

Whitehorse, Yukon**Tuesday, May 15, 2007 -- 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 Yukon Francophone Day**

Hon. Mr. Hart: Monsieur le Président, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour rendre hommage à la communauté franco-yukonnaise. Aujourd'hui est la Journée de la francophonie yukonnaise -- Yukon Francophone Day.

L'année 2007 marque aussi le 25^e anniversaire de l'Association franco-yukonnaise. Nous célébrons la contribution des franco-Yukonnais, qui ont joué un rôle important dans l'histoire, l'économie et la culture du Yukon. Des francophones habitent le territoire depuis plus de 150 ans.

Aujourd'hui le Yukon compte une école francophone, une garderie francophone et un journal francophone. La communauté francophone fournit des services aux entrepreneurs, aux immigrants, aux jeunes et aux femmes. Elle fait activement la promotion des arts et de la culture.

Les francophones participent aussi aux activités de l'ensemble de la population yukonnaise et ont établi de nombreux partenariats. En résultat, il n'est pas rare d'entendre parler français partout dans le territoire.

Nous sommes fiers de voir que la communauté franco-yukonnaise est reconnue comme l'une des plus dynamiques au Canada. Sa présence enrichit notre vie de tous les jours.

Monsieur le Président, j'invite tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative à se joindre à moi pour rendre cet hommage aujourd'hui.

Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Mitchell: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to la Journée de la francophonie yukonnaise -- Yukon Francophone Day. Canada is a multicultural nation and a bilingual country, with French being one of the two official languages. In 1988, the Yukon passed an official languages act, and in 1989, Canada and Yukon signed agreements to promote French as well as native languages. On this landmark day, we join in celebrating with l'Association franco-yukonnaise on their 25th anniversary. For 25 years, l'Association franco-yukonnaise has been the official spokesperson of the more than 1,200 French-speaking people in Yukon with the aim of improving the quality of life for French-speaking people in Yukon.

Francophones have been present in Yukon since the early days of its settlement by Europeans, and by the time of the Klondike Gold Rush, francophones were already well estab-

lished in the area. They have been miners, trappers, merchants, doctors, nurses, teachers, religious leaders, artists, athletes -- in short, they have made contributions to every aspect of Yukon life and culture. L'Association franco-yukonnaise gives the community a wide variety of information with *L'Aurore Boréale*, their semi-monthly newspaper, and offers adult counseling and training services and a gathering place for all francophones.

In Yukon, we are fortunate to have a francophone school, École Émilie Tremblay; the French immersion school, École Primaire Whitehorse; the French daycare centre, La Garderie du petit cheval blanc; and Espoir Jeunesse, an organization for young people in the Yukon. Francophones play a major role in our communities. They contribute in a dynamic way by enriching Yukon culturally, economically and socially. Francophone artists contribute to the visual arts, music and dance, and many francophone events are part of Yukon's cultural life. Francophones in the Yukon come from all regions in the country, and L'Association franco-yukonnaise has created a gateway, bringing together the entire Yukon francophone community and giving francophones a sense of identity and of belonging. For that, we salute you. Merci pour tout que vous faites pour le Yukon.

Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

Mr. Hardy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with pleasure that I rise on behalf of the third party to pay tribute to the Yukon's first francophone day. Félicitations pour 150 ans de participation positive dans la communauté.

Twenty-five years ago L'Association franco-yukonnaise was incorporated to support and celebrate the Yukon's francophone community. Since its inception, AFY has contributed substantially to French heritage in the Yukon. It has accomplished a remarkable presence by developing language services and cultural activities and by supporting institutions such as the francophone centre and the French newspaper, *Aurore boréale*.

French schools and French immersion in the school system are here in large part thanks to a very vibrant French community, and I have to admit that, on a personal note, I am extremely proud to find out that my granddaughter will be starting school in the French immersion program, and I am sure she will be teaching me a lot of French.

Although this day is to reflect the French presence in the territory, it should also be a focus to remind us of the multicultural nature of the Yukon and all of Canada.

The two founding nationalities in Canada -- French and English -- have developed a nation in which all nationalities and races can keep their identity, take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging.

The physical presence of a diverse population makes us more open to accept other cultures and to recognize the potential of all Canadians. By opening society to accept all cultures, we have strengthened the social, economic and political life of Canada. In great part, the French presence and the federal policies to encourage the French language have underlined the great benefits to all of us of an inclusive citizenship that has respect for our Canadian diversity.

