

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 29, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Ron McFadyen

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the government caucus to pay tribute to the exceptional career of one of Yukon's finest broadcasters and most well-known media personalities who is unfortunately retiring this week, Mr. Ron McFadyen. Ron and his wife, Cathy, are here in the gallery today. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Throughout his lengthy career on Yukon's airwaves, Ron has impacted the lives of many Yukoners. Ron, of course, is also well known for his earnest commitment and his dedication to athletics and sport in the Yukon. This commitment began early in his career, as he became one of the first reporters to travel throughout the north to report on the Arctic Winter Games.

Since then, he has become a regular feature at many sporting events, tournaments, races and competitions, often disregarding the pelting of rain or snow. Whether it was late hours on the Klondike road relay, freezing temperatures at the ski hill, or pouring rain at softball diamonds, Ron was there with his microphone and his headset. This dedication allowed him to find events and stories that are so often forgotten by other members of the media but are so important in people's lives. Ron would go the extra mile to report on stories that were truly important to Yukoners, and told the real story of Yukon by telling the story of people and their lives. The number of lives Ron touched with these stories is countless, and it's rare to find a Yukoner who hasn't had the pleasure of an encounter with Ron.

But it's not just his work on the air that has made him so well known and so well liked. He has also extended an incredible amount of time volunteering with a variety of groups and associations. He has given his time with the Klondike road relay, the Chilkat bike relay, the 2007 Canada Winter Games, and many other events that would be too numerous to name here today.

He has also been active with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association — a group he helped found in 1976 — and has sat on its executive for almost all of the years since then, including sitting as its president for more than half that time. These ac-

tivities, among others, were the reason he was nominated this year for the Volunteer of the Year award.

Another key aspect of Ron's career was his fine commitment to journalistic integrity. I think all members of the Assembly will agree that in reporting about political events, Ron could always be counted on to report the facts without them being filtered or biased by his personal opinion.

Ron has always been someone that Yukoners could count on in the media for fair and honest reporting and that is a fact much appreciated by many Yukon citizens. I certainly appreciate that integrity on your part, Ron.

I know I speak on behalf of many Yukoners, including all members of the government caucus, in wishing Ron well in retirement and saying to Ron that you will be sorely missed and Yukon's airwaves will never be the same without you.

Mr. Inverarity: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to Ron McFadyen, a good friend, who after 30 years of broadcasting in Yukon is retiring this Friday.

Ron's love affair with radio began when he was 15 years old. He worked in Cranbrook, B.C. and, as a young man, later in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In November of 1969, Ron brought CKRW on the air. This passion for broadcasting is not limited to public radio. Ron was an avid amateur radio operator and the 65-foot flag pole in his backyard in Riverdale is a witness to his commitment to speaking to the world.

In 1971, Ron left CKRW to become a jeweler at Murdoch's Gem Shop for a few years. However, in 1973, Ron accepted a position with CBC Radio in Whitehorse and remained there until his retirement in 1996, due to health.

After his retirement from CBC, Ron worked at a few things for the next couple of years and during that time, he even worked for me at Radio Shack, but this was all short-lived because Ron's true love — radio — kept calling him back. He came full circle and rejoined CKRW in 2000.

Ron will be signing off this Friday, May 1 on the 5:00 p.m. newscast. A chapter of Yukon's history will come to a close. Ron will be remembered by three generations of Yukoners who supplied him with colourful and enthusiastic comments of their harrowing experiences in sports, art and recreation. Over the years, many a Yukon parent has been woken up early in the morning by their children telling them, "Turn on the radio, Ron's interviewing me." These children have now grown up. They turn on the radio and go in and call their father and say, "Ron's interviewing me so please turn on the radio, Daddy." Let's not forget the beloved birthday greetings. Ron introduced this public celebration in 1969, and it continues today. Birthday greetings have become an important tradition and if it is ever missed, even for one day, Rolf Hougen sure hears about it.

I met Ron when I joined the Whitehorse Jaycees in 1975. Ron was a volunteer as well, and we had many excellent adventures together in the name of community service. I remember one cold January day when the Jaycees were collecting Christmas trees, because the city didn't do it then. Ron was trying to get this particularly stubborn tree out of the snowbank so I came over to help him. We both reeved on this tree and finally we worked it loose only to discover that there was a root

ball on the end of the tree. We quickly moved on to the next house and replanted this tree firmly in the snow bank again.

I won't speak of the other adventures such as Keystone Cops. What we've done over Rendezvous is probably best left there.

My wife Mary and I returned home to Yukon after having lived back east for six years in the late 1980s. I ran into Ron on Main Street on the first day back. He stopped me and said, "Hey Don, how you are doing? I haven't seen you for a bit." It was like I had never left. Our friendship picked up, and it was as if I had only been gone for a few days.

Ron has had many successes in his life. Some of the many awards that he has received are the Media Person of the Year from Cross Country Canada and Sport Yukon's Media Person of the Year, which he was awarded a number of times. In 1996, Ron McFadyen was inducted into the Sport Yukon Hall of Fame for his dedication to and the promotion of amateur sport in the Yukon. Ron had the ability to offer a unique perspective of participants by doing interviews while running alongside other runners on the White Pass Summit at midnight in a blinding snowstorm. This perspective made him stand out among his peers.

One award that meant the most to Ron was the Commissioner's Award for Public Service, which Ron was awarded in 2005 for his contributions to sport and recreation through his positive journalism and years of service in the Yukon. Ron was also very inventive, having founded the ever-popular Canada Day lazy person's triathlon which, together with CBC, he ran for 10 years. This entailed running down from Lobird Trailer Park to the top of Robert Service Way, then cycling down to the Whitehorse dam and finally canoeing downstream to Rotary Park. This was a family affair that was always sold out. Now Ron is retiring and I sure hope he has time to organize this event again. Ron, I'll do the stats.

Ron also ran in the Klondike Road Relay pretty much from its inception until just two years ago. I have been helping on the Klondike Road Relay doing stats since about 1987. What most people don't know is that everything I know about timing for the Klondike Road Relay, Ron taught me.

Ron, you've had a lifetime of achievement. Your passion and drive for excellence, and especially your approach to youth, has touched many lives in the Yukon. Your contribution to fair broadcasting and your service to the Yukon public is a record few of us can only dream of aspiring to.

This Friday, May 1, CKRW will be hosting an open house from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. for all Yukoners to come and say farewell to Ron. Ron, upon your retirement, it is truly my pleasure to tell you that I have been blessed to be called your friend.

I'd like to call on all Members of the Legislative Assembly, your wife Cathy and all Yukoners whose lives you have truly touched, to say thank you so much.

Applause

Mr. Cardiff: I don't know what more can be said, but I'd like to offer congratulations on behalf of the NDP caucus to Ron on his retirement.

When I first moved to the Yukon in 1976, one of the first jobs that I worked on actually was a ventilation upgrade at CBC, of which there have been many. I've worked on a few ventilation upgrades at CBC.

What I remember was the warmth of the people who worked at CBC, and Ron was one of those people who welcomed me to the Yukon. As a newcomer, a cheechako, he contributed to my knowledge about the Yukon and about the people who live here in the Yukon and the public broadcaster's perspective at that time. It was a great place to work and learn. It was where I first met Ron. It was a good place to meet him, and I thank him very much for his contribution to broadcasting here in the Yukon. I have to concur with the Government House Leader about the fairness of his reporting.

Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any introductions of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I would ask the House to join me in welcoming Grand Chief Carvill of the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Applause

Mr. Mitchell: I would also like all members to join me in welcoming to this Assembly, Ms. Cassandra Ostlund, the Grand Chief's executive assistant, who is in the gallery.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, I have some more evidence for tabling.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion: THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government not to proceed with proposed health care fee increases that include:

- (1) \$600,000 for medevac services;
- (2) \$1.1 million for chronic disease patients;
- (3) \$675,000 for pharmacare services;
- (4) an increase of \$570,000 for long-term bed rates; and
- (5) a \$54 per person, and \$108 per family health care premium that totals \$8.5 million.

Mr. McRobb: I give notice of the following motion: THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to table its policy that approves of paying a full-year's salary to

the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation, when in fact there was a period of 4.5 months when no person was authorized to perform in that position.

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

THAT all members of this House urge the Government of Canada to maintain the federal food mail subsidy program that provides nutritious perishable food and other essential items to the isolated northern community of Old Crow at reduced postal rates, and to specifically ensure that

(1) personal orders are not eliminated as an option for the residents of Old Crow; and

(2) the City of Whitehorse is maintained as a food entry point.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to fully honour section 116 and other pertinent sections of the *Education Act*, which establish school boards in the Yukon, so that the mandate of present and future school boards can be realized as set out in the act.

Speaker: Are there further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Alaskan cruise ship traffic

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, a cruise ship line said it would shift the vessels destined for Alaskan waters in 2010 to another location — in this case, Europe. Both Norwegian Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines have said that they would be going elsewhere next summer. According to a national news story in the United States yesterday, Holland America has also threatened to pull capacity out of Alaska this year. Port authorities in Vancouver have said that the reduction in service will mean a loss of \$38 million to their economy next summer. What lobbying has the Minister of Tourism done to reverse this decline in numbers of cruise ships and cruise ship passengers coming to the north?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, as we are aware, the Minister of Tourism has worked very closely with the partners and with the Yukon Tourism Industry Association in addressing a long-term marketing strategy. It's very unfortunate that we do have the current economic situation not only affecting North America but the world, along with recent issues regarding illnesses. Government of Yukon is very well poised to work with all the stakeholders in the tourism industry — with people here, with people in Alaska and people internationally — to implement creative programs to address the needs of Yukon businesses and to work to continue to bring visitors to our great territory.

Mr. Inverarity: We know that things are going to be down this year in the Yukon, and it is simply a question of how much. The government's decision to cut marketing to North America by \$500,000 in this year's budget will certainly not help.

The port of Skagway is looking at a drop of 25 percent of cruise ship passengers from just two years ago. That is over 200,000 fewer visitors. That means fewer people coming up to Carcross, Whitehorse and Dawson City.

Officials with the Tourism department have already said publicly that numbers are going to be down this year. We know the department does forecasts each summer, and tourism operators rely on those forecasts to plan their summer staffing and to get ready for the season. How much are we going to be down this year?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Carnival Cruise Lines' recent announcement regarding its 2009 Alaska summer program will not have any impact on Yukon. Skagway's cruise ship calendar for 2009 shows that the *Carnival Spirit* will commence its port calls in that city on Sunday, May 10, and it will return every Sunday until September 13.

The cruise ship will be in port from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and, again, it will not have any impact on Yukon. That should reassure the member opposite.

Mr. Inverarity: Well, what about Holland America, Royal Caribbean? They're all going to be cutting back.

It's unfortunate that the Minister of Tourism will not be able to attend this week's annual tourism association meeting in Dawson. I know the operators are interested to hear first-hand how the government is dealing with the drop in cruise ship travel. Several weeks ago, the director of tourism in Skagway said his community was also looking at a drop in visitors this summer. He said the biggest negative impact is going to be on land tours — the ones where folks tour through the Yukon and the interior of Alaska before flying home. Those numbers are actually going to be the worst. Anywhere from 30 to 40 percent down is the forecast for motorcoach highway numbers, and that's just related to the cruise line industry.

This has a major spillover into our industry as well. When will the government release its projections for this year?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I'd like to correct the members opposite. Our Minister of Tourism will be in Dawson City for the meeting this weekend, and I would ask them to please get their facts straight, for once, in this House.

Question re: Thomson Centre reopening

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, over five years ago, this government closed the Thomson Centre for renovations. Today that building is still not fully operational in spite of the millions of dollars that have been spent on it. Just like the health centre in Watson Lake, millions have been spent, years have gone by, and Yukoners are stuck with another health care facility that is dysfunctional.

Last fall, the minister confirmed parts of the building remained closed and would be that way until the beds at Copper Ridge Place were opened. He said that was his priority. Those Copper Ridge beds are now open. When is the minister going to get the Thomson Centre fully opened as promised?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I indicated to the member opposite previously with regard to the Thomson Centre, this facility is being looked at for the possibility of enhancing the current hospital facilities, that being the emergency room and lab. They are currently looking at the Thomson Centre to see if that foot-

print can allow them to expand their facilities and to take care of the pressure on the current hospital.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, during the 2006 election campaign, a former Yukon Party Health minister promised to reopen the Thomson Centre. The Member for Lake Laberge said that reopening the Thomson Centre with its 44 beds will allow the government to address the waiting list for Yukoners who need residential care support and allow us to establish a much-needed palliative care unit within the centre.

The former minister did not keep that commitment and it is one of the many reasons he was shuffled out of the Health portfolio. He didn't get the job done.

