



The Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 6

2nd Session

25th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, November 9, 1982 — 1:30 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Donald Taylor

Yukon Legislative Assembly

SPEAKER — Honourable Donald Taylor, MLA, Watson Lake

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Andy Philipsen, MLA, Whitehorse Porter Creek West

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Chris Pearson	Whitehorse Riverdale North	Government Leader — responsible for Executive Council Office, Finance, Public Service Commission, and Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations.
Hon. Dan Lang	Whitehorse Porter Creek East	Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Highways, Yukon Housing Corporation, and Yukon Liquor Corporation.
Hon. Howard Tracey	Tatchun	Minister responsible for Health and Human Resources, Renewable Resources, Government Services.
Hon. Clarke Ashley	Klondike	Minister responsible for Justice, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and Workers' Compensation.
Hon. Bea Firth	Whitehorse Riverdale South	Minister responsible for Education, Tourism, and Heritage and Cultural Resources.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS

(Progressive Conservative)

Bill Brewster	Kluane
Al Falle	Hootalinqua
Kathie Nukon	Old Crow
Andy Philipsen	Whitehorse Porter Creek West

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

(New Democratic Party)

Tony Penikett	Whitehorse West Leader of the Official Opposition
Maurice Byblow	Faro
Margaret Joe	Whitehorse North Centre
Roger Kimmerly	Whitehorse South Centre
Piers McDonald	Mayo
Dave Porter	Campbell

(Independent)

Don Taylor	Watson Lake
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Clerk of the Assembly
Clerk Assistant (Legislative)
Clerk Assistant (Administrative)
Sergeant-at-Arms
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Hansard Administrator

Patrick L. Michael
Missy Follwell
Jane Steele
G.I. Cameron
Frank Ursich
Dave Robertson

Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 9, 1982

Mr. Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
 We will proceed with prayers.
Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Mr. Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?
 Reports of committees?
 Petitions?
 Receiving or receiving of petitions?
 Are there any introduction of bills?
 Notices of motion for the production of papers?
 Notices of motion?
 Are there any statements by ministers?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I would like to inform the House that last Thursday, November 4, while I was in Vancouver, meeting with the hon. Lloyd Axworthy, federal Minister of Employment and Immigration, I signed, on behalf of the Yukon Government, a new three-year agreement under the new *National Training Act*.

I believe this agreement will have far-reaching ramifications for Yukon as it will form the basis for maintaining our present training program and will also provide the funding for the development of new programs for our citizens.

These training programs will be instrumental in assisting us to develop a skilled labour force in the territory, which will be available when economic development opportunities arrive.

⁰² Although the agreement calls for the expenditure of up to \$13,000,000 in federal funds over a three-year period, I would like to zero in on this fiscal year and indicate specific figures for funding that will be available for that purpose. The largest allocation of funds is for institutional training. Up to \$1,989,000 will be available for this purpose. Institutional training covers the programs offered at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre, and some of the very courses we are offering in the community learning centres throughout Yukon.

The funds accrue to the Yukon Government through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission purchasing space in the courses that we offer. It also covers the apprenticeship programs that are so important in developing skilled tradesmen for Yukon.

The agreement also indicates that a total of \$654,000 has been allocated for industrial training, of which \$200,000 is earmarked for critical trades skills training. Industrial training is conducted through industry supplying on-the-job training opportunities for individuals. Small allocations have also been made to cover some administration costs.

⁰³ Although not specifically mentioned in the agreement, another positive aspect is that additional federal funding will be coming to Yukon through unemployment benefits and training allowances being paid to people taking part in the courses we offer. It is estimated that in the current fiscal year, the unemployment benefits will amount to just over \$1,000,000, and the training allowances will be in the vicinity of \$300,000.

Another highlight of the agreement is the fact that Yukon will now be eligible for capital funding from the skills-growth fund. This is a federal fund which has been set up to provide capital funding for training facilities. The funds are allocated for training space, and should be used for such items as computers, so that Yukoners should have the opportunity to develop the skills required for the new technologies that are being developed.

One of the factors which determines funding for training is the list of designated national occupations, which will be issued on an annual basis by the federal government. These are the occupations for which a shortage of trained manpower exists. I am pleased to report that Yukon will be involved in the process which helps determine the list. We have been invited to take part in the annual meeting in which labour, industry and government will get together to determine Canada's

future labour and training needs.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that training is a common theme that emerges from all economic development scenarios. It is the tool we must use to ensure that Yukoners have the skills to become involved, and the training agreement I have just signed will help us achieve that goal.

⁰⁴ **Mr. Byblow:** I am very pleased to respond to the second ministerial statement in two days from the same minister on topics from the same meeting. Perhaps tomorrow we will be getting more information.

As I said yesterday, this side of the House agrees whole-heartedly with the initiatives in job training, and certainly with the priority treatment and the effort, not only in a territorial sense, but in a national sense. I think the minister would agree that for too many years, we, as Canadians have relied on the import market in our critical trades needs and, as a consequence, we have neglected an adequate training system of our own.

In that new training agreement that the minister has announced, in that it provides for training programs within the territory for trades areas that we are in short supply, I trust that the minister will ensure — in fact, I insist that the minister ensure — that a thorough manpower planning process take place in order that we can properly and adequately address our job market requirements. I think, in particular, it is very encouraging to see territorial participation in establishing the designated national occupations, and I suppose it would be fair to say that it would be equally as encouraging to see Yukon recognize mining as a designated trade.

I am also encouraged by the capital funding available under a section of the agreement.

I think it is fairly obvious that it is nearly impossible to provide training in areas requiring specialized and high-tech equipment without that kind of funding to assist in the purchase of equipment required. On a very specific aspect, I have already requested the minister to provide me with copies of the training agreement and I trust that the minister will not forget to do that.

In conclusion, I certainly will look forward to public dissemination of the information surrounding the full training agreement and, of course, help the minister in assuring that the people of the territory can take full advantage of what is available under this agreement during this economically depressed period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Land claims

Mr. Penikett: A question for the Government Leader. On a number of occasions, in recent months, we have heard predictions of a land claims agreement-in-principle within the year. In the interest of informing the legislature and the public on this complex and important issue, will the Government Leader be making a ministerial statement or two on the progress of the land claims talks during this sitting of the legislature?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: It is highly likely, when we get to the Department of Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations, which also includes the Land Claims Branch, I will have something to say about the work that has been done.

I am in no position to make reports to the House because of the confidentiality of the claim, other than to say that I, too, am optimistic. I am also very pleased by the attitude that has been adopted, particularly by the Council for Yukon Indians, because I deem it to be a very, very positive one. They, through their chairman, Mr. Allen, have made it very clear that their objective, like ours, is to get a land claims settlement agreement-in-principle as quickly as possible.

⁰⁵ **Mr. Allen** has indicated that he is hopeful that this can be achieved by Christmas. I want to assure all members of this House that I, and the people from Yukon who are working on this claim, will do everything we can to facilitate that hope.

Mr. Penikett: As a result of the secrecy surrounding these talks, this legislature may be asked in effect to close its eyes and rubber-stamp parts of the settlement agreement eventually. I would ask the Government Leader when and if members of this assembly shall have the opportunity to discuss the broad policy implications of the land claims settlement issues?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: The broad policy implication of the land claims settlement issue is whether there is going to be a land claims settlement or not. It has been the stated policy of this government, and a major objective of this government, that should be a settlement of the aboriginal land claims. It is a fact that there will at some point in time be an agreement-in-principle, and at that time it is going to the responsibility of the three parties that are at the negotiating table — the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the Council for Yukon Indians — to present that agreement-in-principle as a *fait accompli* to the people of this territory, and I mean all of the people of the territory and, as well, to the Government of Canada. At that time, it will have to be accepted or rejected.

These are negotiations. They cannot be conducted in public. I have supported the Council for Yukon Indians' stand that the worst thing that can happen to these land claims negotiations is if we do start negotiating them in public. There is good progress, and I am hopeful that there will be an agreement-in-principle that we will all be able to go public with very soon.

Mr. Penikett: I would like to ask the Government Leader if some of the elected representatives of the people in this House are to be continued to be denied any opportunity to discuss government policy, government policy expressed at the negotiations. Exactly how may we be satisfied that our views, as well as those of the Conservative Party, are represented by the territory's negotiator?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: The fundamental issue is that there is responsibility to negotiate land claims. The responsibility falls to this side of the House to negotiate on behalf of the people of the territory. That is what we are doing. We will advise everyone as soon as we possibly can. I say once again, there is absolutely no way that these negotiations will ever be resolved if there is any indication that we, the Council for Yukon Indians or the Government of Canada have to go public with them.

07 Question re: Cyprus Anvil

Mr. Byblow: I have a couple of questions for the Government Leader surrounding the Cyprus Anvil aid package.

The government has indicated that approximately \$1,200,000 of the \$1,600,000 aid package to Cyprus would be directed to the purchase of surplus housing in Faro. Could the Government Leader indicate to the House whether any units have been identified and, if so, how many, and what type of units, would this aid package be expected to purchase?

Hon. Mr. Lang: No, I would say that the decision has to be made whether or not the mine is going to be opened first. If that is the case, then we have indicated our willingness, up to in the range of \$1,200,000, to look seriously at the purchase of some of the excess housing that they would have extra, in respect to the community itself, as opposed to going ahead with the proposed apartment block that we had considered over the past year.

Mr. Byblow: I applaud the government position for playing the role of a good businessman, and I would be tempted to ask if the government considers that the mark of a good businessman would be to be investing in Faro, but that would be treated as frivolous, I am sure.

Could I ask the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation if he could explain what intentions they have for the housing once it is procured?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I just want to assure the member opposite that, first of all, we do not intend to go in the hotel business. I am sure now that he can sleep easy.

I would say that the idea would be to replace a lot of the housing we have at the present time with more permanent housing, because a lot of our present units are mobile homes.

Mr. Byblow: As the minister can confirm, the hospitality never ends in Faro.

Can the Government Leader indicate if he is prepared to encourage the reopening of Cyprus Anvil, should it prove advantageous, by increasing its current offer of contingent aid?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I thought that I had made it clear to the honourable member, and to everyone else that, without some indication of financial aid from the federal government, we are absolutely in no position at all to increase our offer of aid to Cyprus Anvil.

We honestly believe that we have offered all that we responsibly

can, in respect to the opening of that mine, at this point. We have also said to the federal government that should they wish us to be the facilitator of more aid going to Cyprus Anvil, we would be quite prepared to act on their behalf.

08

Question re: Welfare fraud

Mr. Kimmerly: A question to the minister responsible for social assistance. I am informed that recently there was a case of a discovered welfare fraud involving approximately \$6,700 that came to the minister's attention, that was not prosecuted in the courts. Is this a fact?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: There are quite often attempts of welfare fraud. Yes, I am aware of one such alleged fraud. We are doing our best to collect that money back again. As far as taking the matter to the courts, at this time, we do not see the benefit to the government to do that. However, that is an option that is open to us, and may perhaps have to be pursued in the future.

Mr. Kimmerly: Is it the specific policy of the government to prosecute welfare frauds in the courts?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: As far as prosecuting welfare frauds, or attempted frauds, that would be a matter on a case by case basis. We would have to look at all the situations and make a decision at that time. As a blanket policy, I would not commit my department to do so.

Mr. Kimmerly: A previous minister spoke of the Yukon Opportunities coordinator as a job involving an aspect of auditing for social assistance fraud. Is the function of the present person in any way involved with auditing social assistance recipients?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: To the best of my knowledge, no, that is not the job function of the person involved. The job description of that person does not deal with investigating possible fraud. It is the function of other people in the department.

