

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 19, 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.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Be the Change movement and Sea of Pink Day

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome students from a variety of different Yukon schools to our Assembly and also to honour our young leaders in the Be the Change movement, in preparation for the third annual Sea of Pink Day on Friday, November 20.

Mr. Speaker, this program lets Yukon students experience, first-hand, their own power to transform the world. Through the Be the Change movement, we strive for a world in which every child feels safe, loved and celebrated.

The official kickoff for the Be the Change movement is Challenge Day, which takes place at the beginning of the school year. On Challenge Day, school staff, adult volunteers, and youth facilitators work with students to create a positive vision of schools and communities, one without cliques, gossip, teasing, harassment, isolation, stereotypes, intolerance, racism, sexism, bullying, violence, homophobia, hopelessness or apathy. Then students are invited to become part of the Be the Change teams — a commitment to a year of action, not just a day of talk.

This year, Be the Change teams at Porter Creek, l'École Émilie Tremblay and F.H. Collins have been joined in their work by the newly formed "Yukon Circle of Change," a group of citizens committed to supporting the Be the Change movement and the communities at large.

Be the Change events will include a pay-it-forward shovelling drive, Christmas and Valentine's kind-o-grams, Free Hugs Week in January, Culture Pride Week and the annual Campaign of Kindness.

Participants of the growing movement invite all Yukon citizens to commit to one act of change every day. On this Friday, November 20, the Be the Change teams are launching the third annual Sea of Pink campaign. The campaign coincides with international Stand Up to Bullying Day and marks the end of Stand Up to Bullying Week, November 16 to 20.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 a grade 9 student in Nova Scotia wore a pink polo shirt on his first day of school. He was called a homosexual, ridiculed and threatened with violence. This story might have ended there as it does with many acts of bullying if not for two grade 12 students who had had enough. Their Sea of Pink campaigns started small with an e-mail cam-

paign and dozens of discount t-shirts handed out to peers — and it grew, with bullies drowned out by a wave of support from hundreds of others at the school who chose to wear pink on that day. It grew further into an international phenomenon proving that a bit of teamwork can defeat a lot of apathy and indifference, and it still grows. This year, people across the territory will be joining millions of others around the world wearing pink in solidarity against bullying in schools, families and workplaces.

Thanks to the efforts of our Be the Change teams, not only Yukon schools and government departments will join in, but various clothing stores will have pink window displays and racks, and many merchants will offer customers a discount for wearing pink on that day.

I would like to once again congratulate our Be the Change teams and all the youth working for the betterment of their community. I am proud to say that these outstanding young people are not waiting to become tomorrow's leaders; they are already a powerful force for positive change and an inspiration to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, the students I met with earlier asked me to pass on a couple of messages. They told me that they wanted to say, "Be the change you want to see and take time to say 'hi' to someone, and that small action will influence someone to do better and it will have a domino effect throughout the day."

Again, I would like to welcome the students from l'École Émilie Tremblay, from Porter Creek and from F.H. Collins schools to our Assembly today.

Applause

Mr. Inverarity: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Bullying Awareness Week. This week brings to the forefront the devastating consequences of bullying and affirms that this destructive behaviour must be stopped. Bullying is an issue that touches all people, directly and indirectly, regardless of their gender, age, culture, religion or nationality. Bullying and harassment are methods of misusing power, and they demean and hurt everyone.

Bullying comes in many forms — physical, verbal and relational. It is also rampant in our on-line lives and the on-line lives of our students. It happens every day in schools, malls and on the internet. One in five Canadian youth report being bullied regularly. Bullying can devastate young people, leading to long-term emotional problems. We need to focus on developing the skills to prevent and cope with bullying.

The theme for Bullying Awareness Week 2009 is, "Stand up to bullying." If you see bullying, remember you have the power to stop the behaviour. People who bully love an audience. People who stand up and do nothing make bullying worse, especially if they support or cheer the person who is the bully. Research has shown us that approximately 15 percent of any given population in a school or workplace is directly involved with bullying. That leaves 85 percent as potential bystanders, or the silent majority.

If the bullying or harassment doesn't stop, we need to keep telling people to get help, gather with friends and speak out

against bullying and harassment. Tell your parents and/or another adult whom you trust so that they can support you.

Students from Porter Creek Secondary School, F.H. Collins Secondary School, Vanier Catholic Secondary School and l'École Émilie Tremblay are all participating in the Sea of Pink campaign, which takes place tomorrow, to emphasize the importance of taking a stand against bullying at school, at home and also in the workplace.

We ask all Yukoners to join with these students by wearing pink on Friday in solidarity against bullying. Though we have seen many changes in society's attitudes, we still have a long way to go. We must all work together to prevent bullying in our communities through education and awareness, for bullying is not just a school problem; it's also a community problem. We may never completely eliminate bullying from our society, but to do nothing makes us part of the problem. Now is the time to commit yourself to be part of the solution; stand up to bullying.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic caucus to pay tribute to Bullying Awareness Week. We usually think of bullying in relation to schools and children. It's exciting to see the young people here today and the sea of pink here in the Legislature. When our children are concerned with an issue and respond to it in such a positive way, I think we can be assured the future doesn't look as grim as it might be. We thank them wholeheartedly and we wish them well in their efforts to stand up to bullying and to be the change in our society.

I would like to bring another kind of bullying to the public's attention and that is workplace bullying — bullying behaviours, actions and occurrences connected with a person's employment. It's the kind of violence where the employee is threatened, injured or put in reasonable fear of injury if he or she does not comply with a demand.

Many times the threat is implied that he or she will be dismissed from their employment if a certain action is not done. Workplace violence is often initiated by persons with power over employees. It can be as violent as causing injury or disability or it may appear to be a mundane request that has little effect on the employee but benefits the superior position. It may be as simple as altering work being produced to favour an act or an opinion that normally the employee would not favour for ethical or other reasons.

The intimidation that is a result of workplace bullying has far-reaching effects. If the employee survives either physical or emotional violence, they are still subject to the stress that comes from having been violated; that has a long-lasting effect on the employee. It also causes disruption in the workplace in general with employee turnover, absences, stress-related illness and lost productivity. The effects and the costs of violence in the workplace take a toll on the workplace culture, on employers and employees alike. Bullying is pervasive, learned behaviour where aggression gives the aggressor recognition and status. It is often the result of low self-esteem that can lead to increasing levels of depression and escalating levels of aggres-

sive and violent behaviour. It must be stopped when it is initiated, otherwise it perpetuates itself and it grows.

We want our workplaces to be safe for employees. We want our employers and our children to learn healthy ways of dealing with conflict that will last a lifetime. We must respond positively to disclosures of bullying and make policies that prevent its spread. We must continue to support our young people and set good examples for them and stand up to bullying, and we need to be part of the change.

In recognition of National Child Day

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise on behalf of the House today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing tomorrow, November 20, as National Child Day, which is also the 20th anniversary of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Monsieur le Président, j'invite aujourd'hui mes collègues à se joindre à moi afin de souligner la Journée nationale des l'enfant, demain, le 20 novembre, qui marque également le 20^e anniversaire de la Convention de Nations Unies relative aux droits de l'enfant.

National Child Day has been nationally celebrated since 1993 and commemorates the United Nations' adoption of two documents centred on children's rights: *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1959, and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1989.

By ratifying the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1991, Canada made a commitment to ensure that all children are treated with dignity and respect. This commitment includes that they be given the opportunity to have a voice, to be protected from harm and to be provided with basic needs and every opportunity to reach their full potential.

I am pleased that today we have also announced the proclamation date for the new *Child and Family Services Act*, which will ensure that Yukon children will have a voice, will be protected and will have their basic needs met. The new act is the result of years of consultation and development and will mean significant changes to the way this department interacts with children, families and communities in responding to families in need and in crisis.

The focus is very much on ensuring the protection of children and recognizing the role of families and communities and First Nations in protecting those children.

Celebrating National Child Day is about celebrating children as active participants in their own lives and in their communities — active citizens who can and should meaningfully contribute to decision-making as we create a Canada fit for children.

Today we celebrate the initiatives we have taken to make a difference in the lives of children and families, including the new act, the kids recreation fund, Yukon child benefit, and our healthy families program, which was recently recognized with a Premier's award.

We have made other changes that demonstrate our commitment to produce real results to support families. These include our increased financial support for social assistance, childcare services, and non-government organizations that sup-

port families, such as the Child Development Centre, food bank, FASSY — Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon — Skookum Jim Friendship Centre and others. Even the change in the name refers to our new philosophy, as we move from the *Children's Act* to the *Child and Family Services Act*.

We are making a difference, Mr. Speaker.
Thank you.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mitchell: I would ask everyone in the Assembly to provide a warm welcome to Mr. Scott Kent, a former member of the Assembly and the executive director of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, who just kicked off, this lunch hour, in the foyer, this season's Festival of Trees season of events.

Applause

Speaker: Are there further introduction of visitors.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Lang: I have for tabling the Queen's Printer Agency annual report for the year 2008-09 and the Fleet Vehicle Agency annual report for 2008-09.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling?
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 today of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to follow through with its 2006 election promise and provide more continuing care facilities for seniors by fully reopening the Thomson Centre.

I also give notice today of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Government of Canada should immediately increase funding to correct the chronic underfunding of land claims implementation.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to move forward with plans to develop a public day-use site and swimming area at the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest, and include adequate funding in the 2010-11 budget for this project.

Speaker: Are there further notices of motion?
Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?
Hearing none, this then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Minto mine water testing

Mr. Elias: I have a question for the Minister of Environment. The Government of Yukon is responsible for a variety of water testing and inspection. Some of it is housed in the Department of Environment and some of it is in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Who does the testing became an important issue this summer when the Minto mine had its water licence amended. In the past, some testing and inspection at the mine was done by the Department of Environment. That changed sometime this summer. The Environment department was cut out of the process and Energy, Mines and Resources took over.

Can the Minister of Environment let Yukoners know what changes were made this summer, or this fall, with regard to who is responsible for water testing and inspection and analysis at the Minto mine site, please?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: To the member's question, we have to recognize that all testing required by condition of water licence has been done and continues to be done, but the circumstances at the mine site itself — in dealing with those circumstances, this went before the Yukon Water Board and amendments to the existing licence were made through that process. It was duly followed — all the regulations and conditions were duly followed and the Water Board made their decision.

Mr. Elias: Let the record show that the Environment minister didn't answer the question. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment had responsibility for some water testing and inspection at the Minto mine site. Sometime over the summer, those responsibilities were transferred out of the department. They now reside in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. This is very unusual and the decision obviously wasn't made by officials; it was made at the political level. The Minister of Environment would have been aware of this change in her responsibilities — unless, of course, this is like the Peel River watershed planning and the minister was out of the loop.

Can the Minister of Environment tell Yukoners why her department gave up these important water-testing responsibilities?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I hope the member will understand that the responsibilities haven't been given up at all and the issues that related to the mine site are based on conditions and terms of the water licence duly established through the Yukon Water Board. The issues that were dealt with recently were not about giving up responsibility at all. In fact, it's about taking on the responsibility and going before the Water Board. Due process was followed and the terms and conditions continue to be followed at the mine site.

Mr. Elias: Well, let the record show again, Mr. Speaker, that the question of why the responsibilities were switched between the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources was not answered. Sometime over the summer an interdepartmental MOU between the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources was signed. The MOU transferred some water inspection and analysis responsibilities away

from Environment and placed them in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

This is a very unusual step and did not happen without the involvement of the minister and probably the entire Cabinet. I think the Minister of Environment owes the public an explanation of why this happened. Perhaps this is similar to the situation with the Peel. Maybe she wasn't in the room. Maybe she was just informed after the fact.

Will the Minister of Environment please provide Yukoners with a copy of that memorandum of understanding and explain why it was put in place? Can the minister explain why she agreed to transfer her responsibility to another department?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, the minister hasn't transferred any responsibility — quite the contrary. All ministers retain those responsibilities and diligently perform their tasks within the requirements of said responsibilities. I think the member is confusing things. The issue here has been dealt with appropriately. All terms and conditions of the water licence have been met, continue to be met and the Yukon Water Board has been involved in any decision subsequent to the original licence.

Mr. Speaker, responsibilities have not been negated and have not been diluted. Responsibilities are being delivered upon not just by government, not just by ministers, but by the Yukon Water Board itself, and indeed in this case, the company.

Question re: Minto mine water testing

Mr. Fairclough: I would like to follow up, Mr. Speaker, with the Minister of Environment on the same issue. Her department was responsible for some of the water testing that was being conducted at the Minto mine. It no longer has that responsibility; it was transferred to Energy, Mines and Resources.

Now we know this minister doesn't really run the Department of Environment; it is run out of the corner office. We saw that from the Peel watershed episode where the Premier was giving Environment officials instructions and the minister wasn't even in the room. This summer, an interdepartmental MOU transferred responsibility for some water testing away from this minister and her department. So I'll ask the minister this question: did she support her department having these responsibilities taken away?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, Mr. Speaker, the theme that the Official Opposition continues to pursue is very problematic for the Official Opposition. They fail to accept in any way, shape or form factual answers. They fail to understand what the government's roles and responsibilities are. Now we have another member from the Official Opposition talking about responsibilities. Well, the government has presented to the Official Opposition time and time again the responses — factual responses — that demonstrate the government is living up to its responsibilities in all facets of governing this territory, as we were elected to do and as we were required to do. This is not about transferring, negating, or diluting responsibilities in any way. It is about following due process and that includes the Yukon Water Board. Surely the Official Opposition under-

stands the significance of the Yukon Water Board and the responsibilities it bears.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, who is in control here, Mr. Speaker? Is it the Minister of Environment or the Premier? This is a very serious issue and Yukoners deserve an explanation. This minister had responsibility for some water testing at Minto mine. Those responsibilities have been taken away and we want to know why. This is a very unusual situation. This kind of decision is obviously not made at the department level. It was made at the political level.

The transfer raises a number of questions. Why did it happen? Was the government unhappy with the testing being done by Environment? Whose idea was it to transfer this responsibility out of Environment? Was it the minister's idea or was she informed after the fact? We need some answers to these questions, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to ask again. Did the minister support this responsibility being taken out of the Department of Environment?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, terms and conditions are what are relevant here and that includes the terms and conditions of the water licence duly issued by the Yukon Water Board.