We heartily congratulate the Yukon's francophone community on their impressive successes and wish them many more in the future.

Thank you. Merci.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Mme. Sandra Henderson, the president of the Yukon Teachers Association, to our gallery here today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Returns or documents for tabling.
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a rural Yukon drinking water infrastructure strategy in keeping with its election commitment to ensure Yukoners have access to safe drinking water.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to include "practical obscurity" provisions in order to protect individuals' privacy interests from the potential misuse of personal information that is available through the on-line court document system by:

- (1) respecting the principles that the right of the public to open courts is constitutionally protected;
- (2) acknowledging that technology has increased the amount of personal information that is available to strangers and, as such, protection of individuals' privacy interests may be diminished;
- (3) ensuring that improper searching of court documents is prevented while searches that support legitimate research, or that in the public interest, are not compromised.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to honour the commitment in the 2001 Yukon literacy strategy to make literacy programming accessible to all Yukon people, to develop partnerships with First Nation communities and to provide multi-year funding that would be relevant and accessible for communities at levels consistent with community training funds.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work closely and cooperatively with the Association of Yukon Communities and to consider the long-term requirements of all Yukon communities in the promised review of the comprehensive municipal grant; and

THAT this House further urges the Government of Yukon to move expeditiously in conjunction with the Association of Yukon Communities to review the *Municipal Act* with a view to amendments that will address the funding needs of both urban and rural communities, regardless of size or organizational status.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to evaluate the social and financial services it provides to women in rural Yukon and to respond to their needs in an appropriate fashion considering:

- (1) the high rate of addictions and violence;
- (2) the scarcity of government services and supports available in rural communities through the Women's Directorate; and
- (3) the lack of organizational services available to community organizations to assist rural women.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Power rates

Mr. McRobb: I have some questions for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday afternoon this minister announced he was increasing Yukoners' power bills. On July 1, only six weeks from now, Yukoners' power bills will be going up 15 percent. They can thank this minister and this Yukon Party government for axing the rate stabilization fund.

After reviewing a few power bills this morning, it's evident this decision will cost the average Yukon family about \$200 in this coming year. Let's start from the beginning with this minister. Will he confirm that Yukoners' power bills are going up 15 percent in six weeks, and that this decision was made entirely by the Yukon Party Cabinet?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the issue, we have extended the rate stabilization plan on the 50-percent level as of July 1 to July 2008. In that process they will apply for a rate reduction in February 2008, and we will move forward with a rate reduction for all Yukoners when it comes to their power bill.

Mr. McRobb: He's avoiding the question already. As if this isn't bad enough news, it gets worse. We've established that Yukoners' power bills will go up 15 percent in six weeks' time at the hands of this minister and the entire Yukon Party Cabinet.

In addition, power bills will increase another 15 percent in a year's time, when he axes the rate stabilization fund entirely.

That's a 30-percent increase in 14 months. It means \$350 to \$400 for Yukon families.

Where does the minister think a senior citizen living on a fixed income, or other Yukoners trying to make ends meet, will come up with this additional \$300 to \$400 a year to cover his increase?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The member opposite is wrong. We as a government are going to extend the rate stabilization plan at the 50-percent level in conjunction with applying for a rate reduction. We certainly address the individuals in our community who need help, whether it's a senior or the less fortunate. We have programs in place to cover those costs.

With our hard work and the corporation's hard work, we're looking forward to a rate reduction, not a rate increase.

Mr. McRobb: The minister can speculate all he wants about what the Yukon Utilities Board might or might not decide and when that might be decided, but at this time, there's only one known factor: this Yukon Party government is jacking up people's power bills by 30 percent within 14 months.

Let's go back to what the minister said on March 28 of this year when he first signalled his intent to axe the RSF. At the time, he signalled there would be a soft landing by helping people reduce their power bills. Here's what he said: "During this three-month period, the Government of Yukon will introduce a number of other initiatives which address energy efficiency."

By my count, the number of new initiatives to address energy efficiency is zero. This government is sitting on an \$85-million surplus, yet it demands seniors and all families to dig deeper into their pockets to pay \$350 to \$400 more for their power bills each year.

Can the minister tell the House how many new energy efficiency initiatives he has introduced since March 28?