Question re: Wolf predation

Mr. Porter: My question is to the Minister of Renewable Resources. Last week his department officials announced that their contract to Yukon trappers who were hired to assist the department with the wolf predation problem around the Whitehorse area had terminated. Can the minister indicate to us the success of that program, and what further steps his department officials have taken in the continuation of the problem in respect to the Mayo road area?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: The Department of Renewable Resources did contract the two trappers to trap wolves. The program was not that successful. We managed to get two wolves on our first tour around the area. After approximately two to three weeks, they came back on their circuit and they were in the area. However, it was almost at the end of the contract period for the two trappers that, subsequent to that, we have in total eight or nine wolves out of that pack. We now are working with the trapline owner in that area, and I am fairly confident that, within the next few days, we are going to come up with probably another four or five wolves out of that pack. We have traps set out in the area, and we are confident that we will further reduce that pack. We have reduced the pack by eight or nine wolves and I think we have destroyed its potential to do the damage that it was capable of doing before.

Mr. Porter: Can the minister tell us something about the costs of the program, particularly in respect of the trappers and the methodology of payment?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: We hired the two trappers. The total cost to this government was in the neighbourhood of \$6,000 to \$7,000. It was a very costly project, as all wolf extermination projects are. However, as I stated, we were fortunate enough to get a track on the wolf movement pattern. We have been successful, since that time, in getting more of the wolves and we will continue to get the wolves. The actual cost of wolf predation throughout the territory is part of our ongoing, built-in conservation costs, so I cannot identify the total cost. I can identify the cost of the two trappers, which is approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000.

Mr. Porter: In addressing the problem of wolf predation throughout the Yukon, has the minister or the Cabinet examined the idea of reintroduction of the bounty system?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: As I stated at the first of this session, the bounty system has been studied by my department. It has been recommended to me that the bounty system is not going to be effective, and

that we should be looking at alternate methods. As I have also stated, my department will be making those recommendations to me and, at that time, I will be taking them to Cabinet. We will make a decision on what we will have to do, whether it will be hunting by airplane, a poison program, or whatever. The decision will be made and I will announce it in the House.

Question re: Northern preference

Mr. Philippen: Could the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs tell this House if he is aware of the Government of the Northwest Territories' recent decision to drop Yukon contractors from their northern preference clause, and could he tell this House if he has taken steps in this regard to rectify the situation?

Hon. Mr. Lang: It did come to my attention approximately a week or ten days ago. I did have some conversation with my counterpart in the NWT, bringing to their attention that NWT contractors do qualify under our northern preference contracting provisions. I indicated to him that we would find it very difficult to continue having that particular provision in our present policy if Yukon contractors could not apply under the NWT provisions. I have written to him, I have sent a copy of our present policy. He has indicated to me that they will consider once again putting Yukon contractors within the provisions of their northern preference contracting policy.

All I can say is that I will be following it up further this week to see what progress my counterpart has made on the subject. It is a very important matter, as far as the contractors are concerned.

Question re: Legal Services

Mrs. Joe: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Justice a question and he said he would find out the answer. Because it was a very pressing matter, I am going to ask the question again.

In the past, all women applying for maintenance through the courts have always received assistance through YTG Legal Services on processing claims. These services are not covered under legal aid at this time. I have received information that the YTG Legal Services now only assists those women who are receiving social assistance. Can the minister tell me if, in fact, this information is correct?

Hon. Mr. Ashley: I will bring the information in tomorrow.

Mrs. Joe: I would also require the other information that I asked of the minister yesterday, when he brings me the answer to the above.

Question re: Mediation services

Mr. McDonald: I have a question for the Government Leader. A government press release, announcing the offer to provide mediation services in the placer dispute, said that the Minister of Economic Development at the time had promised an inquiry in response to industry concerns. I am interested in knowing what became of this offer for an inquiry.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I answered that question yesterday. I will quickly run through it again. What happened was, when we offered to provide this kind of mediation service, to be the facilitator of a get-together, the federal government decided that they would not be party to such a meeting. They instead offered — because they said it was their responsibility — to conduct an inquiry of their own. At the present time we are waiting for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to name the person or persons who will conduct this inquiry. We have been pressuring them to get this done. Unless it is done very soon, I doubt that it will have any impact in respect to what might be happening with placer miners next summer. I think it imperative that this inquiry be held quickly so that any action that is going to be taken can be taken over the course of this winter, so that everybody know what the rules are going to be next summer.

Mr. McDonald: I would agree with the sentiments of the Government Leader. The same press release indicated that the Director for Federal Northern Affairs Program in Yukon expressed tentative support for the proposed mediation services, and yet the Government Leader said yesterday that the federal government had decided that they would appoint their own commission of inquiry. Could the Government Leader explain the apparent disparity in the Yukon Government's accounts of federal positions?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: At that time, the regional director, in Whitehorse, was very forthcoming and outright in respect to his

support for our proposal. He was overruled by the powers-that-be in Ottawa. That is all that happened. That is not extraordinary. It happens all the time.

Mr. McDonald: Yesterday I asked the Government Leader if he had any knowledge of YTG involvement in the formulation of new placer regulations in the person of a Mr. Ray Coon. I had made a mistake, it was, in fact, a Mr. Joe Coon. Has the Government Leader investigated this alleged Yukon Government involvement and, if so, what has he discovered?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: Mr. Speaker, I will answer that question because it was a member of my department who was involved in this study to set up the guidelines. I think what the Government Leader was speaking to yesterday was the fact that we had very little input into what went into the guidelines, period. The decision was made by the federal government that they would bring out guidelines, and they have arbitrarily placed them on. We have had some involvement at a lower official level, expressing some of our concerns, but as far as influencing the guidelines we have had very little opportunity to influence them. The guidelines have been set by the federal government departments, especially Fisheries and Oceans, and that is where it stands. The Government Leader was correct yesterday in saying that we had very little, or no, input into the guidelines themselves, except at this official level, where we had an opportunity to comment.

Question re: White Pass

Mr. Brewster: I would like to address this question to the hon. Government Leader. Could he please tell this House the status of the White Pass boat which is attempting to unload at Haines and, if this boat is unable to unload, what will be the additional cost of food being trucked in from Vancouver?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: The White Pass and Yukon Corporation was not successful in their attempt to get a temporary restraining order against the pickets at Haines on Friday last.

As a consequence, they have now resolved that they have to maintain their supply routes into the territory via highway, via truck, for all commodities. I know that they have taken necessary action to ensure that that transpires. In the meantime, it is my understanding that White Pass will be attempting to move the Clifford H. Brown back to Vancouver, where the goods that are on it for Yukon would hopefully be unloaded and eventually arrive here in the territory by truck.

It is my understanding that the estimates of the increased cost, while not being able to move any of the foodstuffs by boat, will be between 3.8 percent and 4 percent, so we can anticipate an increase in our cost-of-living at the grocery store of between 3.5 and 4 percent as a result of this unfortunate incident.

I have talked personally to Governor Hammond, and I am hopeful of being able to speak, sometime today, personally, to Governor-elect Sheffield about this problem. I know that both men are very, very concerned. I also know that both men are very cognizant of what an impact this is having on Yukon. I hope that, somehow or another, the issue can be resolved very quickly.

Question re: Nine-day fortnight

Mr. Penikett: I have a question for the Government Leader. For some time now, most employees of this government have worked a nine-day fortnight. In view of the depressed state of the local economy and the Yukon Government's serious financial circumstances, I would like to ask the Government Leader if the Cabinet has discussed the possibility of a four-day work week, as has been reported by a local newspaper?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question, perhaps, borders on materials which are confidential, inasmuch as they would result in a Cabinet decision. However, I will allow the Government Leader to deal with the question if he so wishes.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: We, as a Cabinet, have not discussed a four-day work week. This budget has been put together on the premise that we are going to maintain the nine-day fortnight until the end of the fiscal year. We have made a basic assumption that we are going to maintain the nine-day fortnight until the end of the fiscal year and, in doing that, we end up with the \$500,000 in working capital at the end of the year.

I would respectfully suggest that that would be one option that is

open to us, should we find that between now and the end of the fiscal year there was a dramatic, unforeseen change in our financial situation. I do not anticipate that that is going to happen, however.

Mr. Penikett: I wanted to explore government policy in exactly that situation. Many southern employers who have shortened their work week to four days have also negotiated so-called work-sharing agreements by which Canada Manpower and UIC picks up some share of the wage bill. I would like to ask the Government Leader if any exploratory discussions have been held with Ottawa on this subject?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Yes, and all governments in Canada are specifically exempted from those benefits with the federal government.

Mr. Penikett: That confirms what one has heard locally on that question, but in discussion with an official in charge of the program in Ottawa, there was some indication that they might entertain an experimental project in this score. I would ask the Government Leader, since the criterium for such work-sharing plans is that an employer has less work for employees, something which is easier, obviously, for a private company to prove than a public sector employer, I would like to ask the government if he might have further discussions or explorations with Ottawa on this point as an acceptable alternative to public sector lay-offs?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: Certainly, it would be a far more acceptable alternative, but there is absolutely no way that we could substantiate that we have less work for our employees.

What happens with a nine-day fortnight, or a four-day work week, is that services to the public are reduced. That is really what it is all about, the people who are working the nine-day fortnight are people who serve the public. It is the services to the public that are reduced. Those people on shift work, for instance, in the Correctional Institute, in senior citizens homes, group homes, this type of thing, are not affected by the nine-day fortnight. Again, we deemed it to be a false economy, counter-productive, to put those people on a nine-day fortnight. What we are doing is directly affecting service to the public. We cannot possibly say that we have not got enough work for them. As a consequence, there is no need for them to work the whole week. What we will be doing is cutting back public services.

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Question re: Expired unemployment insurance

Mr. Byblow: I have a question I will direct to the minister responsible for Manpower, and this is further to the minister's announcement yesterday regarding the program to create work for people whose unemployment insurance benefits have run out. Can the minister say yet, either approximately or specifically, what level of funding will be available to Yukon under this program?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I thought that was quite clear in the ministerial statement I issued yesterday. The federal minister, Mr. Axworthy, is not even aware yet how the money will be distributed. It will be distributed on the basis of the number of unemployment insurance exhaustees, or, people whose unemployment insurance payments have expired.

Mr. Byblow: Then I would assume that the calculations for the \$500,000,000 will be based on that. Can the minister state at this time what sort of projects will be prioritized for this particular program, and also, whether or not the selection process will be done in Yukon by Yukoners?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Well, to answer the latter part of the question first, the selection program will be done in Yukon, upon the final authority of the federal Minister for Immigration and Manpower. As far as priorities are concerned, because the job-creation program is so expensive — and I am sure that the hon. member is aware by now that there are three job creation or assistance programs, and if he wishes, I will outline them for him — we will have to look at all programs and prioritize in all areas. It is very difficult to say right now what the priorities will be.

Mr. Byblow: I was pursuing what prioritizing criteria the minister might use, and I assume it will be things like labour-intensive infrastructure, and so on. Can the minister say at this time, whether under this program, the people who will be participating in it will receive remuneration in the same amount as standard UI benefits? And, at the same time, will they accrue further UI eligibility?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Well — maybe to clarify it a bit — I had

intended to set my priorities on a different basis. Of course, the first people we will be looking at will be UI exhaustees because, of course, they will have no money coming in and will be appealing to the Minister of Health and Human Resources for social assistance. So I will be prioritizing firstly on a basis of who has run out of income. We will then use the Bridging Assistance Program and, although I am not indicating the priorities of job creation, as a top-up method for people who are receiving UI employment cheques and who are not accommodating all of their expenses on a monthly basis, say.

And, I cannot answer the last question because I am not exactly sure, and I would not like to give the incorrect answer, as to whether they will become again eligible for UI benefits but I will find out the answer for the member.

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Question re: Carcross school drinking water

Mr. Falle: I have a question for the Minister of Education. Could the minister shed some light on the question of arsenic being contained in the school drinking water in Carcross?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: The Chief Environmental Health Officer, Dan Dimitroff, informed me a few days ago that the arsenic level in the drinking water at Carcross School were, in fact, three times the normal level. It was at that time that the department decided to abandon the drinking water in the Carcross school and we would get water supplies from the community well, which apparently was not affected with the high arsenic level.