I think the problem here is the inference that is being made. I think what the member is actually suggesting is that officials who bear the responsibility, regardless of what department they work within, are not doing their job. The member is suggesting that water testing wasn't being done. I can assure the member that that is simply not the case.

Mr. Fairclough: Yukoners want to know that someone in government is looking out for the environment. That someone is supposed to be the Minister of Environment. What's going on here?

For some reason, the minister doesn't want to explain why the Department of Environment has been cut out of the water testing at Minto mine. This is a major change in reporting and the government didn't even bother to tell anyone. They made no public announcement or explanation.

So again, will the minister provide a copy of the MOU, and the results of the testing done by her department before the responsibility was taken away from the Department of Environment? Would the Minister of Environment stand up to answer the question?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I just heard the Member for Mayo-Tatchun suggest that water testing wasn't being done, and that's the point we've made in the previous supplementary question — the inferences here are simply not correct — and, by the way, the responsibilities that go with this particular matter are all about the terms and conditions of a water licence, not issued by government, but issued by the Water Board after due process has been concluded.

So this is not about the member's view whatsoever. All responsibilities have been met and all terms and conditions have been met, as required by the Yukon Water Board.

Question re: Health care

Mr. Cardiff: This week we established that this government has no strategic plan for land-based healing centres across the Yukon. One First Nation has put out a request for

proposals to develop a permanent land-based healing centre in its territory, and we know from the RFP package that it's providing for interested bidders that the departments of Justice and Health and Social Services will be involved in some way in this facility.

To me, it looks like this government has already chosen one project that's being put forward by one First Nation without involving or consulting any of the other First Nations with similar needs. So why are the ministers of Justice and Health and Social Services not following some sort of a strategic plan to address the needs for land-based healing centres in a way that is systematic, strategic, collaborative and fair to all Yukon communities?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. We on this side of the House are working with the First Nations in question. We have a plan in place with respect to dealing with the centres. We are going to be meeting with the First Nations, and we will be looking at putting forth a first step and putting the program in place and addressing the situation of all First Nations, as well as all Yukoners in the utilization of this service.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, maybe the minister would like to share that plan with us on this side of the Legislature and tell us which First Nations and which communities are involved.

Now, this government is also proposing to spend \$50 million on acute care by building regional hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. We're not saying that's a bad thing but, again, it's being done before it has completed the health care review, which was started last year. In fact, the oversight committee has not even met. The government has failed to make the case that there is an urgent need for acute care regional hospitals, nor has it levelled with the public about the real costs of building, staffing, running and maintaining these facilities.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services please show us in the *Yukon Health Care Review* or the related *What We Heard* document where it says that the Yukon needs more regional hospitals offering only acute care services?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I think we don't have to go too far with regard to answering the first part of this question. I think we've demonstrated just recently the need for acute care facilities within the Yukon. I think it was demonstrated last week in the emergency situation that we were facing, and I'm very thankful that we were able to address the situation and come up with a solution.

I believe also, with regard to the second portion of this question, that Dr. Reddoch and his crew went out and consulted with all Yukoners with regard to what their health needs are and the results were overwhelming that came back from that consultation with Yukoners — they basically stated that health was a very, very important aspect for all Yukoners and that report is available through Dr. Reddoch's report and results of the consultation.

Mr. Cardiff: I think we agree that health is a very important issue for Yukoners. Now the Registered Nurses Association would like to see more emphasis on collaborative care models. The Yukon Medical Association strongly supports the Canadian Medical Association's efforts toward health care re-

form, which include, "to work with provincial and territorial medical associations to develop sustainable funding models for collaborative care in community-based practice." The Yukon Council on Aging would like to see more emphasis on home care and continuing care. The Anti-Poverty Coalition would like to see more emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The Council of Yukon First Nations wants to see substance abuse and mental health included as part of the public health system.

When will this minister and his government listen to what people want and start addressing the health care needs of this territory in a planned, strategic and collaborative way?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I'm glad the member opposite brought up many of the partners and stakeholders he mentioned. We are working with those individuals on improving the services for all those in question.

With regard to the Anti-Poverty Coalition, we are working with that particular group in dealing with the new social inclusion strategy this government announced to improve the adequacies for those who are underprivileged and to ensure they get access to all programming so they are included in all our social facilities.

We are working with all those with regard to continuing care. As I stated previously, we have the best — save Quebec — health care system in Canada.

I think we don't have to go too far. I think it was rather evident in the review and consultation with Yukoners just how good our health care service is here in Yukon. We continue to support that wherever we can.

Question re: Health care

Mr. Cardiff: Will the Minister of Health and Social Services please give us his definition of collaborative health care?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with all those involved to try to enhance health care for all Yukoners throughout the Yukon on an equal basis and to ensure that health care is provided. We will work with all the stakeholders involved to ensure that we can achieve that.

Mr. Cardiff: It sounds almost like the same definition of "acute health care" the minister gave me yesterday. When we asked him, he either misunderstood the question or avoided it.

For years the Yukon Registered Nurses Association and others have been promoting primary care in a collaborative setting. Collaborative care features a multidisciplinary approach in a health centre that has all the major disciplines in patient care working as a team. It is patient centred and is the creative use of the most appropriate provider to meet a wide range of patient needs, including mental health, substance abuse, addictions issues, therapy and other treatments. It's the other side of the coin of acute care. So will the minister tell us what his government is doing to move forward with the establishment of collaborative care alongside acute care facilities?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, a primary aspect of dealing with all Yukoners is providing primary care, and that is something we are doing here in the Yukon in addition to providing all the other services with regard to the social

aspect, with regard to dealing with all aspects of health. We are looking at providing services to protect, promote and ensure the health care of all Yukoners. We are doing that through our planning process; we are working with our partners, as I mentioned previously, to ensure that prevention and integration and evaluation are being maintained for all our health services.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, collaborative care in a primary health care setting is supported by the *Yukon Health Care Review* of September 2008. It is one of the key recommendations of the report. A strong focus on primary health care and health promotion and education is integral to the future health of all Yukon people. This cannot be effectively achieved in an acute care based method of health care, which is the model that government is pursuing by spending \$50 million on its regional hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City.

Those communities need more collaborative care and not just the acute care. They need more collaborative care and chronic care provided in their communities as well. Why is the minister not doing more to encourage the expansion of the collaborative health care delivery model?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are doing that in those two small communities. We are providing enhanced services both in Watson Lake and in Dawson City. Our intent is to provide enhanced services especially in Dawson City. We will provide great services that that community does not enjoy right now. It is being done in conjunction with Yukon Hospital Corporation, which is basically ensuring, through their expertise and value, that that service is going to be provided to that community. We are expanding on their expertise to ensure that service is provided, and we hope to see some ramifications of that with regard to those two facilities in both communities very shortly.

Question re: Water resource assets

Mr. McRobb: I have another question about this government's secret negotiations of Yukon resources without the public's knowledge or consent. The joint position paper released by the former Yukon Energy Corporation chair proved that this government was actively involved in secret negotiations to sell Yukon assets to Alberta interests. We already know how far it was prepared to go in selling out Yukon's energy future, but there is more.

This confidential government internal document also revealed that the Yukon's water resources were on the table. Again, the Minister of Environment has some explaining to do. Why did she approve this secret scheme to negotiate the Yukon's water resources to private interests from Alberta?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I wish the Member for Kluane would actually read the document that they tabled. It clearly demonstrates that the Yukon government wasn't selling assets at all. The evidence that the members opposite — the Official Opposition — have provided this House corroborates the government's position. We're not selling assets; we're building assets. We're not giving away Yukon's water. This is absurd.

Now, whatever the members of the Official Opposition are thinking they're going to gain from this approach, the government side will leave that up to them.

In the meantime, we're very busy building more assets for the Yukon Energy Corporation, providing greener energy for

this territory, besides reducing our dependence on a much more expensive form of energy — that would be fossil fuels. Hopefully, at some point in the future, the members opposite will grasp the facts and stop being so confused about their own evidence that they present.

Mr. McRobb: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're merely trying to hold the government accountable for what was indicated in its secret document. Now let's examine the facts — we know this government was involved in secret negotiations with ATCO's president and CEO. We know the territory's water resources were part of those negotiations. We know a year ago ATCO launched its new subsidiary, ATCO Water. We know ATCO Water is in the business of building water pipelines and we know the ATCO president and CEO said there was great opportunity north of 60°. We also know the territory's Environment minister is responsible for protecting the Yukon's environment.

Why was she prepared to relinquish our territory's natural resources to private interests in Alberta without the public's knowledge or consent?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is: that that is completely inconsistent with the facts. The member said "secret negotiations." The evidence the members opposite provided this House and anywhere they want to provide that evidence will demonstrate this was no secret. The briefing the members received some days ago clearly outlines the fact that, contrary to being a secret, many were involved, including the corporation itself. Furthermore, the member is now suggesting that we were selling Yukon's water assets. This is ridiculous, Mr. Speaker; it's surreal. The Official Opposition has a major problem. They talk about accountability? It's time the Official Opposition was accountable for the statements they make in this House.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, I've stated the facts and they speak for themselves. Yukoners place high value on their water resources. They have never been asked by any government whether those resources should be negotiated away. This government didn't bother to ask Yukoners for their opinion before entering into negotiations with Alberta interests. This government agreed to include it in the secret negotiation package.

Instead of being open and accountable, this government is hiding behind an MOU with a private company from Alberta that made this matter confidential or secret. It was not known to the Yukon public, Mr. Speaker.

Yukoners want to hear directly from their Environment minister. Why did she go along with this memorandum of understanding which clearly put Alberta interests ahead of Yukon interests?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, first off, there was no memorandum of understanding and the members opposite were told that a few days ago when officials took the time out of their busy schedule to try to assist the Official Opposition in their confusion. There was no memorandum of understanding so it would be impossible for any minister of the government to agree to such a memorandum of understanding that didn't exist.

Furthermore, the member opposite again suggests that we are selling Yukon's water assets. This government is protecting Yukon's water assets and protecting Yukon's environment. In fact, I have a multi-page document right here of all the work being done across the departments of this government, protecting and preserving Yukon's environment, its wildlife, its fish, its lands, its water. The members opposite had better understand that accountability works both ways. The statements they are making in this House, they will be held accountable for.

Question re: Ministerial responsibility

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, we continue to ask the Minister of Environment to explain her actions or her lack of action. The Premier is busy interfering in the operations of her department, and she is busy following his instructions, instead of standing up for the environment.

Mr. Speaker, senior officials from this minister's department were directed to make public statements about government responsibilities, and this minister stood by and let it happen. When the Premier overrides her authority like this, she's no longer an effective minister; she's simply a placeholder. Yukoners want their government to look after the environment. That's supposed to be this minister's top priority. That's not happening when she's busy following orders from the corner office. When is the Environment minister going to stand up to the corner office?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Now, before the honourable member answers the question, the Chair is having a bit of a quandary here, Leader of the Official Opposition, the question criticizing policy, et cetera, is perfectly fine, but you're getting awfully close to dishonouring the member herself, and I would just ask the honourable member to keep that in mind.

You have the floor, Minister of Environment, please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It has been very interesting listening to the debate this afternoon here. I very much pride myself as Minister of Environment over the last year and a half. And, in fact, I'm very proud of the accomplishments that the Department of Environment has undertaken over the last year and a half.

For the very first time, as I mentioned earlier this week, we have undertaken a climate change action plan, which we launched. We have undertaken a climate change secretariat to oversee and coordinate government's response to climate change. We have undertaken for the first time ever a new remediation assessment sites unit in the Department of Environment to oversee all the Government of Yukon's liabilities when it comes to contaminated sites. Furthermore, we are working to actually address those contaminated sites.

We have launched a new animal health program in collaboration with other departments to respond to the changes that we are seeing in the climate and, as a result, changes in our wildlife. We are working collaboratively with Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon College on the recent launch of the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence — of which a large part is a mandate for mitigation of climate

change. We are developing the water management framework, of which the members opposite are so very interested. We have launched a new solid waste action plan, which comprises new regional transfer and so forth.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the Environment minister has learned well. Her responses sound remarkably similar to the Premier's. We get an infomercial instead of an answer. Mr. Speaker, we are really starting to question what is going on with the Department of Environment under this minister's watch.

We have learned that her department has relinquished responsibility for testing water and that is certainly cause for concern. This minister avoids answering questions just like the Premier and avoids accounting for her actions. Yukoners are really wondering what is going on. Who is running the Department of Environment, the minister or the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what Yukoners are wondering. They're wondering what the Official Opposition is trying to accomplish, what the Official Opposition is trying to gain by making the statements they are in this House. The facts of the matter are that, under this Minister of Environment, there has never been more emphasis on protecting and conserving Yukon's environment.

Look at the list of examples — under this minister's watch, Yukon has a climate change action plan. Under this minister's watch, we've actually established the centre of excellence. Under this minister's watch, we are modernizing our biophysical database. Under this minister's watch, we are taking steps to protect the Porcupine caribou herd. Under this minister's watch, we are celebrating Yukon parks. Under this minister's watch, the percentage of land base under protection and conservation in the territory has risen dramatically. Under this minister's watch, we've resolved the management plan issues for Tombstone, a jewel of protection in this territory — and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Under this minister's watch we have one of the most significant developments in Tombstone in terms of a VIC, powered by solar energy — the greenest construction in the area. This is the Minister of Environment's job; this is what she has accomplished. The members opposite had better catch up.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier makes our point for us. We've asked eight times today about a transfer of responsibility for water monitoring and what we get are repeated lists and infomercials, but not answers. This Environment minister stands by silently, supportive, while the Premier guts her department's submission to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. The minister adamantly denies any knowledge of the Premier's direct interference with her senior staff despite documents that prove otherwise. The minister has completely given up her department's mandate for water testing, and the minister has finally learned to sound like the Premier in response to serious questions, by not answering them.

When is this Environment minister going to take back control of the Department of Environment?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: This is interesting. The member opposite is wrong on all counts and yet he's asking for an answer. There are no answers to that type of question. The questions

aren't even factual and have nothing to do with what the government or any minister in this government is delivering on.

Mr. Speaker, the transfer of responsibilities has got nothing to do with making sure the responsibilities are being dealt with. The terms and conditions must be followed; obligations are being followed. They confuse "direction" with "interference". They confuse decisions with other matters — and I won't even say the word here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition should start to think about being part of the solution instead of being part of the problem. Yesterday they had an opportunity to participate with the members of this institution, to go out to the public and deal with a matter that is long-standing — the *Landlord and Tenant Act* — and they tried everything possible, Mr. Speaker, to get out of doing their job.