The current Health minister hasn't made any progress on this issue either. Yesterday he said the plans have changed — and he repeated that today — for this facility, and the majority of it will now be turned over to the Hospital Corporation. Will the minister confirm the plan for 44 beds is now off the table?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I just wish to refresh the member opposite's memory on a couple of issues with regard to this government's basis to provide excellent health care to all Yukoners. We believe health care is a very important process for us here in the Yukon and we have worked very closely with Yukon Hospital Corporation; we understand their needs. They have indicated their requirements to increase the size of the emergency room, as well as additions to the lab facilities, in order to accommodate all the Yukoners and provide better acute hospital care services for us.

They are looking in that facility that's adjacent to their current hospital facilities and they are using consultants to provide advice on that and information. We are awaiting the results of that to bring forth through there. The Hospital Corporation will be looking at that and making recommendations.

Mr. Mitchell: My memory is working just fine so let me refresh the minister's memory. What I remember is the former minister promising to reopen 44 beds in 2006 and this minister reiterating that promise last fall in debate in this House. Now after six years in office and three Health ministers this Yukon Party government can't complete a health care infrastructure project. It is a question of government competence, or perhaps we should say incompetence. The government starts a project, spends a few million dollars and then changes its mind. It has happened in Watson Lake, in Dawson and now the Thomson Centre.

Before the last election, the Yukon Party promised a 44-bed facility for seniors. The minister now admitted today and yesterday that plan has been scrapped and it is going to the Yukon Hospital Corporation — more off-loading. Why does the minister continue to let this project slide year after year and when is the building going to be fully utilized for seniors as has been promised?

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to the actual building itself, maybe I can enlighten the member opposite with regard to its original construction.

This building was designed for Hawaii, and not really for the north, and as such, many of the repairs and work that has had to be done on this building has taken place in order to accommodate it to a northern climate. We're working on this

facility. We've made adjustments to the facility. I would also remind the member opposite that the seniors were moved out of this facility and up to Copper Ridge before we came in. As I said, we're working with the Hospital Corporation on making the best use of that facility to provide acute health care for all Yukoners.

Question re: School boards

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, last week, in response to a question I asked in the Legislature here, the Minister of Education gave us some insight into his view of establishing school boards in the Yukon. The minister acknowledged that Yukoners want to have a voice in their communities and in their schools and in the education of their children. He said that they don't want to see money spent on things that don't have a significant impact in the school, in the classroom, and with kids. But he also implied that school boards are a needless bureaucracy, and that Yukoners don't want them. Is the minister now saying that school boards are now, or in the future would be spending money recklessly, that they would not have a positive impact, and that they would simply create another level of needless bureaucracy?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: No, Mr. Speaker, that's not what I said, nor is that how the member opposite should infer it. I guess it is true that people can jump to the most illogical, improbable conclusion at any time. In our community, we have an opportunity for the creation of school committees, school councils and school boards. We have seen the school committee in Kluane move to the next evolution, shall we say, of becoming a school council. In the territory, we currently have one school board. We do have the opportunity for more.

Mr. Speaker, school boards in other jurisdictions across Canada provide a very valuable function and they provide a very valuable function here. The commission scolaire franco-phonie du Yukon does do a very good job with l'École Émilie Tremblay in providing French-first-language education here in the territory. We have seen other jurisdictions making changes, consolidating school boards, jurisdictions moving from one for every community to larger school boards and looking at how we can efficiently and effectively use the resources that we have and accomplish the number one goal of providing academic education, all the aesthetics, the culture and all of the other components of education the government has a responsibility to provide for Yukon youth.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister should read *Hansard* because that's what he said.

Part of the final report of the education reform project deals with the one school board that we do have and it outlines the barriers to this school board's autonomy. They include lack of control over funding; they include the board's relationship with its employees and the administrative relationship between the school board and the Department of Education. There are recommendations in the report for the department to review its operations to determine if it's undertaking activities described in section 116 of the *Education Act*. I've got those recommendations here and I'll file them.

It also recommends that the department give clear direction on how it will recognize and engage with the school board.

When will the minister act on the recommendations in the education reform project for this and for future school boards?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Department of Education is conducting normal operations with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. The member has asked me to comment on some other issues. The member knows full well that there is a suit that has been filed and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on those issues at this time.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, it's not inappropriate for him to comment on his actions with regard to the education reform project.

The process to establish school boards and the long list of their responsibilities are in the *Education Act*. I shouldn't have to point out again that we have a francophone school board and that two First Nations are working on trying to have a school board, and a third community actually conducted a vote on that issue.

Obviously, Yukoners are interested in having school boards. Francophone parents want one badly enough to take this government to court after years of failing to negotiate their legislative rights as a school board.

This minister's answer to the movement to have school boards is to say: help us in writing school growth plans. That is an insult. The minister can throw out the school growth plans if he doesn't like them. Why is the minister centralizing power and control of all education within his department and not listening to the rights of Yukoners for locally based decision-making?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Unfortunately, the member opposite is off the mark on this. In order to enhance the locally based decision-making, the Department of Education has worked with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees and many others to develop a process of doing school growth plans.

The school growth plan is an opportunity for the school with the school council, with local First Nations, with other people in the community who are interested in the activities in that school to get involved and to set the direction for that school, to set some of its priorities and, yes, I will state very clearly: I as Minister of Education expect the priorities of literacy and numeracy to be in all school plans. Those are a foundation to our education system. If anyone came forward to me with a school growth plan that did not address the issues of literacy and numeracy, I indeed would ask them to revisit their decisions, because those are so vital and important to our territory that they must be addressed.

As well, it also gives the flexibility for the community to address specific issues, to look at different programming it wants to offer, to look at issues regarding the school calendar and other programming in the school.

The school growth plans are an excellent opportunity to engage Yukoners.

Question re: Ranch Ehrlo

Mr. Edzerza: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services about Ranch Ehrlo, situated in Saskatchewan. I have since discovered their income for last year was

\$31,834,961 — wow. Now that the minister has had time to consult with his officials, I will ask the minister again: how many Yukon children have been sent to this institution in the past 10 years?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I can't provide the member with a total detailed account of how many have been there in the last 10 years. We have sent children to this facility because this facility provides the expertise required to assist these children in helping them along their way.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, I find that answer unacceptable because the minister can provide that. Since yesterday, my phone has been ringing off the hook. It appears that a number of Yukon citizens are faced with this burden of losing their children to an institution in Saskatchewan. There are citizens from Watson Lake and Whitehorse who have had — and are still having — difficulties getting their children brought back home. That's unbelievable and unacceptable.

My question to the minister is this: how many Yukon First Nation children are being sent to these institutions throughout Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I indicated yesterday, we don't like to identify any kind of issues regarding the children who are being sent to these facilities out of the territory. We're basically looking at the health and welfare of all children who are sent out to ensure that the facilities we're sending them to can address the problems and issues that are being addressed by each of the children who are out.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, Mr. Speaker, it has been common knowledge to me that the government does get reimbursed for money spent on status children in care. I was notified today by a constituent that his son was sent to Ranch Ehrlo in Saskatchewan without his knowledge or consent. That is unbelievable. In this budget of \$1.3 billion, the Yukon government sees fit to send our youth out of the territory and continue to build roads and paint bridges. Yukoners certainly have questioned, and must question, their priorities.

Will the minister now do what is right? Stop sending youth to Saskatchewan. Cancel the construction of one hospital, and build a facility here in the Yukon to support our youth in crisis. Will he do that?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I'll just have to correct the record and provide the member opposite with some really official information.

All the children we send out to receive assistance in care are by order of court. This is not something we do on our own. We don't just go out and take them and ship them out. That's not what we do.

This is all done; these are our children; they're in our care; and we're looking after their facilities; and they're going Outside to get assistance to help them out with their situation, and that is what we're doing in all these cases.

We're going to continue to do that because, first of all, we don't have the expertise here in the Yukon to assist many of these individuals; therefore we have to go out and get it. We do that on many issues relative to health — not just mental health, but all issues of health. If we don't have it here, we'll go out and try to get the best service we can for all Yukoners.

Question re: Building management

Mr. Inverarity: In February 2007, the Auditor General of Canada provided a number of recommendations for the Department of Highways and Public Works. On page 2, the Auditor General observed that the department did not have a long-range plan for the management of its buildings. Such a plan would help this government receive value for the money it spends on office space.

At the time of the audit, it was noted that a consultant had been engaged to develop a Yukon-wide, five-year master space plan. That was two years ago and we have not seen the plan yet. Has the master space plan been completed and will the minister table it?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, the master plan is done; it has been finalized, and I look forward to putting it out to the general public. It's very informative, and it did take a lengthy period of time to get the work done, but it is done at this point, waiting for the department to finalize the documentation so we can put it out to the public.

Mr. Inverarity: That's very good. I'd like to see it tabled here as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General of Canada had this to say about the government's attitude toward value for money and I quote: "A high percentage of office space is leased. A vast majority of recent leases were entered into on a sole-source basis..."

This kind of contracting is usually the most expensive option, and two years ago the Auditor General of Canada told the Yukon government to stop doing it. But that was two years ago and the Premier has said that that's just her opinion.

Why is the government continuing to ignore the recommendations of the Auditor General of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're not doing anything of the sort. We are looking at and addressing the issues that were brought forward by the Auditor General. A lot of the leases are in place. They're long-term leases. A lot of the places are a continuation of leases in existing buildings and existing space. That is why we put the space plan together, Mr. Speaker, so we could put a business plan to go forward into the future in how we manage space in and around the Yukon and mostly in the City of Whitehorse.

This government was very clear, Mr. Speaker, that we would try to maintain a concentration of government employees in downtown Whitehorse. We are doing just that, Mr. Speaker. We are putting bids out. We have the master plan together. We are addressing the Auditor General's questions, and that is what we're doing internally. The master plan is done. The department is looking over it. It will become a public document and I look forward to having it brought out very soon.

Mr. Inverarity: Let me say it again. It is about value for money, and sole-source contracts are the most expensive way to do business. In 2007, this government sole-sourced 26 contracts for building leases and office space. The total value of these contracts was in the range of \$5.5 million. Last year, that increased to 40 sole-source contracts for a total of \$8.8 million. Let's be clear: the government is going in the wrong direction here. With the wave of the hand, the government has

simply dismissed the Auditor General's recommendations as an unwanted option. When the Auditor General of Canada says "fewer sole-source contracts", the Government of Yukon did more sole-source contracts. When will this minister implement a cost-effective process for leasing office space?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We are doing just that, Mr. Speaker. That is what the master plan is all about. The master plan is how we're going to manage space now and into the future for the government of the territory. Understand, Mr. Speaker, when he talks about 20 leases, we have about 400 to 500 leases. So, I mean, we're doing our job. We're a large component of business for landlords in the City of Whitehorse, and throughout the Yukon. We're doing our work. The master plan is done. We're working with the Auditor General to answer those questions, and that's what we're doing as a department.

I would like to thank the department for all the work they have done on these exact questions that the member opposite brings up. They've done a very thorough job, and once Yukoners see the master plan that I have looked at, they're going to be very pleased with the investment that was made in that master plan, and people will better understand what we do as a government, and what impacts our rental situation has on the economy of the City of Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite talks about leases, we're talking about the Elijah Smith Building, for which we have leases with the federal government, and we're talking about individuals who own buildings downtown. First Nations have buildings that we lease. We do business with every walk of investors in the territory.

Question re: Yukon Development Corporation, chair remuneration

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, the issue so far with the Yukon Party's political appointment for chair of YDC/YEC can be defined as follows: one, the Yukon Party told the public the chair's annual salary would be capped at a maximum of \$38,000. Behind the scenes, his salary has ranged up to \$95,000, yet this was kept quiet. Two, the chair is paid twice, once from YDC and again from YEC. The government didn't tell the public about YEC's payment. Three, the actual YDC payment is not required to be reported. Four, the YDC pay is capped but YEC's isn't — it's open-ended. Five, finding out how much YEC pays its chair is a tedious, time-consuming and uncertain formal exercise.

Will the minister responsible do the right thing and instill regular reporting measures so the public gets the whole story?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: There's one item the Member for Kluane forgot to articulate here on the floor of the House in his question, and that is the matter that these are only items of his opinion. I want to refer the Member for Kluane back to the date of December 9, 2005. The member has just stated that it's such a tedious exercise to get information — I guess from the chair or from the Yukon Energy Corporation. However, when the individuals representing the corporations were before this House, the Member for Kluane asked a question about how much the chair was receiving, and the chair responded to the question. I don't find that very tedious, Mr. Speaker. I don't find that secretive. I find it a really disturbing situation that

here we have the Official Opposition, the Liberals, now going after another board member, as they have with the college, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier is asserting a motive and impugning the reputation of the member by saying he's going after an individual. He's asking a question of government policy, which he is entitled to do.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order; however, members must treat each other as honourable. That is part of our Standing Orders and part of our tradition in this Assembly. I would ask the honourable members to please respect that.

