

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, December 9, 2008 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to call a meeting of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, or SCREP, to update the House rules to better accommodate present day realities, such as reviewing larger budgets and the additional responsibilities from the devolution of resources from the federal government, by increasing the number of sitting days per year and eliminating what is known as the guillotine clause.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 17(1), of the *Human Rights Act* appoint Rick Goodfellow to be a member of the Yukon Human Rights Commission.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Government of Canada reconsider its involvement in the war in Afghanistan prior to the stated date of withdrawal in view of the fact that:

(1) we have now lost 100 members of the Canadian Armed Forces;

(2) the success of the NATO operation in Afghanistan is in doubt; and

(3) Canada's history was always one of peacekeeping rather than making war.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Government of Canada should adopt a key recommendation of Amnesty International's submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by leading a coordinated effort among all governments in the country to develop a comprehensive national strategy to address violence against indigenous women in this country.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion, please?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

Hearing none, this then bring us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Economic stimulus

Mr. Mitchell: The opposition has attempted to point out to this government the importance of being proactive and ready for the economic downturn that is now clearly appearing in Canada. It will affect us too, Mr. Speaker. There may be the normal lag of a few months, but it will happen.

Former Yukon governments used to table capital budgets in the fall sitting, enabling contractors ample time to plan. The City of Whitehorse needed no such prodding. The city is dividing its spending plans into a capital and operations budget, and has announced more than \$32 million on capital projects for next year. Meanwhile, this government has remained silent.

If the Premier cannot lead, will he at least commit to follow? Does this government intend to put forth an economic action plan to address the impacts on Yukon of the Canadian recession which will shortly be coming our way?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I'm very hesitant to accept the information provided by the Leader of the Official Opposition. Recent stats demonstrate that what the government is doing is the appropriate approach. It's about being prudent; it's about not having knee-jerk reactions; it's about fully understanding and being aware of the trends that are happening to the territory. That's the system we've put in place. We're doing that with key stakeholders, and I've informed the Leader of the Official Opposition what those key stakeholders are saying — it is to maintain the course.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the member is now referring to a doom-and-gloom scenario for the Yukon that simply does not exist.

Our job is to maintain a confident population and a very progressive approach to managing Yukon's way through the global cycle.

Coming meetings with finance ministers and the First Ministers meeting are all dedicated to coordinating and planning Canada's approach to the global cycle and Yukon's involvement in that approach.

Mr. Mitchell: Statistics such as the employment numbers that the Finance minister refers to are known to be trailing indicators, not predictors. Now, pretending that nothing will ever happen is not leadership and it doesn't serve Yukoners well. President-elect Barack Obama says, quote: "We are facing an economic crisis of historic proportions. The truth is, we do not have a minute to waste," in restoring economic health.

So where does this Premier think Yukon is — on another planet — totally isolated? Robert Fairholm, Director of Economic Forecasting at the Centre for Spatial Economics, calls Ottawa's rosy projections a "fantasy". Even the Prime Minister eventually got the message. He now plans to bring forth a new budget in January. In the absence of substantial news stimulus, the Yukon economy will shrink next year, so it's time to move

up capital projects, invest in people and keep people working and businesses profitable.

Will the Premier commit to announcing a fiscal stimulus package?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: In the first instance, the member should not be comparing the Yukon to the United States and to what's happening in the United States. There's no correlation whatsoever with what the Yukon is experiencing and the situation the United States finds itself in.

As far as stimulus, this member and his colleagues have opposed six years' worth of stimulus that have brought the Yukon to the position it's in today, a position with many options available to it, fiscally, infrastructure-wise, investment in people, apprenticeship training. All the factors we are working on in the Yukon today, and have been in the past, are contributing positively to the Yukon's ability to manage its way through a global cycle.

I caution the member in bringing information to this House that is not consistent with the facts. Yesterday I pointed out an example of what the member put on the public record, and I'm prepared to point out more examples.

Mr. Mitchell: Yesterday this minister disputed figures on thousands of dollars and quibbled over them while millions of dollars are slipping through his fingers. As for the United States, I would respectfully suggest to this Premier that what happens in the United States does impact on our mining and tourism sectors.

Mr. Speaker, the city will spend \$9 million for road and sewer work in Takhini North and nearly \$9 million for a new fire hall and bylaw office at the top of Two Mile Hill. Another \$4 million is slated for work on the sewage outfall at the Yukon River. All the Premier has to do is pick up the phone and call some contractors, business leaders and workers and ask them if they are concerned.

This Premier gives real meaning to the old cliché about Emperor Nero fiddling while Rome burned. The Premier has to stop fiddling around and show Yukoners leadership. Will he bring forth an economic package to restore some faith with Yukoners and the business community?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the Hon. Premier answers the question, I have a cautionary note for both leaders here. I would urge you to focus on the issues and not on the motives, please.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the member is now citing the City of Whitehorse's budget, which is something the Yukon government has saw fit and the members opposite opposed. We have increased the fiscal grant to municipalities. So we are glad the city is doing its job. This government, however, has invested hundreds of millions in stimulus through capital projects and more to come. The member's suggestion that the government has not invested in stimulus is incorrect and should not be brought to the floor of this House. It is a non-constructive discussion and has nothing to do with the realities of today.

Furthermore, the member doesn't have to take my word for it. Talk to the key stakeholders; talk to the construction community; talk to the Chamber of Mines; talk to the chambers of commerce; talk to the tourism association; talk to the arts community — talk to all Yukoners. Maybe then the member will get an understanding of what is happening in the Yukon and what the government is doing in association with Yukoners, with contractors and with all involved.

Furthermore, we're thankful that we have a record-high population, not an exodus of population that we experienced under past governments. That's a distinct difference.

Question re: Asset-backed commercial paper investments

Mr. Mitchell: We are talking to Yukoners who work in mining, tourism and the arts, and they're worried.

So let's follow up on the chair of the WCB revelations from last Thursday that the WCB investments have shrunk by some \$20 million. This is not just a problem for the WCB. Blue chip stocks are down significantly as well and, in some cases, way down.

There are other Crown corporations and agencies that may well be in a similar situation. Just a few years ago, this government had to top-up pension funds for Yukon College and Whitehorse General Hospital.

As the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board pointed out, your investments are worth what you can sell them for — in other words, fair market value. When assigning value, it's not what you paid for them and it's certainly not what you hope they'll be worth some day in the future. The value is what they're worth now.

In light of the markets' volatility, will the Premier tell the House the value of the government's investments as of November 30, 2008, including any additional adjustments to the frozen ABCP investments?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the Hon. Premier answers the question, I remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that it is out of order to quote a previous question in your next question — it is called "bootlegging". I appreciate that the honourable member got caught up in the passion of the debate, but please keep that in mind.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the WCB and its investments, I would hope that the member opposite recognizes that the Leader of the Official Opposition had spent some time as a member of the board when decisions on those investments were being made. That said, Mr. Speaker, I've already informed the Leader of the Official Opposition on countless occasions what is transpiring with the investments due to the situation in the freezing of trading on a certain block of investments. I've also recited to him what the adjustments that we had to incorporate and book for our year-end were all about. It is an interest-earnings adjustment and it is strictly following the guidelines that we must follow. The bookings of the value and the adjustments were duly scrutinized by the Auditor

General. Again, we have a counterproductive and frankly non-essential debate with the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Mitchell: If we could only use one phrase to describe the cause of the financial crisis that has occurred worldwide, that phrase would have to be “lack of confidence”. Financial markets surged yesterday because president-elect Obama was instilling confidence.

This Premier needs to instill confidence in investors who want to invest here in the Yukon business community and especially among Yukon people. If they’re confident, they’ll continue to buy. The Premier could do a lot to instill confidence if he were to show Yukoners that, as of November 30, our investments were remaining healthy. That would go a long way to show this government still has the capacity to address the problem.

Will the Premier assure the House that during debate on the Finance department he will instruct officials to have all the current information available for the House?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I’m not sure what good the current, past or future information would do for the member opposite. Furthermore, I think it’s important the member recognizes that, when it comes to confidence for investment, take a look at the public accounts; take a look at the increased values of our own-source revenues. That’s due to investment, especially from the private sector. It ranges across a spectrum of our economic situation here in Yukon.

I can’t recite any further facts of the situation to the member opposite; the member does not accept them. Once again, the government side is not going to engage in a discussion with the member opposite unless it’s factual.

Mr. Mitchell: That was a simple question and I’m perplexed to understand why the Premier wouldn’t take the opportunity to have all the facts laid out on the table. Why would he not want Yukoners to know that?

I’m beginning to have some real concerns here, Mr. Speaker. We’re beginning to believe that the numbers we presented to the House yesterday may have been too small. When you combine all the corporations, agencies and the government itself into a single number, the figure of \$61 million put forth yesterday may look pale in comparison.

The Premier must instill confidence. He must show leadership. He must come clean with the state of Yukon’s investments. Will the Premier make available, not only the government’s investment portfolio but those of all government Crown corporations and agencies as well so that Yukoners can see the total picture?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: We do make facts available; we table them constantly. Let me give you an example of what I’m talking about. We tabled a report that we conducted — an audit on the department with respect to contracting — and here’s what the member concluded out of that report.

On November 19, he said with respect to sole sourcing that all matters on the threshold of \$25,000 and over — the exception to the rule was that this government just simply allocated those types of contracts directly into the public when, in fact, the contract registry itself shows, in that very same year, 2007,

that 97 percent of those awards were handled through a competitive process.

The point I’m making is that the information the member presents to the House, after the facts have been tabled for him, is not consistent. That’s why the government simply will not engage in this kind of fruitless debate.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Before the honourable member asks his question — and I will add time to Question Period due to this — I just want all members to welcome former Speaker John Devries, former MLA for Watson Lake.

Applause

Question re: RCMP policing agreement

Mr. Cardiff: In the 20-year territorial police service agreement, in effect until March 31, 2012, the Minister of Justice sets the priorities and goals for the RCMP police service each year. The minister’s priorities and goals should be prominent in the police service agreement. Will the minister outline for us the priorities and goals for the current year and the upcoming year?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The priorities that we have discussed with the RCMP for the upcoming year is community safety, which is very important to this government and to the citizens of the Yukon. The next priority is policing services. We’re discussing increasing the number of RCMP officers in the Yukon and the backup policy of the RCMP.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer.

Perhaps some of the priorities and goals the minister sets should reflect the public consultation on policing done in 2006 in all three territories. The consultation indicated, among other things, that improvement was needed in the area of public complaints. The process was said to be both unclear and ineffective.

Some citizens who made complaints to the RCMP public complaints commission in Ottawa did not even receive a reply. Furthermore, there’s a public perception that investigations are done in a biased way because, basically, the RCMP is investigating itself.

What improvements have been made in the public’s access to complaints and the responses to those complaints in the last two years since that report was completed?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This complaint issue is very important to this government. We are now under negotiations to have a northern approach to complaints and not have to go to the southern provinces, to Ottawa or Vancouver. Hopefully, we will have a northern position for complaints that will be completely northern and accessible to Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which will be a huge improvement to the complaints process.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. Hopefully it will be independent as well. The report on policing in Yukon says that it became clear in community consultations that the RCMP faces a legacy of distrust and misunderstanding. Of great concern recently and an area unfortunately not addressed in the policing report is that of the care of persons in custody. There have been several deaths of persons in custody

in Yukon over the past few years. Some of them have been due to illnesses that were not followed through on with medical consultation. The perception is that First Nations, especially, are treated in custody as if the only problem with the person is being drunk or high when autopsies show later that there were medical problems as well.

How is the minister addressing the need for policy change with the RCMP on protocols involved with intoxicated persons in custody?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This is another issue that concerns me very deeply. I have had several meetings with the commander of Division M and pointed out the importance of cultural recognition and of people in custody for their protection. Hopefully we will have an across-the-board introduction to local culture instead of a generic concept.

Question re: RCMP policing agreement

Mr. Edzerza: This issue I'd like to raise follows up on the previous question. Once again, we have had a tragic and possibly preventable death in a holding cell of an RCMP detachment in the Yukon. This brings the total number of aboriginal people who have died in police custody in the Yukon to four since 1999. If the RCMP had proper policies and procedures in place, many people say the latest victim would still be alive.

I have to ask the minister: what is done to ensure severely intoxicated people are properly examined, supervised and monitored while they are incarcerated?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to start by extending my sincere sympathy to the family of the deceased. This is a very sad time for them. Of course, if there is a death in the cells, the chief coroner is appointed to oversee the death and investigate unexpected or unnatural deaths. Based on the results of a coroner's inquest, the chief coroner can recommend ways to prevent similar untimely tragedies and save lives. If it is noticeably due to a malady or an illness, the RCMP takes them directly to the hospital under their policies. Since I do not know the particulars underlying this case, I will not comment on it.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, the coroner's juries have now looked into three of these tragic deaths. They have made a number of good recommendations that are designed to save lives, providing the recommendations are properly implemented. These include such things as better monitoring, better communication and better education and training about medical matters.

Two more coroner's inquests into the deaths of individuals while they were in custody of the Yukon RCMP are pending. How is the minister working with the RCMP to ensure that coroner's juries' recommendations are implemented and more deaths in the future are prevented?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Based on the results of a coroner's inquest, the chief coroner recommends ways to prevent similar untimely tragedies and save lives. There are two situations where an inquest is mandatory: if the death occurred while the deceased was being held in prison or in the custody of the RCMP.

When a jury makes recommendations on how to prevent similar tragedies, the coroner will pass those recommendations to the appropriate groups and individuals. However, the coroner does not have the power to enforce agencies to implement these recommendations, and this is true in all jurisdictions across Canada.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics of an individual request.

Mr. Edzerza: Maybe the minister should be putting on some added pressure to make sure that some of these recommendations are taken seriously.

The members of the Yukon's aboriginal community are quite rightly very concerned. They are asking how many more people must die before anything is done to address their concerns. They are also concerned that in each of these cases the RCMP did its own internal investigation. Of course, each time the investigator concluded that no member of the RCMP was at fault.

