in the major business lines that the department has?

I will then turn it over to the Member for Klondike.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, in this year’s budget, received money under the strategic industries fund. The amount for the 2013-14 budget is \$137,000. I don’t have the total available that they’ve received over the years, but that’s the budget for this year. That particular project we’re funding includes property tours in

Yukon and investment promotion tours of financial markets in Europe and North America, which I described earlier.

One additional thing I did want to add is that if members are looking for additional information about the Gold Mining Alliance, they’ve got an excellent website that I would encourage folks to visit, but one of the things that I’ve seen on there before — I’m not sure if it’s on there still — is that the majority of companies, at least, have seen or see an increase in their share price and the volume of shares traded on days after they’ve had an investment tour, so that’s another indicator. Again, it’s not perfect. It doesn’t mean that A is because of B, but it’s a positive thing and the companies point to it as an example of success. CEOs have commented to me that it is one of the indicators they look for as to whether or not something has been successful — whether or not their share price has changed and whether or not their volume of shares traded has increased. So, just another little metric that helps to describe the activities of the Gold Mining Alliance.

I did want to additionally note that the Gold Mining Alliance isn’t the only form we use to promote investment in Yukon. There is a whole range of ways we do that, but that’s outside of the question that she asked, so I think that covers it.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the officials from the department for joining us today. I really appreciate your time. Thank you to the Leader of the Official Opposition for her thorough critique, I guess we can call it, and for all of her questions, which leave me with only a couple of questions here.

I’m going to start with red tape. Yukon was tied last year for last place in the Canadian Federation of Independent Business’ annual Red Tape Report Card. The report indicated that the Yukon made no measurement of red tape and had no long-term commitment to reducing it. We received a D, I believe. As far as the Economic Development department, what is this government doing to reduce red tape that has been created in the office?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We are, of course, aware of the red tape studies that are conducted annually by the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, and we are always appreciative of any organization conducting studies or reviews of what’s going on in Yukon.

In my opinion, one of the things that we could do better is presenting the information about what we’re doing already to groups like that. I think they are sometimes not aware of some of the positive steps that government has taken over the years. We met with the CFIB a few times, and they like to hear that you have a strategy of sorts that says, look, we are committed to red tape production and a series of steps that they want to see on paper. We don’t have that and perhaps we could look at something like that, but there are a number of steps that each minister takes in each of their departments to try to make sure that our services and programs are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The point I would make is that, while we don’t have a general strategy that the CFIB will turn to to indicate whether we have been successful or not, we do take a number of actions throughout the departments to try to improve the

programs and services that we provide — doing things like improving the Land Titles Office and the things that occur there, improving the permitting system with regard to mining companies and providing regulatory clarity for companies.

In the Department of Environment, for instance, we recently announced that we are going to be changing some details around the fees — what are otherwise fairly trivial fees — that were collected and would cost more for us to collect than they were worth. So, we've eliminated some of those.

These are things that happen across government and are part of the normal, everyday business of government as far as I'm concerned, but they don't get reported as red tape cutting because that's not the way we do it. I think we can be doing a better job of promoting the activities we're already doing as cutting red tape. Then again, we always take the input from organizations like CFIB positively. We appreciate their input. I would say that even in jurisdictions where they'll announce a blue ribbon commission on red tape, the commission or the study that they enact will often cause just as much red tape as it's fixing.

I think there are always ways we can improve governance and the way we offer services and programs, and I think we could do a better job of communicating those to the public, including to organizations like CFIB. I hope that answers the member's question. It's something we are aware of that we can do better. We're always trying to improve our services and we can probably do a better job of communicating.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the response from the minister. I did attend a few different events with the CFIB and this was a major concern from their members, so I do hope there is going to be some forward progression on the red tape here in the Yukon through the minister's office.

Let's move to the accord with Alaska — the Alaska-Yukon Intergovernmental Relations Accord indicates that both parties will appoint officials to serve as principal points of liaison for policy purposes and the expeditious sharing of information about mutual interests and joint concerns. This document was signed over a year ago.

Can the minister tell us by legislative return, if possible, who has been appointed to serve as the Yukon's liaison?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As members will be aware, earlier this year, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and I travelled to Skagway to sign an appendix to the intergovernmental accord between Alaska and Yukon. In that appendix, we agreed to work on a number of projects, but focusing on the corridor — the economic corridor, as we called it — between Skagway and Yukon, particularly Whitehorse, Carcross, Skagway — and then potentially on to Juneau.