Hon. Mr. Lang: The member opposite is wrong. We are going to extend the rate stabilization plan to 50 percent of its original coverage and, in that time, we are going to work with the Utilities Board to reduce the rates for the consumer, not increase them. We're looking at rate reduction throughout the Yukon, not increases.

Question re: Rate stabilization fund

Mr. McRobb: Let's review the facts. We know that the Yukon Party has unilaterally made a political decision to axe the rate stabilization fund. This will increase Yukoners' power bills by 30 percent. It's a classic case of government hands in your pockets. This decision will cost the average Yukoner anywhere between \$350 and \$400 in their power bills each year. But it doesn't have to be this way. We offered a good alternative to this minister just a few weeks ago. We know that he has looked into his crystal ball and believes that everything will be okay, but we're not so sure. He was wrong in his predictions just last month, and he'll likely be wrong again.

There's a practical solution to avoid punishing Yukon ratepayers. During the interim period, after June 30, will he continue the rate stabilization program in full until we see what the board decides?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, the member opposite asked the same question. We're looking over the next 12 months on

rate reductions for the Yukon consumer, and we're going to work with the Yukon Utilities Board to get that done. That's what we're looking at, Mr. Speaker.

We have committed to extend the rate stabilization subsidy for the next 12 months at 50 percent of its original level. We're working at lowering rates for Yukoners, not raising them.

Mr. McRobb: Well, obviously, this minister just can't keep his hands out of Yukoners' pockets. People's electricity bills are going up 30 percent because of a political decision made by this Yukon Party government. It doesn't have to be this way.

The Yukon Party is sitting on a surplus of \$85 million and not one penny of it goes toward continuing the rate stabilization fund. The minister says that help is on the way next year, but that's only his crystal-ball approach. There are other complications that suggest he'll be wrong again.

Besides, it's up to the Yukon Utilities Board to set rates, and so far a process hasn't even been established to allow for that, so we're back to the current problem.

This government must do something more to help people. Will the minister commit to continuing the rate stabilization fund, in full, out of the \$85-million surplus?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, in answering the same question from the member opposite, this side of the House has to deal with factual information. The factual information is this: the rate stabilization subsidy will be extended at the 50-percent level from July 1, 2007, until July 1, 2008. In between that, we will be working with the Energy Corporation and the Yukon Utilities Board for a reduction in the power bills of Yukoners. This side of the House has an obligation to work with factual figures. The consumers in the Yukon will benefit from this decision, and it will unfold over the next 12 months.

Mr. McRobb: This government is acting in an arrogant and uncaring way. Not one penny of the \$85-million surplus is going toward this. Now, Yukoners on fixed incomes can thank this minister for increasing their power bills by 30 percent. Imagine tomorrow: Power bills 30 percent higher. Imagine tomorrow: seniors can go find \$350 to pay for higher power bills. Imagine tomorrow: young families and people who can least afford it can go find \$350 to pay the minister's new 30-percent higher power bills.

We have made a positive suggestion to the minister: shield ratepayers from these big increases until we know what happens next year. What would it cost? Only about \$2 million or 3 million. This government is sitting on an \$85-million surplus. Will the minister do the right thing and protect ratepayers from this increase?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, what part of "rate reduction" does the member opposite not understand? We're looking at conservation. We're looking at rate reduction over the next 12 months. We will protect the people who are less fortunate. This government has done it in the past and will do it in the future.

Again, the member is wrong. We have to deal with factual figures on this side, because we are the government. We are looking at, over the next 12 months, a rate reduction. By the way, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a conservation program to

make people in the Yukon more aware of how we can conserve our energy and work with our energy into the future. That's what the Yukon is looking at today.

Question re: Community Wellness Court

Mr. Cardiff: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Justice some questions about the new Community Wellness Court. I'd like to follow up on some of those. This court is set up to design wellness plans that call for serious interventions with offenders who have multiple problems. The minister said yesterday that the court will refer them to treatment to address those problems.

What criteria will be used to designate an offender as eligible for a wellness plan designed by that court, and who determines whether or not those applicants are eligible?

Hon. Ms. Horne: People would be referred to this court by the judges, depending on the severity of their charges. It would be entirely up to the judges and the individual to choose this court.

Mr. Cardiff: Maybe the minister can get back to me with a legislative return on that answer. The offenders that we're talking about are people with addictions, FASD and people with mental health issues. Many times they have all of these things at the same time, which is a serious complication for them and their families. These multiple problems mean that the treatment they are going to get is complex and it affects all parts of their lives. It also includes supporting the family.