Yes, accountability is important, Mr. Speaker. The Official Opposition is going to be held to account for their actions, their conduct and their statements.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Nordick): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Education.

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 come to order.

Bill No. 17 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Vote 3, Department of Education.

Department of Education — continued

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Elias: I'd like to continue my line of questioning from the other day with the Minister of Education. Realizing that our education system must meet the needs of our students

and community — there's a really good-news story to report in my community of Old Crow, and something that we've valued for a long, long time and that's land-based experiential learning. I just would like to take this time to thank the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Department of Environment for their hard work in bringing together a partnership that our community can be proud of, and that's the Old Crow experiential education project.

Maybe I'll just quickly tell a story from my youth about growing up in the Old Crow Flats until the age of 13 and being tutored in an 8 by 10 canvas tent out on the land from March until June with my grandmother. I'd have a binder from my elementary school teachers about the work that I had to complete, and I always did complete that work, but when it was time for me to go to high school my grandmother sat me down and she said, "You make sure that you recognize your traditional teachings of the language, the culture, and traditional knowledge with regard to the fish and wildlife and our land and the interconnectedness with the environment." How important that is in today's world, because our society is changing so rapidly and she recognized that back then. She really prepared me for that transition to high school. She made it clear to me that I must tell people that the education she gave me over those years has value in today's education system.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon Department of Education have moved forward with a three-year project that's based in the community of Old Crow and on the land, and it's going to provide a rural First Nation experiential model for kindergarten to grade 9 that will be unique in the Yukon with an emphasis on First Nation culture while meeting the specific educational needs, using a collaborative process. A major component of the project is to develop and implement field trips and on-the-land activities that combine cultural competency along with western educational learning outcomes.

The project will provide the students, school staff and the Old Crow community members the opportunity to grow and learn together in understanding cultural language and history. It is so important to recognize this because our community of Old Crow placed a very high value on this over the years and so many leaders before me, and chiefs before Chief Linklater, have talked about this, so it is good to see that this project be recognized and that partnership. So that is a very good-news story.

With regard to the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and the implementation of their school growth plan, it is important to recognize that with the assistance of all stakeholders the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School has arrived at the following goals. First Nations culture is goal number one. Goal number two is social responsibility. Goal number three is literacy and goal number four is numeracy. I just wish the staff and the students of the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School well in achieving those goals throughout the school year and I am willing to help any way that I can to help the community and the administration and the staff achieve those goals.

With regard to the high school students, a recent development that — another partner of the Department of Education is the education support worker here in the capital city. She's

doing a wonderful job in taking care of the students. Something that the parents felt that the high school students — their children — really needed to address was the issue of grieving because, over the last three years, our community has lost so many people — so many elders, youth and a spectrum throughout our community.

Next week, at the Sundog Retreat, the high school students from Old Crow here are going to have the opportunity to have a retreat and to have a certified, trained family counsellor facilitating the workshop and be able to teach things like how to grieve properly, how to deal with the feelings of grieving and how to move forward.

As a high school student from Old Crow, having to leave your home, family, friends and your elders and your safety net in the community — not to mention the culture and the lifestyle — it's pretty much a shock for a lot of the students who come from an isolated community in Old Crow, to have to come to the hustle and bustle of the capital city with all its enticements and pressures with very little direct family support. The high schools themselves have very different dynamics and support structures, so they step into an atmosphere with very little culture and traditional language — and traditional foods are very important.

It's important to recognize that the students from Old Crow who have to come down to receive their public education can't just drive home on the weekend. They can't just go see their family over the weekend and many of them tell me that they constantly miss their parents and their siblings and their grandparents and the sense of community — they're homesick, basically. I've gone through this myself and, for many of the students, it becomes a choice between being with your family and getting a public education, because that's how hard the choices are.

That's something I wanted to talk to the minister about because this issue of transition with is not only with students from Old Crow, but there are other students around the territory who have to leave their homes to gain a public education. It has been discussed at the local level in Old Crow. Some ideas that were brought up to help solve this problem, to ease the transition, are basically having some of the high school or all of the high school grades taught in Old Crow so that our students can stay home and graduate from grade 12 in Old Crow. That's one of the comments I've been hearing from my constituents.

If that's not possible, maybe we can get together and have a similar residence to the Gadzoosdaa residence where many children from Old Crow must actually reside when they have to leave home. The idea is to have a residence owned and operated by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and possibly in partnership with the Department of Education and other governments. When I asked what the reasoning was behind this, just about every one of the parents suggested that it's the cultural integration; it's the traditional foods; it's the direct understanding of the language and the culture that comes from Old Crow. Those were the types of programming that could possibly meet the needs of the students who have to travel so far to get their public education.

Another idea was to have education support workers in each of the high schools that the students from Old Crow attend. It's an important job, and they do so much over and above the call of duty — the education support workers in Old Crow and in Whitehorse.

Another idea was that those students in Old Crow who are scheduled to go to Whitehorse could participate via video conferencing, for instance. They could be in the classroom in Old Crow and they could participate in a video conference and see the classroom dynamics in the high school and see how the teacher teaches and how the students respond to those teachers. I believe the technology exists.

These are some of the things the community is thinking about to ease the transition, just so the students in Old Crow, before they come to Whitehorse, can get a taste of what actually goes on in a high school.

Another idea to assist in the transition between Old Crow and Whitehorse for the Old Crow students was for the Department of Education to accommodate for credits to be achieved in Old Crow.

In grade 9, the Planning 10 credits that they must get to attain their high school diploma could be facilitated in Old Crow. The other idea along with that is that maybe there could be a course delivered in Old Crow that recognizes the skills and abilities necessary to survive in the north: the Vuntut Gwitchin culture, the Vuntut Gwitchin language, the history. Those credits could also be used to graduate, so when the students come down from Old Crow they come with some confidence. They would come to the capital city and into the high schools with some credits already under their belts and would already be a few steps toward their graduation certificate. Those are some of the ideas that have been floating around the community for some time.

I would like to hear some of the minister's ideas around those concepts from the community.

Another issue that has come up lately — not lately; it has actually been around for years. I'm going to try to present this argument in a positive fashion. In Old Crow, I've ridden the bus. It's in disrepair — I see I'm running out of time. Maybe I'll just let the minister answer those questions, and then we'll see where we can go from there.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'd like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his comments. Indeed, many of his comments today have given significant validation to the education reform process and the school growth process. I'm very encouraged to see that the expected outcomes of some of those projects are making a difference in the member opposite's community.

I did have the pleasure and honour of working with Chief Joe Linklater, the Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, on part of the education reform project. It was a very positive experience for me. I certainly valued the different perspectives that I heard and the different comments that were produced, and I gained a significant appreciation for some of the challenges that are faced by Yukon students and especially by Yukon First Nation students in our education system.

There was one day when I was discussing — we were having a broad discussion of education with the chief. He reminded me that there has been an education system in Old Crow or in the Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory since time began, that as long as people have been there they have been teaching each other how to do, how to be, how to know and how to live together. That is the definition of a civilization or of a community where there is that education process and that those formal education processes — of how to get along with each other, how to transfer knowledge, how to pass on skills — have been happening there since time began.

That education has happened in all communities in Yukon before there was a Department of Education, before there was a cement block school built, before there was a Minister of Education. It is important to recognize that and to build upon that. That's an important lesson to learn and it's one that I often repeat when I speak to teachers, administrators, superintendents, or other Education officials. It is important also because it validates the knowledge in the community, the processes that the community has and reminds us that the traditional western education system isn't always the be-all or the end-all — that there are things that we can learn and that there is certainly room for the education system to evolve and reform.

The Government of Yukon — the previous Minister of Education — did embark on an education reform project. Some of the initiatives that have come out of that have included recommendations to see things like school growth planning, land-based experiential programs, and First Nation experiential education programs. I appreciate that the member opposite recognizes and acknowledges that those changes are happening and that it's making a difference in his community.

Just as an aside, I would encourage him to share that perspective with his colleague, the critic for Education, who doesn't always seem to recognize that positive changes are happening in our system. But the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has certainly recognized that school growth planning is an important tool in his community, leading to greater community engagement and leading to greater programming changes that are meeting the needs, and will begin to meet the needs, of more of the students.

This government has worked very closely with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and, through the northern strategy program, has identified resources that will lead to a land-based experiential program for Old Crow, and we will look at this as a model of how we can develop a system that can be used in other jurisdictions as well, and it will do many of the things that the member opposite is discussing today.

I was reminded that our education system now acknowledges and gives credit for learning how to play basketball — just as an example of recognition of a traditional Canadian sport — and how students are credited and given school credit for learning and mastering that subject. The chief from Vuntut Gwitchin asked me: Why can't we have credit for learning traditional Gwitchin activities? I couldn't think of a good reason why we don't. I couldn't think of a good reason why the education system hadn't done that in the past. I couldn't think of a

good reason why the education system hadn't been responsive to the needs in the community in the past and put that in place.

So I'm certainly pleased to see that this government and in the budgets we have before us — that I trust the member opposite will support — will foster the growth of those programs. A grade 10 experiential program will be introduced in the 2011-2012 school year. Before that begins, we will continue to make changes with the school growth plan to incorporate the needs of the community and the school.

The member opposite has also brought forward issues around the school growth plan and talked about how that was a very important tool and that the ideas brought forward in the community could be introduced. I fully support that and endorse that and that is the whole point of a school-based, community-driven growth plan. I certainly appreciate the member opposite sees the value and the contribution that the community has in creating that.

The member also brought up the issue of partnerships and how the education system can work with others in order to address some of our collective issues. I certainly recognize that there is more to learn in life than can be addressed in our formal education system. There is a tremendous amount of learning that happens outside the walls of a classroom.

Don't get me wrong, Mr. Chair, learning that takes place in a school with our teachers is a tremendous part of growing up, but there are many, many other things that happen outside the school and it's the involvement of those people — our family, our community, our clubs, our groups, our churches, our sports teams, our other arts and culture places — that also teach incredibly valuable lessons for life and teach skills that are necessary for effective participation in our community.

The Government of Yukon will continue to work with all our partners, such as the education support workers, such as the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, such as the Council of Yukon First Nations, to address many of the issues brought forward. I'm pleased to see that the member opposite is seeing the benefits that the education support workers are bringing to the lives of students.

The member opposite also brought up the issue of transitions and that has certainly been identified as an important issue through the education reform project.

Initiatives and programs have been identified in New Horizons, and there has been a considerable amount of work done in the last 18 months on enhancing transitions. Those are the different changes, whether they be from daycare into kindergarten, or kindergarten into grade 1, or from primary school into secondary school, or from community life into Whitehorse life, and also the transition then from high school to post-secondary, or the transition into the world of work.

These are key times for individuals and ones for which I've already outlined many of the different programs that are in place to address them. As for specific initiatives in order to assist students from Old Crow, such as video conferencing with the school, it sounds like a great idea. I don't know of any roadblocks in the way that would prevent something like that from happening.

I believe, too, that in the past the students from Old Crow have come to Whitehorse and have done a visit to the school beforehand in order to see the school, to meet with some of their other brothers, sisters, cousins or friends who are also there who will give them an introduction. It sounds like a great idea to me.

I remember when I was in primary school we took a field trip to the junior high school to find out where everything was and to appreciate the differences from where we ruled the roost to where we would be the new kids on the block. It does dispel some of the fears or the trepidation that one is going through when making that change. We are often very afraid of the unknown. If we don't know what we are getting into, it can be pretty scary. Having a warm welcoming into the school I think is important in all schools and for all our students. That is one of the reasons why I encourage Yukon College to participate in so many activities with Yukon high schools or even Yukon primary schools with things like Yukon College hosting the skills competition or Yukon College hosting things like the science fairs. Any excuse to get students into the college is a good excuse. It helps to ease those transitions and it helps to normalize the idea of going to a college, and it helps to remove many of the fears beforehand.

The member also asked about distance education. This supplementary budget does address the issues of distance education. It provides for video conferencing equipment for some of our schools that needed to have those resources updated. I know we do have many students throughout the territory who are doing many of their high school courses through distance education. We're seeing students in Mayo, for example, Mr. Chair, doing law courses or drafting courses by distance education. This type of distance learning — whether it's computer based, video conferencing based, or whether it's the typical type of correspondence school work — is a great way of introducing high school courses to others before they come into Whitehorse to complete their education.

We do realize that in many of our smaller jurisdictions it's really not practical to offer the whole range of high school courses, that there lacks the different teaching skills or teachers or, in some cases, the resources to provide the full spectrum of courses all the time in all communities. We do try to find alternatives and one of those is the distance education model. I'm pleased to see that those types of distant learning options are expanding and that they're being embraced by students in our community.

The member also asked about how we could get credit for other high school courses before going to high school, or before leaving this community and, Mr. Chair, that is a key part of the land-based experiential education program. Those initiatives that he's discussing and asking me to do are being done through the programming that we're working on right now.

Also, for the member opposite's information, we're also working with the high school and Yukon College to do dual credit recognition, where students in high school can also take a course at Yukon College and receive a Yukon College credit for it and also a high school credit for it. That's a situation where we build upon the assets and resources through Yukon

College, utilizing many of the resources that they have, utilizing some of the ideas and the directions that students want to go in, validating those ideas of the students and helping them to fast-track their approach to different things.

I certainly agree with the member opposite that this is the direction that we have directed the Department of Education to take: to work with the community to address community concerns; to find additional ways of providing programming, resources and options to students; to increase the transition ease for students going from school to school or school to work; to work in partnership with others — I certainly appreciate the comments coming from the member opposite that are validating and acknowledging these changes and are recognizing that they are making a difference in Yukon's communities.

I think that covers the issues that the member raised in his first question. I will turn the floor back over to him.

Mr. Elias: I appreciate the Minister of Education's comments. I just wanted to make one thing clear: I do what my constituents direct me to do. Whether he sees that as different from my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun, whose job is to hold this minister to account on behalf of all Yukoners and act as the Education critic and advocate — he's passionate about his portfolio. As far as I'm concerned, he's doing a phenomenal job, so I will leave it at that.