Through that appendix, there are a number of specific projects identified. For those specific projects, there are individual government leads from each side. For the energy project — the potential of grid connection between Whitehorse down to Skagway — that department lead is an assistant deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. For the telecommunications project, which is also contemplated under that appendix, our Technology and

Telecommunications Development Directorate director is the point person for the Yukon government. At the political level, the Department of Executive Council Office and the Governor's office are the primary points for the overarching accord.

Whenever we are doing something under this accord and under the respective appendices with regard to specific projects, we identify project-specific leads. I think we'll probably talk more about the projects themselves, but I'm sure more questions are coming on this.

Mr. Silver: I'll leave my question on the floor that we did request, by legislative return, who has been appointed to serve as this liaison. I will move on to my final question, which is about the Internet study.

The minister announced in the spring that the government would fund a bankable feasibility study into the second Internet connection. Work on this began in August, as we'll all remember, when the minister announced a bankable feasibility study for an alternative fibre optic telecommunications link to the south being undertaken through partnerships between the Government of Yukon and First Nation development corporations — I believe Dempster Energy Services.

I have a couple of question on this file. How did the government select this particular partner? Was it sole-sourced? If so, could the minister explain why? What route is this study looking at? I believe the study is due in November. Has the minister received it and when does he plan on releasing it?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the member opposite raising this question because it's an important one and it's one of the projects that we have underway that we in the department, and certainly within the Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate, are particularly excited about.

The member is correct that, earlier this year, I announced a series of things that included — that we would be undertaking or would like to undertake a bankable feasibility study on an alternate fibre optic link to the south. That was in conjunction with a number of other announcements that I discussed earlier today in my debate with the Leader of the Official Opposition, so I won't rehash them all, but they were in response to the work we had done with YITIS and other groups to develop the ICT sector strategy and the telecommunications development report, which suggested to us, in both cases, that infrastructure was a significant challenge for this industry and that the capacity and redundancy — or lack thereof — was an additional challenge.

So following that announcement, we created the Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate and began implementing and working with YITIS to implement the recommendations of it. Following that, we were approached by Dempster Energy Services. It's a group of the northern First Nation development corporations that are interested in the development of the study. They had approached us with a proposal to lead a study and asked that

we would contribute funding to match, or to add to, the funding that they were going to provide.

We of course were excited about that because, as I indicated earlier in the year, we wanted to do a bankable feasibility study ourselves and when we were approached by this group of First Nation development corporations who were eager to undertake a study, we were equally as eager and provided them with the funding to do that. So there has been no sole source here. This is a funding — a group of First Nation development corporations requested funding and received funding to do a study.

We would be happy to work with any group of First Nation development corporations, or perhaps even private companies if they were interested as well. But really what's going to happen and what this study is going to tell us, I expect — well, first of all it's going to tell us whether the project is economical or not. It would seem to me that it's probably not economical on its own merits because otherwise I would think a business would have probably undertaken the project already, so there's probably going to be a role for some public investment in this.

Obviously our most favoured outcome would be a project that is led predominately by industry, but it seems that because if the project is not economical and there is a gap, there may be a role for federal investment that could come from the Yukon government — it could come from the federal government, it could come from some combination. It could come from First Nations who see a benefit and see the potential to invest in a project of this nature. Ultimately the ownership model and the possibilities are open. I would expect this bankable feasibility may give us some indication of what might work and what might not, but I'm not sure exactly.

I know that it is not completed yet and I know it's the 28th day of November so I don't know when we might expect it, but I think probably in the coming weeks, if I had to guess, which is a little bit later than we previously indicated. We'll have to see. I haven't seen it yet myself so I can't say that it's completed.

The question is where we go from here once we have this study and once it's completed. Where do we go? I think what we will need to do is to ensure that we've got a partner on the Alaska side that will allow connection into their system. That actually fits in with what I'm saying right now: we have to make sure that we have a partner in Alaska that is willing to allow us to connect to them.

There are currently three fibre links going — main sort of trunk lines from the Anchorage area to the Seattle area in general. One of them connects laterally over to Juneau, so we would probably join with that particular one. There's an interest from Alaska in extending south from Juneau to Ketchikan and then joining from Ketchikan to Prince Rupert and linking in that way, which would give us another set of loops — as we use the term “loops” in that project.

The point that my colleague just passed to me is that we are in the final stages, but are still in negotiations with our colleagues in Alaska about some of the project and what it's

going to look like. What is causing the delay are our discussions with the companies in Alaska and the Alaskans to the end of this project. I think that answered the question and if I didn't, I'll ask the member which part.