We suspect that we are witnessing systemic prejudice by the RCMP whenever they arrest intoxicated people of First Nation ancestry. That's just not acceptable. Will the minister raise our concerns with the superintendent of the Yukon RCMP?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Hon. Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I find this unacceptable that we're now on the floor of this Legislature accusing the RCMP of systemic racism. This is uncalled for, it's an outrage, and it has no place in this Assembly.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The Chair would remind the Member for McIntyre-Takhini that 19(k) of the Standing Orders states, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member introduces any matter in debate that, in the opinion of the Speaker, offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly." The honourable member is coming awfully close to that. I know the honourable member as a person and understand that that's not his intention. The Premier's point of order was well noted, so please keep that in consideration, Member for McIntyre-Takhini.

I'm not going to ask you to withdraw; however, if in future it comes up again I will ask you to withdraw.

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said earlier, the RCMP is aware of the cultural practices of the First Nations in the Yukon. They take it very seriously. We have our proposed northern justice department going in at Yukon College which will help further the education of RCMP.

Question re: Incarceration rates

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada released the latest number on incarceration rates today. The Minister of Justice should be aware that Yukon's rate of incarceration is up by 33 percent. The minister confirmed yesterday that there are currently 90 inmates in the Whitehorse Correctional

Centre which was designed to hold only 45 inmates. Incarceration rates in Yukon are rising and the existing correction centre is full to overflowing. The transitional women's unit is still a year away and as far as the new jail is concerned, the lack of results over the years speaks volumes for itself.

What is this government's plan for dealing with more inmates than they have room for?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'm really glad this question came up because it shows how effective our SCAN legislation is and the street crime reduction team. Our arrest rates have gone up considerably after this legislation was passed and the street crime reduction team got on the streets.

As to the recidivism rate, in Canada and throughout the world, it is very hard to measure, but we are tackling the crime rates in the Yukon and it's not only in the jails, we have so much going on for the crime rates. I will just share a bit here with you.

We have the development and implementation of graduated drivers' licences, the development and implementation of an alcohol ignition interlock program, harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment, enforcement — and I emphasize the enforcement. That's why our rates are up, because it is effective.

Mr. Inverarity: Statistics Canada has confirmed the minister's claim that the crime rate reduction efforts in the Yukon are effective. Incarceration rates are up by 33 percent. Well, we've been waiting for this government to build a new correctional facility since 2002. Law enforcement is expanding, the SCAN program and the street crime reduction team, for example, are making our streets safer by removing the bad guys from our neighbourhoods. The transitional women's unit will add capacity for a few more inmates sometime late this year but, really, won't address the problem of overcrowding in the jail.

Can the minister confirm that this government is still making inmates sleep on the floor?

Hon. Ms. Horne: There have never been inmates sleeping on the floor.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Again, a caution. Focus on the issues, please, and not on the motives.

You have the floor, Member for Porter Creek South.

Mr. Inverarity: During budget debate yesterday, the minister requested an increase of approximately \$5 million for her department. The money is to be used for increased law enforcement, more resources and effort toward crime reduction and safer communities, better programming and rehabilitation. This is good news for Yukoners and we support it, but there's a serious problem here.

We can reduce the crime and make our communities safer by taking people off the streets, but we still have to have some place for them to go. Will the minister tell us where this government is going to put the growing number of people who have been incarcerated?

Hon. Ms. Horne: You know, it's interesting, because all these issues were voted against by the opposition, the Offi-

cial Opposition, prior to these being introduced, and it's great to see that they are lauding the success of these programs.

We have the new correctional centre underway, which will commence in the spring. We have the new women's transitional living unit, which is being started in the spring. There will be no overcrowding; we have a new correctional centre coming on line. We are using community programs, where we're sending the offenders back into the community, to learn and go into their cultural ways, to interact with the community and be productive citizens.

Question re: Energy policy

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, yesterday's appearance by officials from Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation raised a few issues I'd like to follow up on with the minister responsible for those corporations. To start with, the Yukon Party's decision to cancel the rate stabilization fund will increase power bills by 30 percent, half of which has already hit consumers while the other half will hit in a few months. The Yukon Party's standby response to our questions is to accuse us of favouring subsidies, not respecting the principle of user-pay to promote conservation, and not respecting the independence of the Yukon Utilities Board.

Yesterday, the irony and inconsistency of that argument was exposed. Can the minister explain why he is doing exactly what he accused others of doing by denying the Yukon Utilities Board's right to address the 30-percent residential class subsidy at the upcoming hearing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, from a policy perspective of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, I must say I am rather surprised to see the Member for Kluane demanding that the government allow the Yukon Utilities Board to do what is referred to as rebalancing rates. By putting in place an order in council, maintaining the status quo and preventing the Yukon Utilities Board from considering the reclassification and distribution of the share of total costs borne by residential, commercial, industrial and government consumers respectively, we have kept costs lower for residential consumers than the member would propose. The Member for Kluane just stood on the floor and advocated raising rates for residential customers.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, when we see that minister respond about policy it complete abrogates the minister of Yukon Energy Corporation's responsibility. He's the one who must answer these questions. Now the minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Mr. Kenyon, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Mr. Speaker, on March 25 of 2008, the Speaker cautioned members: "...that the government body is a collegial body; any member can answer for any member. Just keep that in mind as you are asking the questions." I ask the Speaker to remind the member opposite of that ruling.

Speaker: Mr. McRobb, on the point of order.

Mr. McRobb: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I agree that the House rules state that the government side can put anybody up to answer a question. I'm merely pointing out that the minister responsible for the corporation refused to answer and somebody else did.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. The Cabinet, as everybody knows, is a collegial body and any member can stand up on the government side and answer any question he or she wishes.

Mr. McRobb: Now, the minister responsible can't have it both ways. He can't take a principled stand and then conveniently reverse those principles to maintain another subsidy of similar proportion. It should also be mentioned that he didn't bother to inform the House about what he was doing in the background. We had to find out from the officials.

Now, let's turn to the issue of the all too frequent power outages. *Hansard* will show how the minister has refused our suggestion to have the Yukon Utilities Board review this matter. It was discovered yesterday that officials were unaware that when the Yukon Utilities Board last reviewed power outages in 1991, it occurred during a general rate application, or GRA. That's the same type of hearing that is scheduled now.

Now that the minister has also been enlightened about this possibility, can Yukoners count on him to do something to make this happen, or is 17 years not long enough?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the honourable member answers the question, I'm going to caution the honourable members again to please focus on the issues and not on the motives. We're debating the issues here, not individual members' motives.

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, you have the floor please.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In engaging in debate and responding to the Member for Kluane, let me focus on the facts. I will point out that the rate stabilization fund, which the Member for Kluane has supported, was a \$32-million subsidy over the period of time since its inception. It did nothing to expand electrical infrastructure; it did nothing to assist people in moving to energy efficient appliances, et cetera, such as we are doing through Energy, Mines and Resources, the Energy Solutions Centre, and assisting people with programs such as the good energy program, helping them make those moves to reduce consumption.

What the member is referring to with the rate rebalancing, as it's referred to, is the structure of the proportion of rates borne by different classes of customers. Under that structure, the government pays a higher portion of the costs. The member stood up and advocated that we allow the Yukon Utilities Board to consider rebalancing, which would result in a significant increase in residential power rates. We will not accept that suggestion. We have done as previous governments have done through order-in-council, as is our prerogative — instructed the Yukon Utilities Board not to rebalance rates. That's keeping

the rates lower than the Member for Kluane would have us do by his very assertion and request that we allow the Yukon Utilities Board to consider rebalancing rates.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that in terms of the challenges and in terms of the cause of power outages, we know the cause. It was the period of time under the Liberal and NDP governments that the Yukon Energy Corporation was not investing in capital maintenance as it should have been. They have now increased that to between \$7 million and \$10 million per year, for the past three years, and they have presented those plans to the Yukon Utilities Board and been improved.

Mr. McRobb: Isn't it curious why the minister responsible doesn't choose to defend his past practice on this matter and the stand-in minister didn't even answer the question about power outages? The minister can't have it both ways. He orders the YUB to stay away from addressing a subsidy against his own stated principles; now he won't demonstrate leadership by ensuring this important public concern is addressed at the appropriate opportunity.

Now let's switch to another issue discussed yesterday. It was revealed that the estimated cost of Mayo B was roughly \$100 million and the transmission link rang in at about \$40 million. That's \$140 million, or about double the amount of Yukon Energy's total current asset base. This government is giving this costly option a very high priority while the corporation struggles to find enough money to replace worn-out parts to keep the lights on.

When will the minister responsible see the light, reverse his priorities, and ensure Yukoners see light instead of more power outages?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: I'm loathe to get into this debate consistently, but the members are forcing me to do so. A "stand-in minister" — we've discussed this in the past. Members are not to call people "junior" minister or "stand-in" or "novice" minister. They are the minister; that's it. There is no adjective prior to "minister." It is "the minister". Honourable members, keep that in mind, please.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and of course as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, it's my honour to be responsible for the good folks in the department who have responsibility for the government's role in energy policy.

I would again remind the Member for Kluane, his reflection on behalf of the Liberal Party does not accurately reflect the facts. The member is referring to principles and suggesting that the reason for not continuing the rate stabilization fund at its full level was one of ideology. No, Mr. Speaker, it was good policy.

I would remind the member that groups including conservation groups have encouraged us to make that move and to even go further in completely eliminating the stabilization fund. We reduced the total amount, but we have also taken the appropriate steps in investing in infrastructure expansion to put a downward pressure on electrical rates. We have worked with the corporation, again, as I stated earlier to the member. The

corporation has significantly increased its investment in capital maintenance under our watch compared to its neglect under the NDP and under the Liberals. They are recognizing the need to invest in and upgrade equipment that is reaching the end of its lifespan. It is taking them some time to do that catch-up work from the state of neglect it was left in previously.

We as a government have also acted to assist people in moving to more energy efficient practices by programs including the good energy program offered by through the Energy Solutions Centre, which assists people in purchasing energy efficient appliances and other equipment. We are helping reduce their energy costs. We are investing in electrical infrastructure through partnerships with the corporation.

I believe I'm out of time, Mr. Speaker. There are so many good things I could continue on for quite some time here.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Honourable members, the Chair and the Deputy Speaker both make interjections. Last week we received very clear instructions from all three party leaders to tighten up the verbiage and tighten up the respect for each other. The Deputy Speaker and I take this instruction from the party leaders very seriously. We will continue to do this until we have a level of decorum here we're all expecting. Thank you very much.

The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the government private member to be called for debate on Wednesday, December 10, 2008. It is Motion No. 647, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike. In the interest of expediting debate, the government will only be identifying one private member's motion for debate tomorrow.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 62: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 62, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Lang.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move that Bill No. 62, entitled *Act to Amend the Animal Protection Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 62, entitled *Act to Amend the Animal Protection Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all members for the support they've shown on the *Act to Amend the Animal Protection Act*.

Thank you.

Mr. Fairclough: We in the Official Opposition will be supporting the *Act to Amend the Animal Protection Act*. We

thank the officials for all the information they've provided. It was very useful in going through this act. We had some concerns; we raised a lot of issues with the minister on this act and in the end, we've come to the conclusion that this is a good amendment and we will be supporting it.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to also thank the minister and the officials for the information that was provided around the amendments to the *Animal Protection Act*. I would also like to thank all of the constituents who approached me in the past three years, I suppose, about the *Animal Protection Act* and thank them for the information that they provided to me about the proposed changes and the need for changes.

I believe that we've made great strides toward creating a better *Animal Protection Act*, and I look forward to making further improvements in the future. We will be supporting this act.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 62 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 62 has passed this House.

Bill No. 61: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 61, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Lang.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 61, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 61, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, again, I'd like to thank all the individuals who had input into this amendment to the *Municipal Act*, all the municipalities and of course Yukoners as a whole. I'm also going to thank all the members for the support they've shown as we moved this through the debate here in the House.

Thank you.

Mr. Fairclough: We in the Official Opposition will be supporting these amendments. We don't have any problems with it, and agree to it.

Thank you.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I would like to also indicate that we will be supporting the *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*. I think that we had a fairly thorough debate with the minister when the bill was debated in Committee of the Whole in the Legislature. I only have one question for the minister. The minister received a letter on November 14 from the City of Whitehorse regarding some concerns that they had about the amendments to the *Municipal Act*. The minister doesn't have to expound on it here in the Legislature, but could he provide to this side of the House a copy of his response to the City of Whitehorse.

Speaker: If the member speaks, he shall close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, in addressing the member opposite on the *Municipal Act*, certainly we had dialogue with the City of Whitehorse and some of the issues that were brought forward by the city through the process were not accepted in the new amendments. We did commit in our meetings that once we look at the *Municipal Act* in the future, certainly those things could be brought forward and we would seriously look at them at that time.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 61 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 61 has passed this House.

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

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Forest Resources Act; Act to Amend the Seniors Income Supplement Act; Act to Amend the Animal Protection Act and Act to Amend the Municipal Act.*

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

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 12 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2008-09* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 12, *Second Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Education.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and pleased to rise in the House today to speak to a number of important initiatives supported by the Department of Education supplementary budget for 2008-09.

At the Department of Education we are working to create a more responsive education system that enables all learners or all ages to succeed. We are also working to enhance transitions between different levels of education, training and the world of work. We are also working to further develop and maintain meaningful relationships with all partners in education. In addition, we are working to enable education, training and skill development for Yukoners so they may respond to opportunities and meet Yukon's labour market needs.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Education's focus on creating a more responsive education system, enhancing transitions, developing and maintaining partnerships, and our work in labour market development is well-supported by this year's supplementary budget.

I'm also pleased to announce that this year we will be seeing an increase to the Department of Education's funding. Under the 2008-09 supplementary budget, there will be a 2.2-percent increase in O&M expenditures and a 17.3-percent increase in capital expenditures.

The total operation and maintenance supplementary budget for 2008-09 is \$2,504,000. Under education support services, we are requesting \$516,000.