I maybe have four or five more questions. The other day in Question Period I asked a question of the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. It was about the statistics with regard to violence against women — not only violence against women, but violence against aboriginal women in the territory. The statistics that I found — and I'll tell the minister this: they were difficult to find, because they were buried in statistical analysis from the Government of Canada from the Government of Yukon.

You know, those statistics are not getting any better. I asked those questions in Question Period because Yukoners care about them; I care about them, and I want to try to find solutions to them.

In talking to Yukoners about this issue, they asked me what kind of territory I want to live in 10 years from now. I want to live in a territory where those statistics on violence against women are not three times the national average or double the national average. I want them to be below the national average.

So, thinking about how to accomplish that, if you look at the territory — let's just look at this from a monetary point of view. We've got the territorial government that has an average of a billion-dollar budget a year. You put in 13 self-governing First Nations — it fluctuates, but let's say they have a \$10-million-dollar budget a year, and then our municipalities' budgets, and the federal government's budget. There's no reason why, if we all push in the same direction, we can't address serious issues like this.

Maybe I will step back a bit and say that I would like to see a comprehensive approach being developed by the Government of Yukon where all the departments have a hand in accomplishing the goal of having violence against women well below the national average, for instance. Every department

should have a hand and goals and responsibilities in doing this, because the statistics have been terrible for far too long. To me, whatever we are doing or whatever money has been allocated isn't working.

All the organizations in the Women's Directorate and all the women's organizations are doing a phenomenal job in fulfilling their responsibilities around the territory, and it is commendable. I think it is the public government's responsibility to participate in this in a comprehensive, different way. One of the questions to the Education minister is, how can his department participate in a comprehensive approach and take a bit of a leadership role, because I see his department as being one of the ones who could take the leadership in lowering these statistics of violence against women.

You know, ideas and concepts like abuse prevention at the very low grades, life skills, leadership development, trades and apprenticeship program, housing, addressing poverty — all these overarching, very large issues.

Having a comprehensive and holistic interjurisdictional, interdepartmental plan is required and I just wanted to ask that fairly large conceptual question to the Education minister on how he sees his department moving forward with that concept, how he sees his department participating more than it does now.

Now I'm going to move into this issue that I started to go into earlier. The school bus that's being used in Old Crow is in disrepair and, first of all, it's not designated as a school bus. It was designed as a city street bus and it's run by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Talking to the school bus driver, the parents and the students themselves, it's a concern. It's a safety concern, it's an issue that's not going to go away — I'll put it that way.

When I look at what's being communicated to the students, to the parents, to the school administrators, staff and the community members about the school bus, there are things around the community that say, "Wait until the school bus stops, the door opens and the bus driver says it's okay to board the bus. Be sure the bus driver can see you and you can see him or her. Walk in front of the bus, never behind the bus. Listen to the bus driver. His job is important for your safety. Stay in your seat. Don't stand. No bullying or teasing on the bus. Don't distract the bus driver. Please treat each other respectfully on the school bus."

The bus driver in Old Crow who transports the kids to and from their homes asked me to go on the route with him. This is a 27-seat vehicle and 30 Chief Zzeh Gittlit schoolchildren got on the bus — so 30 students fighting for 21 seats is not safe.

I look at the minister's brochure that was released today about riding the school bus and what parents need to know. You know, some of the things in the brochure are asking questions: who can ride the school bus; getting on the bus safely; riding the bus safely; leaving the bus safely; cold weather safety. The list goes on and on and there is lots of discussion under that. But what caught my attention in the minister's pamphlet was under the question of who can ride the school bus. It says that, generally, transportation is provided for students who live more than 3.2 kilometres from their neighbourhood school

— generally. In my community of Old Crow there are students who live farther than 3.2 kilometres from the school.

As the minister knows, we have met on this issue face to face — I believe it was around October 13 in his office. I did write him a letter representing the issues and concerns around this issue. In my opinion, the minister has full discretion to provide that safe transportation to the students in Old Crow.

In the *Education Act*, under section 47(2), it says: "If a student's home is more than 3.2 kilometres by the nearest passable road from the school the student attends pursuant to section 11, the Minister shall provide transportation for the home, or an allowance for transportation and accommodation, or provide an educational program by distance education."

Section 47(3) states: "If a student's home is less than 3.2 kilometres by the nearest passable road from the school the student attends pursuant to section 11, the Minister may, subject to any fees or conditions prescribed by the regulations, provide transportation for the student to and from the school and the student's home."

So, to me, in reading that legislation, accompanied by the minister's literature on riding the school bus and what students need to know and, actually, what's going on in the most isolated communities in the Yukon, I guess my question is, why doesn't the minister just simply say, "Okay, I have the discretion here. A 40-passenger school bus is on its way to Old Crow on the winter road this year, which is scheduled to be built in February, and will be used for the transportation of students in Old Crow for 10 and a half months of the year."? It's a vehicle. I think there are enough Community Services and Highways and Public Works staff in Old Crow who can maintain the vehicle. The contract for the driver can come from Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. I'm trying to address this safety concern, because there have been many near misses in the community because of the vehicle that's being used now. It doesn't have stoplights; it doesn't even have amber lights that work. I will also mention that as far as I'm concerned, for the children of Old Crow these are extenuating circumstances that they have to deal with. I won't even get into the climatic conditions, but I think I have built a good argument that the minister does have this discretion.

I don't understand why — he sent me a letter yesterday, I believe, that says he has no interest in providing transportation — the school bus for the students in Old Crow. Again, I'm trying to present this argument in a productive manner. With a government that has a \$1-billion budget, this is an easy win. Depending on the minister's comments on those questions that I've given him today during general debate on the Education department, I'll turn the floor back to the Education minister.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the comments coming from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. He is certainly passionate about his riding and the issues that come from the community of Old Crow.

We have had several good discussions about education. I certainly recognize his interest in it. I also recognize his acknowledgement of some of the recent changes to education. Perhaps in the future if the Education critic is unable or unavailable or whatever to attend a briefing such as the joint YTG

and Council of Yukon First Nations briefing on New Horizons or a budget briefing on education, that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin might take his place, because he does seem to be genuinely interested in this and does seem to want to make the time to find out more about education issues and what is really happening with the education system in the territory and the changes that are taking place. It is very encouraging to see this kind of passionate interest from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate that he's just getting warmed up. I hope this isn't another hockey reference or a rumble reference or something like that. So we'll just try to answer the member's questions here because he did put a number of issues on the floor, the first one being the issue regarding violence against women. The member raised the issue of violence against women, and some of the statistics that are, of course, alarming to everyone, not only in this Assembly but in the territory, and asked: what could we do to address this?

One of the things that this government did immediately upon forming government a couple of years ago was to reinstate the Women's Directorate. That was a significant move — to establish the Women's Directorate as a lead department to take the initiative on many issues and also to work interdepartmentally to address many issues, whether it was through the Public Service Commission, whether it was through Justice or whether it was through many other departments.

In fact, I understand the Women's Directorate was very instrumental in developing the Aboriginal Women's Summit in Watson Lake, which also included Education, Health and Social Services, and Justice. We are seeing their thoughts, their involvement in all our departments, whether it is looking at additions to the Education department's curriculum or changes to programming.

Mr. Chair, I just want to bring the member opposite's attention back to the tribute that we had today and recognizing that tomorrow is the Sea of Pink Day and this is the week of bullying prevention and that we have other initiatives, such as Be the Change, in our school. Today we had the gallery of our Assembly full of students from Yukon's high schools here in the Assembly today to demonstrate their support for these types of initiatives.

The Be the Change movement does have people who come together to make a commitment to create a positive vision of schools and communities and to stand up against things like cliques, gossip, teasing, harassment, isolation, stereotypes, intolerance, racism, sexism, bullying, violence, homophobia, hopelessness or apathy. We saw a commitment by our youth to come into the Assembly and stand in their red shirts, their Be the Change t-shirts, to demonstrate their support for the movement, their commitment and their dedication.

On a number of different opportunities, I've had the chance to attend Be the Change functions or to talk to social justice groups, to see that some of these objectives are being included in school growth plans. When the member opposite rose today to talk about the school growth plan for the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow, he identified that social jus-

tice was one of the key initiatives that they wanted to see instilled in their school.

It's those kinds of changes, those kinds of programming, which are going to lead to the systemic changes in our society that the member is looking for. My hat goes off to the teachers and the volunteers who put so much time into these types of programming. There's a tremendous amount of work by the folks at Porter Creek and F.H. Collins school, not only with their student leaders, but also with their parent leaders. This past fall, as part of the Be the Change days, the facilitators for this program — and it has now turned into an international program — were in the territory not only to hold the Be the Change days at F.H. Collins and at Porter Creek Secondary School, but also to lead a very substantive three-day workshop with students and adults in our community to enhance this movement.

I had an excellent meeting with some of these students earlier today who committed their Thanksgiving Day weekend — their Friday, Saturday and Sunday — I think it was 10 hours a day — to go and to learn how to be more effective leaders in their community to change societal values, customs, norms, beliefs and what-have-you about these issues.

The Department of Education is working very closely with our youth to help build up the next generation of community people who will stand up and say no to these situations. They are not only making the commitment not to do it themselves but are also making the commitment to take action to prevent these issues from happening to others.

We are all in this together. There does have to be a holistic approach to it. There is certainly a strong working group, including and led by the Women's Directorate, Justice, Education, Health and Social Services. We are making a difference in the lives of our kids.

Also, Mr. Chair, along this same topic, there is also the issue of the common client project. I just want to touch on this briefly for a moment for the member opposite.

This is an issue where we are working collaboratively interdepartmentally. And it is important to note that Justice, Health and Social Services, and Education are working very closely to address the needs of those individuals who are the common client of the three different departments — those students who are, for whatever reasons, involved in the justice system or are receiving support from Health and Social Services while, at the same time, working on their education.

Yukon Party governments have been very proactive in addressing many of these situations. It was a Yukon Party government that put in place the Teen Parent Centre a number of years ago to support and address the needs of students who had children, to encourage them to continue their education.

Also, in a previous term, this Yukon Party government established the Individual Learning Centre, which is a way for students to re-engage after they have left high school — for whatever reason — and we're looking at expanding that model to our communities, as well, because we do know there are students in other communities who have disengaged and left school way too early. We do know there are a multitude of reasons for those, that we do have to work interdepartmentally to

address them. We do know there are substance abuse issues. We do know that there are family issues and many other issues outside the scope of the Department of Education. We appreciate that we as a government have to work to address many of their needs.

Another program that was introduced a couple of years ago was the Sundog carving program. This is an excellent program that is now led by the Department of Justice. I expect the Minister of Justice is very familiar with this program, has seen their site and the carving project they were working on this year. In fact, the Premier was involved and other ministers were involved in their carving projects this year.

We've seen interventions and programs like that where Justice and Education are working with youth who have disengaged, who have other issues, and we're working to provide — in a culturally appropriate manner — to re-engage them, to help them to build the competencies, skills and abilities that they need to lead happy, healthy lives.

These are just a couple of the initiatives that I am thinking of off the top of my head here. These aren't all new initiatives supported in this supplementary budget, but there are initiatives in this budget that are going outside of the box to support students who haven't traditionally been supported.

We are continuing to work with our administrators and our curriculum people and our teachers to design programs that are engaging, that are culturally appropriate, that are passing on the appropriate academic information. We are certainly not looking at reducing our academic standards, but we do have to find a way to engage our students. We are looking at the First Nation experiential program, which is in this budget and which I hope the member opposite supports, and stands up and says yes, that he does believe in initiatives like this; because this is thinking outside of the traditional box of education. It is looking at making a change.

We know if we do the same thing over and over again we will get the same results, and Yukoners have told us that they want to see different results. So we're expanding the opportunities that are out there, trying different things to engage others. I hope the member opposite appreciates those programs and the differences that they are making in the lives of Yukoners and will ultimately make in Yukon communities.

The member opposite also brought up the issue of transportation. He and I have sat down and discussed this — we've discussed it in the Assembly before. I now recognize that the member opposite appreciates that the bus that he's referring to does not belong to the Department of Education, does not belong to the Government of Yukon, but belongs to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and that the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has chosen to provide this support to students. I certainly applaud Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation for all the active efforts that they put into supporting students.

The member opposite mentioned the pizza program. I think there is another one with a gift certificate program. I know the dedication of Chief Linklater on this issue is tremendous, and I appreciate and applaud all the efforts that Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation gives. This is part of the recognition that we cannot do this all by ourselves, that there is the support of

others, and that others can complement the work of the education system.

The member opposite is also very familiar with the legislation regarding the distances for bus transportation, and I'm sure the member opposite appreciates the challenges in providing bus transportation to Yukon students throughout the territory. This isn't an issue that is particular to his riding, but indeed affects all Yukon students. It is a fact of life in Yukon, as in Canada, that we have schools that are not within walking distance, that we have bus transportation, and that we have split-grade classrooms.

We have also seen a tremendous amount of support or encouragement from members of this Assembly to see more elementary schools that are within walking distance of people's homes. I know how important it is to have schools within walking distance of their home. That is why the *Education Act* is laid out as it is. We do have challenges. There are situations that I am aware of where the school bus only goes so far down the highway away from Whitehorse and other parents do drive their students to the bus. I am familiar because that happens in my riding quite often, where the school bus does not go down a particular road, for a variety of reasons, and the parents drive their children from the house to the main road.

We do have other situations where students live in very isolated places and the Department of Education supports those students with either the potential for accommodation at Gadszoosdaa or other types of supports, or the department provides distance education programming, and that is certainly an option that many use — the home schooling type of approach.

Many people do that out of personal choice, and others do it out of a sense of necessity. Yesterday, the Member for Copperbelt, the Leader of the Liberal Party, also brought a bus transportation issue to my attention, so this is not an issue that's isolated to the member opposite's riding. There are issues right here in the City of Whitehorse. We've seen a recent change in road closures that has created another issue. The Department of Education is certainly working with the constituent he referred to, and we are actively seeking a way to address this situation. One helpful hint for the member opposite: in some of our communities where there are more students than seats on the bus, the bus does two loops. It does go out and pick up one group of students, goes to the school, drops them off and then does another loop. We don't always have to fill a bus to overcapacity.

I know that in the member's community it is a very short distance. In many cases, it's a stone's throw, if I can use that term — certainly not that I'm promoting throwing stones — so there would not be that much of longer time for this bus route. I see my time is up.