Until Mr. Dimitroff comes back to us with a suggestion, or remedy, for the problem, we are staying at *status quo* with the water being delivered to the school. I would like to assure the member for Hootalinqua, because the school is in his riding, that when the recommendations do come to the Department of Education, we will take those recommendations and we will implement whatever is necessary to make sure that there is safe drinking water for the school children.

Question re: Social assistance

Mr. Kimmerly: A question for the minister responsible for social assistance.

The Alberta Government has just instituted a "work-for-welfare" program, the so-called community self-help project, which requires employable recipients to do community work for money. Will the minister state, for the record, whether the Yukon plan is in any way modeled on the Alberta plan?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: That would be a great idea but I do not think that we have the money like Alberta has in order to implement that plan. I tend to be in full agreement. I think if someone requires assistance from the taxpayer, perhaps the taxpayer has the right to ask something in return. That is not being considered at this time by my department.

Mr. Kimmerly: As a clarification, will the minister say categorically if the opportunities coordinator position involves a work-for-welfare program in any way at all?

Hon. Mr. Tracey: I thought I just answered that question. It is not the thrust in my department now to have work-for-welfare. However, I certainly want to get people off of the welfare rolls and, as I said, I tend to agree with Mr. Loughheed's program.

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Question re: Fishing treaty negotiations

Mr. Porter: I would like to ask the Government Leader about his government's request to the Canada-United States treaty negotiations with respect to the fishing industry. I did get an answer, but was not able to pursue it fully. Today, can I ask the Government Leader to tell us in greater detail the nature of his request to the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: We pointed out to them that salmon fishing was an industry that is carried on in this territory. A lot of people are involved in it and we thought that we should have some input and some say into any changes in the treaties that will be negotiated. To the best of my knowledge, we have not yet been advised as to whether or not we are going to be included in those talks. I would be happy to follow up for the hon. member, and I will also undertake to make sure that he is advised should we get advice when the House is not sitting, because I recognize his interest in this area.

Mr. Porter: In his follow-up, can the Government Leader undertake to pursue a meeting with the federal Ministry of Fisheries re-

sponsible, and also would the Government Leader indicate as to whether or not he would pursue a meeting with the Governor-elect in Alaska on the very same issue?

Hon. Mr. Pearson: If I understand the thing correctly, there is a tribunal set up to actually do this work. I do not know exactly what their Governor-elect of Alaska's role might be in that. Certainly, I will follow up on that and see what I can find out. The moment we have any information, I will let the hon. member know.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. I must advise the House that the time allotted for question period has now expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Before proceeding with orders of the day, I would like to point out to hon. members the presence on the order paper of Bill No. 101 entitled, *An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*. The Chair notes that the House has now passed Bill No. 13, also entitled, *An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*. These two bills deal with the same subject matter and I am sure that members are aware that it is a long established practice that the House should not be asked to pronounce itself on a question in the same session on which it is already decided or expressed itself, either by negative or positive vote. It would therefore be irregular for the House now to further proceed with Bill No. 101 because it would renew debate on a matter upon which the House has already pronounced itself. I will therefore be ordering Mr. Clerk to remove Bill No. 101 from the order paper.

We will now proceed to government bills and orders.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS

Bill No. 12: Second Reading

Mr. Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 12, standing in the name of the hon. Mr. Ashley.

Hon. Mr. Ashley: I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill No. 12 entitled, *An Act to Amend the Optometry Act*, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill Number 12 be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Ashley: These amendments to the *Optometry Act* are being introduced to facilitate entry into Yukon and subsequent practice by qualified optometrists from outside of Canada. The changes to the registration requirements will bring our legislation closer in line with that in force in other Canadian jurisdictions.

There is a shortage of optometrists in Canada. At the present time, there are only two Canadian universities, the University of Waterloo and the University of Montreal, which offer optometry programs. The University of Waterloo graduates 60 optometrists each year and the University of Montreal graduates another 30 to 40 French-speaking optometrists each year. In view of the shortage of Canadian-trained optometrists, adoption of these changes will provide a less arbitrary and more flexible approach to licensing with no intent to lower basic standards.

In addition to the registration amendments, the legislation has been changed to eliminate the grandfather clause, which dates back to 1955, and is no longer applicable or necessary. The use of the title "doctor" by optometrists will also be permitted. The allowance of optometrists to use the term "doctor" is not inconsistent with what is permitted in numerous other jurisdictions. Graduates from the University of Waterloo, at least, are issued a degree of Doctor of Optometry and we consider that no harm or confusion will result from allowing optometrists to use the designation in connection with their practice.

In summary, our prime concern and reason for changing the registration requirement, is to ensure that the legislation does not unduly restrict the availability of optometric services to people of Yukon.

Mr. Kimmerly: This is an uncontroversial bill, and we agree with the principle of the bill. The explanation given by the minister is, in our view, quite accurate.

We have one or two questions that we will undoubtedly raise in the committee stage about the overall licensing adequacy in the Canadian industry, but it is not specific to the Yukon situation in any real way. It is an uncontroversial bill, and I look forward to its speedy passage.

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 4: Third Reading

Mr. Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 4, standing in the name of the hon. Mr. Pearson.

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill No. 4, *Fifth Appropriation Act, 1981-82*, be now read a third time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the hon. Government Leader, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill No. 4 be now read a third time.

Mr. Penikett: I just want to say, before this bill bites the dust, that in retrospect, 1981/82 was a very good year.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill No. 4 do now pass and that the title be as on the order paper.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the hon. Government Leader, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Human Resources, that Bill No. 4 do now pass and that the title be as on the order paper.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move, seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the hon. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House convene into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Chairman: We will now take a short recess.

Recess

Mr. Chairman: I will call Committee of the Whole to order.

We will continue with the *Second Appropriation Act*. We will go to page 30 of the Operation and Maintenance Estimates, 1982/83 to Education.

On Education

Hon. Mrs. Flirth: My department has spent considerable time reviewing and fine tooth-combing all aspects of the estimates which we shall be discussing today. The goals of the exercise were to reduce expenditures and maintain the quality of the programs. It is evident from these estimates before you that these goals have been achieved. No programs have been cut and are in place at a more-than-adequate standard.

Travel, materials and supplies and other such administrative items have been severely curtailed. An energy conservation program is being operated in all our facilities in order to reduce consumption and realize savings in utilities.

The department endured a grueling, but positive, zero-based review, where every effort was made to reduce costs and every line item of the budget was scrutinized. There is no fat in the Department of Education, Manpower and Recreation. We have been able to continue with our French language program, French immersion program and the Native language program, as well as maintaining a superior quality of education.

A healthy student-teacher ratio has been maintained. No schools have closed, no teachers have been laid off. New schools have been opened in Old Crow and Porter Creek, and another will open in Pelly early in the new year.

Grants and bursaries to students have increased dramatically, and a highly successful student-employment assistant program was implemented during the summer months. We can be proud of these achievements.

Advanced education and manpower is undergoing major restructuring. This is evidenced by an increase in person-years at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre and in the area of manpower planning and development. Last week we signed a \$13,000,000, three-year agreement for training and we are now setting up the

mechanisms for a job-creation program, job-retention program and section 38 agreements — that is the Bridging Assistance Program. All of this is supported by an additional \$1,000,000 from this government.

In the area of recreation, it is particularly noticeable that we have trimmed administrative costs so that more funds are available for community grants. The Green Paper review is in process and consultation has taken place with all interest groups.

²⁰ In April, 1982, the Women's Bureau was transferred to the Department of Justice, and in August, 1982, the Resource Corps was transferred to the Department of Renewable Resources.

I am proud to stand before you today in the knowledge that we are presenting a budget which is not only realistic, but maintains a high level of service in these recessionary times.

Mr. Byblow: I certainly would like to thank the minister for her first major delivery on the budget and express some approval of the effort to maintain program quality.

While I believe that the minister is sincere in expressing that her department tried very hard to maintain program quality, and limit cutting to a minimum, I did take some time to do something of an analysis of a couple of departments, and I just throw out, by way of an observation, that the two highest expenditure departments are Highways and Education. Together, they account for nearly one-half of the O & M budget.

In the spring budget, there was a \$1,000,000 spread between those two departments, with Highways the higher expenditure department. This fall, in the present budget, the spread is \$300,000 and, on the surface, that would seem to be very good. It would appear that Highways was cut further than Education. But, when I started analyzing the actual cuts involved, I found that a \$1,200,000 building maintenance expenditure item, which was in the Highways portion of the budget in the spring, is no longer in the Highways portion of the budget in the fall. When I take the other side of the comparison, this fall's education budget has inserted a \$200,000 building maintenance line item that was not in the spring budget. As well, I notice that the present education budget has a couple of other program expenditures, and I believe the minister touched on them, that were not in that original spring budget.

If similar percentage cuts had been made in each of these two departments, and I have chosen Highways only because the dollar amounts were comparable, then the Highways budget ought to have been less, overall, than the Education budget, because it had this \$1,200,000 removed from it. I guess the only point I would make there is, in a general sense, if my analysis is correct, the Education budget has been cut much more drastically than Highways. In that regard, if that is correct, we only raise the concern about prioritizing.

Extending from that, I briefly want to talk about some of the consequences of budgetary cuts in Education, firstly in a very practical sense. Then I want to talk about it in a more philosophical sense.

One of the most frequent complaints that I got this past summer from schools is in the area of supplies. Now, there is a very apparent cut-back in ordering these essentials. These essentials are required in any standard classroom presentation, the aids. You know, we are talking about paper, we are talking about texts, we are talking about even things like chalk. It is certainly something about which I am getting some feedback. And whether or not this period has anything to do with it, I am not sure, but I raise the point because it has been raised with me. If there is some very obvious and apparent policy change, then I just simply raise it as a concern and feedback from the grassroots level of the schools.

However, I want to talk about something a little more general, and a little more fundamental, in terms of educational concerns, in that, from a budgetary component, as I said earlier, nearly a quarter of our operational and maintenance budget is directed to education, and from a social and human sense, everyone is affected at some time or another in varying degrees by education.

I think my party and I have always advocated a priority treatment of the vocational aspect of education. And certainly, as the minister announced earlier today, the component of job training at the adult level is an encouraging sign, in terms of what I want to talk about. Certainly, with the federal funding that has been made available, and with the standard government responsibility towards education, I think we can at this time, more than ever, take a position of realigning

some of the archaic or non-existent educational objectives of the territory.

Now, one of the strongest recommendations that came out of a federal study, and this was an all-party study, entitled "Work for Tomorrow", emphasized the need for streamlining the vocational component through the formal educational system, through to the pre-trades training, either at the latter stage of formal schooling, or in the post-secondary institutions, right through to the job training.

²² Emanating with the trading agreement that the minister talked about earlier in her ministerial address, I think we have an ideal opportunity here. I have previously criticized this government, and perhaps I should say previous administration, that the education system is guilty of a directionless meandering. If I asked the minister or any member of her department just what the goals and objectives of her department are, and I realize they are stated at the outset of the budget, I am sure that in any explanation I would get some motherhood statement about providing elementary, secondary and adult education to the people of the territory. I do not say that derogatorily. I make it with the express and precise purpose of calling to attention the need to define or articulate a comprehensive social and practical philosophy about where we are headed and what we are doing with a quarter of our budget. I say that in all seriousness. If we complement our budget with the federal assistance that is becoming available, we have quite a substantial amount of money that we are dealing with. I appreciate the minister's comments. I said earlier that I sincerely believe that her department believes that it is doing its best job, and did its best job, in reconstituting this budget from the spring. But I raise in all seriousness some deep-rooted problems that are inherent in our system and that must be addressed.