Mr. Silver: I pretty much got all the answers as far as the routes that are being looked at. I guess we'll know more once the minister receives and releases this information. I do have one further question about Dempster Energy Services and this contribution agreement. What was the amount of this contribution agreement?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said, Dempster Energy Services approached the Department of Economic Development for support to undertake a bankable feasibility study on an alternate fibre optic link from Yukon to the south. This support was provided through a contribution agreement with Dempster Energy Services. The estimated cost of the fibre feasibility study is expected to be a total of \$133,000 of which we have committed 75 percent — so 75 percent of \$133,000 — which is approximately \$99,000.

Mr. Silver: For the question on this contribution agreement, it does kind of beg the question of why it wouldn't be put out to tender. I understand that a development corporation comes forward, but this is a feasibility study on something that this government had been talking about previously.

Does the minister think that somebody — like maybe Northwestel — wouldn't want to bid on a process like this?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think Northwestel will undoubtedly be involved in this project, necessarily. They must be involved. They own the current infrastructure here in Yukon and anything — you can build a line and add it to, or you can build a fibre optic line from Whitehorse to Juneau, but it means nothing for redundancy if you don't have an agreement with the other trunk line where services can work together.

I would think that absolutely Northwestel will be involved. They are undergoing their own infrastructure development plan. They have their modernization plan underway right now. They are currently undergoing a holistic review by the CRTC that will see change to their current operating environment. We think that they'll be a key player in the study as a potential user of the link, a service provider to users in a southern end of the link and a potential operator. The proposed project has the potential to increase the value of Northwestel's fibre assets, as well.

I absolutely agree that Northwestel will be involved moving forward and I look forward to working with them to see this project come to fruition.

Mr. Silver: I apologize if I wasn't clear in the question. Of course Northwestel will be involved afterward. I'm talking about the bankable feasibility study particularly, and the fact that a company did come forth for this but, once again, why wasn't the decision made to put this feasibility study out to tender?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: If Northwestel were to approach us and want to do a similar study, we would be happy to work with them on it. The reason we went with this particular

proposal was that it was initiated by the First Nation development corporations and we thought it was a positive arrangement to have the First Nation development corporations engaged in this. Since they were driving the project and requested funding, we provided it. It certainly doesn't preclude working with any other group, any other business or any other development corporation in the future on a similar project or any other project related to telecommunications.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? We're going to move to line-by-line debate in Vote 7.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Corporate Services

Ms. Hanson: As the officials will know, I had asked in the briefing — so I'm not sure — I know it's in O&M someplace, but we had asked for a breakdown of the amount attributable to the collective agreement with respect to the increase in total O&M of \$2.204 million. We further asked for the amount of the supplementary budget that's attributable to the outcome of the collective agreement — within that, the amount that's identified for managers' pay, any relocation expenses and the total number of FTEs.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: If I heard that correctly — in Corporate Services, where we have the \$30,000 broken down between collective agreement and managers' merit — \$17,000 is for a collective agreement and \$13,000 is for managers' merit.

Corporate Services in the amount of \$30,000 agreed to

On Corporate Planning and Economic Policy

Corporate Planning and Economic Policy

underexpenditure in the amount of \$10,000 cleared

On Business and Industry Development

Ms. Hanson: Again, I'd just like to clarify — of that \$1,317,000, could the minister just provide the breakdown for that please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of the total amount there, \$74,000 is for collective agreement and managers' merit increases and is broken down by the two. \$35,000 of that \$74,000 is for collective agreement, and \$39,000 of that \$74,000 is for managers' merit.

Beyond that, there is an additional \$781,000 in revotes — \$44,000 is for enterprise trade fund projects, \$498,000 is for strategic industries fund projects, \$161,000 is for film and sound incentive program projects, \$50,000 is for community access program projects, \$28,000 is for business development projects, \$292,000 is new funding approved by CanNor for the target investment program and an additional \$10,000 of funding from Government of Northwest Territories and \$10,000 of funding from Nunavut government, which is the pan-northern study program. There is \$100,000 of new funding approved by CanNor for the Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre and a \$50,000 transfer from corporation planning and economic policy to technology and telecommunications unit. That total is the \$1,317,000.

Business and Industry Development in the amount of

\$1,317,000 agreed to

On Regional Economic Development

Ms. Hanson: I have the same question for the minister — a breakdown please. Then I guess it would be appropriate at that time for him to provide the total number of FTEs and the number of managers and non-management positions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will have to get back to the members on the number of managers versus non-managers. I'll commit to responding to that at a later date.