Mr. Elias: I'd like to make a couple of comments on some of the things the minister has said. Firstly, with regard to the statistics regarding violence against women and violence against aboriginal women in the territory, I've heard from several government ministers about reinstating the Women's Directorate, and I thank them for doing that. I also want to say this: no member of the Official Opposition had a hand in making those decisions eight years ago — not one of us. Also, not

one of us had a hand in creating the climate under which those decisions were made, so I, for one, am not going to take any responsibility for the decisions of past governments, and what's now history. I will put that on the official record.

I appreciate the Minister of Education's response to some of the questions. I guess I would like to see a consistent, long-term, monumental movement at all levels of government to address this issue of violence against women. I think we can do more. That is why I bring this up, because 10 years from now, I don't want the statistics to be where they are today. I think we need a comprehensive approach. Obviously, our public government in the territory can coordinate itself in that fashion and look for partners to move forward with that. It has got to be done, because it affects the health of all the communities when these kinds of terrible statistics continue decade after decade after decade and the costs of them continuing are pretty big.

It's not good enough to me, it's not good enough to my constituents with regard to the safe transportation of the students who go to the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School to and from their home. I think this is an easy fix — I tried to present a logical argument, but the minister will be hearing from me again in the very near future. His thought process around the practicalities in Old Crow about getting the students to and from school in a safe manner are simply not practical.

I will say, once again, thank you to the officials — thank you very much for your hard work and you know my community of Old Crow and all the students and staff and administrators in Old Crow and at Yukon College's Alice Frost Campus in Old Crow — the work continues and I commend each and every one of them and my whole community for accomplishing the educational needs of the students and everyone in the community, really, because everybody participates as a community in the education of our children.

I thank the minister for his time and his comments. And, again, we agree to disagree, and he will be hearing from me again on some of these issues.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I certainly appreciate the comments coming from the member opposite. I certainly appreciate the zeal with which he represents his constituents, as do all members of this Legislative Assembly. I know that there are issues that come from all members of the Assembly — my colleagues included and me in my riding — that we do our best to address each and every day. We try to do that in a manner that is fair and equitable and creates policy that can be implemented consistently throughout the territory and provide an equity in the opportunities that we have for all Yukoners.

The member opposite started off by commenting about the closure of the Women's Directorate. I'll just remind the member opposite that I didn't ask him to take responsibility for that. I know that. He wasn't part of that decision, but I would ask him: at the same time that he criticizes others, that he do give credit where credit is due — that it was a good decision to reinstate that.

Mr. Chair, these decisions are put in place in a majority of instances with a budget figure that gets attached to it. The member wants to show his support for the initiatives that this government is undertaking. If he wants to show his support for

the expansion of First Nation experiential education programs, if he wants to show his support for initiatives like the Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence — which for some reason the member opposite didn't even ask me about — he can support the mechanism that makes it all possible, and that's the budget. Mr. Chair, this is an incredibly good supplementary budget. It builds upon what was introduced in last spring's budget. It responds to situations out in today's Yukon communities. It addresses our fiscal realities; it addresses our fiscal situations. It addresses the needs of Yukoners. It certainly recognizes the trends that we need to respond to.

I would encourage him and all members of this Assembly to support the supplementary budget and to say, "Yes, there are some initiatives in this budget that are worth seeing implemented," and not just to stand up and say no. A multitude of different opportunities are being supported here. Another one that comes to mind is the Women In Trades and Technology or YWITT. I am not sure if the member was part of the discussion the other day when we started talking about apprenticeship results. We are now seeing the reality — we have three times as many people graduating from apprenticeship programs as we had in 2003. That is a pretty darn good statistic. In 2003 we had about 20 or 22 students — I don't remember the exact number off the top of my head — graduating from apprentice programs. This year, we have 70.

At the same time, Mr. Chair, we're seeing an increase in the number of women and the number of people of First Nation ancestry involved in trades, receiving their apprenticeship program. The member opposite was talking about ways that we can engage more women and reduce the issues of violence in our society. There's another way. By supporting YWITT, Yukon Women in Trades and Technologies, we're promoting women's equality and helping women to build their futures in self-sufficiency.

I appreciate the member opposite does have criticisms, and there are some valid criticisms of what government has done in the past. But I would also ask him to recognize, as he did earlier, the excellent changes and improvements that are being made. I encourage him and all members of our Assembly to acknowledge the differences that are being made, the improvements that are happening, by standing up and saying, "Yes, I support them. I support the initiatives that are in the budget," and to vote for it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? Seeing none, we'll proceed line by line in Vote 3.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Education Support Services

Education Support Services in the amount of \$134,000 agreed to

On Public Schools

Public Schools in the amount of \$1,211,000 agreed to

On Advanced Education

Advanced Education in the amount of \$2,738,000 agreed to

On Yukon College

Yukon College in the amount of \$785,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$4,868,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Education Support Services

On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space

Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$34,000 agreed to

On Public Schools

On Facility Construction and Maintenance

On F.H. Collins Secondary School — Fire Alarm System

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, would members like to hear about the review of secondary school programs that this supports?

This revote is requested to continue with the secondary programming review committee's strategic plan, which must be completed to inform the building advisory committee and to allow progress in the design component for the new F.H. Collins Secondary School. Again, this is certainly evidence of this government working in collaboration and in partnership with others, to include them in the decision-making processes, to include their ideas, thoughts and concerns, not only in how we go about providing secondary school education to Yukoners now, but also on the design features of the F.H. Collins Secondary School.

Chair: Any further discussion?

F.H. Collins Secondary School — Fire Alarm System in the amount of \$5,000 agreed to

On F.H. Collins Secondary School — Review of Secondary Programs

F.H. Collins Secondary School — Review of Secondary Programs in the amount of \$61,000 agreed to

On Site Improvement and Recreation Development

Site Improvement and Recreation Development in the amount of \$64,000 agreed to

On School Initiated Renovations

School Initiated Renovations in the amount of \$152,000 agreed to

On Various School Facilities Renovations

Various School Facilities Renovations in the amount of \$156,000 agreed to

On Indoor Air Quality

Indoor Air Quality in the amount of \$63,000 agreed to

On Capital Maintenance Repairs

Capital Maintenance Repairs in the amount of \$421,000 agreed to

On School Painting Program

School Painting Program in the amount of \$22,000 agreed to

On Instructional Programs

On Distance Education

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, this funding is requested as part of New Horizons and will provide video conferencing access in the four remaining rural schools: Teslin, Carcross, Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay. The importance of information and communication technology in education is increasing, and this will ensure equity of access for all our communities. Again, this is an opportunity to provide addi-

tional programming options for students throughout our educational system.

It's another step to increase the equity in education; it's another way that we are looking at providing more programming options to rural students, which, I believe, was a concern brought up by the members opposite. It is another way that we are addressing those concerns.

Chair: Is there any further debate?

Distance Education in the amount of \$100,000 agreed to

On School-Based Equipment Purchases

School-Based Equipment Purchases in the amount of \$274,000 agreed to

On School-Based Information Technology

School-Based Information Technology in the amount of \$322,000 agreed to

On Advanced Education

On Community Training Fund

Mr. Cardiff: The minister, twice now, has read my mind about what I was going to ask questions about. I thank him for not making me have to stand up to ask the questions.

In this area, though, with regard to community training trust funds, I would like to know two things. The first is, to which projects are the funds in the supplementary budget going? I am just wondering whether or not the department has worked on some sort of a comprehensive strategy for how to manage community training funds?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, when I took over the portfolio of Education, one of the things I wanted to put some significant effort toward was looking at the vision of education in the territory and specifically, to take a look at some of the work we're doing in the post-secondary education area to ensure that we were indeed preparing Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

There are significant resources that Yukon provides for post-secondary education opportunities, not only here in the territory, but for literally thousands of students who are supported by the Yukon grant or other initiatives under the auspices of Yukon government. Mr. Chair, in addition to looking at what we do through apprentice programs through Yukon College, through partnerships with third-sector delivery agents and also the programming that we have going on that we support — from Outside institutions, universities and colleges — we wanted to take a real comprehensive, overall look at this.

I will share with the member opposite that, through the Yukon grant, over 1,000 Yukon students are supported in their post-secondary education career at over 130 different post-secondary institutions across North America, which I find is an amazing statistic. Yukon students go to well over 100 post-secondary education institutions across North America, but they do have a tendency then to go to their centre of excellence for whatever field they're studying. This is a great statistic. It's also one that Yukon College needs to take a look at — where we are seeing some of the leakage in some of our programs. Are there programs that Yukon College could be offering, right now, for which we have students we're supporting to go Outside? So we put some significant amount of work into working

with Yukon College to become a more responsive institution, to look at its comprehensive strategy.

Advanced Education has been directed to undertake a labour market framework. The labour market framework will include a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, immigration strategy, national recruitment strategy, an employee retention strategy, and a labor market information strategy.

We're working very closely with a multitude of different partners on this, including employers and educators throughout the territory, on the variety of these different issues. As part of the comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, we are looking at the community training funds. We have a wide range of training funds, some of which are sector specific: they look after the needs of a specific industry group. Also, some of them are regional specific.

It's part of our overall labour market framework. We're looking at developing a comprehensive strategy to address many of these issues. We've also seen some increases in funding for different groups through northern strategy funding, which have created some blips, shall we say, or temporary increases in their funding. These have been very good projects that have been supported by the northern strategy funding but, as we're all aware, this funding is not an ongoing type. So we'll have to respond with our training trust funds to address these areas appropriately.

What they have done is to create a highlight of some of the necessary areas where additional training is needed or desired. Some of the work that has gone on with this was the labour market framework symposium and the establishment of the variety of different working groups that have been meeting monthly since February 2009 and the establishment of the website to facilitate all their work. So we are still waiting for some of the final products to come through, but I do want to reassure the member opposite there is significant work being done to address comprehensive skills and training areas. This will include the training trust fund.

Community Training Fund in the amount of \$383,000 agreed to

On Youth at Risk Initiatives

Mr. Elias: Could I get a breakdown, please?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, this revote is to complete a youth employment strategy project that's administered by Yukon College and extended to June 26, 2009.

Youth at Risk Initiatives in the amount of \$19,000 agreed to

On Labour Market Development

Labour Market Development in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

On Yukon College

On Post-Secondary Education Infrastructure

Post-Secondary Education Infrastructure in the amount of \$203,000 agreed to

On Research Centre of Excellence

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm sure that all members will join me in the excitement over the establishment of the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence. This budget provides \$550,000 to

complete the construction of the Research Centre of Excellence facility, which is located on the Yukon College grounds. This is a very exciting initiative that was a campaign commitment of this government. We are proud to see that this is another campaign commitment that has been achieved and is realized. I've had some very good discussions with the researchers and scientists who are involved with this initiative and they are ecstatic about the opportunities that are before them.

There are literally tens of millions of dollars of research proposals that have already been produced by researchers working through the Research Centre of Excellence, and if only a small portion of those comes through we'll see a significant increase in the amount of knowledge that is generated and kept in the territory.

It is also very exciting to see the tremendous partnership and collaboration between the college, other universities such as the University of Calgary, and other institutions, as well as the participation of the private sector. It is very exciting to see both the pure and the applied research that will be conducted at the centre.

I really can't say enough about how proud we are to see the Research Centre of Excellence launched and look forward to the contributions that this will make not only to the world's knowledge about climate change, our knowledge about adaptation and mitigation, but also how it will impact the Yukon College facility. This will increase the profile of the college and make it a more attractive institution, and attract world-class researchers to the institution, who will then have opportunities to share their knowledge with Yukoners at the facility.

I have also previously mentioned the bachelor of science program that is going to be offered through Yukon College. This is done in conjunction with the University of Alberta, I believe. The University of Alberta will be the degree-granting institution and this is done in partnership with them. In part, this is because of the establishment of the Research Centre of Excellence.

It's very exciting seeing these opportunities here in the territory, so I appreciate the opportunity to highlight the Research Centre of Excellence for all members again today.

Research Centre of Excellence in the amount of \$550,000 agreed to

On New Campus Buildings — Dawson City Campus

Mr. Cardiff: I have a couple of questions about — actually, I'm hoping to tie in both projects. There are two lines: Dawson City campus for \$300,000 and Pelly Crossing campus for \$200,000. The first question I have is that it was my understanding that the federal government was sharing the costs of both of these campuses on a 50:50 basis. If you look at the recoveries, we're only recovering 50 percent of what it is. So, to me, that's not 50:50. We're only getting half of what the Government of Yukon is putting in. So we need to go back to them and get the other 25 percent for this supplementary budget.

This money is being provided to Yukon College. What I'd like to know is, are the proposed buildings — the campuses — to be owned by the Government of Yukon? Are they going to be owned by the college? I am just wondering — if they are going to be owned by the college, is the government intending

to provide additional funds for operation and maintenance of these facilities, because that has previously been a concern. If there are going to be lease costs associated with these buildings, which could put more financial burden on the college as well.

So if the minister could clear those items up it would be appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, again, this is another very exciting project, not only for Yukon College but for all Yukoners. It further demonstrates this government's commitment to post-secondary education and education opportunities in the territory and this Yukon Party government's commitment to rural communities.

Seeing the establishment of new facilities in these communities is going to be tremendous. I am sure all members here have seen the facilities that were currently in place and these will be a tremendous improvement. In addition to the construction of elementary schools, this government has also worked with the School of Visual Arts as another example of our investment in capital for education. This again goes to demonstrate the commitment to education in the territory.

The Government of Yukon is very pleased to be working with the federal government on this initiative. The federal government established the knowledge infrastructure fund a short time ago and invited different institutions and jurisdictions to provide submissions and applications or requests for this funding. Yukon College identified their priorities. They identified the projects they wanted to see go forward. They established the whole proposal — indeed, the cost estimates, preliminary drawings and that type of thing. The budgets were put forward from Yukon College to the federal government. The Yukon is fortunate that the federal government has approved the two projects, that being the Dawson City campus and the Pelly Crossing campus.

The federal government has established this is as a two-year project. There is a deadline on the funds. The projects must be completed by March 31, 2011, so there is a significant time pressure on Yukon College to complete these projects in time.

The member will realize that this is the first year of a two-year program, so not all of the money has flowed in this one year — that there will be additional resources coming and going in future years too. It will balance out that there will be 50 percent of the monies allocated contributed by Canada and the other half of the amount of money that was requested by Yukon.