As I began earlier, certainly the vocational and the trades training component must be thoroughly re-examined. I think it is tremendous that we have a new training agreement signed with the federal government, but I want to extend that lower down, as it were, in the system. I call attention to the need for vocational streamlining through the entire system. In essence, what I am saying is, a carpentry class in grade ten must have applicability to a pre-trades course in vocational school, which in turn must have applicability to an on-the-job apprenticeship training qualification. I say this with more concern than the organizational aspect would suggest.

I think too often in our present system, for example, the high school trades courses are a drop-in, drop-out babysitting service, and no one benefits. But the money is spent. We then have to question just what our system is doing. We have to question that in a practical sense, in a functional sense, in a dollar sense as well. Is our system protecting the academically gifted or just the academic elite? Is it rejecting the disadvantaged or the disinterested or even the non-aspiring and if so, what accommodation are we providing to cope with this problem? And do we have a goal-related initiative in terms of what we are doing about it? Do we know what we are doing?

I get numerous concerns raised about the drop-out rate, and when I look into the reasons I am really dismayed. I will not go into any detail about that. I believe one of my colleagues will probably talk in some depth about that. The point I wish to make is that we must more clearly restate our educational philosophy and apply that philosophy in the classroom and throughout the whole system.

²³ Putting it another way, what I am asking the minister is if she will, in the course of her tenure, be re-examining this direction of education in the territory? Even more specifically, is the minister prepared to undertake a statement on educational policy, and is that policy going to include the commitment that we would like to see all Yukoners provided with a fair opportunity and means to achieve, or, what I would like to consider, a basic right to education? Will that statement of policy include a commitment that education will remain in the democratically controlled facet of society? Will that commitment include that Yukoners have the educational system that will allow them to leave the system, when they are through with it, with positive feelings about the system, about their abilities, and having a realistic sense of their futures in society and, of course, in the economy?

I believe, emphatically, that this government should undertake, over the next couple of years, a commitment to seek public input — hearings if necessary — on the revision of the *Schools Ordinance*. We now have an eight-year-old piece of legislation. We now have a

crossroads facing us in terms of educational purpose on commitment and we have a society questioning, which for the most part is quite unclear, just what education is about, and whether the money is most judiciously spent.

My party and I believe that this kind of exercise would be most beneficial, not only from the input and informational aspect, but from a budgetary sense as well. I dare say that we may well end up with some substantial cost savings as we realign our educational facilities, as we may realign and streamline our programs and, in general, the total service delivery through education.

²⁴ That is a principle comment that I wish to make in general debate. I have a number of much more specific concerns, but rather than going into them, I will just leave it here, see if the minister would like to respond at all, and then go one by one into the more specific aspects.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: From the member for Faro, I get this somewhat apprehensive, fearful impression that he will father me all through the next four years, and he must be horrified that such a person as myself has been appointed as the Minister of Education, since I am not a teacher, and, as the common saying goes, everyone is an expert in education because everyone has been to school, but when they take that additional step and they become teachers, then they become that much more of an expert.

Mr. Byblow: I did not say that, I did not say that.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I appreciate the member's comments and I would like to just, in a chronological order as he made comments, respond to some. Hopefully, I will be able to alleviate some of the apprehensions and fears that the member does have.

Firstly, he indicated some concern about supplies being in short demand. Children will receive the education without the additional chalk and erasers and paper, and the principals and teachers have actually been extremely cooperative and extremely innovative in compensating for any shortness of supply in this area.

When we talk about making budget cuts and deferrals in education, I would like to just mention to the member, in case he has neglected to point this out in the budget, that because such a large portion of the budget, half, is designated for teachers' salaries, and teachers have been exempted from the nine-day fortnight, we were faced with a problem where we had half of a budget that was to cover three major departments, not only Education and Public Schools, but, as well, Recreation and Advanced Education and Manpower, and half of that budget went towards teachers' salaries.

We are giving a priority to the vocational aspect of the Education department. I think the member will be finding that the Manpower Branch and Continuing Education Branch will be undertaking some new initiatives to maintain and improve the existing responsibility areas, such as apprenticeship training. We have made some very conscientious efforts to get the Manpower department running smoothly. We are, at the present time, short quite a few positions, and the Manpower department has just moved to the Department of Education and the deputy minister and I have made it a priority to get the department functioning in order that we do benefit from the federal funds.

We are presently recruiting an assistant deputy minister for the Department of Manpower, for which we received some criticism, but I am sure the members opposite are aware of the crucial position, and the criticalness of this position being filled, so we can benefit from these federal funds.

As far as the drop-out rate — I believe, from grade ten to 12 is 39 percent now — I have been doing my research, I have been doing some homework, and I am aware of the member trying to educate me a bit about comprehensive education. I have done some studying of the fact that the drop-out rate after the introduction of comprehensive education goes from 39 percent to 12 or 13 percent. Comprehensive education is something I think we will be looking at in the department.

As Minister of Education for only four months, I would not like to be as bold as to stand here and say that I am prepared to set department objectives right now. I would like to assess the whole department a little more, and find out exactly how it is functioning, how it is operating.

To reassure the member that we are doing something, we are not just constantly reviewing, we, as the member opposite was made aware during the election campaign — there were a lot of critical comments

made about the administrative department in Education — we have already undertaken to do a personnel review, and we have made some rather interesting discoveries about the distribution of authority, and accountability, and we will be further assessing this. When we compared our administrative staff to comparable places in B.C., such as Prince George and Quesnel, for example, we found that we in fact only had two more administrative staff than these communities. Something I found that was extremely interesting to note was that these areas have school boards in place. We have school committees, and I am sure that the member is aware that school boards have fiscal responsibilities and school committees do not, and this accounted for our extra administrative staff to carry on the financial functions of the department. We are also doing a systems analysis of the administration of the department. In objectives and priorities, we are trying to start at the top, and work our way down.

As far as philosophical statements about the Department of Education are concerned, I think that I am a very practical and functional person, and I do not anticipate any problems with frivolous education systems. I am at least aware, and I will say so openly, that when you are talking about education, people tend to spend so much of their time dealing with the parents and with teachers and with administrative staff associated with education that the main objective of education, the child, is quite often forgotten, though very often discussed. My objective, and my first concern, is the child and the adult receiving education, and that is where I shall start the priorities from in the department.

²⁶ I do not like to hear the Department of Education referred to as a babysitting service in any context. I would like to think that our teachers are certainly providing something other than that, and the department as well. I would like to caution the member. He mentions implementing the technical trades into the mainstream of the school system. I appreciate that that is part of comprehensive education, but the caution I would like to make is that parents still have an extremely poor attitude towards this, and I have recognized that. We will endeavour to bring that particular aspect to everyone's attention when we are considering it.

I think we have to have programs to keep the students interested. If we want to be philosophical, I would just like to reassure the member that, number one, I am going to think of the students, and I am going to be thinking about keeping them interested and keeping them involved in our education system.

Mr. Byblow: I would sincerely thank the minister for her very frank response and assure here that, in no way, is it my intention to shoulder any fatherly responsibility for her departmental responsibilities. Nevertheless, without belabouring several of the points that we both have addressed already, I want to come back to the vocational aspect with respect to its priority and parental attitude.

I believe, and I am sure the minister is aware, that in the past couple of years, through the various school committees and through the territorial educational council, there have been initiatives from those parents saying, hey, look, we want you to take a closer look at the vocational component in the school system. I am saying that the problem may not so much lie with parents, or even students, as with the established traditions of the system itself. Sometimes it is very hard to change people, in fact, they are the hardest to change if you are trying to institute anything different.

In a general response on that vocational aspect, I would suggest that we must make more of an effort to do this streamlining I talked about earlier and I will just leave it there. I do not particularly see much of a problem in doing some of that streamlining in terms of it being a very practical, functional step in terms of delivering a complete system. If a carpentry class starts in grade nine and it concludes four years later on the job, every component fits neatly together. Granted there would be some problems related to employer standards, requirements, contracts and so on, but I am sure those can be worked out.

²⁷ The minister commented, and I was very interested to hear it, about her department's analysis of its own alleged top heavy administrative component. I think we are all in this House aware, at some point or other, of that standard criticism of education, "It is top heavy administratively, we have far too many administrators in the territory for the number of teachers and students", and the allegations go on.

I would be curious to hear from the minister how we do compare,

provincially, in terms of the administrative component versus the staffing, and how we stack up against provincial jurisdictions. I am led to believe that we have far in excess of standard averages in the administrative end. The minister can certainly correct me if I am wrong.

I want to talk about a topic that neither of us has touched on, and get some response. Very specifically, with regard to the community learning centres, can the minister tell me at this time whether or not this program is intended for upgrading or improvement, what communities are we going to be looking at, and how does this connect with the training component that is now being emphasized in the system? Perhaps, with that generality, the minister could respond.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Regarding the administrative versus staffing comparisons to other jurisdictions, other provinces, I have only done a comparison with B.C., because we follow the same curriculum as B.C. As I intended before, for approximately 5,000 students and 300 teachers, they had six administrative staff and we had eight. We do have extra administrative staff, but considering that Yukon, with a population of 23,000 to 25,000, depending on the day, provides all the services that a province provides, all the facets of education, all the facets of adult education, and manpower and recreation. That this small population has to provide all those services would explain the fact that we are going to need some extra staffing, particularly when our school committees have no fiscal responsibility. In jurisdictions in the provinces, in B.C. and other provinces, the school boards do. We need the extra administrative staff for the financial management of the department.

²¹ I am not saying that that justifies that we have two extra, or four extra, or whatever. What I am saying is that we are reviewing this. If we find that we are overburdened with administrative staff, we will certainly think about doing something about it. Personally, I do not think we are. I think it is very easy, when you are on the outside — and I was always guilty of this, as well — of remarking that the administrative department in the Department of Education must have been top-heavy, because I have heard the comments so many times. However, when you come in and you see the programs that are being delivered, and each program that is being delivered needs one or two people to deliver that program, you soon find out that without this administrative personnel, the quality of education and the program delivery would not be there.

I believe there are four community learning centres now — and I may not have this 100 percent accurate and, if not, I will correct myself at a later time: we have one in Watson Lake, one in Faro, Mayo and Carcross. To indicate to people who are not aware of it, the community learning centres have an Apple II computer, they have a booklet that people will go in and fill out, put information into, regarding their personal education, their abilities and their interest. The information is fed into the computer and an assessment can be made as to which vocation that person should pursue. This is all part of our vocational and technical training that is going out to the communities. It is being decentralized to the communities, along with the distance education and the mobile unit that travels from community to community.

Mr. Byblow: Just to complete full-circle on an earlier point that I raised with respect to public input and subsequent revisions to the *Schools Ordinance*, in terms of updating and realigning, is it the intention of the minister, during her tenure over the course of the next two or three years, to reopen and update the *Schools Ordinance*?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I have already been looking at the ordinance and I am sure we will come upon things that will need some updating. I am not making a commitment that I am going to examine the whole *Schools Ordinance* right now because I do not know enough about the Department of Education to know whether that is really an accurate statement to make, or whether that is necessary to do. To reassure the member, certainly, if I feel that it is necessary to do that, we will do it and it will be done with as much input as feasible.

Mr. Byblow: I appreciate that reassurance and certainly, on the public input, I think it would be most judicious to seek that, because there is a lot of opinion and point of view respecting education out there.

To complete the questioning on that subject, and I ask this question in all seriousness because there is some concern, is it the intention of

the minister to reopen the ordinance within the next school year for any specific purpose?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I have indicated to the education council and, I believe, to some school committees that I have met with that, upon their recommendation, we will be opening the *Schools Ordinance* as far as looking at the longer extension of holidays over the Christmas period, perhaps the children getting out of school earlier and getting back to school later, so that they would have the month of June off, which is the summer month in the Yukon Territory — June and July, as opposed to July and August. These things will only be done upon the recommendation of the education council and school committees, and I am sure there will be plenty of public input through parental guidance.