The following is a breakdown for the Regional Economic Development line. \$31,000 of this is for collective agreement and managers' merit increases and, broken down, that's \$28,000 for the collective agreement and \$3,000 for managers' merit. Further to that \$31,000, there is \$166,000 for revotes of the Regional Economic Development funded projects, and of that \$166,000, there are about one dozen projects done by: the Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation; the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; the Dena Nezziddi Corporation, which is the Ross River Development Corporation; the Kluane Community Development's strategic action plan; Kwanlin Dun First Nation's land development plan; the Na Cho Nyäk Dun's feasibility study, which is worth \$18,000. The Town of Faro is doing the OCP and ICSP reviews, which is worth just over \$14,000. With the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, we're doing a procurement strategy worth about \$30,000. With the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, we're doing an economic development strategy for approximately \$50,000. Finally, we've contributed \$14,000 to implement MOU priorities with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. That totals \$166,000.

Further, there's \$680,000 worth of community development fund projects that are being revoted. I won't list them all because there are many, but they total \$680,000 approximately.

There is a slight reduction of a transfer to capital from the information technology equipment and systems of \$10,000, so that equals out to \$867,000. That's the line item for Regional Economic Development.

I just would note that on those community development fund projects, we get these very commonly in Economic Development, and I'm sure members are familiar with them over the years now. A lot of times these are small groups conducting fairly small projects and they can get delayed by weather, by contractors or by any number of issues that they have. It is fairly common to see these revotes in these CDF funded projects.

Ms. Hanson: The minister made an interesting point there. I just wanted to ask for a point of information with respect to revotes. Is there a cap on the amount of a departmental budget that can be revoted?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a question that's obviously broader than just Economic Development. I don't believe that there is, but I stand to be corrected by the Department of Finance or another department.

Regional Economic Development in the amount of \$867,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,204,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures***On Corporate Services****On Office Equipment and Furniture**Office Equipment and Furniture in the amount of \$10,000 agreed to****On Business and Industry Development****On Business Incentive Program**Business Incentive Program in the amount of \$2,000 agreed to**On Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program**Dana Naye Ventures Business Development Program in the amount of \$7,000 agreed to**On Community Development Trust — Yukon Entrepreneur Support Program**Community Development Trust — Yukon Entrepreneur Support Program in the amount of \$69,000 agreed to**On Total of Other Capital**Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared****Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$88,000 agreed to******Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,292,000 agreed to******Department of Economic Development agreed to*****Some Hon. Member:** (inaudible)**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Ms. Stick: I would just ask that members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming Bonnie Duffee from Dawson City who is down for a women's hockey tournament this weekend.

Applause

Chair: We are next going to look at the Department of Education. That is Vote 3.

Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're going to begin general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Department of Education

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Department of Education's supplementary budget for 2013-14. The supplementary budget reflects a number of expenditures which reflect operation and maintenance, as well as capital costs that have been accrued over the course of the year thus far.

In particular, a number of those expenditures include just over \$1 million to support the new Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining training programs — specifically course offerings for the upcoming year, 2013-14, including heavy equipment operator, introduction to underground mining, community mining dual credit, welding, mineral resources

technician, and curriculum development for heavy equipment mechanic.

The budget also reflects expenditures in support of oil burner mechanic training, to enhance the delivery of training to meet community needs. Advanced education is also requesting an additional \$453,000 for labour market programs and services, comprising a number of different initiatives, including the labour market agreement to reflect an adjustment, as well as dollars, in support of the foreign credential recognition program.

"Other" dollars refer to dollars in supporting the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, as we continue to work together with CSFY so that we can continue to provide high-quality French first language education to right holders. As part of this expenditure, it also includes just under \$1.8 million, \$900,000 of which is earmarked for capital expenditures that support the construction of two portable classrooms in support of l'École Émilie Tremblay. We also have identified \$895,000 in operation and maintenance for CSFY.

There are other expenditures that refer to revotes totalling \$445,000 which have been requested for both school-initiated renovations, school-based equipment purchases and funds used by schools to support programming. These expenditures occur over the course of the school year, rather than a fiscal year, and that is what is reflected in this supplementary.

There are other expenditures. Just over \$1 million has been requested as a revote under capital to complete the purchase of 15 school activity buses — and it also includes other expenditures.