Yukon College is managing the construction of this project. They are the ones that are going through the designing phase in conjunction with the property management division. Yukon College has identified the projects; they identified the resources that were required. Government of Canada and Government of Yukon have provided those resources. The projects are required to be completed by March 31, 2011. These buildings, like all Yukon College assets, will remain under the ownership of the territorial government. That's how these have been structured in the past. There will of course be negotiations back and forth with the college about the O&M or the man-

agement of these types of facilities. There were leasing costs in the past that Yukon College paid out to others for their businesses.

So we will certainly be sitting down with the Yukon College folks and addressing the situation that arises after these wonderful new facilities are created. I very much look forward to seeing two new campuses opened up in Dawson and in Pelly Crossing, and I expect that they will be very positive contributors to not only the local economy, but also the local social side of things. We all know that putting resources into education has significant socio-economic impacts, and as well, once again, demonstrates this government's commitment to Yukon's communities.

Mr. Cardiff: I thank the minister for the long explanation of the projects, and there's no doubt in my mind — and I know from my previous experience with Yukon College the condition of the facilities that the college was operating in both of those communities was long overdue for replacement and that goes back a long time.

I'm pleased to see that this area has finally been addressed. The other question I have is this: can the minister quickly just provide us with the proposed total cost of each project?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yukon College officials have identified that they require \$2.6 million for the Dawson City campus. Yukon College has advised that they require \$1.4 million for the Pelly Crossing campus. Those are the funds that have been identified and then provided for these projects.

Chair: Is there any further debate on Dawson City campus, \$300,000?

New Campus Buildings — Dawson City Campus in the amount of \$300,000 agreed to

On New Campus Buildings — Pelly Crossing Campus

New Campus Buildings — Pelly Crossing Campus in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

On Enhanced Security — Ayamdigut Campus Upgrades

Enhanced Security — Ayamdigut Campus Upgrades in the amount of \$125,000 agreed to

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$3,474,000 agreed to

Chair: Are there any questions under Revenues and Recoveries?

On Revenue

Revenue cleared

On Recoveries

Recoveries cleared

Department of Education agreed to

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now proceed with Community 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 come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*. We will now proceed with Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Lang: I am pleased to introduce the 2009-10 supplementary estimates for the Department of Community Services. For this supplementary budget, the Department of Community Services requests an additional \$1.412 million in operation and maintenance expenditures and an additional \$7.588 million in capital expenditures. This supplementary budget includes an estimated \$50,000 increase in operational maintenance revenue and a reduction of \$8.514 million in operational maintenance and capital recoveries.

Community Services continues to invest in Yukon communities and, of course, Yukon people. Mr. Chair, we are doing this through our commitment to provide programs, services and infrastructure for the sustainable development of Yukon communities, including the delivery of joint infrastructure funding programs like the Building Canada fund, gas tax fund, municipal rural infrastructure fund and Canada strategic infrastructure fund. This includes our goal to make land available to Yukoners and our commitment to communities for sustainable planning. This also includes, Mr. Chair, our commitment to advance the new Yukon solid waste action plan in order to better manage solid waste in Yukon.

Mr. Chair, we are serving Yukon people and their communities by improving safety and security of people and communities. Through strengthening and integrating emergency response and through improved consumer protection, we are enhancing the health and well-being of Yukon communities and people through improved waste water and drinking water infrastructure and through our continued support for sport and recreation in Yukon.

We are building capacity, encouraging effective participation in community life and well-being through volunteers and local governance, through our support for municipal government and local advisory councils in the Yukon, through the support we have provided to municipalities and local advisory councils during the 2009 elections, and through our commitment to public library services in Yukon.

Mr. Chair, in the past year this department has accomplished a number of significant projects and we continue our good work.

I wish to acknowledge and extend my thanks to the dedicated hardworking people in the Department of Community Services and the professional and volunteer emergency responders in our communities who help ensure safe and healthy Yukon communities.

Through partnerships in our communities with municipal governments, local advisory councils and First Nation governments, we are together working to engage citizens and foster productive relationships. Community Services is contributing to healthy communities and to Yukon's economy by investing in our people and, of course, our communities.

The protective services division of Community Services has made strides in the past year to fully integrate the Emergency Measures Organization, wildland fire management, emergency medical services, fire marshals office and volunteer fire departments.

The 2009 fire season was notable because we experienced one of the highest sustained fire danger ratings on record. Yet fire crews were very successful in protecting our homes and infrastructure, with only one cabin loss and no serious injuries recorded. Volunteer fire departments worked alongside wildland fire crews to successfully action fires, and this kind of integrated response and teamwork will continue.

Earlier this year, we increased remuneration for volunteer firefighters. In this supplementary budget, we are requesting an additional \$57,000 to help retain and recruit volunteer firefighters. To ensure that emergency medical services is properly equipped, we are requesting \$250,000 for three new ambulances to replace aging equipment and aid EMS crews in responding rapidly to help those sick, injured or at risk.

In addition, we are requesting \$52,000 to improve emergency medical services dispatch function, to upgrade the Whitehorse EMS facility and to purchase new ambulances and aircraft stretchers. We continue to invest in emergency response infrastructure. A new integrated emergency response facility is nearing completion in the Town of Watson Lake, and Golden Horn's new volunteer fire hall was officially opened in September of this year.

The \$1.5 million Golden Horn fire hall project is part of our ongoing effort to improve and upgrade the facilities and equipment of our volunteer fire departments in unincorporated communities. The integrated emergency response facility in Watson Lake requires an additional \$692,000 to complete renovations.

We are committed to helping keep communities safe and prevent the spread of wildland fire through the FireSmart program. Last year, 28 projects created 29,560 hours of employment, and this year 33 new FireSmart projects worth over \$1.3 million will generate almost 43,748 hours of seasonal employment in communities throughout the Yukon.

Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization led a highly successful, inter-agency flood preparedness and response program. This year, in anticipation of potential flooding, we repaired the Upper Liard dyke as a preventative measure to reduce the risk of flooding in that community. Community Services is also upgrading infrastructure to help with flood preparedness by funding a \$110,000 dyke protection project on the Stewart River in Mayo.

Mr. Chair, there is another \$248,000 for riverbank stabilization in the community of Old Crow. Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization is also continuing its good work to assist Yukon communities and emergency responders in preparing for emergency events by providing emergency response and preparedness training programs. We are requesting from the Legislature an additional \$43,000 for pandemic preparedness planning and for search and rescue training and another \$147,000 for emergency response training in the community of Old Crow.

With the leadership of the Yukon Emergency Measures Organization, Yukon has an up-to-date Yukon government pandemic coordination plan that will coordinate public health response, government and community continuity. With guidance from the Yukon EMO, every Yukon government department also has its own department business continuity plan that ensures the Yukon government can continue to provide essential services even if a large number of people are away with the flu.

Mr. Chair, the community development division of Community Services also accomplished a great deal over the past year. We assisted municipalities and LACs with municipal elections. We undertook an extensive review of its solid waste operations with objectives of modernizing and improving solid waste management throughout the Yukon. In August 2009, Community Services released a comprehensive Yukon solid waste study, which assessed all Yukon solid waste facilities, summarized community and stakeholders consultation, and studied waste management approaches in other Canadian jurisdictions. The study will be an important resource as we move ahead. We have now moved to the action phase. I am pleased to announce the Yukon solid waste action plan, which lays out a plan to significantly improve Yukon's solid waste management system, has been released and is available to the public. Yukon is modernizing our solid waste management system and practices, and we are committed to creating a sustainable waste management system that meets the current and future needs of all Yukon communities. Mr. Chair, the Yukon solid waste action plan provides us with a path forward that includes improving infrastructure and services, new regional transfer stations and transportation circuits, enhanced recycling, waste reduction, diversion programs and partnerships with community groups, municipalities and First Nations.

We will continue to seek new opportunities and innovative approaches to advance our vision of creating a modern sustainable waste management system.

Mr. Chair, Community Services has updated the *Animal Protection Act*, and in 2009, we are well on our way to implement operational plans to support enforcing the act, responding to complaints and providing education and awareness initiatives to help prevent animal abuse and encourage the humane treatment of animals. An animal welfare officer started work in March and has developing operational policies and, of course, procedures and obtaining the specialized equipment to deliver education and awareness programs to encourage the humane treatment of animals.

We continue to promote sustainable, healthy communities by encouraging active living through sports and recreation. We have increased operational grants to 33 Yukon sports and recreation groups to improve sports and physical activity throughout the Yukon. This department is providing \$417,000 annually to the Yukon sports for life program, which directly supports sports and recreation organizations, coach and athlete travel and training, and coaching salaries and to fund Yukon's elite athletes.

Community Services is also continuing to fund recreational infrastructure upgrades and is requesting an additional

\$250,000 for repairs and upgrades to make the Dawson recreational centre fully functional.

In keeping with our commitment to sports excellence in Yukon, we will request \$400,000 to assist the City of Whitehorse in its plans to host the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. We are further requesting \$600,000 in new funding to support the 2007 Canada Winter Games Aboriginal Sport Legacy fund. Community Services is contributing \$411,000 this year to support Yukon's participation in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games by its youth ambassadors, sports officials and traditional Inuit and Dene games athletes and coaches. We are seeking an additional \$36,000 to cover pan-northern accommodation costs, which is 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Northwest Territories.

Another priority for our department is to provide community education opportunities through public library programs.

Yukon public libraries celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009 and, as we look toward the future, we appreciate both how much Yukon libraries have changed and grown and the excellent service our community libraries offer Yukoners today.

During the recent Library Week open house, I had the honour of revealing the future for the Whitehorse Public Library, which is our largest community library and headquarters for Yukon's public library system. In 2012, Whitehorse Public Library will move to the new space in the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre now under construction on the Whitehorse waterfront. This is exciting news for all Yukon.

Locating Yukon's public library at the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre is a natural fit. We look forward to the opportunity for joint programming in a venue being built to celebrate the sharing of culture and tradition. We are requesting \$64,000 to continue planning for the new library space.

Yukon public libraries are also upgrading its circulation system and will be providing additional electronic resources, including a pilot wireless internet project in the Whitehorse Public Library to enhance public access. We are requesting another \$18,000 for these projects in this supplementary budget.

Our commitment to libraries extends to Yukon communities as well. The community library in Teslin was recently relocated and officially opened in September. We are undertaking renovations on the Carcross library as well and are requesting an additional \$16,000 to complete the upgrades.

Through the good work of the community affairs branch, we are working with municipal governments and local advisory councils to promote sustainable healthy communities by supporting local government and community organizations. The Yukon government has already increased the municipal grants and, by 2012-13, the comprehensive municipal grant will have increased by more than \$16 million per year.

Our department assists municipalities and local advisory areas prepare for elections this fall by providing training materials for all Yukon councils, administrators and returning officers, election advertising and by offering training for newly elected council members. Yukon continues to foster positive working relationships with Yukon municipalities and the Asso-

ciation of Yukon Communities and finds ways to provide services that will lead to a better quality of life and good governance in Yukon communities.

Yukon signed an MOU to emphasize the strong relationship between Yukon and the Association of Yukon Communities earlier this fall. Yukon is helping municipalities identify and apply for funds to undertake important community projects through sources such as Canadian community adjustment funds and recreation infrastructure Canadian funds.

Community infrastructure — in addition to our support for integrated emergency services, libraries, solid waste management, local government and sports/recreation, Community Services is investing in community infrastructure to enhance the quality of life in Yukon communities. We will continue to work with the federal, First Nation and municipal governments on infrastructure funding and project coordination. We will ensure that Yukoners and Yukon communities received the maximum benefit from multi-government funding programs, including the municipal rural infrastructure fund, Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, gas tax fund and the Building Canada funds.

Since 2005, Canada and Yukon have contributed a total of \$35 million for 19 Yukon community infrastructure projects through MRIF. Projects funded included the \$15-million Hamilton Boulevard extension, \$7.2 million for the Mayo recreational centre project, \$3.8 million for the Takhini North reconstruction project and the \$88,000 Faro sewer project.

Through gas tax funds, Yukon communities have their share of \$37.5 million to support long-term planning and sustainable infrastructure. By the year 2014, an additional \$60 million will be available. This year to date, 53 gas tax projects divided among seven municipalities and six First Nations have been approved.

In concluding, Mr. Chair — at the beginning of my presentation, I acknowledged the staff of caring and focused individuals who know their job, and of course, perform them very well. In closing, I would like to acknowledge and thank all our partners in the projects we undertake. That includes Canada, the municipal and First Nation governments, of course Yukon businesses, construction and tradespeople, our professional and volunteer emergency responders and every individual Yukoner who has contributed to Community Services consultation. Together, we will continue making our community a safer and healthier place to live and make a home.

Mr. Chair, this supplementary budget will assist government in reaching its goal of building strong and healthy Yukon communities. This is a budget designed to serve Yukon citizens, and of course, their communities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Elias: Once again, it is an honour to rise in the Legislature to engage the Minister of Community Services in debating the supplementary budget. As always, I would like to thank the officials who are present here today in the Legislature as well as all the staff and officials within the department for their dedication and hard work in achieving the Department of Community Services' objectives.

I thank the minister for his opening comments. I would just like to begin with my own community because, in Old Crow, there are some pretty exciting things going on with regard to capital planning. They have just finished their 10-year capital plan priorities for the community. I would just like to recognize that in the record and I will read this chart into the record.

Under the environment and energy, the relocation and upgrade of the bulk fuel storage facility — to move that to the north side of the airstrip is a priority for the community. That is planned to happen in the next two years at an approximate cost of \$750,000.

Under environment and energy, again, it is the environmental clean-up of existing fuel tank farms after relocation and other community sites. So, again, this is scheduled to happen in the next three to four years, with a cost of \$450,000.

A fuel transport and distribution truck will be a tangible asset for the community, at a cost of \$40,000, is a priority.

Also, the community is to work with the Yukon government to locate and construct a soil remediation site to occur within the next year. That's an approximate cost of \$50,000. Under the project name and category of planning and housing, the priority to renovate and repair existing housing basically throughout the 10-year capital plan at a cost of \$2.4 million; to build new or replace housing to meet ongoing demands over the next 10 years, as well, is another \$5 million; to build an assisted living facility for elders and those with disabilities is to be started in the next couple of years at a cost of \$350,000; to build a garage and secure storage next to the warehouse at the old school site, near the water well sites, and that's at a cost of \$180,000 to construct a phase 1 of the Crow Mountain subdivision that includes gravel production, a road access, power and telephone lines to be conducted in the next couple of years for \$3.5 million; consolidate the industrial area in one location; to relocate the forestry facilities — that's projected to happen in the next six years at a cost of \$750,000; and to expand the cemetery, to do some engineering work with regard to infill, water drainage, repairs and landscaping, to be done over the next couple of years, which is at an approximate cost of \$100,000.