I believe the Hon. Premier has about 15 seconds left.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point is, the member's assertion that information is hard to come by and very tedious when it's recorded on the pages of *Hansard*, from his very own question, it's not in any way, shape or form reflective of the facts.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, that information is only a drop in the bucket. Now it appears that the minister responsible must have submitted his resignation again. Wasn't it this Premier who declared that his government practises full disclosure? Mr. Speaker, there is yet another item to add to that growing list of issues. Number 6, we've discovered that a 4.5-month gap exists between the orders-in-councils appointing the chair, yet the Premier stated yesterday he paid the chair full salary for each year. Mr. Speaker, by law the Yukon government must authorize this position through order-in-council but that didn't happen.

This is quite interesting and I am sure all those dedicated Yukoners who have served on boards and continue to do so would appreciate an explanation from the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any other instances where he paid board members for unauthorized periods or did he make an exception in this case?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the Hon. Premier answers, when the Member for Kluane frames a question that is "he did this" as opposed to "the government doing that," it is going to lead to discord. You are going to get the answer from one side that the question evokes. The honourable members should just keep that in mind as they carry on this debate.

Hon. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Number seven — the Member for Kluane is in fact incorrect. I would like the member to expand a little more on this area of the four-and-a-half-month gap and the so-called overpayment. By the way, Mr. Speaker, I would refer the House to *Hansard* and the issues of double-dipping that the Member for Kluane brought forward to this Legislative

Assembly yesterday. We would like to hear a little more from the Member for Kluane so that Yukoners can hear from this member and his caucus colleagues — the Liberal caucus in this House — how Yukoners are going to be affected should they choose to become a board member or a committee member in this territory, working on behalf of Yukon citizens.

Mr. McRobb: It looks like we have a live one here, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the Premier doesn't like it when he gets caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: No, no, no. You don't even have to stand up. What is the implication, honourable member, when you say a member is caught with their hand — did I not just say that all members should be treated as honourable? That is a dishonourable statement. Please do not make those kinds of statements. The honourable member has the floor.

Mr. McRobb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier often challenges us to table the evidence. Well, we have tabled the evidence. Yesterday we tabled the evidence to prove that the formal exercise to find out how much YEC pays its chair is so tedious, time-consuming and uncertain; today we tabled the evidence that proves there was a gap in the OICs of 4.5 months, in which the chair was not authorized to work. Yesterday's *Hansard* is evidence to prove the Premier admitted he signed the cheques without paying the chair's full year's salary.

I challenge the Premier: can he table the evidence to prove this is normal practice?

Speaker: Thank you, you're done.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I do enjoy a challenge, especially from the Official Opposition, and indeed, when it comes to the evidence that they say they present. So let me try to help the Member for Kluane.

Actually, what the member has presented to this House is information. But if the member wants to present "evidence," there is another venue, another institution, for that to take place. So the member could go outside of this House, removing the immunity of this House, and present that evidence, make the accusations against those who he is saying here in the House are doing something that could be defined as untoward.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: On a point of order, Member for Klondike..

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Nordick: I'd like members to recognize a constituent of mine, Mr. Bill Bowie.

Applause

Speaker: All right. I'll try this again. It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Health and Social Services. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Department of Health and Social Services — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Chair, when we closed debate, I was attempting to give the minister sort of a snapshot view of what mental health really means to First Nation people in the Yukon Territory and how First Nation people were affected by the residential mission schools. As I stated earlier, I believe that many people have come to the conclusion that it is time First Nations got over it. I know the Premier mentioned that Canada apologized. It appears that the government tends to believe that is the end of it and that's enough.

Well, I beg to differ, because today, as recently as yesterday, we still have residential victims passing away at a young age. I believe the one who passed away yesterday wasn't even 50 years old. So, are we over it? That's the question we have to ask ourselves and I would say definitely not — definitely not.

I know that the Pope offered a gesture of sorrow, and it's too bad the Pope couldn't live in the sorrow and the social ills that we experience every day. The fact is there was a mass abuse of a race of people in Canada — First Nation people. Massive numbers of people were abused, and I can't understand why the governments to date, including the federal government, can't seem to come to a realization that this is still, and will continue to be, a severe problem right across Canada until such time as this issue is taken with the seriousness that it should be.

We are not going to be able to deal with this issue simply by saying, "Move on." It's not going to happen. As I stated earlier, I don't know how many times in the past years I have

attempted to get the government of the day to look very seriously at a land-based treatment centre in the Yukon Territory. I know the Premier jumped up and said that, "You had that challenge and that task, and you failed."

Well, again, I'd like to put on public record that was something that was handed to me at the eleventh hour as I was walking out the door, moving away from the Yukon Party, which I find was unacceptable. It's not an excuse for today because I would have to believe from comments like that, that the Premier has no faith in the ministers that he has working under him. If it's going to be shifted to me because I left the party, that it's not being done, that's not acceptable.

There are enough ministers there. The ministers can still go to work on this issue. I have all the confidence in the ministers in government that they can accomplish this.

The thing I think we will have problems with is getting the blessing from the Premier to do it. I certainly hope that from now until the end of the mandate that the Premier would reconsider this whole issue and look at it for what it is.

I stated earlier that our number one issue in the Yukon right to date is mental health. I had an individual come to my sweat lodge recently, who made the comment that this individual spent approximately two years in Whitehorse Correctional Centre because there is no mental health facility in the Yukon that could accommodate this person. The choice was to voluntarily stay in Whitehorse Correctional Centre or else be shipped off to the Maritime provinces somewhere without any — without any — comfort that this individual would ever be able to return to the Yukon again.

I have major concerns with this issue because, in my opinion, it's almost criminal that something like this should take place simply because we cannot accommodate someone who has mental health issues — and God only knows why. I can make assumptions, but I won't. I know some of the story, and it's a sad story, but it's something that's quite a common story in the Yukon. I can't help but continue to request from government that they look at a land-based treatment centre other than what is being proposed by integrating it with the correctional facility. Mixing civilians and people in the correctional facility together to embark upon a treatment program — I certainly hope it could work, but I do have my doubts. I would certainly prefer that the government doesn't stop there, and that they continue to look at possibilities of working at partnerships with First Nations who already have infrastructure in place.

My question to the minister: will the minister bring this back to the Premier and ask if he would reconsider the land-based treatment centre option?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are doing just that. We are entertaining two proposals from two First Nations with regard to land-based planning and we are awaiting the results to be submitted to us for us to review. I might add that this particular forum has been fully supported by the Premier.

Mr. Edzerza: That is music to my ears, Mr. Chair. I will certainly be a happy camper the day I really see it come to fruition because it is greatly needed.

I am going to move on from this area now.

The next area I would like to just touch on a little bit — and I know there has been a lot of discussion around this already and I may have missed some comments by the minister but according to a health survey that was done, called “Reclaiming the Well-Being of Our People” — this is a summary of the *Yukon Regional Longitudinal Health Survey* report of March 2007.

One of the findings was that very limited services were available in rural communities for home care services needs such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, home maintenance, personal care, nursing and palliative care. People who are aging and those with disabilities need these services.

Can the minister just give a brief update on whether or not maybe some additional services have been provided in the communities with regard to these areas that I mentioned, such as palliative care, aging and those with disabilities?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Yes, we are working on our home care since last year. I can tell the member opposite I was recently in Haines Junction, where I met with many of the seniors who indicated issues with regard to home care. We are addressing home care issues where we can, based on the issues. We were having some difficulty in addressing weekend assistance, but we have overcome some of those issues in that particular area and we are looking at, again, trying to strive to ensure that we can provide as many services at home to enable the seniors to stay at home. Also, in regard to that, the facility in Haines Junction is providing us with an excellent opportunity for a specialist or a health group to go there and actually meet with the clients right there for smaller type medical issues, such as working with their feet and things like that, right there at that facility. It has been very much appreciated and is working out very well.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for that answer. I’m going to just maybe touch a bit on alcohol and drug use. In this report, it states that there is no evidence found that alcohol was made or used by Yukon First Nations prior to contact with traders and whalers from other cultures. It first became a problem with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 and then again when Yukon ended Prohibition in 1921 by establishing liquor stores to make up lost revenues from federal cutbacks. Liquor sales in the Yukon again increased dramatically during the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. Profound social changes, combined with residential school trauma, left First Nations vulnerable to the severe misuse of alcohol.

In 1977, the Yukon Liquor Corporation was established to purchase, distribute and sell liquor within the territory. The question I have for the minister — and I assume he may be able to answer this or he may direct it to another minister. I believe there was \$11 million plus in profit from liquor sales. Does the minister know if any of that can be directed right directly back into treatment? I’m thinking of an example, like maybe two cents on every bottle of liquor that’s sold has to go back into treatment.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Obviously, the minister responsible for liquor has issues, but he also has restraints in which monies can be allocated for. But education is being provided to ensure that individuals — all individuals, I might add, Mr. Chair —

practise safe drinking where it’s possible. In addition, we have several programs that we provide, both here and in our communities, that will assist citizens in dealing with their problems, either through counselling and/or providing assurance through programming.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for that answer. I only have one last question that I’d like to ask, and that has to do with kinship care. I know there were some questions asked around this already; however, I do think it’s important that I get something on record with regard to this, because it is a very, very big issue with a lot of my constituents. For the record, I state that one of the largest First Nations is situated right in the middle of the riding I represent, so obviously a lot of the questions that are presented to me have to do with First Nation issues.

Kinship care has always been — not only under this government but under many other governments — a real issue. I know from experience that a lot of us grandparents do not involve Social Services because of the fear that our grandchildren will be taken into care. A lot of us, including myself, have raised our grandchildren without any assistance whatsoever from the government.

In my humble opinion, that probably saves the government millions of dollars. With things happening the way they are today, a lot of grandparents cannot sustain this kind of practice any more. We can’t just take over responsibilities from our children or even our relatives any more because of the drastic cost of living. Most grandparents — myself included — find that we can’t keep up to the young kids any more. According to this report and a press release from the Census of Canada, it says that in 2006, for example, in the Yukon about 85 children aged 14 and under living in private households, or 1.5 percent of all children in the age group, lived with one or both grandparents, where no parents or middle-generation was present. This was three times the national rate of 0.5 percent.

The research revealed that 86 children being cared for by kin were grandparents of interviewed families, so 89 percent of these children were under 14. I just wanted to put on record that I believe I may have heard the minister mention some kind of a financial compensation being looked into toward this issue, but maybe if he doesn’t mind, if he would just restate that for me — I would appreciate it.

Hon. Mr. Hart: He’s right; we did discuss this yesterday.

We will be reviewing this in conjunction with the child act. We’ll be looking at the situation and trying to address this very sensitive issue, and review it and see how it’s going to be taking place.

One of the issues is that we’re going to have to start looking at addressing the social inclusion aspect here. The member opposite talks about looking after children. There is also the issue of paying people to look after their own children. It’s a sensitive issue that we’re going to look at, and as I said, we’ll be addressing it by using social inclusion. I’ve asked my officials to look into this issue, bring it forth when we go forth on implementing the child act, and to see just exactly how we can address the issue the member brought up.

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

I'd like to just close by thanking the minister for the responses, and I want to state again for the record that I do appreciate that the Health and Social Services program is probably a very, very difficult and overwhelming kind of a program, because it deals with the mental, spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of people, and all four of those are humongous tasks.

Thank you.

Mr. Cardiff: The members before me have covered off much of the areas of interest in the Health and Social Services budget, so I'm not going to go over all of that but I do have one area that is of extreme interest to me and it surrounds, basically, the fact that we haven't gotten anywhere with the *Landlord and Tenant Act* in six and a half years. I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services isn't going to be able to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants, but there is an area, I believe, of legislation within the minister's control and jurisdiction and responsibility that could have a profound effect on the living conditions of people in the Yukon Territory, and I believe it's called the *Public Health and Safety Act*. Given the amount of time that it has taken for us to do reviews and respond to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, wouldn't it be better to maybe explore some sort of regulation under the *Public Health and Safety Act*. These regulations could set minimum standards for housing in Yukon so that people aren't living in conditions — and almost being forced to live in conditions — of substandard, Third World housing where people are living in homes with no windows; living in homes where sewage is backing up through floor drains and sinks; living in conditions where homes are mouldy and unhealthy; living in homes where conditions actually pose a threat to the health of the people who are living in them. In large part, these homes are rental properties. I know the minister is going to stand up and say that they can move. Well, they don't always have the opportunity to move because of their social condition or their level of income. They can't afford to, and we don't have adequate social housing stock to house these people. We need to look at this from a variety of points of view.

I am asking the minister this: will he look into bringing in some regulations that would set minimum standards for housing requirements?