Mr. Kimmerly: I should assure Mrs. Firth that I have absolutely no intentions of appearing, in any way, fatherly. I indeed am not even going to make a single comment, at this time at any rate, and wish only to ask questions, although I have a series of questions. I will ask them one at a time.

Firstly, the minister, unlike Mr. Tracey who has a specific priority of a goal of a geriatric care centre, is not announcing any priority or any objective during the next four years, except to keep students more interested. I am interested in that process and those objectives. I will be asking questions about them in a very general sense.

I realize that the minister does not wish to make any philosophical statements about education, I presume, but I am going to ask some specific philosophical questions, some of which I asked in the spring. I would be interested inasmuch of an answer as is possible and, indeed, I will probably ask the same sorts of questions next year, in light of the developments, or lack of developments, in the area.

The first one is a very simple one. The Yukon's *Schools Ordinance* specifically allows for corporal punishment in the schools. In light of the stated objective of keeping the students more interested and, presumably, listening to students, is the minister able to make any statement about the use of corporal punishment in the schools, or any plan of consulting with either students, teachers or parents to study the question? I am specifically interested in some rural schools in the Yukon where, I believe, a note is sent home to the parents asking for permission, should the need arise, to use corporal punishment in the schools. I would ask the minister to comment on the general question and the specific practice of asking permission of parents about corporal punishment?

²⁰ **Hon. Mrs. Firth:** The question is corporal punishment, that the member is so concerned about. The consultation with parents and school committees had already been done. The corporal punishment section of the *Schools Ordinance* was amended only after consultation with them, and recommends that in fact we go back to using corporal punishment. I do not think that it hurts to ask the parents' permission, or indicate to the parent, that the teachers do now have this authority with the children, in the form of a note to the parents, because, after all, not all parents are aware of changes and of recommendations that school committees have made on their behalf, because not all parents are that involved with what the school committees are doing and what is happening within the Department of Education.

Mr. Kimmerly: As a clarification question, and I have two or three, but the first one is, if the practice of sending notes to parents is adopted, it strikes me, as it is obvious, that some parents are going to say "yes" and some parents are going to say "no". In light of that, are different students going to be treated differently in regard to corporal punishment, or what is the policy of the school going to be?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Well, I am reluctant to give any answer to that question. This is an administrative matter, and I believe the regional superintendents and the principals have each other to consult on these matters, as well as school committees, which have some input as to the recommendations of the every-day running of the school. And personally, I cannot give an opinion to that question right now.

Mr. Kimmerly: Another question is, I am assuming by the minister's answer that the question of corporal punishment was looked into — or, when it was last looked into, which I am aware of — it was, in the minister's view, sufficient, and that the problem is not going to be looked into again in the foreseeable future, a corporal punishment is, in fact, going to continue to be used in Yukon schools. Because of my confusion, perhaps, I would ask the minister to state whether my

statements are wrong or right.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: The parents and school committees recommended that we reinstate corporal punishment and if the school committees and parents feel that the department is not fulfilling their obligations in this area, or that somehow it is getting out of hand, or they reassess the situation and they feel that we should not be reinstating corporal punishment, or proceeding with the practice of corporal punishment, I am sure they will recommend to us that this practice be reassessed and maybe discontinued.

Mr. Kimmerly: This is my last question in the area of corporal punishment. Is the minister planning to consult with students or students' groups about the issue of corporal punishment?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: To reassure the member from Whitehorse South Centre, I already, as the Minister of Education, have been to a meeting with the students' council of F.H. Collins high school. I had a luncheon meeting with them and a forty-minute question period, which I found extremely interesting. The students did not bring up the subject of corporal punishment. If they consider it a controversial subject or a priority, I am sure they will bring that up with me, and I have certainly indicated to them that my door is always open and that I look forward to further meetings with them. I am counting on the students to be observant and involved enough that they will indicate to me. However, if there are indications from other sources, we will certainly look at it.

Mr. Kimmerly: I am sure the primary students and the rural students would appreciate the same consultation.

Going on to a new area, a life skills, or frequently, sex education or family life education, as it is euphemistically called, is often an issue with school committees. Can the minister state the priorities, or the position of the department, with regard to sex education in the schools?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Just to make a comment about the primary students being asked about corporal punishment, I am sure I would not find one child in grade one, two, three, or whatever, who would agree to maybe getting the strap occasionally. It comes back to the old fact that children do not always know what is best for them.

Regarding the sex education, this has not been indicated to me as a priority by the education council or by school committees. I take my direction from these people, who are elected by the parents to represent them and their views. What I make a priority in the department, and what direction the department takes, will come from the recommendations of these people.

Mrs. Joe: I put my hand up in anticipation of Mr. Kimmerly asking his last question. What I am going to be speaking on a little bit right now is recreation, and that is one of the areas that I am a critic for.

Most people here know that recreation is very important to most people in Yukon. I am not really that familiar with a lot of the programs that the government offers, although I am aware of some of the things that are taking place at this point in time. I have talked to a number of people who have been in consultation with the recreation department of YTG and I think there are a number of concerns that have arisen during those meetings. I think that we have to think very carefully, especially about the advisory committee. There has been a lot of controversy and I can see by the smile on the minister's face that she is probably aware of what I am going to be talking about.

Recreation is something that all people of Yukon have an interest in, and it includes many things. I think that if we are going to consider seriously the establishment or restructuring of a recreation advisory committee to the government, then we are going to have to take the recommendations that are offered by the community committees, which, as I understand it, includes as one of the options is that the same number of people, including nominations from each community, and the MLA having final choice on that. I think that, in the best interest of all people of Yukon, that that type of a recommendation is probably the best kind that we have. I understand that the minister, herself, is more in favour of a ministerial-type thing under her department, and I do not think that that would work. I do not think it would work because you are choosing people who may not have the same interest as everyone else. I think that it is very important that all people of Yukon, from every community, have to be on this committee.

I notice that one of the recommendations that is in the Green Paper is in regards to special population programs, which include Native re-

creation, recreation for youth and senior citizens. I think that those three things are very important. I know that years ago the Indian people of Yukon were only allowed to participate in any sport if they could afford it, if their parents could afford to buy them the equipment. Over the years, that type of thing has not really stopped. What is happening is that there are more Indian people who are being encouraged to take part in recreation. Also, over the years, whenever an Indian team wanted to get into any league, there was always the other people saying, "Well, no, you have to join us because we do not want a special team". Now, those types of things have stopped, and I am glad to see that they have.

What we are seeing now is Native tournaments, including hockey, softball and whatever else we have, and I am encouraged by that because that, in part, encourages the people to get involved on other teams, and also what it is doing is to give them more skills in what they are able to do which, in turn, gives them more confidence. The youth of the territory do not really have an lot of planned recreation for them. There are things, like the Boys and Girls Club, which I would hate to see go under at this time simply because there are no funds available. I think that we have to consider clubs, like the Boys and Girls Club, or the teen development group which has been established in Riverdale in a group home, and other agencies and clubs like that, have to be encouraged. If there are funds available, then those funds have to be given to them.

In terms of the senior citizens, a lot of people think that senior citizens are not really interested in recreation, and I think that the minister has found out that that is not the case and is willing to carry on discussions with the groups who are concerned, and I am glad to see that. As we go through the budget, I will probably be wanting to note more answers to some things that I have to ask in terms of the recreation department. I will, at that time, be able to find out a little bit more, but I have had to say these things about which I have been concerned right now.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I just would like to make a few comments about the member's concerns. The composition of the YRAC committee seems to be a great deal of concern to everyone and I would just like to reassure the committee that, after doing much investigation as to how this kind of a funding distribution took place outside in other areas, and other provinces, I found that it was done predominantly by the bureaucrats in the recreation departments. The idea of the change of the composition of the YRAC committee was to get it in line with other government committees, and maybe we could go as far as to discontinue the YRAC committee altogether and let the recreation department distribute the funding. It is merely a job of receiving applications, assessing the applications and distributing them. Maybe the member would like to see that happen?

One of the functions of the YRAC committee is also to work in an advisory capacity to the minister. I am sure if the minister would be so gracious as to put herself in my position, she could see where I would be feeling more in touch with the committee that had, in fact, given me recommendations and I, myself, have the choice of appointing these advisors to the minister, as it were.

They are going to advise me about the final draft of the Green Paper and the potential legislation we will have in the Yukon Territory regarding recreation. Certainly, I would not pick people at random. I have assured the sports groups, the arts groups, the communities, the disable and senior citizens who I have met with, that I would take their recommendations and it would be people of their choice that I had some trust in, that I would appoint to this committee.

However, from the lack of amendments to the legislation, you can see that the committee make-up has not been changed, and is not going to be changed this session of the Legislative Assembly. However, I will be reviewing it, and if changes are going to be made, they will be made in the spring session.

Regarding segregating recreational groups, my personal opinion is that I would like to see more family-oriented recreation. I am very pleased to see the Native children assimilating into sports activities and other recreational activities. I am sure that the member who has directed the comments is aware that I am as much a Native Yukoner as she is. I believe that we have lived here for approximately the same number of years. I think I have been extremely diligent in being open-minded and aware and concerned about the wishes, and about the

difficulties, that the native people have had assimilating into white man's society. And I will continue to be objective and encourage this in a family-oriented way in recreation.

Mr. Kimmerly: I have a number of other questions about education. I am stimulated to ask the minister for clarification of her last statement about promoting the assimilation of the native people into white man's society, and I would ask if it is the policy of the recreation branch to promote assimilation.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am sorry, I did not get the last part of your question.

Mr. Kimmerly: I will ask the question again. I am stimulated to ask a question about the statement just made by the minister about the promotion of family-oriented recreation and the assimilation of native people into white man's society. Is it the policy of the recreation department to promote assimilation into the so-called white man's society?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I believe it is the policy of the Department of Recreation, and of Education, and of the government, that wherever the Native people are willing to assimilate, we will encourage that. I think I have already indicated that to the House that I have had meetings with the president of CYI and some of his officials. I have been out to schools. We have discussed not only education, the support of this government for the Native language program, the support of this government for the Klwane Tribal Brotherhood school, the support of this government to work hand in hand with the CYI to encourage these activities.

Mr. Kimmerly: I will ask for a further clarification. The word "assimilation", of course, is commonly used, and involves the changing from one culture to another, to be assimilated into another culture as opposed to cooperation or joint ventures. Is it the policy of the Department of Recreation to assimilate the Native people, or to work in cooperation and in conjunction with Native people to reduce prejudice?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Perhaps I could have used a better word. I have always thought of myself as assimilating, yet I have still maintained my cultural identity. Perhaps the member would be more comfortable with the word "integrate".

It is certainly not the policy of this government, nor the intention of this government, to make people integrate to the point that they lose their cultural identity. The Native people have a very valuable heritage and cultural identity that they will be sharing with this government.

Mr. Kimmerly: I will go on to the next areas.

I am very pleased with the minister's remarks about doing her homework, and her information that the drop-out rate is 39 per cent in grades ten to 12. That is useful information. What is the comparison of the Yukon's drop-out rate with the B.C.'s drop-out rate in grades ten to 12?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I believe our rate is comparable to that, 39 percent. I would not like to say that is the definite figure, in order not to mislead the member opposite. I do believe that our figures are very similar to that national figure.

Mr. Kimmerly: I will advise the minister that I will ask the question probably every year for the next four years, to notice any change. She mentioned it was a national figure. Does the Yukon rate, I understand to be 39 percent, compare favourably or unfavourably to the national figures?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I believe our figures are along the same line as the national figure. I cannot be specific and say whether they are below or above.

Mr. Kimmerly: Are there any analysis done about the drop-out rate in the rural schools as compared to urban schools.