Mr. Chair, \$226,000 is requested as a revote from the education reform project, completed in 2007-08 to continue the process for implementation of New Horizons: Honouring our Commitment to the Future. In addition to being a direct follow-up to the education reform project final report, New Horizons' aspirations to transform education is consistent with national and international trends. New Horizons describes the transformation of education in Yukon. It is dynamic and flexible, and it will continue to evolve as educators learn more about new ways to assist learners and gain more feedback in how to best engage community members in education.

The Department of Education is committed to working with our partners in education to transform education for Yukon learners of all ages, aspirations and walks of life. New Horizons is co-chaired with the Council of Yukon First Nations, and our partners include Yukon First Nations, numerous non-governmental organizations, community groups, parents and students. As well, the department is relying on participation from teachers, administrators and other school staff to ensure the successful future of education in the territory.

Mr. Chair, \$290,000 is requested in this budget to meet the obligations of the department under the new busing contract. As members are aware, the new busing contract continued provisions for increases or decreases in the price of fuel. I'm glad

to see that the price of fuel these days continues to go down. This will have a very positive effect on the Department of Education.

Under this year's supplementary budget, the Department of Education is also asking for \$1,211,000 to support operation and maintenance activities in public schools. This funding is allocated to various areas, including \$804,000 to increase support in our schools for education assistants and learning assistants to aid students with their unique needs.

A revote of \$176,000 is requested to complete the purchase of new curriculum resource materials. We are requesting this revote because there were delays in the final preparation and printing of these support materials for the new western and northern Canadian protocol math and science curriculums.

The Department of Education is requesting further revotes totaling \$99,000 for school-based programs that weren't completed as a result of the difference between the school year and the government's fiscal year.

Programs included under this line item include projects such as the tutor program and the cultural enhancement programs in schools. These programs make a real difference to students. In the case of the tutor programs, students can get the extra help they need so that homework time is a fluid and well-supported learning activity.

Cultural enhancement programs in schools can make all of the difference when it comes to creating an inclusive and relevant learning environment for all students.

The Department of Education is listening to school communities and we are hearing the targeted programs like the home tutor program and the cultural enhancement funding are working.

The department is also requesting a revote of \$225,000 to complete two projects approved under the northern strategy trust. These include the Revitalizing Culture through Story and Technology and the Walking Together programs. In Revitalizing Culture through Story and Technology, a DVD will be produced that will feature Yukon First Nations' language and culture under the guidance of the Yukon First Nation curriculum working group, which represents eight Yukon First Nation language groups. Walking Together is a First Nation community-based project that will work to develop a language revitalization and maintenance plan in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Also included under public schools is \$29,000 in additional funding from the Council of Ministers of Education Canada for one additional French monitor. French monitors are French language assistants hired to work in Yukon schools. The intention of the French monitor program is to assist the monitors to learn English while they assist the schools by bringing their French language and culture to the schools.

Canadian Heritage is also providing an additional \$7,000 for improvements to core French and French immersion programs. In support of the government's addiction management program, there is also a transfer to the Public Service Commission of \$57,000. There is also a transfer to Public Service Commission of \$72,000 to cover additional costs for Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board premiums.

Mr. Chair, under the 2008-09 supplementary budget, the Department of Education is asking for \$704,000 under operations and maintenance for the advanced education branch. A large part of the advanced education funding is dedicated to supporting labour market initiatives.

Mr. Chair, our K-12 education system sets the foundation for lifelong learning, but advanced education plays a key role in preparing people for engaging in the world of work and enhancing transitions between education, training and the world of work. \$276,000 is requested for the development of the labour market framework for Yukon, and this funding is coming from the federal community development trust. The purpose of the labour market framework is to help ensure Yukon is best positioned to develop an inclusive and adaptable labour market that meets the needs and demands of a strong, diversified economy and provides opportunities for a better quality of life for all Yukoners.

Mr. Chair, comprehensive strategies are being refined to help address the current labour crisis and to help coordinate efforts among all levels of government and businesses to prioritize initiatives, identify gaps in overlapping programs and try to streamline efforts to ensure employers have the staff that they need and that the community needs are met.

Mr. Chair, the strategies are: number one, a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy; two, an immigration strategy; three, a national recruitment strategy; four, an employee retention strategy; and five, a labour market information strategy. Participation by local business operators and other stakeholders in this initiative will ensure the department can make informed decisions and create the most effective strategies to support labour market development.

An additional \$60,000 is also being requested for two, three-year term labour market development officer positions. These term labour market development officer positions will help the advanced education branch to address the increased demand for services in the Yukon nominee program for immigration. These positions will also provide the advanced education branch an opportunity to expand its services to access additional mechanisms through Citizenship and Immigration Canada that will assist employers looking for seasonal employees.

Mr. Chair, this is very good news for employers in the hospitality, mineral exploration and mining sectors who need workers.

By putting systems in place to help ensure employers have the workers they need, the advanced education branch is working toward fostering an adaptable and inclusive labour market to meet the needs of a strong, diversified economy.

Mr. Chair, \$368,000 is being requested to cover the increased training cost for our apprentices. As we are all aware, there is a high demand for tradespeople in Yukon and across Canada. In Yukon, apprentice enrolment has increased substantially, and this government is working to ensure that our apprentices receive the training that they require in order to obtain their certification.

Our support of Yukon College demonstrates the Department of Education's commitment to advanced education and

training opportunities in the territory. A revote of \$73,000 is being requested for the targeted initiative for older workers program. The revote is required because of delays that occurred during the 2007-08 start-up for offering this program in communities. The targeted initiative for older workers is a labour force development project targeted at workers aged 55 to 65 and is jointly funded by the Yukon and federal governments and delivered by Yukon College.

By providing training and work-placement opportunities for older workers, the Yukon government is working to develop further capacity in the local workforce.

In Yukon, 22 percent of our population is aged 50 to 64 and persons who are underemployed in this demographic can be a great asset to the labour force and to any business. The total capital supplementary budget for 2008-09 is \$1,406,000. These capital funds are invested throughout the department.

Under education support services, we are requesting \$56,000 in office furniture, equipment, systems and space; \$7,000 is requested to mitigate the staff health issue that was identified late in 2007-08, which required the replacement of a carpet; and \$49,000 is being requested for office renovations to accommodate the two three-year term labour market development officer positions in the advanced education branch.

The Department of Education is requesting a number of revotes under public schools funding. A \$212,000 revote is requested to complete the review of secondary school programs. These recommendations arising from this review will guide the programming and the development of secondary school facilities and infrastructure. \$126,000 is requested as a revote for site improvement and recreation development to allow for the completion of various projects in schools throughout the Yukon.

An additional \$38,000 is being requested as a revote for soccer field replacements and upgrades to complete the work that began in the summer of 2007 on the George White soccer field at Vanier school to address site and recreation safety issues. Revotes of \$301,000 are requested for all schools to complete projects initiated by school councils and staff as well as purchase of equipment not completed by the government's fiscal year-end.

The Department of Education is asking for a further \$66,000 in capital maintenance to support a number of smaller projects that began in 2007-08. These projects include flooring projects at the St. Elias Community School, Johnson Elementary School and Watson Lake Secondary School and various smaller projects throughout the territory. A revote of \$30,000 is also being requested for various school facility renovations to complete the St. Elias Community School art room and the Vanier Catholic Secondary School chemistry lab.

Mr. Chair, under the 2008-09 supplementary capital budget, the Department of Education is requesting two revotes regarding advanced education funding. To support community training fund agreements signed late in the fiscal year, a \$240,000 revote is requested.

Community training funds provide targeted training opportunities for Yukoners across the territory so that they can take advantage of local employment opportunities.

A revote of \$46,000 is also being requested to accommodate an accounting adjustment for funds allocated to Yukon College under the youth-at-risk initiative.

The youth-at-risk initiative provides youth in Old Crow, Ross River, Pelly Crossing and Watson Lake with employability and job search skills.

Under Yukon College, we are requesting a total of \$291,000 for the post-secondary education infrastructure. This includes a requested revote of \$390,000 to accommodate an accounting adjustment for funds provided during 2007-08 for the construction of a multi-use building, upgrading and retrofitting portable classroom trailers and connectivity improvements and a request to defer \$99,000 in expenditures for the heating trades lab equipment, which will be completed in 2009-10.

The 2008-09 supplementary budget for the Department of Education is going to continue the good work that we have started in our first mandate, and it will support new initiatives introduced during our second mandate.

As I mentioned, the Department of Education's focus on a responsive education system, enhancing transitions, developing and maintaining partnerships, and labour market development is well-supported by this year's supplementary budget. Education and training are vital to creating and maintaining the kind of economy and community that we value as Yukoners. The government's investment in education in the supplementary budget is proof of our commitment to improving quality of life for all Yukoners.

Now, Mr. Chair, if there are any questions from the members opposite regarding the budget and the amounts therein, I would be pleased to entertain them.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, I do have a few questions for the minister in this department, although I must say that, because of timelines here, and because there are so many other departments that need to be debated in this House before the end of the sitting, we won't be spending a whole lot of time in Education. I know this saddens the minister. We have a lot of questions that we would like answered too, but that's just how it's going to have to be.

The minister's asking that we approve some additional spending in this supplementary budget on both O&M and capital. He is asking us to approve \$2.5 million. He is also asking us to approve \$1.4 million in capital.

We do have some questions. I think the minister answered one of them in his opening remarks. I do thank the minister for actually keeping his opening remarks quite short. I believe he feels the same way — that there isn't much time, and perhaps we could get some questions answered in this House.

So I would like to continue with some of the questions I had for the minister. I've heard the minister's remarks regarding New Horizons. The Yukon Party has now been in government for over six years, and we have not had an *Education Act* amendment come forward to the floor of this Legislature. It has been worked on; it has been looked at, and the minister laid out his reasons why in the past.

A review must be carried out every 10 years, and we're far overdue for this. We've been reviewing it for a long time — I think way too long, and I think the minister may agree with me

on that. I understand where the minister is going with the New Horizons and the education reform, but I think that he may have also liked to see some things included that may or may not be part of the total package in the end.

I say that because I really felt that a lot of work did take place in the review of the *Education Act*. It actually started in 1999, and the government side raised the bar and raised the expectations of the public by introducing the education reform project. It is going to be better and newer and geared to what Yukoners want.

Extensive consultations took place and involved First Nations, and some pretty serious issues have been debated in looking at education as a whole. People want involvement. They want a say in their children's education — in their future. First Nations want a say, and they want to help guide the administration and development of education in the territory.

There was one issue that came out loud and clear. I know this gave the Yukon Party quite a problem politically to deal with this — that is the whole issue of governance. Perhaps the Minister of Education wasn't in total control of this. I could see it on the faces of the members opposite. I know the Premier stepped in and said that governance is off the table. It was loud and clear; it is in *Hansard*. They are the facts and it is the evidence. *Hansard* is written up in the fashion. Then it was back on. It was off and then back on — and who knows where and who has control over this now?

At the time, the minister said that the education reform project was the answer that Yukoners were looking for. It was the answer. They spent all kinds of time on it, all kinds of consultation, and said it was the answer. There was a big issue in there, and that was the whole issue of governance. The reason why the Yukon Party took on the whole approach of the education reform project was because First Nations loudly voiced how they felt about the administration of education to First Nation children and the fact that the Yukon Party didn't seem to take this seriously.

I know the minister will say something else, but it came to the point where they went to the extent of having to seriously look at drawing down education under their First Nation final agreements.

That's the unfortunate part — because we're such a small jurisdiction, I don't think any First Nation or community really feels this should have happened at all — any amount of time and resources being spent on this. This has been a big issue and has really pushed some First Nations to look at it very seriously. The result of this is, both on the government side and particularly on the First Nation side, a huge commitment on their part of money and resources, although it's a very high priority. There was a clear message to government about that.

When the government took on trying to address the issues raised by First Nations, they put together the education reform project. I know it was difficult even to get an interim report on the education reform project.

There was one issue that stood out, and that was governance. I brought the question to the floor of this Legislature; I've asked the minister this. It was off the table, on the table, off the

table — what's happening with governance? What's happening with the whole issue that the First Nations raised?

Well, the Yukon Party had problems with this and then we went to another forum — it's called "New Horizons", and I don't know if this is even the end. I don't know where the minister's going to go after this.

There's such a delay and stalling going on that many of the community people are very concerned. We need to have that amendment to the *Education Act*, and we need to have the public's view of this reflected in the *Education Act*.

It's by law; it needs to happen. Here we are, we're talking about New Horizons and I know the minister will say that things are going well. We're talking to our many partners in education again but this is six years that has gone by — a long time; a really long time. Where does it end?

The real simple question to the minister is this: can he give us a completion date on the New Horizons and when can we see an amendment to the *Education Act* tabled in this House?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I thank the member opposite for his comments on this issue. I don't mean to be flippant with the response but the simple answer is that it doesn't end. Education will always be in a state of evaluation, reform and improvement.

There is a constant and continued expectation of the education system that it will examine itself and look to serve the needs of its students better. Education is always in a state of saying, are we meeting the needs of our learners? Are we meeting the needs of the community? Are there additional needs we need to meet?

When we look at the *Education Act* here in the Yukon, we see it's very far-reaching. The expectations indicated in the preamble are very high and very thorough. The *Education Act* speaks to developing the whole person — the intellectual, the academic, the athletic, the aesthetic, the cultural component of a human being, and other areas. We will constantly look at how we meet those objectives, how we meet the needs of the learners and how we meet the needs in our society.

The *Education Act*, when it was presented in 1990, called for a review. It said there must be a review conducted within 10 years. I wasn't in the Assembly at that time to live up to that commitment. It was a previous government that was here that had the responsibility to live up to that. They went to work; unfortunately, things didn't go — well, maybe fortunately — as they had planned.