For the minister's information, this is done in large municipalities. There's a standard of maintenance bylaw in the City of Vancouver and there are similar pieces of municipal legislation, but we're such a small jurisdiction it doesn't make sense for each municipality in the Yukon to do that.

I believe the minister has been lobbied on this by municipalities, possibly — or his predecessor was. I'm just looking to see if the minister would entertain something like that.

Hon. Mr. Hart: In our review of dealing with addressing social inclusion, we are looking at this particular situation. That's currently underway. We're reviewing that to see just exactly how to address some of the issues the member opposite indicated. Whether it'll get into regulation right now — I can't make that commitment until such time as the review is finished. We'll be looking at it, determining what can be done

to assist and provide greater security and safety to lower income individuals.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm really pleased the minister is willing to look at this. I just hope that it doesn't take a long time. The other day, I heard a minister talking about solid waste and that the driving factor behind what we do with solid waste would be an economic issue, and I don't think that's right. I think the driving issue behind whether or not we burn garbage should be a public health issue. The Minister of Health and Social Services needs to make that point to his colleagues.

So I'm pleased that the minister is willing to move forward on this, and he's not sure about regulations. I'm unsure which process he's talking about — whether or not he's talking about a process of social inclusion. Is this part of the health care review, or is this part of some other process? Could he provide some information either today or by legislative return? If he has got something written down on paper that describes what process we're going through and where this is going to be addressed, that would be very helpful.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I indicated to the member opposite that I was going to assist him and then it's not enough. I'm just going to indicate to the member that we're assessing the process as part of our poverty issues — justice, education, affordable housing, and safety for low-income users. That is our assessment. I indicated that that's what we're doing. That's the review that's being assessed, and that's what we're going through. It isn't going to happen overnight. I can advise the member opposite that I've been in discussions with the Anti-Poverty Coalition and have got a more-than-favourable response back from them. We're currently working to address this situation, to provide a positive inclusion and to address many of the issues that are facing low-income providers here in the Yukon — as I stated, involving all the issues, right from housing, education and justice, right through to economic issues and social assistance.

Mr. Cardiff: So is this part of the health review, or some other review?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Chair, it's part of a separate review that I'm doing by myself, with the officials in our department.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell us when that review will be completed then, and what the name of the review is?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Chair, we were discussing looking at the poverty situation, as I indicated earlier, and we're looking at a poverty strategy that addresses the issue of providing social inclusion and then, as I indicated, covers all the issues that I have already provided to the member opposite that we are looking at.

We are just in early stages of this thing. We have been at it for a couple of months and we're just trying to get the outlines laid out. We'll be at it for the rest of this term and we'll head into it. We are planning to provide information and get it out to the general public as to what we are going to do.

Mr. Cardiff: When the minister says the rest of this term, is he talking about the rest of the term of this government or are we going to see something before the end of the term of

the government, which is like 2011? That is what I was looking for.

He has identified that he's in the early stages. We've got a couple of months into this. I applaud him for doing it. We have been asking for something like this to happen for a long time. I am glad to see it happen. I am looking for a time frame of when we might see some results.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I can't give the member opposite a specific time frame but I will endeavour to provide him with updates on a regular basis.

Mr. Mitchell: I just have a couple of follow-up questions because I was waiting to ask about this. I am a member of the Anti-Poverty Coalition and attend the meetings. I just want some more details from the minister. I'm aware of the poverty strategy the minister is working on and I appreciate that this is a very positive step. Some department has to take the lead. It really crosses departments because, as the Member for Mount Lorne has indicated, there are housing issues at stake and we know when people don't have adequate housing, that very clearly leads to some bad situations that are associated with poverty.

I believe there's a director — the director of social services — who was seconded to spearhead this poverty strategy. I thought this was for a one-year basis, but now what I'm hearing is that it's sort of open-ended. Could the minister clarify when they at least expect to have a draft poverty strategy that would come back? Because this will require cross-departmental action. If we're going to really get at the root causes of poverty, it will require the Yukon Housing Corporation. It may require the Department of Justice, and it certainly focuses in the Department of Health and Social Services. I'd like to have some more clarification on timelines, recognizing this may evolve and may not be a final solution.

There is no final approach to poverty; it's just trying to make it get better by whittling away at the causes. If we could get a better idea of when the minister is expecting to be able to take action based on a draft report, that would be helpful.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Here we go again. We're moving ahead. I've indicated that we've started. This is a very large project; it's a very complex project. We're in the early stages of it. We're working with our other departments. The member opposite talked about one year; yes, our director is on a one-year secondment and that's all it is. It's just a secondment to get the project underway. It may take longer to actually get it completed — no question about that. We still have to look at getting all the information, crossing the departments, ensuring that we're not stepping on everybody else's toes and ensuring that we're going to come up with a very good product. I'm looking forward to it.

As I stated, we've already had some early discussions with the Anti-Poverty Coalition and they've provided us with some very good feedback. We've also discovered in the process of providing the strategy that we've had to go and add another element, and that's dealing with and addressing social concerns. That's something that we're going to add into the process to alleviate that and we'll be looking at and addressing

many of the issues that the member opposite from Mount Lorne discussed earlier.

Mr. Mitchell: I recognize the minister has been on his feet for more than two days and I sense perhaps a certain frustration with being questioned by the members on this side. We know that this is a bit of an open-ended process. All I'm getting at is, can the minister indicate whether this is a situation where it may be two years to develop a strategy and then we move toward implementation? Or can the minister envision having some findings perhaps within the first year, and moving to change some of the interdepartmental relationships so that we can start addressing these problems because they are so interrelated?

All I'm looking for is that the idea to develop a final report, strategy, what have you, before anything changes, or is the minister open to sort of an ongoing process or evolutionary process?

I know the minister has seen, for example, the survey in the City of Whitehorse that the Anti-Poverty Coalition developed, and I recognize — and they've pointed out it's not a statistically-valid survey because it's self-provided, only by those who volunteer, but it still indicates that there are hundreds of people who are living in this situation of substandard housing and poor cooking facilities and even with safety concerns. If the minister can commit to implementing changes as they come to discover things that could be improved, that is all I am looking for.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I will state that I recognize all the issues that they have brought up. Obviously, that is why I have asked my officials to look into the situation. I have done that previous to this because I recognize the problem. It is an issue that we've to try to deal with. What I want the members to understand is that it is not going to happen overnight. This is a complex problem and we have to get things going. What I want them to recognize is that we are at least heading down that line and we'll keep them updated on what we're going through. We are hoping to address many of the issues that the members opposite brought up and to improve, basically, the living conditions of all low-income families throughout the Yukon.

As I said, one of the issues that we found after we got started was that we had to figure out a way to deal with social inclusion and that is where we're at. That is going to take a little time to work around that and figure out how we're going to address that situation. That is what our people are doing right now and they are in the very earlier stages, as I indicated.

Yes, we are out there, and we will be preparing information, submitting it and re-submitting it until we hopefully get a product that not only ourselves, but that the members opposite can appreciate.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line.

Mr. Cardiff: I request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines in Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 15, Health and Social Services, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Cardiff has requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, 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 \$229,246,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$8,795,000 agreed to

Department of Health and Social Services agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with the Women's Directorate. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Women's Directorate — *continued*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Women's Directorate.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, I would like to begin today by reviewing some of the debate that took place earlier regarding the Women's Directorate's budget.

As I outlined in my opening comments on the Women's Directorate budget the other day, we are working very diligently in helping to achieve a better quality of life for Yukon women. I would especially like to thank the Member for Whitehorse Centre for agreeing to pair with me so that I could attend the status of women's federal-provincial-territorial meeting at the start of this month, in Winnipeg. My first request for a pair so that I could attend this federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women was to the Official Opposition. It is interesting to note that under the leadership of Arthur Mitchell, addressing the needs of women in Yukon is not a priority, as he wouldn't allow his critic to pair with me. Thankfully, Mr. Chair, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the Third Party, understands and he agreed to pair with me. I sincerely thank the Leader of the Third Party, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, for supporting me to do the work necessary to improve the lives of Yukon women in allowing me to attend this meeting. Because of his pair, I was able to attend a meeting with my ministerial colleagues where I was able to advance the prevention of violence and share strategies to reduce poverty and find ways to increase women's participation in the workforce. These issues are very important to this department and this government and the third party.

Addressing violence against women is so very, very important. I would like to share with members some examples of the work that we have undertaken in this area.

Kaushee's Place and Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake received increased funding with a three-year commitment. This support will help the organizations to focus on long-term planning to assist women and children who have experienced violence and abuse. We released two Yukon-relevant videos and an accompanying training manual in support of violence prevention work and persons looking to help those affected by violence.

The initiative is a culmination of a three-year public awareness and education campaign focusing on violence against women and children. The new resources will help further educate and raise awareness of the resources available to assist those leaving abusive partners and their violent situations.

The Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice co-hosted two Train-the-Trainer sessions in the use of two northern and culturally relevant videos and an accompanying training manual in support of violence prevention, which concluded that the long-term violence prevention public education campaign, and evaluation of this campaign is now underway. The Women's Directorate has doubled the fund for the prevention of violence against aboriginal women.

Since 2004, the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund has supported projects designed and developed by aboriginal women for their communities. Each spring, the Women's Directorate generates a call for proposals, and it has provided a cumulative total of approximately \$500,000 in funding.

In 2008-09, six community-based projects received support from this fund. In April 2008, the community development fund approved funding in the amount of \$276,313 to Help and Hope For Families Society of Watson Lake in order to construct a second-stage housing unit. CMHC has also contributed funding for this project. The unit will be attached to the existing transition home and will allow for the provision of longer term, supported and affordable living for women and children.

Construction is ongoing and on schedule. The anticipated date for the opening of the new housing unit is fall 2009.

VictimLINK crisis line is offered in partnership with British Columbia. This is a toll-free service available 24 hours a day, staffed by professionals trained to provide victims of crime access to Yukon support, information, referral services and crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court, or DVTOC, is offered in Whitehorse and Watson Lake. The Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court is a process that recognizes that family violence is a serious criminal act. This court provides a more innovative response to the issue of domestic violence by combining court proceedings with the proven benefits of treatment for the offender.

Our Way of Living Safely, or OWLS, is a program to assist children who are exposed to domestic violence. It is funded through the federal victims of crime initiative on a five-year agreement, and is available to children whose parent or parents

are involved in the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court.

The sexual assault response team is an inter-agency team of professionals whose primary objective is to promote consistency and coordination between the member agencies in order to successfully prosecute cases of sexual assault. The Protect Yourself, Protect Your Drink campaign, also known as the coaster campaign, is a public awareness campaign that highlights the dangers of date-rape drugs that can be placed into victims' drinks. This campaign will be launched again in spring 2009. We are working in partnership with the Liquor Corporation, Yukon College, Justice and the Women's Directorate.

The other discussion I want to flag here is economic security. Women who have more education or have demonstrated qualifications of their skills have more employment options. Finding ways to help women have more resources helps them become more independent. As I am sure everyone is aware, our government has been working very diligently to improve the employment options available to Yukon women. I would like to share with this Assembly some of the progress we have made here on women's economic security.

The Public Service Commission has the employment equity policy, which identifies women as one of the target groups for employment equity programming. The policy aims for a workforce that is representative of women, who represent 50 percent of the Yukon population and 51 percent of the working age population — those 25 to 64 years old.

As of March 31, 2008, women represented 63 percent of all employees in the Yukon government workforce. Women represent over half of almost every department workforce in almost all job level categories. The number of women in senior management has been increasing steadily. In the year 2000, women made up less than 30 percent of employees in the senior management category; now women make up 46 percent of those employees.

The support variation assistance program provides assistance to persons who need to have their support orders varied. The maintenance enforcement program helps to collect child and spousal support.

Legal aid provides lawyers for parents involved in child protection matters and permanent custody applications. Advanced education has provided \$69,450 through the community training fund to assist Yukon College and the Department of Justice in developing and delivering a pilot program for women interested in exploring a career as a correctional officer.

Government of Yukon participated in the annual forum of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues on October 3 and 4, 2008, with the theme "Making Our Way: Yukon Women in Leadership".

The Yukon Fish and Game Association conducts annual outdoor leadership programs and fishing programs specifically aimed toward women. Young Women Exploring Trades is an annual, day-long forum within which grade 8 and grade 9 girls, Yukon-wide, participate in a full-day workshop creating things that teach them skills in up to nine different trade areas. We have a six-week introduction to trades at Yukon College that

promotes women and allows them to see the benefits of trade careers.

It also provides opportunities for women interested in career development. I would also note that the 2009 annual women's forum, hosted by YACWI, this year will have the theme of "Women's Economic Security".

Mr. Chair, I would like to mention housing for women. We are carrying on the good work begun by the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Our government has done the following: provided funding for a feasibility study for a women and children's shelter; implementation of a priority social housing policy by Yukon Housing Corporation for individuals leaving abusive relationships and seniors from rural Yukon who require relocation for medical reasons; the women's equality fund was created to provide three-year sustainable funding for women's organizations.