Hon. Mr. Lang: On point of order, perhaps the member opposite could provide in writing to the minister those specific questions. I think we are getting away from the idea of speaking to the principle of education as opposed to questioning the minister directly on what would be, for example, probably under establishment 4, within the vote. And then those questions could be answered. In fairness to the minister, I think there should be some forewarning that some of these specific detailed questions are going to be coming forward. Otherwise, we will never get off the principle of the vote and get onto the business at hand. Otherwise, I will be at the liberty to start asking him questions.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Kimmerly, are you prepared to continue in a more general way?

Mr. Kimmerly: Yes, I am. I would give notice that next year I will be asking the same questions and be interested in the comparisons.

About drop-out rates and school drop-outs, it is interesting that if you ask school drop-outs if they were expelled or if they dropped out, a majority, I believe, claim they actually were expelled. A frequent reason for being expelled is truancy, especially in the high schools. I would ask the minister, in light of the generally stated priority of keeping students interested, is there going to be an increased, or a different kind of, effort to keep more students in school? If the drop-out rate is approximately 40 percent, it appears to me to be an extremely large number. And is it a priority of the government to keep more students in school, especially in the higher grades?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Yes, it is.

Mr. Kimmerly: I would ask for a comment about the policy, especially at F.H. Collins, about school drop-outs. Truancy appears to be either the major, or one of the major, reasons for expulsion, and it appears to me that expulsion as a treatment of truancy is self-defeating, and I would ask the minister to comment on that.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Regarding the drop-out rates, I have been thinking, as the member has been asking questions, that the statistics this year for the numbers of high school students in F.H. Collins for grades ten and 12 particularly, show the number has actually increased, which indicates to me that there are more children coming back to high school, possibly because of the shortage of jobs out in the job market.

Regarding the truancy expelling, it is a vicious circle. I am not prepared to make any definite policy statement, or any definite statement on it. Just the fact that I recognize that it is a vicious circle, that one causes the other, and the other causes the other, and we are, through our counsellors and through initiatives on the department's behalf, and on my behalf, as a politician, and as a person interested in education and interested in keeping children in school, are reviewing it as often as we can.

Mr. Kimmerly: I am going to ask a number of general questions about special needs education and special needs attention. First of all, as a preliminary question to that, the new deputy minister was previously the deputy minister for social services. Has that move any implication with regard to the question of special programs or special needs children or is it an entirely administrative thing?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I was not responsible or involved in that move. Perhaps the member could direct the question to the Government Leader who is, in fact, responsible for that. I can only speculate that it was for administrative reasons.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Kimmerly, would the general questions that you were going to ask be pertaining to the administration in the education system? I note that Special Education will come later, under Schools. Do you think that we could have those general questions under that section?

Mr. Kimmerly: I can ask the Special Education questions at any point. I am entirely in your hands. I have no questions about administration, only special needs. They are extremely general questions, and I can ask them at either point.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Maybe I could make a recommendation, if I may be so bold. It is not to insult the member opposite, but if the member has questions regarding education, regarding administration, I would certainly appeal to him to come and see me in my office and ask me these questions. I do not feel that we should concern the committee's time, when we are trying to vote a budget, and I would certainly be willing to do that at that time.

Mr. Penikett: On a point of order, I know the minister did not do it intentionally, but she is touching on a very dangerous constitutional question here. The point of the discussion of the estimates, given that the opposition or members of the House cannot prevent the government doing anything, is that this is the one period when ministers are publicly accountable in detail for the expenditures and the activities within their department. The only ability opposition members, throughout parliamentary history, have is to ask questions, as many questions as they may have and the minister may be able to answer. The minister is under no obligation to answer them, however, if she wants to retain the love and affection of every member in the House,

the minister normally does.

I would only emphasize that suggestions that private conversations can satisfy inquiries for information is not the purpose of Parliament. Parliaments exist so that there can be a public request for information and, in fact, public transmittals of them. I say that to the minister, not by way of a reprimand, only as a caution that that is what we are here for, that is what the estimates debates is. We assume and we take it for granted that it would be an extraordinary circumstance that we would persuade the government to change anything in their budget. However, the principle of accountability is that we can at least get as much information about the activities as possible.

Hon. Mr. Lang: On the same point of order, I think the member opposite raised some good points and I share some of them with him.

The principle that we are speaking of here is that the questions that are arising are becoming very specific. In order that we could continue our love and cooperation that is exhibited on both sides of the floor, would it not be better for the progression throughout the budget to go through the specific questions when we get to the specific area, such as Special Needs, and discuss that at length at that time. It just seems to me, sitting listening at the side here, that we seem to be wandering all over. That would be my preference, as opposed to indiscriminately picking out certain areas in the budget and asking specific questions.

Speaking on the same point of order, if there are very specific detailed questions that members have, it would be advisable, even if you give verbal notice of the questions you intend to ask when you get to an area, that in fairness to the minister responsible of whatever area of the budget, that you will be requesting very detailed information as opposed to saying, "We will have to wait and go for it".

Mr. Penikett: On the same point of order, I accept the minister's admonition. I want to just emphasize though that we have in the last two or three years in this House developed what is a potentially useful practice, and that is having the general debate where a number of these questions would be flagged or indicated in a general way, so that it would enable the minister to prepare for the specifics when we get to them. The previous case, going back four years, we were asking the specific questions and when we got to the detailed item the minister had no advanced warning, and it was not a very good system, because then we had to wait days for the information. And that is the only reason why I think it is somewhat useful to lay out the general concerns in the general debate, so the minister can know what to expect when we get to the specifics.

Mr. Chairman: Then we are agreed that the members will keep the questions general at this point, and you can get specific when we get to the areas that are in question.

Mr. Kimmerly: On the question of special needs, I will have both specific and general questions. I will only ask the general questions now. I will only ask the general question as it relates to the overall priorities, or the allocating of funds from among the lines in the budget, as opposed to a specific line.

The problem of special needs, or learning disabilities, as they are often called, is a rapidly developing area in education, and I would ask the minister to make as general a statement as she likes about the priorities for these kinds of programs, and these kinds of resources, in that, in the next four years, is it the intention to increase the level of service, or to keep it at approximately the level it is at?

Now, I will also ask about the coordination activities with the Child Development Centre and the rehabilitation counsellors, in some cases, in the vocational school, and to comment in a general way on that issue.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I would like to thank the member for Whitehorse West for his very enlightening comments. It was not my intention to refuse to answer the question, however, having sat in other places in this legislative assembly several times, I suppose it just seems longer than normal for a period of questioning when you are down here than when you are up in the public gallery observing. My concern was the restlessness of the other members of the legislative assembly. However, the intention was not to deny answering questions.

To be as brief as I can, about increasing the level of services, or keeping it at the level it is now, regarding special education and the coordination of the child development centre, the department is presently reviewing this and as soon as we have some substantial informa-

tion and we can make a decision regarding it, I will indicate to the member opposite what that decision is.

Mr. Chairman: Would it now be the pleasure of this House to recess for a few moments?

Recess

Mr. Chairman: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. We will continue with general debate on Education.

Mr. Byblow: I have a general area and guesstimating from our earlier discussion, if the minister is not prepared to give any detailed answer, I will be quite prepared to leave it to a specific point in the estimates. It relates to probably three combined areas. One is the vocational school concept that has been discussed in some depth over the last couple of years, for Faro. Combined with that is the question surrounding accommodation, which could apply, either for students or for any proposed vocational training in the community, as well as the question — because it is inter-related — of housing for the existing staff in the school system there.

At the same time, and perhaps the Government Leader or the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation may want to get into the debate, I raise the question in question period earlier surrounding the aid package to Cyprus and whether or not the long-range intention has in mind that component of vocational training for Faro, I wonder if the minister has any information with respect to advancing that case for that community at this time as an extension from the trades training of the vocational school here in Whitehorse?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: No, we are not planning on decentralizing — I am assuming that this is what the member is talking about — education to any of the communities right at the moment. We feel that it is imperative that we get the vocational school in Whitehorse, this central facility, functioning properly. I am sure that the member is aware that we have had some administrative problems in that area and we would like to get our own front porch cleaned up, so to speak, before we start decentralizing.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a community learning centre in Faro and they do have provision for the distant education facility, the Anik Info. The mobile unit has been to Faro once, and that is always a possibility. I think we can accommodate that community in those areas.

Mr. Byblow: Just pursuing that for a couple of questions, I would like to ask the minister is she is aware of the discussions that have taken place on the subject, that is, of decentralizing to the point of creating a wing in that community? I raise that with the same arguments that have been presented over the past couple of years surrounding the very meritorious suggestion of locating such a facility there, related to the large-scale mining operation that normally operates in that community, the availability of large-scale equipment which is a necessary component of some of your heavy duty trades and certainly with the discussions that have been held with Industry and Labour that would consider sending their employees or other students to that community for the very specific trades training. I take it from what the minister has said that this is altogether ruled out. I would question that, especially in light of the job training advance that is being made by the federal government and the available funding. I raise that with respect to the learning centre that is there, that lends itself as a facility. I will certainly not at any point recommend the continuance of those portables where it is housed, but you have to start somewhere. I raise the concern that there has been a positive response from the company in the community with respect to accommodations and facilities. In recent discussions with the minister's own vocational school branch, it has a lot of viability.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am aware of some of the discussions that have taken place. I would hate to make a commitment on behalf of this government that we were going to, in fact, put an extension or a wing of the vocational school in Faro, taking into account the uncertainty of the Cyprus Anvil mine opening again. However, I am aware of the discussions. We are looking at making some provision for the people in Faro to further their trades education, or whatever. We still do have the availability of the facilities here in Whitehorse. I am sure we will be having further discussions along this line.

Mr. Byblow: I would not want to discourage those questions from

continuing. I would not treat as a negative aspect the fact that there is some uncertainty related to mining in the community, and that is all the more reason you ought to be considering something in the form of a secondary industry, in the form of a back-up economy to the area. Certainly, in the long term, as I explained earlier, the community lends itself very well to the kind of extension facility that we have talked about.

43 **Mr. Porter:** I would like to move on to the area of native language, education and, generally, the whole area of native education.

I think it would be a fair comment to state that, over the years, this government has been guilty in terms of its address to the whole question of native education. I think that they have paid minimal attention to this area of particular concern. It shows up very clearly when it comes time to look at the year's funding and the allocation of funds. I think, in this year's budget, we see no real improvement in that area. If you look at last year's, I think we spent \$235,000, in respect to the Native Language Program that the CYI has delivered, and the estimates for this year include not much of a change, but actually a decrease in the area of \$225,000, as contained on page 49.

I think that this has to generally improve. I think that if the government were to look elsewhere in Canada, they would see other governments reacting very much in an opposite direction, providing new direction and attempting to come to grips with the whole question of native language education, particularly in the cultural aspect of education as it is delivered to the aboriginal populace of the various governments across Canada.

I might point out that the Province of Saskatchewan has an incredible program that is delivered through the Indian Cultural College in Saskatoon. There they have instruction in native language, they have the college set up, which has a budget, I believe, in the millions, that sets down native language instruction, and goes through the process of hiring and developing a linguistic aspect for the whole program, which has actually written the northern Cree language, and are also in the process of developing the northern Dena language of the Province of Saskatchewan.

When we look next door to the Northwest Territories, I think we see an incredible difference between what they are doing and what is being done here in Yukon. I just got off the phone from talking to one of the departmental officials over there and I think that, in the language area alone over the next three years, they are spending in excess of \$3,000,000 just for the development of the northern native language. That is by way of a special indigenous language fund that had been voted by the executive committee of that government.

In addition to that, they have another branch of education that is called the Programs and Evaluation Branch, and they are expected to expend, in this year alone, over and above the \$1,200,000 that will be spent on the special programs, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$230,000. Last year, they spent between \$500,000 and \$600,000 in developing the native language area.