What new services will be offered to an offender with complex problems that cover a range of physical, social, educational, mental, economic and psychological issues? Again, what new services will be offered?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said yesterday, I am very proud of this government for pioneering this court. We are the first in Canada.

As the member opposite said, individuals can have multiple problems. That is exactly what this court is for; it's not only for individual problems. It is taking a therapeutic approach to offenders suffering from mental disorders and drug and alcohol problems. The offenders can be helped individually with different solutions in our health system, from our psychiatrists -- as I said yesterday, it depends on the individual, on their specific problems. It is specialized for that person, and that is up for the judge to decide, not the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Cardiff: I'll take another legislative return. The question was: what new services? I didn't hear the answer. The real answer is that alcohol and drug services branch has only one more person-year added to their staff because of this court, and it is long overdue anyway, but it is not enough. Much more than an innovative court process, these offenders need innovative programs and supports after they go through the court, not just more of the same thing they have encountered for years and years.

The minister has said that the court will make a concerted effort to break the cycle of substance abuse and criminal recidivism by providing a therapeutic alternative. It is a nice sentiment, but that is all that it is at this point. There are no new services.

Why does the minister think that the services that are available now will be successful with offenders when they obviously haven't been successful in the past with these same clients?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we have new social problems that we are dealing with that require new services.

Our services, as I explained, are for the individual's specific problems. They will be streamlined and directed to the services they require.

Question re: Alcohol consumption statistics

Mr. Edzerza: Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I tabled a graph compiled by the *Globe and Mail* based on information from Statistics Canada. It showed the number of litres of alcohol per capita that Canadians consume. According to this graph, Yukoners consume 100 percent more than Canadians anywhere else. The government's substance abuse action plan from October 2005 makes a claim that Yukoners as a whole use alcohol and other drugs in much the same way as do those living in the rest of Canada. It goes on to say that rates of substance abuse in the general population are similar to the rest of Canada.

How does the Minister of Health and Social Services explain this discrepancy between the government's view of Yukon drinking habits and the factual data from Statistics Canada?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, the graph published in *The Globe and Mail* that he refers to is incorrectly titled "Provincial Consumption (litres per capita)". The source quoted is Statistics Canada, which collects information from all Canadian jurisdictions on sales, not consumption. The Statistics Canada report, the *Control and Sale of Alcoholic Beverages in Canada*, states explicitly: statistics on sales of alcoholic beverages by volume should not be equated with data on consumption. Although Yukon alcohol sales are above the national averages, it does not mean that Yukoners consume more liquor than other Canadians. In reality, in 2005, a Yukon addictions survey indicates Yukon residents consume similar amounts of liquor compared to other Canadians.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the substance abuse action plan, it says that Yukon's high drinking rate is due to a core group of high-risk individuals who consume at rates much higher than similar high-risk users in the rest of Canada. That view can be debated, I'm quite sure, but we'll give the minister the benefit of the doubt. If our extraordinary consumption rate is due to a small group of people who overindulge much more than other Canadians, surely we need to do something to help those people, no matter how small the number of those who overindulge. This kind of addiction affects everyone. It affects us through social and financial costs of violence, property crime, et cetera.

Will the minister detail for us what is being done to provide more addictions treatment centres, as promised, especially in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: For the member opposite, again, I will repeat that you cannot use statistics on sales versus consumption. I'll give the member opposite an example. A couple

of years ago, even actually up until last year, an average bottle of wine sold by the Yukon Liquor Corporation was around \$12. The average bottle of wine today sells for \$22. To use the member opposite's statistics, that's an increase of 85 percent, based on sales. We're not drinking 85 percent more; we're drinking exactly the same, but a higher quality product. Mr. Speaker, like the man against the lamppost, we have to use the statistics for illumination and not for support.

Mr. Edzerza: I believe we have the wrong minister on the floor here. This minister administers the amount of alcohol sold in the Yukon, not the building of addiction treatment centres. The minister is basically admitting that again nothing will change because a different minister is answering.

The number of addicted Yukoners is alarming. With the new Community Wellness Court in place, an even greater number of clients may be looking for help. That's a fact. What is the minister going to do for them?