I just want to thank our officials for providing the briefing, which I understand was comprehensive and good — and good briefing material that was provided to the opposition members. I also thank my deputy minister for joining us here today. I certainly look forward to taking any questions.

Mr. Tredger: I too would like to welcome the deputy minister, thank her for her attendance this afternoon and welcome her to the Legislature.

I will keep my opening comments relatively brief in order that we may have more time later to more thoroughly examine the details. I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank all department officials and staff, as well as school staff and educators, principals, teachers, learning assistants, tutors, janitors, school secretaries, bus drivers and all the many people who contribute to the education of our children each and every day. I thank them for all their many positive interactions with our children. I'd also like to thank the parents who work closely with the school and who support their children every day.

Last spring, the Yukon Department of Education minister signed a memorandum of agreement between the Government of Yukon and CYFN and First Nation education directors. I wonder if we have an update on that and on any developments that have occurred. What has been accomplished? How many resources have been allocated to the fulfillment of this? When can we anticipate a report or information on this memorandum?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question before us. When it comes to the delivery of education, the involvement of many various partners — but primarily Yukon First Nations — is of utmost importance to the Yukon government. To this end, we have been working on a number of fronts, one of which is working in collaboration with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

As the member opposite referred to, there was an MOU that was signed by the previous Minister of Education earlier this year, as I understand. It commits CYFN, the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada to work collaboratively on a partnership agreement for the sole purpose of improving educational outcomes for our Yukon student population. We are continuing to work on a number of different fronts through this MOU, but also on a number of other areas as well — bilateral agreements with a number of Yukon First Nations directly.

I actually had an opportunity to meet with the Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief just recently to speak to this partnership agreement and hear directly from the Grand Chief and the education department housed within CYFN as to how we have been working with CYFN and to hear directly the progress being made on a number of fronts.

We're very much engaged with First Nations and very much committed to improving those outcomes — graduation rates, assessment rates and the overall engagement of First Nations students — to make our education more responsive and relevant to education as we've known it today. If there's one thing that I have learned, again, as a person who was born and raised in the Yukon — I have seen significant changes in how we deliver and what we deliver in education.

There is some really great work being done by all respective parties and, of course, it commits the parties to create and implement a joint education action plan and we refer specifically to the tripartite agreement designed to produce those successful results for First Nations students. That work is actually currently underway. The working group has been struck and we spoke to that at our recent meeting with CYFN for the purposes of developing an action plan.

As I was just succinctly reminded, of course that working group will comprise three representatives of Yukon First Nations, two from the Department of Education and one from the Government of Canada. That work — that group and of course that work — will also be reporting to the First Nations Education Commission, which has also been in place for some time and is doing some very effective work.

There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of work that is being done. Currently, in terms of curricula, as I mentioned also, in terms of agreements that have been struck directly with Yukon First Nations — Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation for example — as I understand it, it was the first of its kind.

That agreement was struck and was signed off back in August, if I'm not mistaken, by the Premier, the Minister of Education and the Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and sets out ways in which we can work together to further strengthen the delivery of education in our

communities, such as the Klondike area within the traditional territory of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

There is some very good progressive work being done. Like I said, there are also other discussions taking place with other Yukon First Nations similar to what was just signed off with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Likewise, we're developing workplans to actually implement those commitments and obligations. Again, we're very pleased to see the progress being made.

We do have payments, of course — transfer payment agreements on a couple of fronts when it comes to CYFN, one of which has to do with the funding of the Yukon Native Language Centre. We had a three-year agreement. A new one has been crafted and made available and the second primary funding agreement is also in support of education initiatives. Again, that's working in collaboration with CYFN and that is really directly to support the administration of the education department that is housed within CYFN and also going toward supporting the First Nations Education Commission, the community education liaison coordinator, education support workers and also the education outreach coordinator positions in Yukon schools, covering things such as wages, professional development, travel and so forth.

There are a couple of funding mechanisms that have been in place and, as I said, we're very much committed to crafting the workplan. That work has just recently started, however, with striking a working group comprised of all respective parties.

I look forward to — even though it's a relatively early days, as I mentioned, there are a number of various initiatives — restating our commitment to establishing partnership amongst the three respective orders of government for the purpose of improving the achievement of Yukon students. Coming up with that long-term strategic action plan for lifelong learning process for First Nations students in the territory, the priority is on the public education system, K through 12, but also recognizes all aspects of lifelong learning. It's very important and very inclusive when it comes to early childhood development, post-secondary adult education skills development and labour market needs.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress on Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2013-14*, 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: Seeing the hour is 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.