44 In terms of the overall cultural content of the program, I am told that they have a cultural inclusion fund which they appropriate from their budget \$35.00 per student throughout the Northwest Territories for the purpose of expenditure on cultural matters. This money is voted on by the legislature. It is turned over to the communities, and they spend the money as they see fit. They are simply given the \$35.00 per student and they can go out and take the children into the bush and teach them how to hunt, or, if it is desirable on the part of the children and the parents and the teachers, they can go on to such things as snowshoe-making and the other indigenous technologies that have existed and continue to exist. In many of the Inuit communities in the eastern Arctic, the day spent at school for many children, particularly from kindergarten to grade three, are done entirely in Inuktituk. There is no English whatsoever. If English is used, it is used as a second language in that environment. In the east as well, native language instruction continues on into grade nine. In the west, because of the recent development of the Athabaskan portion of the native language program in the Northwest Territories, much of their effort is focused on the lower grade levels.

So, in a sense, those are some of the examples of what other governments in Canada that I know of are doing in respect to addressing the whole issue of native education. And I am just wondering if this government, in the next four years of their term, are planning to

address that area, and if so, in what manner?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I appreciate the member opposite's comments regarding native language and native people in general. However, I have some difficulty with his destructive attitude. I have been trying to reassure the members opposite, and this assembly, that in the education department, when it comes to native language programs to the Kluane Tribal Brotherhood school, we are extending all our support behind the native peoples for this. And I would like the member to recognize that, so I do not have to repeat it again in this assembly. I have made a special trip out to the Kluane Tribal Brotherhood school. This school is not even fulfilling its commitments according to its signed agreement, and we are not closing the school down, because we recognize the valuable effect that the school provides. I took with me Mr. Willy Joe, who is responsible for education with the CYI. Oliver Nelson also accompanied us. I do not think that there was anything else I could do in that area.

Secondly, in the Native Language Program that the member is so critical about this government supporting, again, I have met with the CYI, with the president, Mr. Harry Allen, I have met with Mr. John Ritter, also, the language coordinator, and he is not correct in saying that we are behind. In fact, we are lending Mr. Ritter to the Northwest Territories because we are, in fact, advanced in our native language instruction in our schools. We also have a Yukon cultures book that was written by Julie Cruikshank, and is presently in the school system. I do not want to have to get up and say this again. I really think that the member is making destructive comments that really are not conducive to the harmony of this legislative assembly.

Mr. Porter: Maybe my reputation precedes me in this particular area. I have made no overt attempt at being destructive but I am simply pointing out the allocation, in terms of the monetary resources that have been allocated to this particular area of interest, to the native people of the Yukon. I think, in respect to the government's attempt that they have made in the past, those attempts which they have made have been recognized and their due has been given. In respect to the school in Burwash, I think it was Mr. Graham, who, at the time, was the Minister of Education when that event turned around. I remember quite correctly, when the whole issue did develop, the government was very much opposed to the whole idea of the school being established separate and outside of the *Schools Ordinance*.

However, after the determination of the local people in Burwash became very much evident, and that they were going to see the thing through and build a school with their own hands if they had to, Mr. Graham, much to his credit, came around and recognized what the people of that village were doing, and made some very diplomatic attempts at reconciling the situation.

In effect, where there has been progress, it has been appreciated and recognized but I am saying that, in general, in terms of what I see in this budget, the thrust for the future allocation of resources for the development of native education, in my opinion, is lacking. For the purposes of the comparisons to the Government of the Northwest Territories and for the other governments that exist in Canada, that was not meant to destroy the credibility of this government or in any way demean its endeavours in this particular area. It was meant as a reflection of what is being done in other areas of Canada and, possibly, those experiences in other areas could be learned from by this government, if they were interested. My apologies if there was a destructive feeling on the other side conveyed by the remarks that I have made.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I would accept the member's apology and I hope that we do not have to have further discussions of this nature. I would just like to say to the member that, if he is going to compare the Northwest Territories with the Yukon, he should take a look at the numbers of native people living in the Northwest Territories and Yukon and the amount of funding that the federal government is willing to provide to those people, and I think he will find that the monies that go to the Northwest Territories are substantially more than what we do get.

To reassure the member that we are, in fact, maintaining a good relationship, we have already had negotiations regarding the native language programs and regarding the amount of money that has been allotted. That is what they asked us for and that is what they asked to represent in our budget and we have done so and we have fulfilled that negotiated agreement.

Hon. Mr. Tracey: I would also like to comment that I believe I may be wrong, but I am fairly confident that I am right, that the Northwest Territories government also has the Indian Affairs money turned over to the Northwest Territories government for all its social programs. They are administered by the Northwest Territories government rather than the federal government. That makes a big difference in what the Northwest Territories government does compared to what DIAND would do in the Yukon, versus what we do.

Mr. Porter: Not to get mired too deeply into what the Northwest Territories does or does not do as opposed to what is done here, I would simply like to come back to the original question that I had posed to the minister in respect to the overall thrust of government over the four years in terms of allocation of dollar resources to the development of the whole native education area. Is there at this particular point in the department's history any attempts to sit down and review the area, and, if not at this particular time, would she foresee a time in the future in which this item would be brought to the attention of the department for discussion.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I have already indicated that I have sat down and reviewed this with the president of CYI, and perhaps the member should perhaps talk with the president of CYI and see if he feels we are going to be fulfilling our commitments to the native peoples regarding education over the next four years.

Mr. Kimmerly: I have other general questions about a Yukon curriculum aside from the native languages program. I know the curriculum is modelled on the B.C. curriculum, and all of the major provinces, anyway, are developing provincial curriculums specifically with regard to their cultural background and specific provincial developments. Is the Yukon curriculum, particularly in the social studies areas, progressing to the satisfaction of the minister, and is it a priority to extend this curriculum development?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am presently just trying to familiarize myself with all the curriculums that we do have in effect right now in the Department of Education. I have made no definition of priorities for expansion or otherwise. I suppose, when I do, I will notify the member opposite that we have in fact done that. I am of the impression that we are expanding and improvising on the B.C. curriculum every day. For example, with the introduction of the native language programs, and just recently we received an environmental study handbook to the Department of Education which had been done by the Conservation Society that we are introducing to make Yukon children more aware of their environment.

⁴⁷ I think the department is making a conscious effort to improvise on that curriculum and expand it for the benefit of Yukon children and adults.

Mr. Kimmerly: I will go on to another area, in a very general sense, again. I want to talk about literacy levels in Yukon schools.

The minister previously spoke about the drop-out rate in a percentage figure. Are there literacy examinations, as a general examination done in the schools, as a regular program and, if so, is the minister able to say if the Yukon rates compare with the B.C. and national rates?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am not prepared to say whether we do literacy testing, or whatever you want to call it, on students and I, therefore, cannot give any figures about literacy levels. If the member wishes an answer to the question, I will find out for him.

Mr. Kimmerly: Yes, I do, thank you very much, if you would take the question as notice.

Also, as notice as well, perhaps I would ask the same question about a rural and urban split for literacy rates. I ask the question for a specific and, in my view, extremely important purpose. Recent information out of the vocational school and the academic upgrading courses, specifically, indicates that the students attending upgrading, which is obviously a biased sample of the Yukon population, are at a very low literacy rate and it affects the design of the program in the vocational school for adult education and the implications are fairly substantial.

⁴⁸ Also, a number of constituents of mine have raised the problem of the basics in education, or the three R's; literacy, as opposed to embellishments. I am simply asking for an expression of general policy in the area. The minister spoke of, I believe the phrase used was, "comprehensive education". Would the minister perhaps explain that a bit as it relates to streamlining and mastery learning, and those kinds of concepts?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Regarding the upgrading, I am not sure if this is the question the member was asking. The basic training skills development is what the course is officially called, and people enter this course, I believe, before they go into the vocational school, so that they are at the certain level that is required for the course they are taking at the vocational school.

As to comprehensive education, I do not profess to be an expert on this and I hope the members will bear with me in my very simple explanation of what comprehensive education is. There are four forms of education, from what I have been reading: industrial arts, which are practical arts in general education; vocational training, which are more career-oriented technical subjects, a career awareness and explanation and specialization of your final vocation; three, general education; and four is called career education which, in fact, is a combination of all four, and they call this comprehensive education.

It gives the student an opportunity to not only utilize their core subjects in education, which are the maths, social studies, science, english and physical education. In a general program, they can also accumulate credits in, say, electronics or automotive mechanics, and this concept of education reflects on the comments that the member for Faro was making about streamlining the education system, so that courses taken in the high school, say in electronics or mechanics, were beneficial to, and led up to, the individual graduating and going on further to a trade or vocational school to complete his apprenticeship in that particular field.

Or, if the individual so chose, he could pursue the more academic aspect of his education and could enter university. It revolves around a credit accumulation.

Mr. Kimmerly: The previous minister commented about the concept of mastery learning. I am not sure if she was talking about the same thing I was, at the time. What I was talking about is, instead of the traditional approach of a student being promoted after passing the general examination and getting 50 or 60 percent, the student stays with a subject until he masters it, the examination mark approaching over 90 percent. With this kind of an approach, in an experimental way, there is a significant reduction in the drop-out rate, especially in the poorer ghettos of southern states in the US.

The previous minister commented on it in a very general way, and I am wondering if the department is in favour of that kind of approach or not, or what is the current thinking about it?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am totally unfamiliar with the concept of mastery learning, I believe it is. It is not a concept I have investigated and, therefore, I have not asked the department what their policy is on it or what their thinking is.

However, I just want to mention that I appreciate the member opposite bringing it to my attention and it is always nice to learn something new.

Mr. Kimmerly: The previous minister made a surprising comment, I thought, about the new brain research and the difference in brains, possibly, among Indian and non-Indian children. This is on page 86 of Hansard. Is the present minister following any approach of treating Indian or non-Indian people in any way differently?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: As far as I am concerned, a person is a person, is an individual, is an individual. I do not care what colour their skin is, I do not care what sex they are, I do not care how old they are.

I have not entertained any ideas about brains of one colour of person being different than the brain of another person. My medical profession background just has not allowed me to, and I have never entertained that idea. However, if the member opposite thinks it should be brought to my attention — he obviously does because he has brought it up — I will certainly do the amount of research I need to know about it to satisfy the member's very inquisitive questions regarding the matter.

⁵⁰ **Mr. Kimmerly:** I thank the minister for her comments. I agree with almost all of them. I brought it up in order to obtain a statement of the present policy, and I am extremely pleased it has changed. I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Penikett: I have a couple of quickies that I would like to give to the minister by way of notice. If the minister asks if I am inquiring about sex education, there may be someone who thinks I would need some but it may be a bit late. Sometime ago I had a call from a school teacher friend of mine who did not want his name mentioned or the

matter raised in any particular way, but was concerned about a personal experience. And I want to relate that experience to the minister and ask for some comment. This person had been involved in purchasing a small amount of sports equipment for a school. That person had, I think, been advised there was some policy to purchase locally, a policy which I would in the main support, but discovered that the cost of purchasing locally as opposed to ordering direct, which this person was able to do through a catalogue, the item involved cost him 300 percent more, landed cost here, by buying at a local store than it did by ordering through a catalogue. In respect to this particular item, perhaps the store only handled a small volume, the mark-up was very extraordinary. The teacher involved was, as a citizen, concerned about the cost to the taxpayer. A thoroughly commendable policy of purchasing locally may have limits. I know the government believes that because they have their bid preferential system. It is not the first time that I have heard such complaint. It would not surprise me that sports equipment or other items that are not purchased in large volume have a fairly high mark-up here. I would simply ask the minister, and if she cannot answer the question now I would appreciate getting into it later, if she would look into what procedures her officials may have for checking against being ripped off by local merchants in respect of specialty items.