Under the category of community development: build a community service centre complex at the old or the new school site at a cost of \$10.25 million; upgrade the playing fields, the playground and equipment up to current standards to happen over the next couple of years and that's \$150,000; improve the access to community buildings and washrooms and mobility upgrades — \$100,000; and landscape the grounds in front of the visitor reception centre — \$100,000.

Under infrastructure: work with Yukon government to coordinate planning for a new landfill site to be done immediately at a cost of \$25,000; for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, to contribute to the Yukon government community roads and surface drainage and lighting standards work to be done immediately and that is \$25,000; design and build a road around the north side of the airport at a cost of \$1.5 million; and relocate portions of the cross-country ski trail system and add lighting along various portions of that trail system — \$100,000 identified for that. The idea of building a winter road every three

years to the community is at the cost of \$1 million per year and so over the 10-year period it will be \$4 million. Also to complete the riverbank stabilization and back channel by the airport and by the former landfill site, \$300,000; erect a guardrail between the Porcupine River and Front Street for \$225,000; and the creation of additional crushed gravel, 10,000 metres squared, for \$300,000.

As the minister can see, the Old Crow Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation 10-year capital plan priorities have been approved by the community at a total cost over the next decade of \$30,770,000. I'd just like to read that into the record and maybe I can now begin with some of the questions that I had — specific questions for the minister. I'll just try to maybe ask them individually and see how we progress.

Back in — I believe it was — April of this year, some federal gas tax funding was allocated to provide clean drinking water to some Yukon communities. I was just wondering if I could ask the minister about which communities got this funding and basically a progress report on which communities got this funding to provide cleaner drinking water, and where that's at.

Hon. Mr. Lang: What I can answer the member opposite is that in this budget we're requesting \$118,000 for additional water projects, including the installation of equipment for the Old Crow water well, so we're moving ahead with that in this next building season.

Mr. Elias: In a press release that was provided by the minister back in April, it said that in the next two years, at a total cost of \$10 million, communities like Ross River, Carcross, Marsh Lake, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Village of Haines Junction, and the Village of Teslin would soon benefit from a new water treatment initiative that will meet their needs now and for years to come. So, what I'm asking the minister is — can I get an update on the progress of these initiatives in those communities? Has the money been spent? Has the actual work been done?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Going back to the question the member opposite was asking about the gas tax, I've got some more information.

There have been 53 gas tax projects in seven municipalities and six First Nations, so there is movement on the gas tax projects. What I would have to do on the other areas — I know that we're doing work at Ross River. I know that we're upgrading the Old Crow situation. We were working on the Marsh Lake situation.

But what I could send over is a list of the projects and where they're at. I know that, over the next period of time, we're going to spend the resources on doing just what the member opposite is talking about, understanding that by the year 2012 we're going to have to have improvements on these facilities. So we're very proactive at it.

But I will commit to sending a list of the projects and the amounts over to the member opposite.

Mr. Elias: I'll be looking forward to reading those.

I guess, on further discussion of this, one of the reasons I'm asking for a progress report is because it seems that some

of the money was to be allocated for water system upgrades in certain communities to remove arsenic from the water. So that brings up a concern as to where these projects are at and if they are going to be on time and on budget.

I might be bouncing around here a bit but I'll go to the minister's comments with regard to the 2012 Arctic Winter Games support. I believe in the spring briefing, it was suggested that there is going to be \$611,000 provided for Whitehorse to host the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. Just going back, I believe that the estimated budget for the 2012 Arctic Winter Games was around \$6.1 million. Has there been any more movement on providing additional funding for the Yukon to host the 2012 Arctic Winter Games and if so, how much was allocated and what was it for?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I've got some more information for the member opposite and then we'll talk about the Whitehorse Arctic Winter Games.

On water projects, five communities will receive improved public water treatment systems with funding through the Building Canada fund, including Ross River, Haines Junction, Teslin, Carcross and Marsh Lake. Community Services is also working with governments and community partners to train and certify water operators, improve physical infrastructure and pilot test treatment processes to improve water quality. We are requesting another \$412,000 to complete this northern strategy project. We are also asking for \$118,000 for additional water projects, including the installation, as I said, of the equipment for the Old Crow water well.

Also, the rural domestic water program is a program put together to help individuals drill wells, and we have helped ensure Yukoners have access to safe drinking water on their own property. To date, 82 projects have been completed and 15 well projects are in progress this year. The average cost per well is just under \$22,000.

The City of Whitehorse is sponsoring the 2012 Arctic Winter Games. We've contributed this year a commitment of \$400,000 — that's what we've put to the City of Whitehorse so they can move ahead with the planning. We assist with start-up, set up, staffing and provide additional dollar support in each of the next two years. As we all know, the Arctic Winter Games brings tremendous benefit to our community and throughout the Yukon, so we are a partner in this. The city is the lead on this and we've committed \$400,000 this year and we'll move ahead and work with the community as the games approach.

Mr. Elias: Can the minister elaborate on how much his department has allocated for the 2010 Arctic Winter Games to be held in Grande Prairie, Alberta? How much has the minister allocated for Yukon's participation in that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I guess in answering that, I can say to the member opposite we're sending a full contingent of athletes, and also coaches and other individuals. Of course, we invest in that. I haven't got the dollar figure in front of me right now, but we have been doing this since the inception of the Arctic Winter Games, and will continue to do this.

Mr. Elias: Hopefully, the minister can get me a number with regard to our contribution to this year's games. Also, I wish all the athletes and coaches, and all the participants of the

2010 Arctic Winter Games well. Hopefully everybody has some fun.

The minister mentioned in his opening remarks about the Building Canada fund. I understand that this fund is not going to be a proposal-driven fund, that it's a plan-driven fund. Has there been a plan finalized, and when is it going to be distributed for the Yukoners to have a look at?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, the Building Canada fund is a federal government fund and it is plan driven. We have our plan in front of the federal government in Ottawa and we are looking for a response to that plan.

Mr. Elias: When does the minister expect to receive a response? Is there a timeline for that and when can Yukoners expect projects to get going?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Yes, Mr. Chair. We are very optimistic we will hear back by the end of this calendar year. I can't speak for the federal government, but we are very optimistic that would be the go-forward plan.

Mr. Elias: Can the minister give me some insight on what the total cost of the Yukon's plan is? What is the total cost of the plan and maybe if there is a list of projects that can be provided for me?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I guess, until the plans are approved there is no list. Hopefully all of that will fall together before the end of this calendar year and certainly once that approval is done by the federal government, because this is driven by the federal government.

It would be a public document.

Mr. Elias: Moving on, with regard to the solid waste action plan, first of all, I'd like to thank all the officials and staff in the department for working toward this important initiative. It's good to see that we actually have an action plan and I look forward to it being implemented.

I'd like to start with my own community first of all. I realize that there are senior-level discussions going on with regard to the Old Crow solid waste facility, and I was just wondering if anything has been decided upon about how to deal with the multitude of issues that exist at the Old Crow solid waste facility. Any information that the minister can give me with regard to this would be great.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In response to the member opposite, we're certainly working with the First Nation government on this plan. Also, the department has been on-site in Old Crow to clean up, construct a new fence, separate and do the work that had to be done on-site, but we're in the process of working with the First Nation and putting a plan together on what our options are in Old Crow.

Mr. Elias: I forgot to ask this during the topic of sports. I'm jumping around here; I apologize for that. Next week, there is going to be Yukon's first-ever sport and recreation leadership summit. It's a pretty exciting initiative. I look forward to the discussion during that summit and getting some feedback out of that. I was just wondering if the minister provided any support for that summit to be a success. If so, in what way did they support the first-ever sport and recreation leadership summit that's going to happen next week here in our capital city?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In responding to the member opposite, yes, we are working with it and we are a key investor in that project.

Mr. Elias: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to go back to some issues in my riding.

With regard to the age of the Old Crow fire truck, I guess the question is if the fire truck has been assessed for whether it has reached its useful life? Does it accommodate the growing community and the issues and concerns around its capability of putting out infrastructure fires and wildfires in the community? In addition to this, a concern that came from the community was with regard to how the emergency community fire alarm system was working in the community. There are a couple of systems. One is kind of like an air-raid siren. You pull the siren and the sirens go off, and people hear it and they go to the volunteer station. The other system is a pager system.

In the last six months we did have a house fire in Old Crow and people tried to pull the community air raid fire alarm system and it didn't work. I have also been notified that the pager systems didn't work either. That is obviously a very important concern of the community. I am just wondering if the minister can shed some light on why this happened and how it can be fixed.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Those are concerns in our communities. The system that they have in Old Crow is a fairly old system. We sent a technician up to Old Crow to review the system and see why it wasn't working and the individual discovered that somebody had turned off the main electric switch so there was no power to the system. Right now I am told that it is up and running and that it is working. We have to remember, Mr. Chair, that some of these older systems will become time-expired as time moves on and we certainly have to take advantage of modernization of our communication, whether in Old Crow, Watson Lake or Ross River. We have to make sure that people can get access to fire protection and that means that we have to have communication. Certainly we're aware of this and we will work with Old Crow and the First Nation government, as we modernize this system to make sure that we maximize any investment up there — but the system that the member opposite is talking about is up and running. Again I remind that it is an old system and it does have its problems.

As far as the fire truck is concerned, the underwriters go through our fire trucks to make sure that they're fit to work. There is no timeline on a fire truck, understanding in some of our communities we have fire trucks that have been there for a period of time and they just don't have the wear and tear on them as a fire truck in Edmonton, or Vancouver, or one of the bigger centres — or Whitehorse has. We certainly are aware of the age of our fire trucks, but we trust in the inspections that are done and make sure that our fire trucks are available to the community and also do the job that we assign them to do.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for that. Maybe what's required in our community of Old Crow is a structural fire protection plan, where we can have a plan and people will know at any certain time what the plan is, and who has what job, and what the volunteers have to do, and what the governments have to do, et cetera. I thank the minister for that reply.

Recently — I think it was in August of this year — the British Columbia Court of Appeal released a decision in *Whitehorse (City) v. Darragh*, 2009 YKCA 10, that agreed with the position the City of Whitehorse put forward that the *Municipal Act* does not permit the city to amend the official community plan by a petition for referendum. I'm interested, and Yukoners are interested, in how the minister intends to respond to this court decision that happened this summer. Does the minister intend to amend the *Municipal Act* as a result of this court case? Does he accept the court decision, on their interpretation? Can he shed some light on this recent Court of Appeal decision, please?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, that decision came down on the municipality of Whitehorse and that was a decision made by the Court of Appeal. We certainly will follow the Court of Appeal's decision and we work through AYC for any changes in the *Municipal Act* and we're open to that. But as far as this government's action or reaction, we will follow the instructions of the guidance that was given to the municipality on that decision through the Court of Appeal. Certainly we will work with AYC or any municipality on different issues.

Mr. Elias: The municipal rural infrastructure fund, I believe, has about \$3.7 million in funds that have yet to be allocated. Can the minister provide some detail as to which or when those funds are going to be released? If it's going to be released, what projects are going to be funded by MRIF? I believe \$3.7 million is left in the fund.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I can't argue the figure that's left in this fund. This is a sunsetted fund, and we're waiting for word back from the federal government on the fund, on a different level, so we're anxiously waiting for that response from the federal government. Again, it's another federal government program, and we certainly have to work with them.

Mr. Elias: My understanding was that these funds were already in the hands of the minister and that decisions on the allocation of these funds were imminent. I might be wrong but are decisions going to be made within the current fiscal year or the calendar year with regard to these funds? This seems to be an outstanding issue, and there's quite a bit of money in this fund, so it would be interesting to know what projects are going to be funded, and when, and how much for each project?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The member opposite is wrong. The money isn't in the hands of the minister or the government. It is a partnership that's shared — Yukon government, one-third; federal government, one-third; and communities one-third. It is not just the federal government we're waiting for; they are a big part of the partnership and we are waiting for them to respond.

Mr. Elias: I stand corrected. Thank you very much for the information from the minister.

Going back to the Old Crow water well, this has been on the books for quite some time. I asked these questions before of the minister. Is there a timeline with regard to engineering or a scoping document or a schedule? What exact stage is the upgrading of the Old Crow water well at? Is construction going to

happen soon? What is the hold-up? That's what I want to know. When is the work actually going to be done on the Old Crow water well, because this has been on the books for quite some time.

Hon. Mr. Lang: If you look at the scheduling, the government did scoping and scheduling and design this year. The construction will be next year, next building season.

Mr. Elias: Back to sports again. Back in 2008, the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute provided some statistics and the Yukon scored the highest in physical activity levels in Canada. I was just wondering if the minister had any new statistical data with regard to the health of our Yukoners aged five to 19. I understand we did very well in the sport and fitness level in Canada. I was just wondering if he has any new information with regard to us achieving our physical activity targets here in the Yukon. I think healthy living is very important and this is something that is used as a measuring stick with regard to the health and fitness of many of our youth in our territory. I was just wondering if the minister has any additional information with regard to these national statistics, because we did score the highest — one of the highest levels in Canada — a couple of years ago. I'm just interested to find out whether or not we're still among the highest in this country.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I have some notes here on how our children did. Of course, it has been a concern across the country — what direction our youth is taking as far as a healthy lifestyle, sports and other venues — and it has been a concern for us in our jurisdiction.

If you were to take a look, certainly Yukon is one of the most active places in Canada, but there is a little bit of a "however" to it. On average, our youth still do not meet the targets established in the activity guide. The departments of Community Services, Health and Social Services and, of course, Education are working together to develop a strategy to address these challenges.

So we did better, but there is more to do, and we certainly have to work in unison with the other departments, because without that, it won't work, and we're very conscious of that. Hopefully, as we move forward here, our children will do better. But certainly, I want to be very concerned about the activity guide and make sure that these kids are working toward that goal.

Mr. Elias: In the minister's opening comments, he mentioned that 33 recreational groups around the territory received funding.

Can the minister let me know who the groups are and how much each of the groups received? Which organization actually received the money out of the 33 recreation groups around the territory? Who are they and how much money did they receive?