Design and stakeholder consultations are underway to build an affordable family housing complex in Riverdale. This initiative will address the largest gap in housing that currently exists — secure, affordable housing for lone-parent families, particularly households headed by single women. We are providing stabilized funding for two of Yukon's women's shelters, counselling, and for non-government organizations for the next three years to allow service providers to concentrate on providing services rather than finances.

Mr. Chair, when we ended off debate the other day, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin asked a question about a project the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle was working on. We are aware of the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle's desire to establish an Aboriginal Women's Centre and of previous proposals to the northern strategy to support the project. The Women's Directorate absolutely supports the work of the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and currently provides funding to the organization through the women's equality fund — \$104,000 over three years, 2007 to 2010. This funding made it possible for the organization to develop a strategic plan in 2007 as well as the resources in part to develop the northern strategy proposals that they put forward.

Women's Directorate staff is currently working directly with the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle to develop a new proposal to the northern strategy to fund a feasibility study for an aboriginal women's centre.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to thank the official for taking the time out of her afternoon to be here in the Legislature.

I would like to ask some questions. The minister corresponded with my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, in February and April. In one of those letters she talked about an evaluation of the violence prevention campaign. She said in that letter that it was expected to be done shortly. I am just wondering if that evaluation is complete. Did that campaign meet the stated goals? We will start there.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The evaluation is complete and it did meet the goals.

Mr. Cardiff: Is the evaluation a public document? Can we get a copy of it, if possible? Some of the other questions we

had were around the violence prevention campaign. We wanted to know if there was a measured increase in the visibility of the issue, which was the prevention of violence against women.

There was also a question about the Yukon inter-agency group, Circles of Respect and Equality, to determine if it was effective and efficient. We wanted to know if there were any recommendations contained in the evaluation about future public education campaigns.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Chair, this report has just been received, and the evaluation is not thoroughly complete. Once it is complete, we will decide if it will be made public, if it is in that form.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, we look forward to receiving that. I think this is an important issue, and if we're going to expend public funds on — I think it's an important expenditure of public funds.

We should be spending public funds to raise awareness and to stop violence against women and we know that it is a problem in communities. I think that it should be a public document.

I've only got a few questions. I would like to touch on something that the minister said. One of the mandates of the Women's Directorate is to provide leadership in policy research and development and to ensure gender-equitable outcomes in government legislation, policy and programs.

The minister talked about employment equity and what the Public Service Commission is doing. I have the same chart that she has. In 2008 she is right — almost two-thirds —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Cardiff: This one. This is from the Public Service Commission and I've got the same numbers — basically 63 percent of the public service is comprised of women and 37 percent are men. She talked about the fact that great strides are being made in senior management. In 2000, she said 30 percent; the figures I have are 28 percent. The figure I have for 2008 is 48 percent in senior management. That is an accomplishment. I think that we're moving in the right direction for a representative workforce and that's a good thing.

What she failed to note is that, in the same chart, when it comes to deputy ministers, in 2000 there were 19 percent and in 2008 there are 36 percent. So we are making gains in that area, but we're not making what I would consider enough significant gains. Sixty-three percent of the workforce is women and I would say that by those standards — if we want a representative workforce and we want to see that representation throughout and at the deputy minister level as well — at the very least, it should be 50:50 or it should be 63:37, like it is with the workforce.

So I'm just wondering — one of the objectives is to provide leadership in policy research and development. The government must have a policy on this. I'm wondering whether or not the policy is to see more women in these senior management positions — the deputy minister and the assistant deputy minister positions of government.

Hon. Ms. Horne: This is an ongoing issue. Those percentages have risen. We especially hope that these percentages go up. Women in leadership is an ongoing issue with us.

We have several meetings every year to ensure that women's voices are being heard and that women are getting into leadership.

An interesting note, which was written or said by Charlotte Whitten, the Mayor of Ottawa: "Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good." And as I say: "It's fortunate that this isn't too difficult to do."

I would also like to note that there are 440 apprentices right now in Yukon. This is the highest percentage of women ever registered. The Yukon government has taken the leadership role on this issue to the national forum. I mention the meeting that your leader allowed me to go to as he paired with me. Yukon, right now, is one of the leaders in equality of women in Canada and we were able to put forward what we are doing in the Yukon.

We have to keep this issue at the forefront at this level in order to make strides ahead. It is here that we can exert pressure on the Government of Canada to step up to the plate and its responsibility to women, and especially aboriginal women. Did you know that half of women in Canada over the age of 16 experience physical violence at least once in their lifetime? This is atrocious and this is one of the reasons this government is working so hard to stop the violence against women. One to two women die as a result of domestic violence every week. That number, the violence against women in the territories, is horrifically high, another reason that we're working so actively on women's issues.

We are working with the aboriginal groups in Whitehorse to further their causes and to assist them. These figures do not reflect the fear that stays with the women and their children throughout their lives. We do have to work twice as hard to make our place in society.

Mr. Cardiff: I wouldn't diminish anything the minister said, but the question was about the participation of women, about the Women's Directorate providing leadership in policy research and development to ensure gender-equitable outcomes. What I'm talking about is employment equity.

The minister herself referenced it just previously in her opening remarks. The issue for me is — I don't know if I can put it any clearer than it's better known as "the glass ceiling". I don't know if the minister is familiar with that. I'm recognizing the fact that the government has done a good job over the years in improving the participation of women in senior management levels, and even at the deputy minister level.

What I am asking is, what is the government doing? Don't lobby the federal government on this issue; lobby the Premier. He's the one who hires deputy ministers. What I'm looking for is women's representation at the deputy minister level, at Management Board, at the deputy ministers' roundtables. We want to see more women, and we want to see more aboriginal people at that level, participating at that level of government, so that their interests are represented.

We don't need to lobby the federal government on this issue; lobby the Premier. The Women's Directorate has a mandate to provide leadership in policy research and development to ensure gender-equitable outcomes. That applies to the Public Service Commission, yes. The minister provided the informa-

tion, and I'm pleased that she did that, but there's a glass ceiling. At the deputy minister level, and the assistant deputy minister level, I think we can do better. We can do better to have more representation by women. I think it's beneficial to government and I think it's beneficial to society to have that representation there, to bring another perspective. We need more representation for aboriginal women at that table too.

The minister has it within her grasp. Her department has the mandate to do the policy research and to present the arguments to the Premier and to her Cabinet colleagues. That is all I am asking her to do. What initiatives is the Women's Directorate undertaking to do that?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I can assure the member opposite that the Premier is well aware of the problem and he absolutely supports women being in senior management. I would like to point out that we have two female members on this side of the House and zero on the opposition side. What does that say for the Premier's support of women and Cabinet ministers?

There are many more women in senior management in Yukon government. The number is going up. As I said earlier, we hope that continues to rise. The percentages have gone up significantly. You were asking what the role of the Women's Directorate is. The Women's Directorate became a separate entity under the Yukon government. It was shut down under the other government. The Yukon government and the Premier saw the necessity to have a Women's Directorate.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Horne: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. Who has the floor here?

That's why I mentioned earlier that women have to try harder because we are not listened to. When the Women's Directorate was created, its mandate was to integrate women's concerns into the mainstream of the government policy-making and program development; that role has not changed. The Women's Directorate is very active within the government. They sit in on meetings to make sure that women are included. It would be an insult to women to designate a spot that had to be filled by a woman. Women are not stupid; they can fill a position with their intelligence. They are ready to take over leadership roles. All we need is the chance and that is being offered by this government.

Mr. Cardiff: That was quite something from the minister. I don't know what she's suggesting. It actually leads to another question to some extent. She's pointing out the fact that there are no women on this side in the Official Opposition or in the opposition benches at all. That's not a matter of choice on this side of the House, that's a matter of choice of Yukon electors.

For the member's information, the best that I can recall, it was the New Democratic Party that had a balanced group of candidates put out there to be elected — but that's not what we're debating here. What I was asking the minister is, what policies does the government have and what direction is there to try to fill these positions? I'm not going to go around and around on this with the minister because she has her point of view and I have my point of view. What I'm looking to do is to

advance the cause. What does the Women's Directorate do with regard to encouraging women to run in politics?

Hon. Ms. Horne: What I was relating earlier is that we can do better in this Assembly. Two of the 18 MLAs are women. Certainly, we can do better than that. Both women on this side of the House are Cabinet ministers.

Also, 60 percent of PSAC are women. The number of women in senior management is growing. It has grown significantly, as I pointed out earlier. I have asked women to get interested in politics. Wherever I go personally, I speak to the women. When I go and speak in schools, I tell the students, "We need more women in politics." Whenever I see a group of girls at a gathering, I tell them that we need more women in politics. We should all be doing that. All parties should be aware of this.

The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues is the advisory council that keeps the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate apprised of emerging women's issues in Yukon communities.

YACWI — that is the Women's Directorate board — is made up of eight members representing women in Yukon, which includes urban and rural, First Nations and non-First Nations women. The council advises on legislation, policy and programs that affect women and also hosts an annual women's forum that the Women's Directorate funds. In 2008, the women's forum was held in October and focused on women and leadership. It was a very successful forum that was attended by approximately 60 women from across the territory. We had to turn away a lot of the women who sent in applications to attend; we just didn't have the room. Probably next year we'll get a larger location to hold the meeting. This featured women who had been in political parties prior, and it was non-partisan. We had many women from all parties there, and they were mentors to the young women who were there. They encouraged them to go further in whatever field they wanted to go into. We definitely encourage women, and I would encourage everyone to get more women involved in all areas of government and NGOs throughout the Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm glad the minister is doing that. I think it's unfortunate that they had to turn away participants at conferences and events, and I hope that they can get the funds in their budget to hold a bigger event next year. I would look forward to being invited to attend whatever sessions would be appropriate for me to attend, to hear what's being said as well.

I have some other questions, and we'll try to move through this a little faster, hopefully.

In the minister's letter — I believe this is the letter of April 1 — she talks about the women's equality fund. Seven projects were approved totalling \$521,000.

The funding was made available to the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society in Watson Lake, and there were six Whitehorse-based organizations. Women's inequality and violence against women is a community issue; it happens in all communities. We need to make sure that funding gets out to all the communities and that education, programming and services for women are in all communities.

It's probably an application-driven process, I suspect, but I think that it would be incumbent on the Women's Directorate or the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues to encourage and assist women's groups in other communities to both form and to access these funds.

I'm just wondering why the funding isn't — what the problems are and why we're not getting that funding out to all communities. I'm wondering whether or not the programs that were funded were evaluated, because I believe she said it was evaluated and that there was financial reporting. That's good, and we'd like to see a copy of all that.

But are they evaluated on the success of those programs, what the deliverables were and what the outcomes in the communities were for those women's organizations and the women in those communities? So two things: how do we get it to more communities and a question about the evaluation and the outcomes.

Hon. Ms. Horne: The member opposite is right — it's application driven, and the groups applied for three-year funding. The reason it was set up, of course, was to meet our commitment for gender equality. The Yukon government established the women's equality fund in response to a need identified by a number of women's organizations for more sustained funding. The Women's Directorate administers the fund. Organizations that fit the funds criteria could apply for up to \$35,000 per year starting in 2007 and renewable in 2008 and 2009.

The organizations that have received the funding to date are the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, to increase public awareness and informed public debate on women's key concerns regarding governance and to achieve an informed consensus among Kaska women regarding the Kaska national constitution. I have attended meetings with the women's group in Watson Lake and I found them very effective and I was very, very impressed with their work.

We also have the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. They receive \$34,000 funding in year 1; year 2 — \$35,000; year 3 — \$35,000; and that was to set up an office, hire an executive director to build capacity for an aboriginal women's circle in Yukon, develop and design culturally appropriate and relevant programs and services, and provide programs and services and advocacy service to its clients.

The third group, Les EssentiElles: in year 1, they received \$25,250; in year 2, they received \$35,000; and in year 3 — \$35,000. That was to develop awareness campaigns in French on different themes affecting equality of Yukon women: sexual, verbal and physical violence against young, adult and senior women; the economy; and recognition and rights of women.

The fourth group was Yukon Women in Trades and Technology. In year 1, they received \$31,550; in year 2, they received \$35,000; and in year 3 — \$35,000. This was to increase the skill sets of Yukon women, making them more self-sufficient and generating their interest in further pursuing trades, to increase the skill sets of tradeswomen, and to increase the pool of female instructors available in Yukon.

The fifth was the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. In year 1, they received \$10,100; year 2, \$13,500; year 3,

\$13,000. These funds were to increase accessibility of the women's centre, increase the number of positive strength-building activities at the centre, raise awareness of issues that limit or reduce the well-being of women, increase the number of women leaders in the Yukon, and encourage a greater recognition of the intrinsic value of women.

The Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre also receives an additional \$80,000 from the Women's Directorate annually to support the women's advocate position and women's programming, \$20,000.

The Yukon Status of Women Council received funding: year 1, \$20,000; year 2, \$20,000; year 3, \$20,000. These funds were to build on the work of the northern women and homeless project by following up on recommendations made in the report, *A Little Kindness Would Go a Long Way*, and promoting the research results to positively affect housing options for women in the Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister left out the last one; the Yukon Human Rights Commission also received money. The question was how can we make sure that, in the future, monies like this are made available to rural communities? Is there an evaluation? It said that there would be financial reporting. If there is an evaluation of the outcomes of the projects, can those be made available? That was the thrust of the question. I thank the minister for all the information about the funds that were distributed, but I remind the minister that the mandate that I think is important is the policy research and development. This ensures that legislation and services and policy and programs that the government delivers meet the needs of women. That's why I'm asking about the evaluations, so if those evaluations could be made available, that would be helpful.

The government committed funding for six community-based projects to help prevent violence against aboriginal women. Those projects saw a better uptake from the communities. There was the Kluane First Nation, Burwash Landing, the Northern Tutchone Tribal Council and Selkirk First Nation as well — so I'm assuming that's Mayo, Pelly and Carmacks — I'm not positive. The others were all Whitehorse based. I'm just wondering what we can do to ensure that some of those funds, some of that programming and those projects can get out to other communities. I don't know if the minister could provide some information on why other communities were not involved in that.

Again, maybe it was an application-driven process, but we need to work with the communities to ensure that they're aware that this funding is available and to work with them to make sure that they can access it.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Yes, the member opposite is correct — it is application driven. And I know on our YACWI board, we make sure that we have rural and urban representation. We would have advised the Council of Yukon First Nations of the funding, and we would have advised all of the women's organizations that represent the Yukon. We would have advised Les EssentiElles, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, PSAC regional women's committee, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Yukon Advisory Council on

Women's Issues, Yukon Status of Women Council, and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.

We are all-inclusive, and we do try to include all communities. It may have been that they did not submit an application.

Under Women's Directorate, we ensure we have urban and rural representation to get the word out. We try to get every community involved and covered.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that. I would just encourage them to be vigilant in their efforts, because I'd like to see more programming available in communities. We have a multitude of services here in Whitehorse, but we need to ensure the participation of rural Yukon to ensure we're one community, not a whole bunch of little communities out there — that the Yukon is viewed as one community — and that their participation is appreciated and their concerns are addressed.

In the minister's letter — again the April 1 letter — she talks about an emergency shelter feasibility study. She says that she has received that study and it is currently under review. I would like to request that the minister provide a copy of that emergency shelter feasibility study and the review of it.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to point out that it is not only the women's equality fund that goes out to Yukon women. We also have the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund that pretty well goes out to all communities. This is directly related to violence toward women in the north, because it exceeds the national average.

I don't know if we're all aware that aboriginal women experience spousal violence at a rate that is three times higher than for non-aboriginal women; therefore, I am so pleased that this government has increased their prevention of violence against aboriginal women from \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually. We are meeting our commitment to cut down the violence against women in Yukon.

This fund supports projects designed and developed by aboriginal women which are given to aboriginal women by aboriginal women, which is very effective in our communities. In 2008-09, we committed funding for six community-based projects to help prevent violence against aboriginal women. The member opposite mentioned the Kluane First Nation. We funded the following: Kluane First Nation, \$18,700; Kwanlin Dun First Nation, \$10,217; the Margaret Thomson Healing Centre, \$20,000; Northern Tutchone Council, \$20,000; Selkirk First Nation, \$20,000; and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, \$10,000.

The Women's Directorate generates an annual spring call for proposals focusing on preventing violence against aboriginal women and we have already had our intake for this year. Those are varied — the funding that has gone out. In 2004-05: the Selkirk First Nation, the Margaret Thomson Healing Centre, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Liard Aboriginal Women's Council, Liard First Nation. In 2005-06: Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Teslin Tlingit Council, Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Selkirk First Nation.

In 2006-07: Kwanlin Dun, White River, Skookum Jim, Vuntut Gwitchin, and Ta'an Kwäch'än. In 2007-08: the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Champagne

and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane, Ta'an Kwäch'än and Carcross. Our reach in the Yukon for funding is pretty wide.

The emergency shelter for women, the feasibility study — in 2007, the Women's Directorate and the Council of Yukon First Nations were successful in receiving \$58,500 from the northern strategy trust fund to undertake a feasibility study to determine the most effective way to address the hidden situation of homelessness in the Yukon. The scope of the feasibility study was developed by an inter-agency advisory committee, with representation from women's organizations, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Women's Directorate.

This study provided an examination of the space and programming needs for homeless women by providing well-researched operations and programming options for a culturally appropriate emergency shelter. The feasibility study was received by the Women's Directorate and is still under review by department officials and the inter-agency advisory committee.

To oversee both parts of this study, an inter-agency advisory committee was established, including CYFN, the Yukon Status of Women's Council, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and the Government of Yukon's Bureau of Statistics. The feasibility study was completed by an independent contractor and was designed to determine the scope or model for an emergency shelter with attention to the broader context of emergency, transition, second-stage and social housing services in Yukon; to consider the development, design and service needs with special consideration for the needs of aboriginal women and culturally sensitive programming; provide a conceptual overview of estimated costs; identify sources for long-term funding opportunities and conclude with recommendations and next steps. This feasibility study is still underway and when it is complete we will advise that it is complete and make it available.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister's letter of April 1 says that it is complete. I mean, I can read it directly. She read part of it. The only thing that she didn't read was, "We've now received the completed study and it is currently under review." So is she saying that the study isn't complete and yet she did say it was complete? We'd like to see the study. We'd like to know a little bit more about that and about what the project is going to entail.

She mentioned the funding and listed off all the funding that had been given over the past number of years. I am glad to see that. In her letter she didn't point that out — all the communities.

Maybe at some point in the future, either today or by legislative return, she could let us know what the allotments will be for this year — which community groups will be receiving money.

I applaud the minister for increasing the funding from \$100,000 to \$200,000 to help prevent violence against aboriginal women. I think that's admirable. I don't know if it's enough. I think we could be spending less on — as somebody put it today — "fixing potholes and painting bridges", and doing more for our children and possibly doing more for women and preventing violence against women. But if the minister

could let us know where those funds will be distributed this year, it would be appreciated.

So tying into the question I asked previously about the emergency shelter feasibility study, I'm just wondering what the Women's Directorate's role is. Is there any work being done — I know that in the past there has been a concern and a need for second-stage housing. Kaushee's Place is oversubscribed. I don't know if that's exactly the right word to use for it, but that it runs full to capacity — or over-capacity.

There is more need than there is service available a lot of the time. In the tough economic time that we are facing now where some people are losing their jobs, this is a time to be more vigilant and to ensure that there are services available. One of the needs is a transition from being in an emergency shelter to actually being able to get on their own away from the violent situation or an abusive situation, and to have that support. I am wondering — because there is a need and it has been an identified need for a number of years and we've asked questions of the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation before about this type of thing as well — what the Women's Directorate is doing. What discussions are they participating in around looking for a solution to that problem?

Hon. Ms. Horne: The report is complete. The feasibility study is still being reviewed internally. So the report is complete; the feasibility study is still being reviewed internally.

I would be happy to provide the member opposite with a list of the 2009-10 funded projects for the prevention of violence against women, distributed in the Yukon.

On the second-stage housing, I would really like to commend Kaushee's Place for the wonderful work they do. The staff there are so dedicated to the people who come to them for support and help. They do such wonderful work. I can't say enough about the work they do and the dedication they show in their jobs. The second-stage housing there is of course always full. It provides a safe, supported option for women and their children who are victimized by spousal violence and have chosen to leave those relationships. They couldn't ask for a better place to go than Kaushee's and the staff who are there.

In 2007, this government was tasked to research priority needs in the general population of women. Research indicated that single women with children made up the majority of the wait-list for social housing with Yukon Housing Corporation and they were the most in need of accommodation. As a result, this government is building the Whitehorse affordable family housing project, which is aimed at providing affordable housing for single-parent families. While the emphasis of the housing project will be single women and their children — who comprise the largest group on the Yukon Housing Corporation wait-list — single-parent families led by men will also be included.

This government's focus will be on the completion of the Whitehorse affordable family housing project right now so that we can better meet this important identified need.

Mr. Cardiff: I recognize the project that is on the books. That wasn't the question that I asked. I don't think that the project is a supported living, second-stage housing unit. The minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation has

\$50 million coming from the federal government. It has to be used within two years, is my understanding, or we don't get the funds. There are a number of needs in the Yukon, second-stage housing being only one of them. The state of housing in our communities is deplorable and we could do a lot with \$50 million. I think we should be asking for more money for housing, especially from the federal government, given their responsibilities for First Nations to provide for housing in communities.

My question to the minister was around what discussions they are having with any agencies, any groups. I think, too, that Kaushee's does a great job under very difficult circumstances, and it's a job we shouldn't have to do. I think it would be wonderful if we didn't need organizations like the Women's Transition Home Society and buildings like Kaushee's Place, but the reality is that we need them and there is a need there.

So the question was about second-stage housing — not about the single-family residence, but about second-stage housing. What discussions is the Women's Directorate engaged in, what other departments, around more second-stage housing for women who are fleeing abusive situations?

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

Recess

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Women's Directorate.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to respond to the member opposite on his comments just before we took a break. Of course, we always have funding requirements. We could use more, as the member opposite suggested. There are always challenges that we do face in life that cannot be fixed by just throwing money at a problem. We have to change attitudes. We have to change the attitudes of people toward women and women's equality. Not everything can be fixed only by funding. We have to change our attitudes.

What I know is that when I do ask my colleagues for an increase in funding I do get that funding. They are very responsive and have supported my request for funding.

For example, I asked my colleagues to double the money for the prevention of violence against women. That request was successful. I am also deeply concerned about the funding request for Kaushee's Place and I am glad that the wonderful work that they do is recognized. We went ahead with our 30-unit affordable family housing unit and we have put aside \$10.5 million in this year's budget to address that area, which was more significantly needed than other areas. We are addressing this area and it won't be overnight but we are making significant strides in that.

We are also exploring other options for the second-stage housing and discussing those with Kaushee's Place, but no definite plans have been made. We are now concentrating on the 30-unit affordable family housing project.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for that answer — very much, actually. I would encourage her to work with her

colleagues to address the issue of the need for second-stage housing.

I only have one further question. Actually, it's almost like we're going full circle here because I'm going back to almost the first question I asked today about this. The minister said something very telling in her last answer, and she's right — this can't all be fixed by just throwing dollars and resources at the problem. It's not something that we can fix with money. It is about societal attitudes. It's about the attitudes of men and women in this room, outside the door, on the street and in every community — not just here in the Yukon — across the country, around the world.

Some societies are way more brutal and we need to take that message to them too, but we need to start at home. I agree that dollars aren't going to fix it.

You look in the budget book and at the mandate, which is, "To support the Government of Yukon's commitment to the economic, legal and social equality of women", and then you go to the program objectives. Once again, the first program object is, "To provide leadership in policy research and development to ensure gender equitable outcomes in government legislation, policy, and programs".

I know that now we are going to talk about the dollars and cents that we spend on that, because on page 16.6 of the big book — the O&M funding — we talk about program delivery. There is \$662,000. We look at public education and there is \$424,000. It's all money that's well spent and I'm not disputing that. There is a million dollars there — \$1.1 million that's being spent on program delivery and education, and that's all good.

Then we come to policy research and development. There's \$153,000 in policy research and development. When we get to lines — or if the minister wants to tell us what is in that line item now, I'd be more than happy to do that, but this is where we as legislators, I believe, can make changes. It goes to that program objective about policy research and development and ensuring that every piece of legislation that comes before this Legislative Assembly, and that all government policy and all programs — not just the programs and the public education in the Women's Directorate — I'm talking about program delivery in Health and Social Services, Education, Highways and Public Works, Community Services and Yukon Housing Corporation — that all of those pieces of legislation and all of the programs that are delivered are reviewed. I don't know how you can do that for \$153,000 a year.

Which organization, which group of staff in the Women's Directorate, is analyzing legislation that comes before this Legislative Assembly — we have lots of it — to ensure that gender-equitable outcomes are included in all that legislation, in government policies and in all programs?

I'd like to see more vigilance on the part of the government in that area. I would be interested in what the minister can tell me about what the \$153,000 is being spent on and how we are ensuring that first program objective about policy research and being a leader in policy research and development — how are we achieving that?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I will not comment on this specific area of the budget because we can go through that in line-by-line. What the Women's Directorate does is we go through and review legislation and policies throughout the government to make sure they are friendly to women for women's advancement.