Mr. Speaker, when I became the minister responsible for Education, I got to work with the principals in the project, those being the chair of the Chiefs Committee on Education for the Council of Yukon First Nations and chief of another First Nation who is not a member of the Council of Yukon First Nations. They gave clear direction to the education reform team: get out there, get the consultation, get the input from community people and bring back a report. When I received that report, Mr. Speaker, I tabled it in this Assembly. I provided it to all members. Then, Mr. Speaker, we sat down — "we" being the principals. We brought in officials from the Department of Education and from the Council of Yukon First Nations and

asked, "How do we go forward with this? How do we implement this?"

Mr. Speaker, that was the creation of the New Horizons project, which is all about how we can implement and address the themes, the concerns, the issues brought forward in the education reform project.

There have been many, many joint presentations by senior Department of Education officials jointly with the Council of Yukon First Nations officials on how the New Horizons project is the implementation. It's how we're going to go about making these changes. There have been presentations to First Nations, to individual First Nation governments, to the NDP, to a variety of different groups. There have been public meetings, and this has all been presented.

We have some very good initiatives underway right now. These are things like the school growth plans, which, as I'm sure the member opposite will agree, are an excellent vehicle for including parents and the community in the planning for their school. There are other issues that we're seeing addressed immediately. These include teacher training programs, which again are themes brought forward in the education reform document.

When we took a look at the education reform document, there were several themes that came forward very loud and very clear. They included curriculum — which includes programs, teaching and methodologies; professional growth — which includes leadership and capacity; cooperation, consultation and partnerships; holistic lifelong teaching and learning; information assessment research and reporting; systems, governance, organizations, rights, roles and responsibilities and First Nation culture and language and programming. There has been progress made on every one of those issues. The member can see the evidence in the schools. We've seen evidence with the new curriculums being presented, whether it's the program in grade 10 or the program in grade 5. The grade 5 program is now territory-wide.

Additionally we are working with individual First Nations on looking at their curriculum materials. The member knows the *Education Act* includes the ability for the local school councils to call for the creation of locally developed curriculum materials, so that's what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many different initiatives we can do with our current and very enabling *Education Act*. We're addressing the themes brought forward; we're seeing the changes there.

When the education reform project was tabled, the proponents — the authors — of it did recognize there were many different ideas being presented. If you take a look at the document, you'll see there are items — well, one goes in one direction and another goes in another direction. I applaud the efforts of the education reform team, and I very much thank them for the hard work, commitment and dedication they put into this, but when they presented it, they didn't present it as a fait accompli. It was not presented as, "This is it. If we implement this, it will be perfect in education."

They recognized that further dialogue, further discussion and further development had to occur, and that's what we're

doing. That's what New Horizons is all about: how can we have a continued approach toward improving our education system and how can we go about managing the changes in the Department of Education, in First Nation governments, in schools, with the individual students, with teachers and with our communities in order to accomplish our joint objectives in this?

The member opposite has mentioned governance, and he must have a different understanding of that word than I do. We've made a major commitment to work with parents in our schools and the community in our schools. We can see that with the school growth plans. We want to work with parents and their individual students. We've also made a commitment to work with school councils. We'll see, in other deliberations, about additional funding to provide assistance to school councils in order to increase their capacity.

The member knows about the First Nation program and partnership unit and the work that it's doing. We've discussed in the past the First Nations Education Advisory Committee, and indeed we're seeing a lot of the fruits of their labours right now — the work they have done and how that's going into the community and the classroom.

We've also made the commitment to work with Yukon First Nations both individually as responsible Yukon First Nation governments and also collectively — whether it is through the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Chiefs Committee on Education. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have an upcoming Council of Ministers of Education meeting that is going to focus on education issues that relate to people of First Nation ancestry and I have extended an invitation to the Grand Chief to attend this with me as well as the proponents behind the education reform project — the New Horizons project — the Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Chief of the Liard First Nation. We are working to be very inclusive, collaborative and consultative in our decision-making.

I would caution the member opposite not to become too closely tied to one specific recommendation made in the education reform document because it has not been given widespread support throughout many communities in the territory.

The model presented in the document — Mr. Chair, there are people who have come to me, there are First Nation people who have come to me, and they do not support the model. But I have made it very clear about how this government intends to proceed, about how we want to involve orders of government, communities, parents, teachers and students in the education process.

I've discussed how we're going forward, that being with the New Horizons project. We will constantly see changes being made in education, focusing now on pride in our culture, education of children and youth, education of adults, and healthy communities. This supplementary budget, which supports the Department of Education's previous annual budget, provides commitments in all of these areas.

It works on addressing the needs of students in our primary and secondary schools and our post-secondary institutions and the support for them, as well as additional programming that we provide throughout the territory for lifelong learning, for

our labour market work, for our work with community training trust funds and other specific initiatives that work on targeted projects.

Significant information has been gained, significant relationships have been made, and significant information has been shared in both directions — from the department, from teachers to parents and community members, both back and forth.

We're committed to going forward and building a system, and we're funding a system that continues to meet the needs of our students now and into the future.

Mr. Fairclough: But they're not committed to bringing forward an amendment to the *Education Act* to reflect these things — that is the guidance. Almost seven years and the Yukon Party has the inability to bring that forward.

The minister also said that governance was not given wide support across the territory. I believe he also said we have a different understanding of what that means. I believe that is the case — that our understanding is different. I heard what the Premier had to say.

Does the minister have the same understanding of governance as the Premier or is it different? Because when I talk to the drafters of the education reform project, I get an understanding of what governance is all about. This was widespread and was definitely a do-or-die issue with the First Nations. It must be included. This is what the minister heard: it must be included if you want to reform education for the future.

What I heard the minister say is giving me caution about supporting that whole structure. I do support community involvement in shaping our education because that's what governance is all about.

The minister also said the education reform project was not really to be implemented — it was guidance — and what we have for the New Horizons was to take some of the themes from the education reform project and implement them. Curriculum was one the minister looked at.

It didn't make sense as to what the minister was really doing. What we did ask the minister to do was take the education reform project — because that report is the "what we found" report — back to the communities for their input. Some of it is taken forward through New Horizons but not in the proper manner that it should be. I think the minister would agree with me on that.

I'd like to ask one question regarding this. The minister has said he has taken themes out of the education reform project and is trying to find ways to implement them and make them happen. How is he doing that with the whole governance model and structure that was designed in the education reform project? How is he doing that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: There has been a considerable amount of work in the area of education. Education is one of those issues that people feel very emotional about. Indeed, we've had emotional debates in this Assembly. People want to see the best for their children and their community. That means looking at our systems, some of their challenges and how we can go about addressing them, as well as finding out if indeed there are actual barriers to accomplishing what we want to do.

There are many instances in here when I find myself and members arguing about the same head of the coin, where we all agree about it but we end up arguing about some peculiarity about it. There has been a lot of work looking for common ground as to points we can agree on and points about the direction of the future, and looking and saying, "Well, are there barriers to accomplishing that?"

When we look at barriers, sometimes there might be perceived barriers and not real barriers, or misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

When we all put our heads to it and look at it, those things really don't stand a strong test of examination. We find that we can accomplish many of the things that we want to do under our current system.

Mr. Chair, the people in the community have put forward many good ideas and the Department of Education is certainly responding to that. One of the concerns that people have brought forth in the past is that they wanted to have more avenues of input, more information and be more part of the process. We as a government have certainly taken steps to accommodate that. However, it seems that when we do that the opposition then becomes frustrated and says, "Well just make a decision and just do something. Don't spend all of your time consulting."

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member opposite is saying "years". Yes, and there will be years more of consultation. The consultation will continue forever. There will dialogue ongoing. There has been a change to —

Mr. Chair, the heckling going on here isn't conducive to having good debate. If members have additional questions, I'm sure we can get to them.

Mr. Chair, people have said they wanted to see the process changed. They wanted to see the process involve more people. Well, that involves the consultation process; that involves the dialogue. That leads to better decisions. Consultation is a means to making a better decision, and consultation on a variety of different issues will be ongoing, and we'll continue to see changes. We'll continue to see changes in curriculum. We'll see additional programs launched. With the high school situation right now, we have a great opportunity before us to build a new facility. The government has recognized that the F.H. Collins Secondary School is reaching the end of its economic life. It's still a good school; it still has great classrooms, great labs, great gyms, but it's becoming very expensive to run, very expensive to maintain, and when you do the math, those indicators are leading and saying, "Hey, a different facility will serve the needs of the community better in the long run." That doesn't mean we're going to neglect the programming going on there.

We have the opportunity to start with a green field and build a new building, and that means we can gain from everything we've learned in the past. We can look at what has worked and the direction people want to go and make those changes.

When we started this process of looking at what the new structure would look like, it asked what programming we

needed in there. When this started, I had no idea that one of the main themes coming out of this would be that we should maybe look at changing the time that school operates. There were certainly some issues that came up that weren't always expected, but it's a good issue and we now have an opportunity to address it. We'll continue to work toward that.

We have a tremendous opportunity; there's going to be a tremendous investment made in this that deserves careful consideration, thoughtful planning with eye toward the future and an eye toward responding to the issues that have been raised where we now have an opportunity to respond to them. We'll see that and we are seeing it every day in our Yukon schools. We are seeing the input that school councils are having, whether it's on school discipline policies or whether it's on school infrastructure or whether it's on the creation of a hockey rink in the community. We're seeing the input that the school councils and people in the community are having in the community. I just recently attended a function at the Ghùch Tlâ community school in Carcross where the Carcross-Tagish First Nation had made a significant investment in providing curriculum materials and lesson plans and ideas about some of the things they wanted to see incorporated in classroom education. These information resources were passed on to the teachers there, so the teachers can make adjustments in their programming and planning and their teaching and evaluation to include community-based resources.

The Khà Shâde Héni from the Carcross-Tagish First Nation once asked me when we would see the constitution of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation in the school. I can tell him now it's in the school. It is there.

I'm sure the member does recognize that changes have been made to curriculum. Changes are being made to approaches and programming, and we're looking at making more changes.

The member opposite has made some more comments, and I don't always agree with some of the comments, so I will try to correct the record. The model that was put forward in the education reform document has not received an avalanche of support. In fact, Mr. Chair, it has been recognized that there are many tools in our toolbox that we can use. I have used the analogy before that we already have an axe, but what we need to do is sharpen it. I think there is support for that, and there is support for the New Horizons document.

The Department of Education and the Council of Yukon First Nations' senior staff made a presentation to Yukon First Nations leadership in October regarding the next steps, and leadership gave their support to move forward with this. There has been a very strong relationship developed with First Nation education officials through the mechanisms that I've talked about earlier through things like the First Nation programming and partnership unit, through the First Nation Education Advisory Committee, through formal and informal discussions with the Council of Yukon First Nations and through the work that other community leaders and I have done.

The New Horizons project is a statement of how we will respond and go forward. It does involve working on many different issues. I'm sure the member appreciates the number and

the breadth of issues raised in education reform. We'll continue to work on that; we'll continue to work with our partners. That will be an ongoing and continuous process that will not be project specific. We won't just say that we've addressed that issue, so it's time to stop consultation, because I'm sure there will be other issues where we will need to go forward and work cooperatively.

Can I offer the member opposite a joint briefing from the Council of Yukon First Nations and Education staff on New Horizons, how it will be implemented and how it will be a tool to go forward?

Mr. Fairclough: I talked to my staff here and said the minister will have all kinds of trouble answering that question, and I was right. Why not be straightforward on this instead of skirting and skating all around the rink and not answering the question?

I can figure out what the minister is doing. I know he's not getting an avalanche of support from within his own caucus.

I know that this issue has been widespread around the territory. It is families, it is parents, it is First Nation people, and it is community people who supported that model, and it was a bottom-up approach — a very different, reformed type of approach when it comes to governance. This minister feels satisfied to avoid that and take a different approach and, yet again, consult on this matter. Why is the minister so afraid of bringing forward amendments to the *Education Act* anyway? What's the harm in that? Why not do it? That's his guidance as he operates. How many more years do we have to go out there and do this work with the Yukon Party? Is it until they call an election and get voted out of office, which could be any time soon?

Now, I'm not going to get anywhere with the minister on this. I thought that this minister, of all the caucus members on the Yukon Party side, would have taken the interest of the public on this one and used his strength to take it forward — and it wasn't to be.

I'm going to leave it alone. I'll leave it alone for now because we don't have all that much time to be dealing with this matter and there are other things that we must do. I will be coming back to this and I want the minister to know that. I will be coming back to this again.

I would like to talk about some of the capital projects out there. I'm trying to move this debate along and I hope the minister can do the same thing and find it in himself to do that.

F.H. Collins: it has been talked about and the government has looked at the cost of replacing F.H. Collins. I'm sure that they have looked at the cost of renovating F.H. Collins. The minister said that they are developing programs and they will build the school around programs. That was his answer in Question Period, that they will build a school around the programs, and should programs change — I don't know. Do they build a new school, or what's to take place?

But why isn't there money in the supplementary budget to get going on it? Why can't we have something designed? How much further and how much time are we going to spend on F.H. Collins, and when can the minister make a decision as to what is going to happen with that facility?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: With education, become more satisfied when we have more kids reading, more kids doing better math, and when we have the gap eliminated between those people who have traditionally not done well in our school and those people who traditionally do well in our school. I'll become satisfied when overall performance standards in all aspects increase — not just on one test, but in all areas of public education.

I'll be more satisfied when we see our already high participation rates in post-secondary education increase more yet. I will be more satisfied when we see more people actively participating in a very satisfying and meaningful way in the labour force. Mr. Chair, I will be satisfied when we see more people becoming aware of their cultural identity and their history, regardless of what race, creed or religion they are.

That is when I'll start to be satisfied: when we are making a difference.

Mr. Chair, I want to see individuals grow up to lead a meaningful life, however they define "meaningful". I will be satisfied when I see the needs of the community being met by people raised in the community. Those are the things that I am working toward. I will be satisfied when I see parents involved to the degree that they want in their child's education. We have some parents, Mr. Chair, who are very involved and others who aren't. That is okay. I mean, it is whatever level of participation that they want.