Hon. Mr. Lang: That is public information and my colleague here recommends that a person find it under the community recreational grant. It's all available on-line. So if you take a moment and do that, that list will come up. There is a formula for it and it's not something that we pull out of the air. There is a formula on how the money flows and the amount of money.

Mr. Elias: Thank you to the minister for that. I didn't realize all that information was on-line. I just expected it to be produced within the line-by-line debate.

I just have a couple more questions. I'm going to be asking the majority of the ministers of this government about this next topic and it's an important one for the Yukon. It's about violence against women statistics in our territory.

Violence against women and violence against aboriginal women are two to three times higher than the national average. This is troublesome to many Yukoners, because those statistics have been pretty high for quite some time. I just wanted to get the minister's thoughts — I believe he was here earlier in the Legislature — about the government developing a comprehensive approach where as many departments as possible participate in working toward dramatically lowering those statistics that have been plaguing the Yukon for far too long. As the Minister of Community Services, some of the ideas that come to mind in order to help this are scholarships given from within the department, work placement programs, training and fire management, for instance. These are just things that come to mind really quickly to help with the problem we have with these statistics with regard to violence against women and violence against aboriginal women in our territory. Can the minister just speak to that concept a bit?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, we are all aware of the statistics that are out there on violence against women throughout the north — Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. We actually stand better than our sister territories, but it's still not good enough. In our human resource department, if we're talking about employment opportunities and whatever, we work very hard at trying to get a balanced workforce that addresses all our citizens of the Yukon. We do work in that respect. I guess, being Community Services, we focus on the wellness of the community and the Yukon as a whole. But if you were to talk about what do we do, well, I think what we've done and shown in the last little while is that we put emphasis on sports and participation in our communities. We're building infrastructure in our communities so that people can participate, so they have things to do. I think that's an important factor. I am concerned, as all Yukoners are, about violence against women.

All the departments here work in unison with respect to promoting a healthy lifestyle. It's very, very important — active living through sports and recreation branch. We try to do this on a daily basis. We certainly work with Yukon Housing Corporation on housing issues, trying to get people that are in situations out of situations and somewhere they can go that's safe so they can have a family life and continue their life. We do invest in that.

I would like to compliment the Department of Community Services for all the work they do and their concentration on our sports and the training that we do on-site, whether it's fire or whether it's EMS programs. All of that is done in our communities to make an active, healthy community so people not only are getting trained, but they have a feeling of need and self-esteem as they build up their personal skills to work inside their community to help their community. To be fair, it does work.

We go to communities like Carcross and see what they do. We go to other communities and see who we have involved, whether it's in the fire department or the ambulance individuals.

We are getting the response we need, and those individuals do an excellent job of protecting our community and also working with other municipalities — you know, the education aspect and First Nations and, of course, we have the unincorporated communities.

So we're not happy with the statistics, but I think we're doing things to try to bring those statistics down. It's not something that will happen overnight. It's not something that we can do here today. But we have to lead by example, we have to have the opportunity out there. They have to have access to training, they have to have access to childcare, and they have to have access to safe surroundings.

So we are addressing those on a yearly basis. And, as the member opposite talked about, what's going to happen in 10 years? Well, if we keep working away at it the way we're doing — we're all aware of it and we're talking about it in the House today. It's not something that's hidden any more. These things are not a good community situation. But I think that in 10 years, you're going to see a massive improvement in education, in how men treat women or how women treat men, and that the respect has to be brought into the equation. And when children are involved, what do we do then?

What we have is work to be done, but let's go to work and get it done and let's lead by example. Hopefully, in 10 years we'll look back and say that we did do something and the community is a better community. There isn't a need for all this infrastructure that was out there 10 years ago to keep people safe. That is all I can say on the issue.

We are aware of it. Community Services has an obligation to work with the communities on a sports level and also to lead by example and I am quite proud of my staff there who are leading by example. Only in your community alone, the people who work for Community Services and Highways and Public Works are held in high esteem and they are an example. We need more of that.

Mr. Elias: I think this is the fourth minister I've asked this question to and I want to thank the Minister of Community Services because that is probably the best answer I've received so far. I appreciate his thoughts on the matter. I guess I would ask him to use his influence at the Cabinet table and the leadership within his department to come up with new innovative ideas for every single Yukon government department to participate in a comprehensive approach to combat violence against women in our territory through whatever means necessary.

I will be asking his other Cabinet colleagues with regard to this important issue that affects all the communities in the territory, because when violence against women and children happens, it doesn't bode well for a healthy community.

So once again, I'll turn the — that's all the questions that I have for now. I might have more in line-by-line debate. I appreciate having this productive and mutually beneficial debate with the minister. I have other colleagues on this side of the

House who want to engage in debate with the Minister of Community Services. Once again, thank you to the staff and all the officials within the Department of Community Services for the job that they do each and every day. With that, thank you again.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I appreciate the member opposite's remarks today, and I look forward to working with him in the future. I'm very pleased to stand up here as the representative of this department. It does excellent work and it's not hard to represent. I look forward to the other members having a few minutes that we can debate issues that they have, either in their community, or throughout the Yukon.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to enter the discussion here this afternoon about the supplementary budget with respect to Vote 51 in the Department of Community Services. I'd like to start with what the department is currently doing. Actually, I'd like to thank the officials as well for being here today. It's always good to see them here in the Legislature and they provide a lot of information at the briefing. We're thankful for that as well.

What I would like to know or ask the minister is whether or not there is going to be a further review or if there is a review currently underway of the *Municipal Act*. Is there a process in place to do that?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In answering the member opposite, we are working with Association of Yukon Communities and with the *Municipal Act* it seems it never stops, but we are waiting for Association of Yukon Communities to come back to us with some requests and certainly we'll be looking at them in the future.

Mr. Cardiff: I realize that it's always kind of an ongoing process with the Association of Yukon Communities and that we're responding to the needs of municipalities. I guess what I'd like to know is whether or not there's an actual public process. I know that there's ongoing amendments and work being done on the *Municipal Act* on a pretty regular basis that allows for the participation of municipalities — the staff and the elected members of those municipalities — but I'm just wondering if there's some way of involving the public so that some of their issues about the *Municipal Act* and the way that municipalities are governed could be addressed.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Any legislation that we change should have some avenue for public participation. I agree with the member opposite. We have had a review of the *Municipal Act* in the year 2003 and 2008. We have also had a conversation or we had a motion in the House here that we were looking very actively at working with the Association of Yukon Communities for the next municipal review. Certainly any large legislation that we change should have a public component.

Mr. Cardiff: I recall that there was a public process in 2003, but I don't recall a Yukon-wide public process with relation to the *Municipal Act* in 2008. Could the minister please tell us?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I have just got some information from my official.

Leading to the 2008 *Municipal Act* amendments, the City of Whitehorse proposed four referendum-related amendments to the act.

Three of their proposed amendments were included in extensive public consultations. So there was public consultation, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cardiff: I do seem to recall part of that consultation, but I'm not sure exactly how far and wide that consultation actually went with the general public.

I just want to raise one issue on behalf of a constituent, and it's with regard to some proposals. Within the *Municipal Act* and the way that municipal elections are run, it's my understanding — I'm not sure whether or not voters can have their names removed from the voters list to allow for greater protection of personal privacy. I believe it can be done territorially, and I don't believe it can be done municipally. Can the minister clarify that and tell us where we're going on that one?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I would like to — I'll address that issue, Mr. Chair. But, going back to his other issue about the consultation, we had the consultation. The consultation was done. There were five issues brought forward in the consultation. Only three were successfully agreed to by that consultation, and that's why it went from five to three on the *Municipal Act*, because of the concerns in these public meetings. I'm told by my official that yes, you can, for privacy reasons, have your name not put on the voters list in a municipal election. Excuse me, Mr. Chair, that was part of the 2003 amendments enabling privacy.

Mr. Cardiff: What this brings me to is now the concern. It's my understanding — and I don't really have first-hand knowledge of this, because I'm not a resident of a municipality. I live in the beautiful Hamlet of Mount Lorne, where we have a hamlet council. It's my understanding that during the last round of municipal elections when the municipality did their enumerations, there were also other questions attached to the enumeration — kind of census questions.

I'm just wondering if there are measures to allow a person to withdraw their name from the voters list to allow for greater protection of personal privacy — it almost seems like there should be some restrictions on the types of questions that should be attached to an enumeration. It's my understanding that they were asking census-type questions about the number of people living in a household and the household living situations. I'm not familiar with what the questions were, because I wasn't enumerated. But I'm just wondering whether or not something along those lines could be looked at during the next review of the *Municipal Act*.

Hon. Mr. Lang: We're talking about an issue that is covered by the municipality. Their bylaws cover enumeration. Whitehorse is the only community in the territory that does that. So they do their own enumeration. I am not privy to the information the member brings to the floor because I was not enumerated in the city — and I live in the city, so obviously they missed me. It is handled by the City of Whitehorse and I really can't answer that question.

Certainly any issue that we would address on the municipal level with the Association of Yukon Communities would be brought forward by the municipalities in their request on the next round of discussions.

Mr. Cardiff: The reality is the enumeration may be done through bylaws but what governs municipalities and how they govern themselves is to some extent the *Municipal Act*. I am just wondering whether or not there is a way through the *Municipal Act* to address this issue or if could be brought to the attention of the Association of Yukon Communities that it is a concern and whether or not it can be addressed through the *Municipal Act*.

Hon. Mr. Lang: The act already covers privacy and it's covered in the act and I can't argue what the municipality does with the enumeration, because they in fact do that enumeration only in the City of Whitehorse, but if you have a privacy issue — in other words, you don't want your name to be enumerated — there's a process to be sworn in at the poll. There is that avenue, but as far as what happens in the enumeration, that task is the City of Whitehorse's obligation. In the act it says you must be a Canadian, must be 18 years or older and must be a resident for one year — so there is that involved in it, but hopefully the privacy thing is maintained and the tools are in place to do that.

Mr. Cardiff: I guess the issue is that it was my understanding that it was the city's planning department that requested these questions to be attached. It was to help them to collect information about land use planning and other things like that. I guess the issue is that, in territorial or federal legislation, when you're enumerated, you're asked if you're eligible to vote. You're not asked a whole bunch of other questions about your private life and your living situation.

So it just seems like an invasion of privacy to allow this to happen. I mean, it's not permitted under the *Elections Act* to ask other questions, other than whether or not you're eligible to vote and all the criteria to meet that. They don't ask you about how many people live in your house, or what you eat for breakfast, or what your intentions are. I don't know what all the questions were, but the concern here is that they were of a more personal nature. It's not done in territorial or federal enumerations I'm just wondering why, through the *Municipal Act*, we allow that to happen.

Hon. Mr. Lang: A resident doesn't have to be enumerated. He doesn't have to answer the questions, so that solves that problem. He can go to the poll, and he can be sworn in at the poll because of a privacy question. If somebody has an issue with being enumerated they can decline that service, but they still have the opportunity to go through a process and be able to vote. So, you can be at both ends of the spectrum. In fact, you don't have to be enumerated and, in fact, you still can vote, as far as I'm aware.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister misses the point, because the point is that when the enumerator comes to your door, they don't tell you that you don't have to be enumerated, that you can be sworn in at the poll. That's not why they're coming to visit. They're coming to do the enumeration. "I'm here to enumerate you, but you don't have to do it if you don't want to." That's not usually the way it happens.

It may be a right, but if it is your right, then maybe we should put it into law that you have to be notified of that right.

Not everybody is aware of that unless they're told at the time they're enumerated.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I guess, Mr. Chair, we could go around and around on this all day. It's really out of my hands. I'm not quite sure if I'm answering the question improperly. In Community Services, we work with AYC. We did put something in place for privacy in the 2003 amendments and that is in the hands of the City of Whitehorse. They do their own census. I'm not privy to what they do. Certainly if any individual has a privacy issue, he has the right to decline the census, but, in turn, can go down and be sworn in at the poll and participate in their democratic right. I can't argue the point with him about what is on the questionnaire or what this individual does, because I myself have never been confronted with that question, nor have I been enumerated in that way. So I certainly can't argue against the remarks of the member opposite nor can I make judgement on what the municipality does when it does its census.

Mr. Cardiff: I guess that kind of highlights the need for a more open process that allows for public input into issues that should be being brought forward in the *Municipal Act*, as opposed to brought forward by the department or just by municipalities. It may need to be a more open process.

I would like to ask the minister about progress that is being made with regard to the *Animal Protection Act*. It is my understanding that an animal protection officer has been hired. I am curious as to whether or not there is money in the supplementary budget for some of the activities. There was supposed to be public education and those types of activities taking place. Can the minister tell us what progress has been made? What types of public education have taken place? What linkages have been built with bylaw officers and municipal bylaw officers in various communities? Are there any statistics as far as the number of interventions, fines or animals that have been protected under the new act?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'm just finishing up on the last question about participation in any *Municipal Act* changes. I just recommend that all Yukoners get involved. We do have public meetings. They are out there when we do change it. We do work with the Association of Yukon Communities, because they, in fact, bring things forward. But certainly, as we go out, other individuals can comment and participate. I recommend that Yukoners do that if they have some issues with the *Municipal Act*.

Certainly, this was one of the commitments we made when we formed government. Part of our platform was the animal welfare officer. The individual was hired and he started in March. His wages were in the mains. He has been focused on developing operational policies and procedures and obtaining specialized equipment to deliver education and awareness programs to encourage the humane treatment of animals, so he's doing his good work.

We are, of course, committed to improving animal protection in Yukon and will continue to support the important work of Yukon's humane societies, the RCMP, the municipalities and First Nations. We are presently meeting with the City of Whitehorse to ensure a smooth working relationship in the

multi-jurisdictional environment. He is doing his job and the budget is there for his wages. Certainly his job description involves going to all the communities in the Yukon, working with their bylaw officers and educating, working with our communities to minimize cruelty to animals and being part and parcel of the community to make our communities not only safer for our animals, but also safer for individuals. They're doing their good job.

Seeing the time, Mr. Chair, I recommend we report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Lang that Committee of the Whole report progress on Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*.

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following documents were filed November 19, 2009:

09-1-127

Queen's Printer Agency 2008-09 Annual Report (Lang)

09-1-128

Fleet Vehicle Agency 2008-2009 Annual Report (Lang)