Mr. Cardiff: Is the minister satisfied that we're doing a good job? Are they reviewing all policies and programs that the government provides?

Hon. Ms. Horne: I am satisfied with the percentages that I voiced earlier in this House and that we have gone, for women employed, from 30 to 63 percent. I am pleased with what we're doing in upper management. As I said it is not something that we can change overnight but it is progressing and I think it is progressing better than we could have expected. We are pushing it. We are pushing these figures to be even higher.

Mr. Cardiff: It is not just about employment equity. It is about all programs being equitable for the delivery of services to Yukoners. It can be any number of services provided by any department of government — not just the Women's Directorate.

What I'm wondering is how vigilant the Women's Directorate is being in monitoring those programs and services.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I can further say that we sit on various interdepartmental committees, including a policy review committee, programs and services committee through the corrections action plan — women and substance abuse working group. We also sit in on other meetings of senior management to ensure that we are looking through the lens to include women and that it is friendly to women hire and equality.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to thank the minister and the officials for their time this afternoon and for the answers that they have provided. I have no further questions at this time.

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Chair, I'd like to start out by just thanking the staff who work in the Women's Directorate area. I believe that this is a very important portfolio, and one that I believe is not supported as much financially as it should be and could be.

However, after listening to the debate here today, I am going to make some comments with regard to comments made by the minister, because I do not appreciate the perception left here on the floor of the Legislature by the minister. To correct the record, I would like to state that the opposition parties ran a lot of women candidates in the last election — a lot of women candidates. And I want to also state that there were some comments made after the election by members from the Yukon Party that candidates who ran for the opposition parties wouldn't even make good filler. So that says a lot for what some of the perceptions really are.

Now, having said that, I want to say again to let the record show that the MLA men in the opposition do hold women in the highest regard.

In fact, I think I'll share some of my traditional knowledge about how, traditionally, men felt about women. We men have lost it over the years. Yes, we did, through mission schools and other factors that contributed to it. However, our traditional

belief is that women are sacred. I don't mind saying that I have asked the question why many times. I never did get a very good explanation. Today, I do know a little bit more than I used to. I could say today, from my heart, that I honestly believe that women are sacred.

I say this because in the traditional teachings I have today, I have been taught that women were selected by the Creator to look after the delicate spirit that He sends to earth. That's a really humongous responsibility. If you can imagine looking after and nurturing something so delicate — and what a woman goes through to be able to bring life to this earth is phenomenal. Even the process of childbirth — right from the nine months of packing the baby in the womb to the very delivery of the child to this earth — every bit of it has a lot of responsibility for the woman.

Having known all of that from traditional knowledge, I did fill that void in my life and my mind that we had lost this a long time ago. I remember my mother telling me 50 years ago that I should always treat women with respect. I never forgot that. I am proud to say today that I have never ever been physically violent with any woman. I try my best to always show respect to the women.

Having said that, I want to go into talking about the budget a little bit.

When I hear the minister trying to support and defend the Premier on women's issues, I have to bring to light that in comparison — let's talk about a \$1.3-billion budget; that's an awful lot of money. When approximately only \$1.6 million is put into the Women's Directorate program, does that really demonstrate that the government totally supports all women's issues? I think that it really doesn't reflect that. In my humble opinion, it reflects that something is there and it's better than nothing. I think there could have been \$3 million or \$4 million put into the Women's Directorate quite easily and the Yukon Party would not have even realized there was \$3 million gone.

Let's get serious about this and let's talk about what reality really is here. This debate is not about protecting anybody; this debate is about support for women's issues and that's what it's about.

When we talk about women's issues, let's talk about all the things that are happening out in the real world. Women are not represented as well as they can be in labour. Let's face it, they're not.

Let's talk about the violence against women. Is it diminishing? No, it's not. It's still real. It's alive and well.

Let's talk about women and equality. I don't believe women have escalated in society to be equals. I just don't believe it. It has been my experience that any time you have a male who is in the top deciding position, women's issues are not a priority. So those are reality checks.

The question I have for the minister is, knowing that there's only \$1.6 million out of \$1.3 billion, how does the minister come to the conclusion that the Premier and the government support women's issues?

Hon. Ms. Horne: You know, in my remarks earlier, I did not bring up First Nation cultures. Being First Nation myself, I was born in a tent on top of a mountain the year the

Alaska Highway came through. I know full well the culture of the First Nations. I was raised by my grandmother and my aunts. I know the importance of a woman in the First Nation culture. This is one of the reasons we are pushing for healthy women — to have healthy families and healthy communities, we need healthy women.

It was this government and this Premier that reestablished the Women's Directorate. I am not saying things that are not factual. Was it not Premier Pat Duncan, a female, who disbanded the Women's Directorate? Actions speak louder than words, Mr. Chair.

Actions speak louder than words. What we are looking at here is the budget solely in the Women's Directorate. This government is serious about the equality of women. It is built in the budget throughout. I can name for you a few items in violence prevention. We have Kaushee's Place, the Help and Hope Society in Watson Lake, correctional redevelopment and the videos we released that are culturally relevant to Yukon and First Nations. We use Yukon First Nation persons as actors in these videos. These have been received very well throughout Canada. We have had requests from other parts of Canada to use these videos for their violence prevention. We are the leaders in Canada in violence prevention against women. Yes, this government is a leader. We are helping women to move forward.

The Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice co-hosted two train-the-trainer sessions. The Women's Directorate has doubled their prevention of violence.

In April, the community development fund approved funding in the amount of \$276,313 to the Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake to conduct a second-stage housing unit. That is being done. We will fund an internationally renowned researcher and educator to train Yukon substance abuse workers. The government is investing \$245,000 annually in a mammography program to protect the health of Yukon women. That is in Health and Social Services.

We partnered with RPAY — the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon — to launch a new healthy living campaign. We developed a high-risk young women fund to assist NGOs and First Nations to implement harm-reduction initiatives.

In January 2008, the community development fund approved \$25,959 to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for a Yukon women's wellness retreat. We have the VictimLINK crisis centre in the Justice department, the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court in the Justice department. Our Way of Living Safely is with the Justice department. The sexual assault response team is with the Justice department.

There is so much more. We have the support variation assistance program in the Justice department. We have Alcohol and Drug Services to assist in the delivery of pregnancy-related issues in Health and Social Services. Advanced Education has provided \$69,450 through the community training fund. We participated in the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues annual women's forum October 3 and 4 for aboriginal women. As I said, we've doubled the prevention of violence funding.

In 2008, we provided funding to six community-based projects. In 2008, eight Yukon First Nation women, including two chiefs from self-governing First Nations, accompanied the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate to Yellowknife to attend a national forum on women's issues.

We held two Yukon forums for housing for women and provided funding for a feasibility study for a women and children's shelter.

As I said earlier, there are some challenges that we face in life that cannot be fixed by simply throwing money at a problem. We have to change attitudes, and this is something I'm very passionate about — to advance women's issues. And to say that we're not doing a good job — we're doing this throughout our government — through all of our departments.

We seem to criticize the employees because they're not doing their jobs: they are doing their jobs. We are making a difference.

Mr. Edzerza: Let the record show that there was no mention of criticizing employees whatsoever. This is coming specifically from the minister.

I'd like to again put on the record that women are like First Nation people — they are studied to death. Studied to death — workshop after workshop, study after study. What do you want to try to learn about women? The facts are all over the place. The facts are all over the place that they're under-represented in the workforce. There is an abundance of violence against women — a lot of spousal assaults.

I would like to say to the minister today — I'll say it again and I'll say it until the day I leave this Earth — that one of the ways and factors that will help in this area would be to establish a land-based treatment centre in the Yukon. These are all interconnected, whether the Yukon Party wants to sneer about it or laugh about — that's their prerogative. But I'm telling you today that the suggestions the Yukon government have right now today to deal with this issue with the correctional facility are not the appropriate approach.

Why do we want to deal with spousal assaults against women and abuse against women after the crime has been committed? Why don't we do it before these things come into play? I'm not against having some kind of treatment in the correctional facility, but I sure would like to try to do something constructive before it goes to the court process and goes to the correctional facility.

I also heard the minister mention a long list of supports that are in place for women. The reality is — and the minister knows this — that they are underfunded.

I've seen it time and time again, where we have a list of 20 different programs, but if you add up the total it only comes to \$3 million. So I mean, the list may sound impressive, but in reality they are underfunded. So I think a suggestion to the minister is that, at the next round of budget talks that you have, go to the table for this issue and start to demand that the budget gets quadrupled. Never mind \$200,000 more a year; make it become — I'd love to see this budget up around \$5 million. Then there'll be a little bit more meat to work with.

I would like to go to a different area. I know this can be probably a discussion for the whole rest of this sitting, because

of questions that could be asked around this — there's no solution to it. When it's not a high priority in government, there are no solutions.

So one question that I would like to ask — and I've asked this repeatedly, probably for the last maybe 15 or 20 years of every government — and that is that we do have a very high percentage of single mothers in the Yukon Territory. I know that in previous times I have brought forward a request to the government to develop some kind of respite program that would enable the single mothers to at least get a break once in awhile for a weekend or something. It's unfortunate but true that I know women who have been left with six children to raise on their own. They have no break whatsoever. This is day in and day out, while the father is somewhere down south enjoying himself.

I have also seen and witnessed women who have had nervous breakdowns over this situation. I think it would be something that would be very well received by a lot of women in the Yukon Territory.

The question I have for the minister is if there is any kind of program like this. Does the minister intend to maybe in the future look at this?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I identified earlier, we did identify that single mothers and their children were in need of housing in the Yukon. Therefore, we are going forward with the Yukon affordable family housing project. We were criticized for studying issues. This is one of the reasons why we do study issues — to make sure that we are doing the right thing to help the problem.

As I said, we can't solve problems by throwing money at them. We have to make sure we're using the funds in the best possible way. Of course we know there are problems; we are working on them; we are working on them using the funding that we have available throughout the government — not only in this directorate. We are using the funding effectively to help Yukon women.

Mr. Edzerza: I'm not asking the minister about housing for women. I never asked that question. I'm asking about respite for single mothers who have to look after six children day in and day out on their own without any support from a spouse — financially or otherwise.

That is the question I'm asking. I'm just asking if the minister — the minister may not even be aware of this. It would be an appropriate time to maybe say that this is an area that really needs to be checked out and we are going to look into it. Will the minister look into this issue?

Hon. Ms. Horne: This question should have been directed to the Minister of Health who was up earlier. That is not a Women's Directorate issue.

Mr. Elias: I must say that I have been listening to the debate over the last hours and I am disappointed. I expected a better attitude from the minister and I feel compelled to address some of the perceptions that have been left on the floor of this House. Right now, I am thinking about my grandmother and what she taught me, and she would want me to respond. She passed away about four years ago.

First of all, I don't engage in this type of debate. I'll say that.

Second of all, I will not take responsibility for any government that I did not have a hand in making those decisions or have a hand in the climate under which those decisions were made. Be it NDP, Liberal, Yukon Party, Conservative — it doesn't matter to me. I won't take responsibility for their decisions because I had no hand in them.

For the minister to categorically suggest that I didn't care about the minister fulfilling her responsibilities and mandate under the Women's Directorate and to fulfill her responsibilities to Yukoners by me not pairing is not factual. The fact of the matter is this: the government has to maintain their majority in this House, and they don't need me for the minister to attend a meeting.

I'd like to share something with this minister. I asked the Leader of the Official Opposition for this critic and advocate portfolio of the Women's Directorate. I also want to share this with the minister. I've been raised by two single mothers, my grandmother and my mother, and I watched them, over the years as they raised me, struggle for women's equality and the fight for women's rights. I watched them work several jobs to feed, clothe and house me and my siblings. I watched them battle violence against women, and I watched them sacrifice day after day and year after year. So for anybody to suggest and talk to me about sacrifices and understanding the struggles of women, as if I don't understand and care, I take issue with that, because I lived it, Mr. Chair.

I was raised by a group of women in my community of Old Crow who are leaders, who are chiefs, who are MLAs, and who created the social fabric of this territory. So for someone to suggest that I don't understand the value of women and leadership in this territory is absolutely false.

Finally, I'll finish with this: I'm proud of the fact that the minister increased the funding by \$100,000 to \$200,000 for violence prevention against women. I'm very proud of the fact that we have two ministers who are women in this Legislative Assembly. I respect the work that they do, and I respect the people they represent, and I've said that before. I'm proud of the fact that the Premier's intergovernmental relations person is a First Nation woman. I recognize the excellent work that she does. When I have to do silent diplomacy in the background to achieve something for my constituents or for Yukoners, she is the one I go to. I am proud of that fact. Do you know what I'm not proud of? I am not proud of the fact that I have to get on my feet to deal with the social inequality issues with regard to women in this territory. I am not proud of the fact that we have to deal with women on the streets of our territory who have to compromise their dignity so that they have a place to sleep under the watchful eye of this Yukon Party government and their stolid indifference to that problem.