Mr. Chair, I want to see the performance increase; I want to see attendance increase; I want to see school become a more meaningful part of people's lives. I want to see schools become a more meaningful part of their community, and that's what the work right now is underway to do. We started this off with the discussion about four of the objectives of the department and of the supplementary budget, and that's what we're working toward. If the member doesn't like the goals that have been set, then come up with some other ones.

I've continually heard the member opposite make some criticisms, but what I would really like is for him to identify for me — maybe he can send me a letter or something — what he would like to accomplish that our current *Education Act* prohibits? We don't have to discuss that today, but what does the current act specifically prohibit or ban or prevent from happening that the member opposite wants to see happen? I know there's a lot of room to grow with the current *Education Act*.

I know we've got an awful lot of room to grow with the current *Education Act*, and that there are mechanisms in there to encourage individual student participation, parental participation, teacher participation, school council participation, school board participation and involvement with other orders of government. The member opposite doesn't need me to go through the whole list of mechanisms that we are currently using.

We're working with the tools we have; we're working to make them better. We're working to make the changes that community members have told us they want to see. We're working toward seeing better educational outcomes for our students across the spectrum, from elementary school, second-

ary school, post-secondary school, and the other programming that we have to offer.

The member opposite knows about the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways* document that was produced. That was the secondary school programming report. A committee was formed to look at the need and what the replacement of F.H. Collins would look like.

Coming up with a school — it isn't always a situation of grabbing a napkin, scribbling it out and saying that's what it will look like. There are questions to look at. What is the school population? What are the programs? What other facilities are in the community that we don't need to reinvent because we already have them? What will we do with the shared facilities? Right now we have a situation where students from Vanier Catholic Secondary School use F.H. Collins for things like the auto shop. Will we continue that process or not? Some of those decisions have to be looked at, made and then planned for accordingly.

I've had this discussion with many people. The high school I went to is just about to celebrate its 50th anniversary — and no, I was not there for its grand opening. I said, "Why don't we just take those plans and use them?" Then we realized that, wait a second, there was a staircase that went down to the library and then up to the study areas.

We know enough about building an inclusive and accommodative school that we shouldn't do that.

Then there were other discussions we had about how the old school was structured and how that worked to — I'll use this word cautiously — segregate different groups in the school. Maybe the sporty folks were always in one area of the school and the folks who liked to listen to some of the bands of the day hung out in another hallway. We know that those things don't make for a healthy, integrative school.

There has been enough work done recently on inclusion. The members opposite, just a couple of weeks ago, wore pink in here to show their support for anti-bullying. We know enough about making things inclusive that we need to realize some of the changes. While it might make a whole lot of sense on the first look to say, "Let's take the plans for Bell High School off the shelf and build a new one right here. It was perfectly good for me years ago and we can use it today."

But no, we realize that we've got some work to do to take a look at the programming that we're going to have here, to look at the issues that kids have and to make changes to the system and changes to the physical structure in order to better meet the needs of the students learning. That is what this is all about. This is all about how do we increase the opportunity for student and learner success to increase? How do we ensure that we have the options that they need to succeed? The options that they need will be different for different students.

I am a firm believer, Mr. Chair, that the more options or opportunities you have, the better the outcome. If that means that you can't take a class at one school because they don't offer it then maybe you go to another school. We do need to realize and have some of these discussions, that just because there is a student who goes to Vanier doesn't mean that there should be something prescriptively prohibiting them from go-

ing and taking a class at F.H. Collins. In the document, we heard loud and clear that people wanted to see separate schools or not one great big high school in Whitehorse. That was one idea that was being discussed.

Could we take advantage of some economies of scale and have one structure that would have a multitude of programming that would meet most of the students' needs most of the time? Well, we've seen from the research that has been presented, from the dialogue with students, teachers, parents and organizations, that that was a road that they didn't want to see travelled down and that the appropriate size for a high school, based on the research, is about 500 to 600 students. Okay, there's one indicator that we can now use to build a school around. We'll continue to look at that, to go forward, to work with other agencies within the Government of Yukon — I'm thinking the property management branch — in order to take the project to the next step.

Can I tell the member opposite when the sod-turning ceremony will be? No, I'm sorry, I can't at this stage in time, but I will tell him that I'm looking forward to being there with my shovel and turning the sod.

Mr. Chair, there was a line item — the \$212,000 revote, which is requested to complete the work and to continue on with the next step regarding the secondary programming. There is work in this; the report was not received until well after the budgeting had been completed. We do have our capital budget coming forward for the next fiscal year in just a matter of months. As we have committed here on the floor of the Assembly, we did complete the building of the school in Carmacks that the member is intimately aware of. There has been significant work on other schools. We have publicly stated that the next school that the government will work on will be the replacement of F.H. Collins.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, really, I didn't expect the minister to have that much trouble answering the question. It took a long time to get out what he wanted to say. It's not that difficult to keep it short — another purpose for his long answers, of course. I do have a few more but the minister says that he wanted to close the gap; he wanted to ensure that kids have the ability to read after coming out of high school. He has been in government now for over six years and he is still working at it.

I want to quote something, and here are a couple of them: "What is arguably the most critical element in decision-making is the connection between district personnel and the aboriginal communities, particularly with the aboriginal leaders." This is out of B.C. In other words, the decision-making is fractured and marked by mistrust.

Also, the minister is talking about involving community people. This quote says, "Improvements to student performance are more likely if aboriginal stakeholders are incorporated into decision-making structures." "...the higher-performing districts were more visibly successful in realizing this objective." And, "There are also gains to be achieved by encouraging participation of the broader community, especially parents and relatives, in the school system."

I know the minister heard this over and over again and that is part of why the whole governance model was put on the ta-

ble. Now it's being — I would say — ignored in the way it was put together, and a new approach with New Horizons has come forward. The whole issue about governance was to have a bottom-up model approach to governance of education. It's too bad, but the minister went there.

It took a long time to answer what was taking place with F.H. Collins and whether or not a decision was going to be made. The minister couldn't come up with one — he couldn't say when he's going to stick the shovel in the ground and turn dirt. He couldn't say that. But more than likely if he keeps up this approach to capital projects, then we're not going to see F.H. Collins school started at all under the Yukon Party because it will be voted out by then.

The minister also said that the Carmacks school was completed. You know, it's a great school and everybody has gone through that school. But there are lots of issues with that school yet. The grounds are still not completed. Years and years and years of working and they finally knocked down the old school. They were going to use it for fire practice. They finally knocked it down, but they still haven't developed the grounds. Until they do such a thing, then of course it would be completed. The school itself physically is built with the blueprints upside-down and backward, but what the heck — government approved it.

The minister did mention something that was interesting about the busing contract and I want to ask a question about that. They scrapped the busing contract and redid it to include the higher fuel costs. The minister said that the contract does reflect the cost of fuel. In other words, if fuel prices are down, then the amount of the contract should be down as well. The changes were made not too long ago. We have fuel prices that are at a four-year low. Is that information made available about the savings on this busing contract? Would the minister make that clear what the reduction is versus what it was at the time — I think we were at \$1.40 for a litre of fuel — of gasoline — and now we're down at 89 cents, 88 cents in some places and even lower. Can the minister just elaborate a little on that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the member's questions regarding the retendering of the school busing contract and the new contract that was signed. The member did put out some information, though, that I do need to address.

The member opposite talked about the delays in tearing down the old school. I will remind the Member for Mayo-Tatchun that was on the floor of this Assembly where the Liberal Party got up and made a request to me to take a look at what else we could do with that, to not go and immediately knock it down but to go and look if there were any alternatives to it.

I listened to the MLA for the area; I listened to the member opposite. I appreciated his input and gave direction to do just that. So I guess it's fair to say that I will be criticized if I listen to the member opposite and criticized if I don't listen to the member opposite.

He also presented some information — and if the member opposite has another copy of the report, maybe he could send it to my office, so that I can take a look at it, read the comments and have a fuller appreciation of what the article was about. I'll

be the first to stand on the floor of this Assembly, as I know others will do, and say that any excuse to get the community into the school is a good excuse to get the community into the school. To use the school for positive celebrations is a great thing. To have people coming into the school and seeing the accomplishments of the students there is excellent. Having people coming in and doing additional programming in the evenings, or using the school gym or some of the other facilities — I believe wholeheartedly in that.

I think the more opportunities that we have for all members of the communities — especially some of the detractors of the education system — give them an opportunity to be in the school and see what's really going on — is a good thing. I certainly support that.

I will get to the busing contract. The member also talked about representation in schools. I'll remind the member opposite that in many of our school councils, there is a guaranteed minimum representation of First Nation people on the school council. Once again, I'll remind the member that is a minimum — that is not a ceiling on First Nation representation — but a minimum. There are opportunities for more people to get involved should they wish to do that. That's just in the school council.

I haven't seen the latest figures, but I do know that at the end of the school elections, there were many school councils that did have vacant seats. Many of them have been filled since then, but there are opportunities should other people want to get involved.

But school councils are only one way of doing that. There are other opportunities for getting involved and volunteering in the school, or participating in some of the other programming that goes on. Just off the top of my head, I'm thinking of things like the bison hunt that goes on, which does see additional people come and participate in the school, or the elders in the school program, that the Department of Education runs and that many First Nation governments also support. There are some communities — Teslin comes to mind — where they pay for an additional elder in the school so that there are two, one of each gender, because they feel that that's important. So there are opportunities for involvement.

There are always teachers looking for people to come in and assist with programs. I know with the grade 5 curriculum program that was launched earlier this year, there was a whole section on the teacher training about how to work with community members to encourage them to come into the school, and what the etiquette or the process is for working with elders to invite them into the school. So again, there are many opportunities for community members to be involved in this school. I'm not sure of the barriers prohibiting what the member might be alluding to.

The member also asked about the busing contract. The member is correct; there was an issue with the contractor. The contractor requested a renegotiation of the contract. The government felt the fairest process for all involved, to ensure value for the government, to ensure a fair playing field for other businesses and other busing companies, was to retender the contract. There were also some changes made to that.

Members will also recognize that one of the commitments the Yukon Party made in their platform was to encourage the participation of local businesses and, wherever it was practicable, efficient and made sense, we would look at smaller contracts so more regional or community-based businesses would have an opportunity to bid on them. That was a conscious decision that members can see in the Yukon Party platform; changes were made.

A change was made in this contract that included a fuel escalator or de-escalator clause which will make adjustments that are directly related to fuel prices on a monthly basis.

The price of this is based on the Bloomberg index, which is an industry standard for fuel pricing. I believe it's done on a monthly basis. As I'm sure members will appreciate, it's done on a reactive basis. We'll have to wait until we see what the price for fuel was last month, then when the contractor does all of its calculations and looks at the factors that are involved in this figure, we'll be able to tell. But I can't tell the member opposite how much the fuel savings or the fuel cost was for the month of November or December and I certainly can't tell him what it will be for January or February.

The fact is we put in a clause that was used in other contracts of this government. It ensured value to the government, and it provided a level of certainty for the contractor. So I can't tell him how much it was, but I would assume that if they had previously made a bid using \$1.50 per litre for gasoline and it's now, in some instances, down to 90 cents, that the actual fuel value would be less now than what it would have been under a tendered process at \$1.50. It should be noted too that they regularly add up as well.

The short version is that I think by seeing a reduction in gasoline prices, we'll see a savings over — instead of a figure they had used based on \$1.50 per litre. Now, if the price goes back up to \$1.50 per litre, will we see an escalation in the fuel cost? Yes. But if prices go down, we'll see a reduction in that amount too.

Mr. Fairclough: I see the minister is having fun with numbers here. It's a long-winded answer. I thank him for providing what information he has on it and hopefully when it does come forward on his desk, he can provide it to the opposition, also.

Just to note with the Carmacks school, it was a section that was of concern that we raised with the minister to perhaps look into ways to save it so that community could use it — that was torn down first. The old section was left for fire practice and has been there all summer. Now it is basically a gravel pad and no work has been done, of course, because of the winter months. I just give the minister that information.

I have another question in regard to a school bus in Old Crow. Are there any plans within this department to have a yellow school bus — a school bus designed to haul children to school, shipped up to the community of Old Crow?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One member is commenting on the colour as the key factor.

Mr. Chair, one of the things that we recognized when going out on the school bus tender project was that, in some cases, using the large, standard, great big, long 72-passenger

bus wasn't the most efficient vehicle. There are some instances where using a smaller vehicle, when there are going to be less students on it, obviously makes more sense.

In fact, we can see with the Kluane Lake school that they have a yellow bus; however, it's the small bus version instead of the 72-passenger. Where appropriate, they've looked at using a smaller vehicle in order to save on cost and to reduce the impact on the environment.

Mr. Chair, the situation in Old Crow with the school — it's just on the outskirts of town; I'm not sure of the exact kilometrage from the farthest house to the school — the member's saying at least two. They do have an airport shuttle-type bus that is used to transport students when necessary over there.

I've had a discussion with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on this. He did express, on a previous occasion, an issue of concern about safety. There was discussion about one of the sliding "stop" arms that might be used.

Immediately upon hearing the concerns from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, I talked to the department on that, and they spoke with the principal. I understood that there was going to be a letter sent home with all of the students reminding parents of vehicle safety and the safety of kids around the vehicle — that there were going to be assurances, for example, that they would turn on the four-way flasher when stopping to pick up kids and that it would use the appropriate parking area or drop-off place to drop kids off. There is still significant life in that vehicle.

I think one of the opportunities or one of the necessities would be having some kind of other transportation mechanism in to the community, whether that is a winter road or something. I will tell the member opposite that there is nothing in the supplementary to address that. That was a concern that was raised with me. We will take steps immediately to increase the safety aspect to ensure that the driver of the vehicle is driving it properly and taking appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the kids. We have also sent out information to the people in the community to remind them of their responsibilities when kids are running out to the school bus. I hope that, by working with the bus driver and with the community, we can cover many of the concerns around safety in that community.