The other question I wanted to give notice of is a different kind of problem. I would guess that we have had some decline in the enrolment in the schools here. I do not know what order of magnitude it is. I would guess, also, that we have not had, in percentage terms, quite the same decline in numbers of teachers, although I assume the total of staff complement is not as high as it might have been in previous years. Having figured that, I was surprised to hear a student in Whitehorse not too long ago claim to me that classes this year seem more crowded than they have in previous years and that the course options were not as various. In this student's case, it was affecting her career choices, or at least the programs she wanted to pursue to get into university. That was her reason for expressing her concern. I wonder if the minister when we get into the details of the schools program, might be prepared to give us some kind of detailed description of the situation, particularly as it affects the high school in this town.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am aware of all the questions that the member is asking; however, I feel that maybe we will have a more beneficial discussion if we do it as we go through the vote, if that is all right with the members.

Mr. Byblow: I have just a couple more little areas to pursue with the minister before we can get into the vote-by-vote detail. Recently, the minister made a very fine gesture of appealing to the Teachers' Association for some consultative process to take place in order that, mutually, certain expenditures could be cut back further than was proposed or planned by the department. And as I understand, the Teachers' Association dealt with the matter and that there are ongoing discussions related to this. I guess my question relates to the fruits of that exercise in relation to the budget we are looking at. As I understand, the minister made the appeal for the YTA to find \$300,000 worth of cuts. I believe that may have been adjusted to \$250,000 later. Are those cuts that the YTA came up with, I believe, precisely in three specific areas, now incorporated into this budget? Where is that process taking place with the YTA now?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I would rather not comment on the whole negotiation process, because it is still not completed, and I would hate in any way to impair those negotiations. We hope, by Wednesday, that we have a final answer. As far as the amount of money, the \$250,000, it is identified in the budget as a cut. Of course, when we negotiated, we started high so that we could come down. We asked for \$300,000; however, as negotiations proceeded, we said we would settle for \$250,000, and could we count on it as we had to identify it in our budget. We were reassured that, yes, this amount would be found and we did in fact identify it in the budget.

This evolved from the extremely efficient exercise we did in the zero base budget review and we were just unable to fulfil our commitment of trying to cut a certain number of funds without touching programs. I have indicated, through direction from my cabinet and caucus, that we were not to affect programming. It was then decided that we would make an appeal to the Teachers' Association, and in fact this is the amount that we identified.

Mr. Byblow: I am assuming then that that \$250,000, at some stage of agreement, is already incorporated into the budget and I am quite satisfied to leave it there. I have the utmost respect for the negotiating process and certainly would not want to be part to any jeopardy thereof.

I have another area of question, in general terms, and perhaps I am going beyond the parameters of this general debate, though it is very related. Maybe the Government Leader may want to address this. In the strategy for recovery that was tabled at the conference in Edmonton relating to the \$13,000,000 being sought for various capital advance projects, there were eight projects related to school improvements, one of which was the Christ the King high school addition, another significant one was the Carcross school addition and numerous other incidental upgrading and improvements to various schools around the territory.

My question on that general subject is how does this relate to the ongoing program in the school's budgeting process? I realize that I am probably talking in part, at least in some of these items, of very capital budgeting and, in some cases, it is quite distinctly improvements of an O & M type. Could the minister shed some light on these two aspects? What is happening to those projects in terms of the process of budgeting? Has any O & M monies, that were budgeted in the spring, been removed and put into that program funding?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: These projects were capital deferrals and we will be resubmitting them as capital projects when we do the capital budget. Does that answer your question?

Mr. Byblow: The eight projects identified in the strategy for recovery are all capital budget items and, therefore, did not affect either any part of the O & M education budget. That answers that question.

The last related item that I have on the subject, and perhaps by way of notice, is the whole matter of busing. I realize that it comes up in transportation under the schools vote and perhaps we will leave it there, but I certainly will be wanting to know some figures related to what this government did in relation to the transportation cut-back and, of course, in explanation of some of the controversy which took place some months ago.

I think those fairly well summarize my general concerns. I would have liked to debate with the minister the matter of housing for teachers in the outlying areas, although I realize I am getting into what is distinctly, by tradition, not an education responsibility. I have some concern about that, because it is a bit unfair to hide behind a bureaucratic process and suggest that education has no responsibility in housing for its teachers in the outlying communities. I invite the minister to make any comment that she would care to. I would only advise her that it is, certainly, a concern in my community and in a number of other outlying communities. We are facing the situation, where you do have alternate housing, where the government could suggest, "Okay, go find your own house". You do not have that situation, government is a landlord, and housing has a direct effect on the performance of that teacher in the classroom. It is a working condition. It is important to the teacher, as it is to every resident in the territory, to have a reasonable home environment from which you would then expect a normal behaviour and performance by that person.

So, I certainly would invite some comment on that subject and just leave the general debate as having been concluded.

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I just would like to tell the member that I will advise my colleague, the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs, that you are, in fact, giving notice that you will be asking questions about Yukon Housing Corporation. I have extreme faith in him that he is doing his best in that area and will be able to answer your questions.

One comment the member made about working conditions and the effect that housing has on working conditions is that this government is not in the practice of negotiating working conditions with teachers. I am sure this will bear much discussion through the next four years, but the present practice is not for this government to negotiate working conditions with the teachers.

Mrs. Joe: I just have one last question in regards to education. It concerns the school advisory committees. I understand that it is a very democratic process and if they are interested, can seek election to these committees. What I would like to know is how much power those

committees have, who they are responsible to — whether it is the schools or whether it is the government — and if, in fact, they can make any changes in the schools?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: The school committees are elected members, elected by the parents. Each school has its own school committee. They have various responsibilities. Probably the best way to sum it up would be to say that they recommend and advise the department as to the every day functioning and every day running of the school. It could be as varied as recommending that they have a playground with grass to recommending that they have a French immersion program or native language program.

I mentioned that they are elected representatives. From that body of school committee representatives, a body is elected of education council ministers, who are in an advisory capacity to the minister. As far as power, I do not like the word power, because it indicates to me that people have to identify their power because they are not able to get anything constructive done. I think I have been fairly diligent in indicating to the school committee members that they do not need a power definition because I am certainly very willing to listen to their suggestions and recommend them if they are feasible.

As far as a direct line of communication, school committees are in communication with the department, and the education council is my advisory group, as I mentioned earlier.

On Administration

Administration in the amount of \$1,023,000 agreed to

On Accounting

Accounting in the amount of \$134,000 agreed to

On In-Service Training

Mr. Kimmerly: This is an interesting line that I wish to pursue for two reasons. The first reason is, I have a question about an orientation program for Yukon teachers, and I specifically mean non-Yukoners who come to the Yukon to teach.

Is there an orientation program, and is there an effort to improve it or is the minister now satisfied with it?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I am not aware of any official orientation program, *per se*, but I am under the impression that we do have some program in place for this.

Having been the clinical teacher at the hospital and been in charge of the nurses' orientation program, I can certainly relay to the member that I am aware of what orientation programs are and what they do. I will certainly be aware of how satisfactorily our new teachers are being oriented to their new jobs.

Mr. Kimmerly: If I may make a comment, a number of people in rural Yukon especially, have made me aware of their concerns with — I do not want to call them "outsiders" — but new Yukoners who come to teach in the schools and their concern about the adequacy of the orientation program. As an analogous system: there used to be one, for a long time, for RCMP members who came north. It was discontinued 10 or 15 years ago and reinstated in an improved way in the last two or three years. The community comments I get are extremely positive about the new RCMP program, as an analogous procedure.

The second question I have is that I notice that in the spring budget there was a decrease of eight percent over last year for in-service training. In the new budget, there was a decrease of 41 percent, or a decrease of \$24,000. What was the \$24,000 cut?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Just to briefly make a comment about the last question, we may be a bit ahead of ourselves. This is part of what is presently being negotiated with the Yukon Teachers Association, so I would rather not comment on that specific amount. If the member would prefer to wait, I will comment after we have settled.

To answer his concerns about orientation programs, my understanding of orientation programs is that one of the objectives of an orientation program is to keep people longer in one area where they are employed so that you cut down the tremendous turnover that you may have; I certainly know from experience that this was one of our problems at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

I do not believe that this has been identified as a problem with teachers now. I believe teachers are, in fact, staying in Yukon longer; there is not a high turn-over rate. I certainly had not identified an orientation program as a priority to the extent that the member is asking questions; however, I appreciate his comments and his indication that it may be.

In-Service Training in the amount of \$48,000 agreed to

On Extension Program

Extension Program in the amount of \$14,000 agreed to

On Curriculum Development

Mr. Kimmerly: Again, a similar question to the in-service training question: it is a decrease of \$11,000 from the spring budget. What is the \$11,000 cut?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: That \$11,000 was in the actual of 1981. The decreases were due to the fact that an employee was hired on an employment contract and costs came out of personnel costs. It was, I believe, to make an illustrated guide to a new Yukon textbook, *Prelude to Bonanza*. Funds for this purpose were budgeted opposite other costs, which was professional and special services, and they are now coming out of those personnel costs.

Curriculum development in the amount of \$30,000 agreed to

On Native Language

Mr. Chairman: Native language, \$354,000.

Mr. Byblow: On the line item there is \$354,000 budgeted and later in the budget under recoveries, only \$225,000 is shown as what is transferred to CYI for the native language administration. Why is there that difference in numbers? What explanation do we have for that? Is that some of the administrative costs being assumed by the department for Mr. Ritter and others?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Native Language in the amount of \$354,000 agreed to

On Grants and Bursaries

Mr. Byblow: I would be curious why this was put into this portion of the budget because it was not included in the spring portion of the budget, nor last year's. I am just going to elaborate a moment here and perhaps solicit some further information from my very early comments today in comparing a couple of departments.

The administration portion of the budget with respect to grants and bursaries and the SEAP program introduces some \$880,000 into the budget that was not there in the spring. So if you eliminated those two you would have quite a substantially greater cut in the figures.

Mr. Byblow: In summary, the spring administration budget and the present budget are the same, or almost the same, in dollars. But \$800,000 more has been introduced, so you can easily tell where the cuts have been. While the minister is answering why this has been introduced to this portion of the budget, could she at the same time perhaps explain whether or not the additional man-year that we have in the administration portion is the vocational person we were talking about earlier?

Mr. Chairman: The grants and other contributions are outlined on page 49 and 50 in the operating and maintenance manual, of course.

Mr. Byblow: I do not want a detail, just why is it here?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: You would like to know why it has been put in this particular area? I think with the re-organization of the funding, we passed new legislation last summer after the election, increasing the allowances in the Students Financial Assistance Program, and the increases were quite substantial for tuition, especially the increases for living expenses, and in order to accommodate this and make it run more efficiently, we have felt that this was necessary.

Mr. Chairman: Is there any further debate on grants and bursaries?

Grants and Bursaries in the amount of \$704,000 agreed to

On Student Employment Assistance Program

Student Employment Assistance Program in the amount of \$170,000 agreed to

Mr. Byblow: Just before we clear the total amount, I want one question answered. Why twenty-six man years, as opposed to twenty-five before? Where is that extra body? Is that the vocational person?

Hon. Mrs. Firth: I believe that it is, but I would not like to say for sure. I will bring the answer back to the member tomorrow, if he wishes.

Administration in the amount of \$2,477,000 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pearson: I move that you report progress on bill num-

ber 3, and that the Speaker do resume the Chair.

Mr. Chairman: You have heard the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker resumes the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: May we have a report from the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Phillipsen: The Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 3, *Second Appropriation Act, 1982/83*, and directed me to report progress on same.

Mr. Speaker: You have heard the report of the Chairman of Committees, are you agreed?

Some Members: Agreed

Mr. Speaker: May I have your further pleasure?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move, seconded by the member for Whitehorse North Centre, that we do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the hon. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, seconded by the hon. member for Whitehorse North Centre, that we do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.