I am not proud of the fact that the statistics regarding the violence against women in this territory are not getting any better. I am not proud of the fact that the wait-lists for single women and their children are long. The solution to the problem is right there. This Yukon Party government is moving at a snail's pace. I am not proud of the fact that the Whitehorse

Aboriginal Women's Circle has identified a need in our capital city and is struggling to address that need.

My role that I've asked for and received by the Leader of the Official Opposition to get on the floor of this House and be responsible to be the critic of the Women's Directorate and advocate for women's issues — I take that responsibility to heart. For the minister to get on her feet and suggest that I don't understand or care for women's issues in this territory offends me.

I'll say it again. I don't usually engage in this type of debate and I understand that the minister is heavily scripted.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member has again strayed into the type of debate in personalization that members of his party, including himself, have objected to in the past and the Chair has ruled is inappropriate personalization. I would ask you to remind him of the practise and the agreement of all three party leaders to try to raise the bar of debate in this Assembly.

Chair: Mr. Mitchell, on the point of order.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't believe there is a point of order. It is a term that has been used by all sides of this Assembly in the past. I will leave it at that.

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, terms can be used in different contexts during debate, so referring to a term being used in the past — it really depends on what context it is used in. I know that both sides are very passionate about this issue and I would like to encourage members to just temper their remarks.

Mr. Elias: In conclusion, if I somehow offended the minister responsible then I apologize but I can't sit here and listen to this level of debate because it goes to a level I don't really want to go to. I wish the minister well in fulfilling her obligations under the Women's Directorate.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Again, you know I hate to do this but I do have to correct the member opposite. I did not criticize the member for his regard toward women nor his grandmother nor his aunts. I will quote what I said, "It is interesting to note that under the leadership of Arthur Mitchell, addressing the needs of women in the Yukon isn't a priority."

Chair's statement

Chair: Order please. I just want to remind members that you're not supposed to refer to other members by their names but by the role that they have in this Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Horne: It is interesting to note that under the leadership of the current Leader of the Official Opposition, addressing the needs of women in the Yukon isn't a priority, as he wouldn't allow his critic to pair with me. I did not criticize the member opposite. It's unfortunate that it was taken that way. Of course I understand the importance of it to the member opposite, otherwise he wouldn't be the critic.

We are fighting for the same issues. As for taking ownership of the party we're in, I've only been with this government for the last three years, yet I take ownership for what this government has done — now and in the past. I absolutely take ownership of what they've done.

As my old aunt Hilda used to tell me, "If the shoe fits, wear it. If you've got a whole closet full, wear them all."

Mr. Elias: I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to conclude general debate and deem all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re concluding general debate and deeming all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried

Chair: Mr. Elias has requested unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to conclude general debate and deem all lines in Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted

On Operations and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,239,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$6,000 agreed to

Women's Directorate agreed to

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 68 — Act to Amend the Yukon College Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, it is my honor and pleasure to be here today to bring forth the *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Joining us in the gallery today are several people I would like to introduce and acknowledge. They are Dr. Karen Barnes, vice-president of education and training for Yukon College; Suzanne Simard, the director of community and extension services; Jacqueline Bedard, director of college relations and international; Tosh Southwick, director of First Nations initiatives; Colleen Wirth, director of student services; John Pereira, director of human resources; and Mr. Wayne Coghill, director of administrative services. Welcome to our Assembly.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I am pleased to bring the *Yukon College Act* amendments to the Committee to debate today.

The Yukon College is an important educational institution for Yukon and its people. As an evolving institution, Yukon College has expanded its programming and today it is a maturing institution that provides a number of programs in a variety of areas. These include programming in areas that support adult education, trades, college and university preparation, degrees in partnership with other universities, along with a host of other courses.

As we discussed, Mr. Chair, there has been significant support for this legislation from both opposition parties so far during our second reading. The college also plays an important role in reaching Yukon rural communities through its network of campuses. By having a Yukon institution that supports and provides for lifelong learning and opportunities in a community, it increases the economic and social well-being of that community.

The *Yukon College Act* is the legislative framework that establishes Yukon College. This act is being amended so that Yukon College will have the flexibility to grant degrees. These changes will bring into legislation six key areas that will not only provide Yukon College with a modern legislative degree-granting framework, but will also increase their autonomy and governance.

The board of governors is responsible for governing the operations of Yukon College. As a result of its comprehensive 2007 consultations with Yukon people, one of the key recommendations that was heard was the desire to increase and expand degree programming.

Yukon College offers degrees through partnerships with other universities, such as the bachelor of education, Yukon Native Teacher Education Program with the University of Regina, the bachelor of social work program — also through the University of Regina — the master of public administration in partnership with the University of Alaska Southeast, or the recently announced master of education program in partnership with the University of British Columbia. These changes provide more opportunity for the college to respond to the unique environment of Yukon and its northern culture. These amendments build on the strength of Yukon College by giving them a legislative framework that will strengthen their ability to further key strategies.

Mr. Chair, this can mean moving into unique northern programming, such as First Nation governance. It can mean opening doors and building on strengths and capacities that continue to move the college forward by providing a stage that recognizes the prominence of the college and assists in building its relationships with other educational partners in a variety of areas. This may translate into securing accreditation, building on relationships in the communities, creating research opportunities and attracting students from near and abroad who wish to study at a degree-granting institution.

There are six key changes being brought in these act amendments. These changes regard the chancellor, the student union, the academic council, the finance and audit committee,

the ability to grant degrees as provided for by regulation, and a provision for Yukon College to have the autonomy to set its own tuition fees through a policy framework approved by the minister.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to go over each of these changes here in this Committee. The chancellor is the ceremonial head of the college. Yukon College has been very fortunate to have had many very prominent Yukon people hold this position. This individual plays a key role in connecting with Yukon people by attending many community events and serving to represent the college during graduation ceremonies. Having this position recognized in legislation only serves to increase the prominence of this important role.

The student union will also be recognized in legislation as the formal student body that represents the voice of students. The student union plays a valuable role in nominating students to committees, such as the board of directors or the academic council.

The academic council is essential for a post-secondary institution. It ensures that the college achieves academic excellence and that there are necessary degree-granting protocols in place for the institution.

The purpose of the finance and audit committee is to assist the board of governors in fulfilling its obligations and oversight responsibilities relating to the audit process, financial reporting, the system of corporate controls, and risk management. When required, the committee makes recommendations to the full board of governors for approval. The degree-granting provision under this new legislation will provide Yukon College with powers that clearly enable Yukon College to develop degrees, as provided for in regulation.

Finally, Mr. Chair, the board of governors will have increased autonomy over setting their own tuition fees. As it stands now, the legislation requires the minister to approve each and every fee established. This new provision gives the college the ability to set its own tuition fees through a policy framework that is approved by the minister.

Yukon College has much work to do in preparing for its readiness to grant degrees. There is a multi-year trajectory of work to be undertaken before the first degree can be granted. This includes internal preparedness of the academic council, building on the existing foundation of existing programming, and preparing the business case for government support and delivery of the first degree offering.

The type of degree granted will be one that responds to community needs, builds on the existing university-transferable course foundation already in place, and can be structured in a manner that responds to the changes needed to adapt to an ever-changing environment over time.

We know there is an increasing number of other Canadian jurisdictions that have enabled their colleges to grant degrees. Having a local institution that provides comprehensive programming in the community provides educational opportunities to a region that may not otherwise be accessible for students. We are pleased with the support these amendments have received to date and I look forward to having a debate on this bill with the Committee.

Chair: Is there any general debate?

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, I will be brief in my comments. I would like to thank the minister for bringing these amendments forward. I have read through and have again listened to the minister's comments and his rationale behind the amendments to the *Yukon College Act*. We in the Official Opposition do agree with them. Our questioning about education will come during the Department of Education when and if we get to it.

We understand the amendments; we are modernizing this act and we're also giving the college the ability to grant degrees to Yukon students. We understand how it works.

It then gives the Commissioner in Executive Council the ability to develop regulations that would enable them to do that. We're fully in agreement with this, and we would like to thank the minister for bringing it forward. We look forward to its passing also.

Mr. Cardiff: I too will be brief. I'd like to thank the officials for their attendance. I'd like to thank the college for having people here in the gallery to witness this.

It is actually a little emotional too, I think, because this is a big step for the institution. I think it's long overdue, and I think it's just another piece of the transition of the organization.

My time and my affiliation with the college go back a number of years to when I sat on the board.

Some of the discussions we had were about — I can remember deliberations about tuition fees and degree-granting authority. So this is a good step in the right direction. I hope that eventually one day we will see a university in the Yukon.

We do support this. We indicated that at second reading — both the Leader of the Third Party and I indicated our support for this piece of legislation. We look forward to the ability of all Yukoners to achieve the best that they can possibly be through attending Yukon College. We understand what the amendments are. They are improvements to the ability of the college to govern itself, the formalization of some things that are already being practised at the college and to assist them in the good, most excellent work that they do.

So we will be supporting this now and at third reading. We have no questions. We can ask all the questions we need to ask, I believe, in budget debate.

Mr. Edzerza: I too would like to put my support behind these amendments. I just want to say that degree-granting status is good and an important improvement in the education system within the college. However, I sincerely hope that the college never loses sight of promoting trades. Being one who holds a red seal for welding, I know trades have served me well over the years. I believe that mechanics, plumbers, heavy duty operators — heavy duty operators is one that I've heard a lot of requests for — automotive mechanics — they are all important, every one of them. I know that the college will do whatever they have to do to ensure that those trades training options will always be available.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Chair, I'll be brief. This is a bit of a ceremonial occasion, you might say, because it is a transition, and it's an important one. I do remember the days when it was the Yukon Vocational School, in what's now the yellow build-

ing for the Department of Education. We've come a long way. It's important that the vocational and the trades, those aspects, endure. They're part of it. Becoming a degree-granting institution is a momentous step for the college, and I just want to add my voice to those that congratulate everyone from the chancellor to the president of the college on down, and all of the people who have worked toward this day that sees us moving in this direction. It's a very positive step for the Yukon, and it's one of those steps that members on all sides of the House can be proud of supporting.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the comments coming from all members of the Assembly.

Members have heard me comment in our Assembly that one of the major roles that I see as Minister of Education is ensuring that Yukoners have opportunities. I see this as another great step forward in ensuring that there are even more opportunities available for Yukoners. This government has recognized the importance and value of Yukon College and the role it plays in our community. We've seen the funding provided to the college grow from less than \$14 million when we took office to over \$20 million last year.

We see the number of opportunities expanding. Some of the programs I mentioned earlier are the new master of education program that the college will be offering in cooperation with the University of Northern British Columbia, and this year the college will be offering a program to assist with educational assistants.

It's that kind of responsive nature to the needs in our community that I think is so important. I would like to applaud the Yukon College Board of Governors for the work they have done, not only on the recent strategic plan but also in their ongoing work and the work of the administration and teaching staff at the college, of looking at what the needs are in our Yukon society, Yukon culture and Yukon community, and then ensuring that the programs they offer satisfy the needs there. I believe the expansion of programs they offer will continue to serve Yukoners very well.

I appreciate the comments that I've heard from the Member for McIntyre-Takhini and some of the comments that we received during second reading.

I think those could be summarized by saying that the move toward offering degree-granting or toward university status does not remove the need to provide the college type of programs. Indeed, if there were a day when we saw the name changed to Yukon University, we would still need to have a Yukon College in our community. It plays a very vital and important role in providing adult learning opportunities, in providing opportunities to enhance specific skills, as well as the programming and certification programs that members opposite offered.

I think that this step by the college and by the government will additionally provide more opportunities for Yukoners. Members are aware that Yukon students can attend the two years of an arts or science degree at Yukon College and have those credits transferred to Outside jurisdictions. Those steps are in place now where we can have our Yukon kids educated

here in our community and then move on to other institutions — really, across North America.

Additionally the relationships that Yukon College is building with the University of Northern British Columbia, the University of Alberta, the University of Regina, Royal Roads University, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and others will continue to serve Yukon College very well into the future.

I would like to thank all members for their support of this legislation. If they have any additional questions, I would be honoured to answer them.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? Seeing none, we will proceed with clause-by-clause debate.

Mr. Mitchell: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and title of Bill No. 68 read and agreed to

Chair: Unanimous consent has been requested by Mr. Mitchell to deem all clauses and title of Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 8 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that we report progress on Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and that Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that we report progress on Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and that Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, *First Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress on it.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 68, *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 68: Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 68, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Rouble.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 68, entitled *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 68, entitled *Act to Amend the Yukon College Act*, be now read a third time and do pass. Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, would you please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Cardiff: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 68 has passed this House.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 68 agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:34 p.m.