Mr. Fairclough: It is great to take care of the safety issues — it should be done anyway. It should always be there, number one. But is the community of Old Crow going to get one? I understand it is not reflected in this supplementary budget, and I'm talking in general debate here. Is the minister going to bring forward this issue to Management Board and ensure that Old Crow does get a proper school bus in the upcoming budget in the spring?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin raised the issue with me a couple of weeks ago. I responded immediately to apprise the department of the issue and some of the concerns. The Department of Education responded immediately to the safety issues, and action was taken to enhance safety issues and to further remind people of all of their responsibilities. As for future budgets, we will continue to look at all the pressing necessities in the Department of Education on all of the different issues: the condi-

tion of current assets and the challenges of putting large vehicles into Old Crow.

So at this point in time, I can't make the commitment that the member opposite is asking me to commit to. I can let him know that we will give it careful consideration as we go forward with preparing next year's budget.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that. I guess that's probably the best that we can do at this point. I understand the position that the minister would be in. I thank him for that. I can probably go for days and weeks here in discussion in Education but I'm going to turn it over to the third party and I'd like to move on.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Department of Education?

Seeing none, we will proceed line by line in Vote 3.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Education Support Services

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

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

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,504,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,406,000 agreed to

Department of Education agreed to

Chair: Does Committee of the Whole wish to recess for 15 minutes?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess briefly.

Recess

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

Department of Economic Development

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 12, *Second Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Economic Development.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I'm pleased to introduce the supplementary budget for the Department of Economic Development. The supplementary budget seeks total supplementary approvals and revotes of \$55,000 for operation and maintenance expenditures, \$8,000 for operation and maintenance recoveries, \$2.147 million for capital expenditures and capital recoveries of \$70,000.

Though globally we are experiencing an historic period of fluctuation, Yukon economic activity in 2008 is remaining strong, with indicators showing considerable support. Unemployment has remained at historic lows. Year-to-date retail and wholesale sales have grown over the previous year and the population of the territory has continued to increase.

Preliminary gross domestic product or GDP growth in 2007 was reported 3.8 percent above the national average of 2.9 percent. Hosting of the Canada Winter Games, increased mineral exploration and production at Sherwood Copper — now Capstone Mine — contributed positively to economic growth in 2007. Though our economy remains strong we require now, perhaps more than ever, a considered and thoughtful approach to managing the growth of Yukon's economy.

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

The final departmental objective is to forge partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of Yukon. We are furthering the mandate through our request for a 2008-09 supplementary budget. Our operation and maintenance revote requests speak to contributions to both the community futures project to enable its completion, and a forestry investment plan.

Our O&M recovery addresses a federal/provincial/territorial investment marketing meeting which is 100-percent recoverable from the Department of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was the first of its kind and provided an opportunity for participants from across Canada to report on and exchange information about global marketing and promotion activities. Participants also learned about new investments and marketing tools and products.

Our capital revote requests are largely for departmental funds, such as the enterprise trade fund, which stimulates and supports the growth of Yukon business activity through export market penetration and expansion and business development. Among the funds required for a revote are the regional economic development fund, which facilitates coordinated economic planning at the regional level and the community development fund, which funds Yukon community, industry and professional associations, nonprofit and charitable organizations and municipal and First Nation governments for community projects.

Also included in the revote request are three northern strategy projects: the Yukon cold climate innovation research, the Selkirk First Nation *Toward Self-sufficiency* and the Council of Yukon First Nations e-commerce projects.

Our capital recovery is for the community access program, which provides public access to computers in the communities and is 100-percent recoverable.

So in closing, I would like to point out that this budget represents the continued hard work of this government and the Department of Economic Development to support Yukon's long-term economic prosperity. Our vision continues for

Yukon's economic growth and includes an economy that will capture external dollars and capitalize on the strengths of our geography and of our people. Our vision is for an economy where overall economic output increases on a year-to-year basis through sound economic and regional development efforts.

So that's a synopsis of the supplementary estimates for the Department of Economic Development. With that, I will entertain questions, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Inverarity: First of all, I would like to thank the officials for coming today. I know you've spent a lot of hard work within the department in getting ready and I know coming to the House here takes away from the time you can spend in your department, so I do appreciate the effort and the time that you've come over to spend with us and look forward to some really good debate here with the minister.

There are a couple of housekeeping things that I need answers on to begin with. If we go back to the Yukon Party platform, pillar number three, the economy, the platform states that the government has committed to creating an independent appeals committee to adjudicate contracting and tendering disputes, and as I said, it was under the economic platform. I'm just wondering how that's going and is it in place yet?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I'm sure that the Minister of Highways and Public Works will be happy to discuss that at the appropriate time. That's not in the purview or mandate of my department.

Mr. Inverarity: I guess I'm a little confused then, because in the Yukon Party platform it states: pillar number three: the economy. So are you saying that this is not an economic development issue that you're looking at, in terms of trying to bring forward, obviously, something that has been brought up in the House during Question Period? I recognize that the Minister of Highways and Public Works may have some input into this, but clearly it's under the economy; that is your purview, I believe.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The economy is certainly the main focus of our department, but the economy involves everything from the Department of Environment, the Department of Finance — and contracting, specifically, is the Department of Highways and Public Works. So I invite the member opposite to have that discussion at the appropriate time.

Mr. Inverarity: I thank the minister for his answers on that. I just needed some clarification. There was another comment that was in the same platform document. It discussed the development of industry standards in the hospitality sector and skilled workforce. I think they were specifically talking about industry standards in general, but certainly it was in reference to the hospitality sector. I was wondering — again, as it was listed under the Economic Development platform — whether or not there was any progress, perhaps some grant funding that has been given out to someone to try and develop these standards within the hospitality industry?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: We do have some projects that we've worked on through the Tourism Industry Association Yukon. We've done some analysis and provided assistance with strategic planning. But, again, the Department of Tourism and Culture is the lead on this and, in particular, in terms of

setting industry standards. So I would invite the member opposite to have that discussion, again, with the appropriate minister.

Mr. Inverarity: I appreciate the comments from the minister. It is obvious that these should not belong under the economy platform but perhaps under other platforms that are listed in the four or five pillars that they had in their platform.

Perhaps we could talk a bit about business incubation. As you know, I've had some interest in this over the years and I know that there has been some research since I became a member of the House here. I know a couple of individuals who have travelled to some of the business incubation forums and seminars that have been housed across Canada. I am curious how much government funding has been directed toward this particular business development project and if there have been any models that have been developed or any sectors that we have been looking at regarding trying to develop a business incubation model. In general, how is it going?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, there are a number of different programs within the department from investment attraction and labour force development and looking at these things from a variety of different ways. One of our programs we've had very good luck with — that actually is in the budget — is a program to assist small business, more particularly in the development of business plans, something that would be ready to provide to a lender, for instance, in order to promote them to advance and come to fruition, as well as to provide funds to do marketing strategies, possibly to attend conferences and that sort of thing.

There are also a number of film and sound programs that I should probably mention a little bit because we've had very good luck with some of these. In particular, we have five film funding programs and one sound recording program. The programs were created following extensive consultation with local and national film and sound industries.

These programs provide local artists with opportunities to develop their craft, along with encouraging production companies from outside Yukon to film in the Yukon, thereby promoting tourism, job opportunities, et cetera, for Yukoners.

To just briefly mention those programs — I look at these as a means of incubating and promoting our people to have trained staff.

When people come to work, they want to know if we have staff who are capable and trained in the equipment, procedures and this sort of thing. To give a quick rundown on that, we do have a film location incentive, which encourages production companies from outside Yukon to film here and to hire and train Yukoners. There are three components to the incentive program on that. We do have a travel rebate program. We have a labour rebate and a training program there.

Again, when these companies come in and want to do that kind of training or have that kind of program, they want to know that there are people capable of doing the job. We need to get those people trained. Secondly, there is a film training initiative, where they can apply to a fund for financial support for both outside and local film training workshops and have that workforce up here trained and ready to go. I'm always

amazed at the number of people within the film industry who live in Porter Creek North, which is my riding, because that has become a big issue at the door.

We also have a film-makers fund, which is up to \$8,000 per applicant. That is available to Yukon resident film and video professionals to assist them in developing viable careers in the business of making films and videos for broadcast or commercial release. We also have a film development fund of up to \$45,000 per applicant. That's available to Yukon residents or Yukon corporations to assist with the costs of development of film projects in Yukon.

Then we also have a film production fund and that's up to \$500,000. That's available for Yukon film productions where a Yukon corporation has significant financial and creative control of the project. The applicant is required to have marketplace support in the form of a broadcast licence or film-distribution agreement.

The purpose of the sound recording program is specifically to support Yukon sound recording professionals to develop viable careers and businesses by making sound recordings in the Yukon for broadcast and commercial release. 2008-09 capital budget for these programs was \$760,000 and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission works with other departments — again, it's an interdepartmental collaboration — as required to facilitate project filming in the Yukon. That could be the Department of Tourism and Culture, it could be the Department of Highways and Public Works for road closures and permitting or facilitating sustained and viable growth in the various sectors. It might be the Department of Environment for environmental concerns or animals used in the film.

I'm sure the member opposite will be interested to know that statistics that we have produced over the last couple of years show that for every dollar that is invested through the film and sound programs, the return is between \$9 and \$10. That is not a bad return on investment. This is an example of one of the programs where we can use this to incubate and to give people a central place to come and develop these projects.

The technology innovation fund at Yukon College is another one that I should mention. It is funded \$150,000 annually for innovative, new, applicant-driven projects. This is something that people can apply for and work with. Also, in terms of some of the other programs — again, through business and trade and regional development, building capacity, putting groups together that can develop a technology — all of these are involved in many, many different programs.

Mr. Inverarity: I thank the minister for those comments. They are actually very interesting. As the department continues to grow in business we will perhaps see other sectors have the same success as the film and sound industry. That is really good to hear.

I would like to just ask a question regarding the Yukon cold climate innovation research — that's how it is listed on the budget item but I think, if I'm not mistaken, it sort of includes both the cold climate research centre and the research centre of excellence — I'm sorry, I just forgot the name in my mind here, but I believe the minister knows what I'm talking about. I'm kind of curious as to how much money has been

actually allocated over the past three or four years to these projects, what has been accomplished for the money that has been spent. I noticed that there's an additional, well the total will be \$649,000 for the year. Where is that money going this year, and what deliverables are we expecting to achieve? That's certainly for the current year but I'd also like to know where we're going, if we're getting any further along in actually creating a structure — not that structures are that important, but certainly in terms of the cold climate research centre, I believe that there was a design plan at one point for that. I think that there was some small business incubation that may have been part of that, but it may have been pulled out now. I'm looking for an update more than anything else — perhaps the minister could give us some detail.

Also, on the same item, there has always been a component of this, and the component was for private sector investment into the research centre. I'm wondering if we have any commitments to help co-fund the research centre.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The Yukon government certainly recognizes the commercialization of cold climate technologies. It's something that we've got enough of, especially the last couple of days. That will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners and contribute more to the diversification of the Yukon economy.

The Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre is being developed around the commercialization of that sort of research. On a personal note, I should add that a lot of the things we look at with that, in terms of insulation — while we're trying to keep the cold out, there are other jurisdictions in the south that are trying to keep the cold in. So there is a much wider range of commercialization than I think some people are really thinking of.

The centre is currently located on the grounds of Yukon College. It has already begun to attract a number of early-start projects that will raise the centre's profile and value. We continue to work closely with the climate change research centre of excellence. And the government continues to work with other partners and stakeholders to support the whole project.

For the member opposite, some of the background — the National Research Council has supported the development of clusters in British Columbia, Regina, Edmonton, and St. John's, focusing on fuel cells, oil seeds, grains and fish. To date, the council has not committed to funding a cluster or centre in the north, but there certainly has been a great deal of talk and people from NRCan visiting.

The feasibility study steering committee was made up of the National Research Council, Energy, Mines and Resources — another department that's very much involved — Yukon Housing Corporation, which was also very much involved in this, and Indian and Northern Affairs, or INAC. The Yukon Chamber of Commerce has been involved, as well as representatives from Skookum Construction, Pelly Construction and Northern, which were representing the private sector.

The current interim board is chaired by Economic Development. Other members of the board include representatives from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Yukon College, the University of Alberta — a very good partner — the Yukon

Indian Development Corporation and the National Research Council, as well as private sector representation.

The funding for the project in 2006-07 and 2007-08 consisted of \$200,000 from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada targeted investment program. It's a yearly amount for each year. The INAC targeted investment program has approved that \$200,000 in the fiscal year 2008-09 for project development.

The northern strategy has approved funding of \$738,000 and this is for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre. The Yukon government has approved a little over \$290,938 — to be precise — to partner with industry and academia in developing the Yukon Cold Climate Innovations Centre and cluster — so the member opposite is right: there is very much a working relationship between the two. Even there, Energy, Mines and Resources, Housing, Highways and Public Works are all involved in that feasibility study.

In terms of the climate change research centre of excellence specifically, Environment is in the lead, another department that is very much involved in developing the economy, and we're working very closely with them on that. I think for the member opposite, if he keeps his eye on some of the releases over the next week or so, he'll be pleasantly surprised.

Mr. Inverarity: I appreciate that update. It has always been something I've been interested in following along in my past lives and my current life.

I'd like to ask the minister if he would take his mind back — way back — to August. There was a postcard pilot project that was done in August and I got one in the mail. I was wondering if the minister could tell us a few things about this project.

One, how did it go? I know it was a little late in the season and there was certainly some media coverage on whether that was the most appropriate time to do it. I have to say that I thought it was quite an innovative idea, other than from a timing perspective. I am wondering what the project cost in total. How much did the government put into the project? How many postcards were sent out? Was there any kind of response received to the postcards and is there a go-forward plan to maybe do it a little earlier in the year this year?

Also, if there was any feedback regarding the biggest — a few people did approach me regarding it, and their biggest concern was the fact that there was an expectation that the people who were putting up these individuals coming from Outside were expected to do it at their own cost. I know that there were some complaints in the newspaper along those lines. I can see some people saying that but there may have been some reason — particularly if it was a family member, I could see certainly putting them up for free, but to have total strangers come into the project — perhaps it was the concept of having a reciprocal agreement like an exchange program that might justify having to put someone up for free.

Certainly, there were a couple of businesses who said, "I work hard for my money; I'm not about to put up my own employees. I put up with them enough all day long." But those comments were isolated, I have to say. Overall, I think most people thought the program had some merit.

Could the minister tell us what we're going to expect in the near future regarding this program, plus the other questions? Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I can give the member opposite some background on that program. The so-called "open your home" postcards were only one part, and a relatively small part, of a domestic hospitality recruitment campaign that was actually done by l'Association franco-yukonnaise. It was not done by the Department of Economic Development. It was designed to address the short-term labour shortage in the Yukon's service and hospitality sectors during 2008. Our regional development branch provided \$49,000 to l'Association franco-yukonnaise for this domestic hospitality recruitment program.

As I mentioned, the major objective of the campaign was to participate in job fairs, develop a Yukon ambassador program, develop a bit of an open-your-home program, and set up a reception centre for newcomers to the territory.

Part of this, I believe, was also getting out into some of the schools and universities to recruit students to come back to the Yukon. During the summer of 2008, 25 people came to the Yukon as a direct or indirect result of that campaign to work in tourism.

To me, the success was most evident during the Rotary Club wine festival last fall — in November, I think it was. I was over there helping to set up and there was quite a large number of employees of the convention centre setting up, and I never heard a word of English — it was all French students who had come here — so I was really quite pleased to hear that.

What happened along the way, unfortunately, is that there was a minor disconnect, and discussions were held about the possibility of a postcard campaign. At the time, the department expressed some concern that that was running a bit too late, but we were assured by the proponent, who had done an exceptional job in everything else and was aware of that, they would get those postcards out in a timely fashion. It was also agreed that the department, as the funding agency — not the agency doing it, but the funding agency — would be able to review them before they went out. Unfortunately, through a disconnect, l'Association franco-yukonnaise sent the cards out without our knowledge but with our logo on it, giving the impression that we had something to do with it, which we really didn't.

However, it is a good idea. It did get a response. It got people talking. As one person on *Cross Country Checkup* on CBC Radio said yesterday after being warned to keep their comments to a minimum on the situation in Ottawa, the opening comment was, "I'm really glad that happened." When asked why, he said, "You know, people are engaged in politics, because they sure as heck were not engaged during the election." And so, in this case, it got people talking and that is a good thing.

We certainly will look at that program and support that program much earlier in the spring next year and correct that problem. If it got people working and talking, boy, I think it was worthwhile. That \$49,000, by the way, was for the overall program and a wide range of activities. A rather small part of

that was actually for producing the postcards and sticking them in the mail.

It was aimed mostly at family members. I agree with the member opposite that family members — that would be a good way to do it. I would invite the business community to consider the other aspects of it. When I was in private business, I often had employees staying in my home. There are tax advantages for that. Watch for those tax advantages. There are ways to do and that is one of the ways to get your employees back in.

So don't just write that off without careful consideration, because it's a marvelous technique. It's a marvelous technique to get to know the staff better and develop the business more quickly by having those discussions over a glass of wine and not over a hectic day at the office.

Mr. Inverarity: I thank the member for those comments. I thought it was an innovative program. I think that it could go a long way in helping with some of the staff shortages. I was talking to one of the owners of one of the fast food chains in town. They actually owned houses in Riverdale where they put up their staff. Over the years, they eventually had to sell them off because of some of the down sides of having people stay in one's house. Overall, they virtually had to do it to get staff to stay in the Yukon.

The member did mention one program. I am going to ask if the minister could discuss the ambassador program that he mentioned just a moment ago. I am going to dovetail that into something that I know he is probably champing at the bit to talk about — and I'm really excited to hear about it — which is the trip to China. I'm really excited to hear about his trip to China and what the outcomes are and I would certainly be remiss if I didn't ask the question.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The ambassador program — just briefly since the question is there — it was involved with getting out to schools and promoting the Yukon and promoting the Yukon as a place to come for a job, come for the summer and, with any luck at all, like so many of us, come up to take a look around and forget to leave. We're pretty happy on that.

The China trip was — I think by all accounts — very, very successful. We took over a number of different companies but for us — to give you the background — new investment capital is really critical to growth because it enables businesses to expand operations, pursue new operations, explore potential — all those good things. The Yukon government is committed to encouraging private sector growth through the attraction and capture of external investment. It supports wealth-generating activities in the natural resources, in the tourism area and in all emerging industry sectors.

We're strategically located for the Asian market. We're five sailing days closer than Los Angeles, three and one-half sailing days closer than SeaTac — Seattle/Tacoma — three days closer than Prince Rupert. So we have very much a competitive resource there. We also have a deepwater port in Skagway, Alaska, which Skagway itself now refers to as "Yukon's port." That is a deepwater port; it will take the largest — well, it might not take the oil tanker that's currently on vacation in Somalia, but it certainly will take any of the large ore

ships, and we have a proven track record of getting ore and product from mines over into Asia.

So we need to take advantage of that strategic resource. We're actually closer, and one of the things the Chinese — I don't think they ever really worked it out on maps, but to look at these maps and see that we're actually closer than Australia, which is a major business partner for the Chinese.

It has a global demand of resources. China, Korea — we met with Korean officials while we were over there. Korea has a huge manufacturing industry and almost 97 percent of its minerals and resources are brought in from outside of the country, not from within Korea itself, so Korea Resources, KORES, was certainly part of that. Our major deposits of lead, zinc, copper, uranium and iron ore are some of the largest and highest density in the world and are of interest to the Chinese companies. There is antimony, selenium — selenium has suddenly, because of the amount of construction in the world, come into a very, very high demand, and the Chinese are very, very interested in that.

So we have developed an investment strategy, or investment attraction strategy, to guide the development of a diversified private sector economy while focusing on key areas of opportunities.

There are a lot of different mineral properties in the Yukon that do require investment to move them forward for development and into the mining stage. Yukon's mineral sector is a key economic generator for the territory, as we all know, and Chinese investment will result in widespread benefits to Yukoners.

Not only must we diversify the economy into many other areas, but we don't want one mine, as in the past, to dominate the landscape. We need multiple smaller mines, which will probably give us greater stability in the long run. Any Chinese investment or business operation in Yukon will have to follow the same requirements as any Yukon business and are bound completely by Canada's and Yukon's environmental and industrial regulatory regimes.

I was pleased to see that question come right up front from the day we started basically courting the Chinese investment — not only from the companies themselves, but the companies must get the permission of the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce, or MOF-COM, to basically put that investment into another country.

Part of our strategy was to go to the government agencies that would approve the investments; also to promote the Yukon, what we are, where we are and what we have to offer. One of the very first questions at every single meeting was if we will hold these companies to the same environmental standards. They were very clear that if we were not prepared to do that, they did not want to talk. Of course, we do. The ownership is immaterial. We have standards and they all have to live with that.

So, as mineral exploration and mine development in the Yukon goes through the environmental and socio-economic assessment through YESAA, and it's permitted through Yukon government legislation and regulations, that holds for everyone.

Since July 2008, we have had three significant deals between Yukon-based companies and Chinese investors. On July 2, 2008, Yukon Wolverine zinc-silver project was purchased by the Jinduicheng Molybdenum Group Ltd., or JMG, and the Northwest Nonferrous International Investment Company Ltd. We will just call them JMG and Northwest. They made that purchase for approximately \$87 million and, by all estimates, it was probably closer to \$100 million by the time they did the travel, due diligence, geological surveys and everything else.

They have made it very clear that they will be continuing that project to bring it into production in the very near future. On August 20, 2008, Tagish Lake Gold accepted an offer of \$5 million of financing from the Yukon-Shaanxi Mining Company — a company that we had the good fortune of spending time with — as well Northwest and JMG in the town Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.

Yukon-Shaanxi, as well, has announced a merger with Tagish Lake Gold and that has been a big step ahead from just simply an investment. They have actually merged and expect to see that coming to good production. For the member opposite, Yukon Zinc Corporation, or the Wolverine property, is between Watson Lake and Ross River — probably closer to Ross River. Tagish Lake Gold is actually the end of Annie Lake Road, which is actually easily commutable for staff and workers from Whitehorse.

Recently, China Mining Resources Group Ltd. — a Chinese company — purchased 18,770,500 shares of Selwyn Resources Ltd. China Mining Resources Group Ltd. now owns 18.56 percent of the issued and outstanding shares of Selwyn Resources.

Really, in the overall game plan, you might say that this has been modest to date, but I should point out that the investment into the Wolverine project and Yukon Zinc is in fact the largest Chinese mining investment in Canadian history, in all of Canada. So, we're pretty pleased to have that and have that continue to develop. It's certainly expected to increase.

In 2006 there is an interesting statistic. China bought 25 percent of the world's base metals compared to five percent in 1980, so you can see how this is starting to grow. China's need to build its own infrastructure and to continue its role as the world's factory is driving an increased need for mineral resources and metals. The threshold for review of investments made by the World Trade Organization — members in Canadian companies — is \$295 million. China is a member of the World Trade Organization and this threshold is established on an annual basis by the Government of Canada.

For the member opposite, we do work closely with Energy, Mines and Resources on mining-related investment activities and in terms of the trip, we worked very closely with Tourism and Culture and other departments on that. That gives some of the background anyway on the trip.

Mr. Inverarity: Well, it sounds like it was fruitful. I have to say that I didn't catch a lot of go-forward issues. The reason I'm bringing that up is that on November 7 I was scanning the newspaper clippings and whatnot, and I came across a newspaper article. It says "China Closes Down Overseas Mining Investments." I'll just quote the first paragraph of this par-

ticular clipping. It says: “China is adding to recessionary forces and damaging its own interests by turning off the foreign investment tap after asset prices have plunged. The Asia Sentinel has learned that the central government has issued a directive to mainland mining and mineral processing companies to freeze all overseas investments until they see a pick up in global business.” It goes on — it referred to Hunan Non-ferrous Metals as being down 90 percent from its peak, and a number of other organizations or companies that were having difficulty with it. I won’t go into the whole article, but it does indicate that there was no indication of how long the ban will last.

I think the minister was in the general neighbourhood over there at the time. It sounds to me like maybe the newspaper clipping is erroneous. I was wondering if there was any effect or if he saw any of this ban in terms of foreign investment being put in by the Chinese and if that has affected the businesses you took over to China. It was certainly of concern to me when I saw this. I will be straightforward that I am trying to follow up on this particular news release, and I have to say that although I’ve seen this particular one quoted numerous times, I have not seen any follow-up.

I was wondering if the minister experienced any of this freeze on overseas investment by the Chinese, or is this not true?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Yes, I’m suspicious that the member opposite should maybe be reading more up-to-date and accurate newspapers. We went over there with quite a number of groups — with eight different companies. We had the largest delegation of anyone at the China Mining Conference.

The China Mining Conference, for instance, is among the top four mining expositions in the world. It attracted over 300 exhibitors, 10,000 professional visitors and 3,000 conference delegates from 45 countries. Out of that, we had a session with the Yukon companies being profiled, which was sponsored by Natural Resources Canada — NRCan. We also profiled our companies and the Yukon in general in a Yukon session. We sponsored a Yukon night reception that was better attended than the Government of Canada reception, which I thought was rather interesting. We presented during the China Mining Conference itself and then the National Development Reform Commission, which is the government agency that has to approve any projects of money going out, sponsored their own session in conjunction with the Canadian embassy. Again, we profiled a number of different companies and then following that, we set up a room with eight different Yukon companies to receive visitors and talk to investors.

From talking to the presidents or CEOs of these companies, I don’t think any of them received less than three serious inquiries. Many received many more inquiries, but many of these — at least three serious ones. The dialogues continued through the afternoon, evening and in fact after the conference.

So there is very definite serious interest and it’s all being followed up. For the member opposite, these are private companies, it’s up to those companies to make those announcements, but my information is that there are a number of very good announcements that will come out with that.

If the member opposite’s newspaper article is accurate on the timing, that there’s a freeze, then I guess a number of different companies didn’t notice that because they have invested heavily in Canada since that date with the merger of Yukon-Shaanxi and Tagish Gold and some of the other things.

I think you have to look at the overall plan. For instance, NDRC — National Development and Reform Commission — is very serious about coming back over. They’re coming over and it’s a regulatory body. They’re coming over and bringing over investors so if they are in any way, shape or form shutting down investment, then they’re not even reading their own memos, because that’s the group that would do it. We had a very wonderful meeting with the director general of the NDRC who expressed the total opposite: that he is intrigued with Yukon and definitely wants to come and look at more opportunities.

To look at some of the background, the Jinduicheng or JDC Molybdenum is the largest producer of molybdenum and associated products in Asia, and reportedly the third largest in the world. It’s publicly traded on the Shanghai Stock Exchange. Although Jinduicheng’s operations are concentrated in Shaanxi Province, China, by my notes, we were told at the time by the director general of that company that they had now more assets outside of China than they had inside of China.

Northwest Nonferrous represents the Shaanxi state geological bureau, and in terms of revenue and technical capacity, it’s one of the top five exploration and mining bureaus in China. Northwest has more than 6,000 employees, including 800 geologists, technologists and engineers. Northwest was the first bureau in China to conduct exploration projects in partnership with companies from western countries. These are the two companies that have joined together to purchase the Yukon Zinc project.

There are a lot of misconceptions about what’s going on over in China, and I understand and can appreciate how people who have not been there can get into misconceptions and start reading things that just simply aren’t accurate and are speculation. I mean, I love some of the statistics: that the largest English-speaking country in the world is China. They have more Honours students than we have students in all of North America.

It has been painted as a bad boy in many ways, but it’s positioning itself to be a low-carbon dragon in some reports. For instance, they do have massive energy efficiency and renewable programs. Much of the low-carbon technology of the 21st century is being researched, built and rolled out in China, as the Chinese have been very good at being the manufacturing part of the world and the factory of the world. Much of that technology is actually coming out of China and being exported by them.

This is a good-news story for China and for everyone. It has become the world’s largest emitter of net carbon dioxide, true; although its per capita emissions are about one-quarter of Canada and one-quarter of the United States. So, again, on a per capita basis, they’re improving quite dramatically.

Basically, if the Chinese emissions were up to U.S. and Canadian standards and volume, they would have the emissions

of all the world combined. So there are some economies of scale in there. With those, perhaps the member opposite has some more details. But I hope that gives some of the background on what we were doing over there.

Mr. Inverarity: So just for the record, the minister is not aware of any central government freeze on overseas foreign investment? Obviously I was concerned when I read the newspaper article. I just wanted to make sure that the minister is not unaware of any freeze on foreign investment by the Chinese government.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again for the member opposite, when the director general of the agency of the central Chinese government that is involved in making that decision is asking to come over with investors and is promoting further investment, if there were decisions being made, that is the agency that would do it — and they certainly had no such thing on their minds.

Mr. Inverarity: I see my time is probably going to be used up at this point regarding that. I would like to thank the officials for coming over and all the hard work that they have done. I have found the session to be very informative. As always, I look forward to having these debates in the House with the minister.

I would request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried, as required.

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

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$55,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$2,147,000 agreed to

Department of Economic Development agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now recess for five minutes and proceed with the Department of Justice.

Recess

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

Department of Justice — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 12, *Second Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, Department of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to recap our discussion from the other day. We undertook an extensive consultation on how we would improve the way Yukon deals with crime. Fol-

lowing that consultation, we developed a corrections action plan. Part of that involves changing the way we deliver corrections programming and part of it involves changing the way we deliver services to offenders and to victims.

We spoke about the transitional women's living unit, how it will provide improved and more suitable living quarters for low- and medium-security female inmates. We spoke about the impact that a new correctional act will have on how we do corrections. For example, we are in the process of hiring a new director of public safety and investigations, who will conduct the investigation of complaints at WCC.

These are a few of the items we covered in our previous discussion. I would like to affirm to this Assembly that this government remains committed to achieving a better quality of life. We are doing this through dealing with alcohol and drug abuse through the substance abuse action plan; we are protecting the family through several initiatives, including the Community Wellness Court and the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court.

We are creating safer communities through our SCAN team, through our partnerships with the RCMP, including the highly successful street crime reduction team. We are working on improving the way we deliver corrections. This means several changes, including the model we use to share information between our work units and the way our correctional officers interact with offenders.

Thank you.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for keeping her remarks reasonably brief. I would just like to remind the minister of the questioning that was happening yesterday. I asked the minister yesterday afternoon before we adjourned about the Community Wellness Court. The question was basically whether or not there had been an evaluation plan for how the Community Wellness Court — or problem-solving court — was working. It's a fairly new initiative. I would be interested in knowing whether or not that is happening.

I would also be interested about whether or not, in the context of the *Working Without Boundaries* document, the appropriate supports from other departments — an example being Health and Social Services — are being provided. I don't need a long explanation. If there is lots of information, the minister could provide a legislative return or notes on it.

Something we've asked for — and the minister has said it was going to happen — was a review or an evaluation on restorative justice. If that's complete, if there's a report available, could she please make that available to us on this side of the House?

Those were the questions that I asked before we adjourned yesterday afternoon and I would like to hear the minister's answers, please.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am pleased to report on the Community Wellness Court today. As members can recall, this initiative stemmed from recommendations in the Yukon substance abuse action plan. The Community Wellness Court is designed to provide treatment and support to offenders living with a drug or alcohol addiction, a mental illness or intellectual disability

and/or an organic brain injury like fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

As of October 6, 2008, forty-seven clients have made appearances in the Community Wellness Court and nine are actively engaged in the wellness process today. Another four are being assessed for suitability. While uptake in the court appears limited, Mr. Chair, it is important to note that the court is designed to make a concerted effort to break the cycle of re-offending behaviour. Intake numbers are small but the effect can be proportionately large on the number of new offences, and they are comparable to what other treatment courts experience. This is very challenging work and needs a concerted commitment from offenders. This court provides a comprehensive approach to meeting an array of issues prevalent in these offenders' lives. As you know, this is an opt-in court, and offenders who choose to go through this court must meet the basic criteria. Their condition — substance abuse, mental illness, or disability or organic brain injury — must be a contributing factor to their criminal conduct, and they must admit responsibility for the offences they have committed.

Certain types of offences are not eligible for this court. They include serious crimes of violence, crimes of a sexual nature, crimes against children and so forth. Similarly, the court will not include individuals where the Crown is seeking a dangerous, long-term or high-risk offender designation. The offender must plead guilty, and the sentencing takes place only after the wellness plan is concluded. Close monitoring of the offender's engagement and progress with the wellness plan is done by the judge.

Each participant in the Community Wellness Court has individual needs, and so a number of assessments and interviews are undertaken as part of his or her wellness plan. This wellness journey can take up to 18 months.

Further work is being done to enhance the programming available through the Community Wellness Court. For example, we are working toward implementation of a continuous intake substance abuse day program for Community Wellness Court clients. In the meantime, the White Bison 12-step program is being delivered to Community Wellness Court clients.

Work has also begun to develop an elders program for clients. I can give you more statistics for up to October 6, 2008. Forty-seven men and women have made an appearance in the Community Wellness Court since June 2007.

I will read statistics for clients currently in the Community Wellness Court. There are 11 current clients — seven men, four women; two of 11 are AWOL; seven First Nation, four non-First Nation; five in wellness journey, two in suitability assessment stage, four in wellness plan development stage; five with addictions, three with addiction and mental health issues, two with addiction and FASD and one FASD.

Statistics for clients who have left the Community Wellness Court: 36 clients have entered and subsequently left the Community Wellness Court — 28 men, eight women; 23 First Nation, 13 non-First Nation, 13 with addictions, nine with addiction and FASD — FASD known or suspected; 10 with addiction and mental health issues — mental health known or

suspected; two with addiction — FASD, known or suspected and mental health, known or suspected — two unknown.

The reasons for leaving: six were not suitable because of legal criteria. Eight were not suitable because there were new charges. Three were not suitable because they were unmotivated. Three were not suitable because of insufficient resources — those being female housing and FASD supports. Three were not suitable because of residing outside of Whitehorse. Three entered not guilty pleas after CWC appearance. Five were not interested as a pre-wellness plan was developed. Three were not interested because a post-wellness plan was developed; two unknown.

On the common client project, a steering committee comprised of representatives from the Department of Education, Justice, Health and Social Services and the Women's Directorate has been tasked to work on a research project regarding common clients. Common clients are persons who are often involved with government services at different periods in their lives. These services accessed by common clients are in the areas of Justice, Education and Health and Social Services. Many of these clients are women.

The research project will help identify the scope of the common clients and the services they access. The *Working Without Boundaries* report was developed by officials from Health and Social Services, Justice and Education.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cardiff: On a point of order, I know that the minister is not reading from *Hansard*, but she is repeating verbatim her closing remarks yesterday. I don't think that is appropriate, given the amount of time that's left during the day. It is not really what I asked for.

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, the Chair is unable to determine whether the minister was reading verbatim from her previous speech maybe read into *Hansard*. On that note, I would encourage the member, if she is mistaken in what she is reading or debating, to focus on the Department of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Thank you. To sum up the evidence in other jurisdictions reveals a group of common clients who are persons often involved with government services at different periods in their lives and at many levels. This overlap of services occurs primarily in the areas of education, justice, social and medical services and, in some cases, social housing. In other jurisdictions, the cost to deliver these services to common clients is high and we recognize that in our jurisdiction. We are still actively working on this report and we are progressing.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the minister for keeping her remarks brief.

I'd like to ask the minister a couple of other questions, kind of as a follow-up to some of what we talked about in Question Period. I thank the minister for her answers this afternoon and for providing some information about the complaints process with the RCMP.

I will quote from Question Period. The minister said that they were looking at a northern position for complaints that will be completely northern and accessible to the Yukon. One of the concerns that the public has, and it was evidenced in the *Northern Policing Review*, was — and was evident in the public discussion — is that the public feels the RCMP investigating themselves, investigating complaints against themselves, is not appropriate. There's a certain amount of either real or perceived conflict of interest, and a bias. So what I'd like to ask the minister: is this something that's going to be worked on with the RCMP, and that is going to be part of the RCMP, or is going to be independent of the RCMP?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This comes out of the Brown report which was an investigative report that was done by the RCMP nationwide last year. The RCMP complaints process is currently under review and we have had discussions on this issue.

There is an independent complaints process, and we want to ensure that northerners have access to an accessible complaints process. I am discussing this with my FPT colleagues right now. It is an issue I would like to see because I know we have problems with this southern complaints process.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer. I don't have a copy of the Brown report. I don't know if that can be made available or if the minister can let us know where we can access it on-line. I know the northern policing review is on-line on the Justice Web site. I believe we're talking about two separate reports here now. I'd be interested in seeing that report.

I just want the minister to confirm: we're not talking about the current RCMP complaints process. We're talking about something that's going to be separate, totally different, totally independent and not influenced by the RCMP.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The Brown report is accessible to the public. It can be found on the RCMP Web site. I believe it would be under "Brown report — Immigration Task Force".

As to the independent complaints process, that already exists. The complaints process as set up now is independent, but the problem with the north is that we have to call Surrey or Ottawa. What is being suggested now is that we should be enhancing that, especially for the north, so it is more clear and concise for northerners.

Mr. Cardiff: Okay, so I understand that. There is some dispute as to how independent the complaints process is, I guess. I will look at the information available and we'll have another discussion about this, probably in the spring sitting.

I have a couple of other questions along the same line. I see we're winding down here today so I'm going to put a couple of things on record here — requests for the minister to respond and, if she can't respond by the end of the day or by the end of the sitting, I would hope to receive something by legislative return. Recently there was the in-custody death. There will be a coroner's inquest, I suspect, but there is also an investigative process that the RCMP do themselves.

One of the things that I have mentioned before is the idea of an independent policing commission in the Yukon that would oversee and could provide some civilian oversight of policing. It could be — I suppose — an advisory body and it

would take some — there are models in other jurisdictions, I guess is what I'm saying. It could be beneficial to more community involvement in the policing process here in the Yukon. I'd like the minister to give that some consideration. Maybe she needs more time to give it that consideration and get back to me on it when she's able.

I would also like to ask a couple of questions about the Whitehorse correctional facility, whether or not there are any — there have been questions asked about progress on it already so I won't delve into that again — schematic or conceptual drawings of the proposed facility and if she could make those available or copies of those available to members on this side of the House.

I would also like to ask one more question with regard to the Whitehorse correctional facility. Again, this is something that I brought up yesterday under Notices of Motion. The minister talked about there being, in the new *Corrections Act*, a position for an inspector in the correctional facility. I want to get the minister to draw the comparison to what was previously the practice, where there were independent citizens who were independent and had powers under the current *Corrections Act* to go in and see what was happening in the correctional facility, to report on it and to have changes made. If she can contrast that with what's being proposed in the amendment, because it appears in the amendments that the inspector that they're proposing there would actually be a civil servant who would work for the Department of Justice, report to the Deputy Minister of Justice or report to the director of Corrections. I feel, myself, that it would be better if that position were independent, so I'd be interested in hearing the minister's comments and if she could confirm some of those facts.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try to keep my answers very short, in our time frame.

The coroner's inquest, which is essential in investigating deaths, is absolutely independent of the RCMP and a thorough investigation is done.

The Brown report, when we call it up on the Internet, covers the accountability of the RCMP. This is what they are suggesting and this is what we are working toward — the Brown report.

The schematic design for the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre is still in process and will be ready by the spring. I will notify the member when it is done.

The complaints process is independent and has been independent. The commissioner on the complaints board is entirely independent and distinct from the RCMP. As I said on Whitehorse Correctional Centre — sorry, what did I say? I meant "distinct".

Well, they are distinct — distinct.

On oversight, our new position at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — I think I went through that yesterday, but I'll go over it again. The correctional oversight is a key component of the new *Corrections Act*. The draft new *Corrections Act* and regulations contain a number of clauses that specifically address independent oversight. These include the establishment of an investigation and standards office, independent adjudicators and a citizens advisory committee. There are also new provi-

sions strengthening the internal administrative law procedures around discipline and strengthened provisions around earned remission. These provisions were recommended by the Office of the Ombudsman during the consultation on the draft new *Corrections Act*.

There are also much stronger independent appeal provisions for the delivery of discipline, granting of temporary absences and earned remissions in the draft new act.

We have established a position of director of public safety and investigations. This new position will have responsibility for establishing the investigation and standards office and for ensuring there is procedural fairness and due diligence for all investigations at the centre. Again, staffing is now underway and it is expected that this position will be staffed by March 2009 and this will be an ongoing daily process. This person will be available at all times. I think that answered all of your questions.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for those answers. Can the minister tell me not the physical location of the office that she was talking about when we were talking about an inspector of corrections or for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre but what department it will be located in? Is it going to be located in a department of government and what is the reporting structure?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This position will be under the Department of Justice, reporting to the ADM and the office located in the Prospector Building.

Mr. Cardiff: Hopefully this will bring a conclusion to this. I would like the minister — and I know there probably isn't enough time to do this — later or by legislative return — this is going to be a position in the Department of Justice that is overseeing the correctional facility. The minister is responsible for the correctional facility; she's responsible for the whole Department of Justice. I'm just wondering if we're talking about the same thing we were talking about with the RCMP investigating itself. This is the Department of Justice basically investigating the Department of Justice. I'm just wondering how the minister can justify or rationalize the independence of that position when it's located in the same department.

Hon. Ms. Horne: We can discuss this further when we go through the act in the spring. The new *Corrections Act* is still under consultation, so possibly we can get together on it.

Chair: Order please. Seeing the time, the Chair will rise and report progress.

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 12, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2008-09*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:32 p.m.