We have our own list of things we'd like to see him doing, such as a medical detox unit, local training for community addiction workers, youth and family addiction treatments, having counsellors working on harm reduction philosophy, and support for First Nations to build wilderness treatment options, as promised over and over again.

Instead of the standby approach, why isn't there money in the current budget for any of these measures?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The Member for McIntyre-Takhini is mistaken on his assertion that there is not money in the budget. Once again, this government has stepped forward. The member is failing to recognize the initiative of the substance abuse action plan -- a significant investment beyond what has been done in the past in addressing areas focusing on the priorities of harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement -- and treatment includes, in fact, half the list of the services the member just cited.

We have increased the resources to groups such as the Yukon Family Services Association to assist them in their counselling services. We have provided funding to the Outreach van to help individuals who may not be accessing the services through the standard areas. We have invested in the Community Wellness Court, as has been discussed earlier in Question Period.

These are but a few of the initiatives -- new initiatives -- that this government has stepped forward on. We look forward to continuing these efforts, in partnerships with NGOs and with First Nations, in addressing these needs and helping Yukoners get treatment to reduce the issue of substance abuse and to help individuals get the help directly that they need, as individuals, to address that problem.

Question re: Education reform

Mr. Fairclough: On May 11, the Premier is reported as saying, "If First Nations want a higher level of decision making in education, they can draw the system down." The Premier's statement is shocking. It is taunting and has the potential to cause havoc on the entire education system. Now the Premier keeps using the word "devolve" when he should really be focused on the word "evolve".

The Premier either doesn't get it or he is using scare tactics. Whichever one it is, it's wrong.

Chief Mike Smith has invited all First Nations to join Kwanlin Dun in drawing down education. Is the Premier at all concerned that the education reform project could be derailed?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the Hon. Premier answers, for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, using terms like "taunting" to describe another individual in this House is going to lead to discord. I'm not going to ask you to retract; I'm just suggesting it's going to lead to discord, so if the honourable member would watch that, please.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: This government has made a commitment to work to reform the education delivery and the education system here in the territory. We have made a commitment to evolve the delivery of education and we are making a commitment to involve Yukoners in the delivery of education.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Yukon First Nations have worked very long and very hard to have their self-government rights recognized, and this government certainly recognizes the right of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation to deliver education to their citizens, should they so choose.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister avoided the question. It was directed to the Premier, so I would appreciate the Premier answering the questions directed to him. This is truly a sad day for education and for all Yukoners.

On the issue of governance, the Premier is also credited with saying that his government "will not host discussions."

The Premier and the minister can't even get their stories lined up. One says one thing and the other says something different when it comes to consultation. This Premier is saying that no Yukoner -- First Nation or non-First Nation, no Catholic and no francophone -- nobody -- will have any say in the future of their children's education by that statement.

Will the Premier, in the interests of the territory, retract this misleading comment and assure all Yukoners that, when this reform process is complete, they will have a meaningful, open and transparent means to be active participants in their children's education?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: What is misleading here is the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's assertions here on the floor and some of the comments he has just made.

First and foremost, no one on the government's side has ever said there is no discussion when it comes to education. What we clearly have stated is that this government will not devolve public jurisdiction.

Furthermore, to the member's assertion that we, the minister and I, are in contradiction -- he didn't listen to the minister's answer moments ago. We are not going to devolve public jurisdiction. We are going to involve First Nations and all Yukoners on reforming the education system. That is what education reform is about, that is exactly what cooperative governance is about, that is what the Yukon Forum is about, and that is what the *Co-operation in Governance Act* are all about. We're carrying out our duties.

However, First Nations have negotiated the right to take down this authority if they choose. This government supports that right also.

Mr. Fairclough: By those comments from the Premier I have to say that maybe he does not understand what governance is all about. I'm wondering if we are seeing the real education reform plan of this government.

Now the Premier is saying to Yukon First Nations to sit down and be quiet or draw down. What kind of consultation is that? If the First Nations draw down education, as they are entitled, it will cause drastic changes for everyone. The Premier is being very controlling here, giving First Nations no alternative. What is he going to tell non-First Nation Yukoners who want a say in their education? Is he going to tell them to move to British Columbia?

Will the Premier acknowledge that Yukoners, like citizens in other jurisdictions in Canada, deserve the right of input into shaping and controlling their education system?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, I'm thrilled that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has just asked that question because my answer to the member will be: what does the member consider school councils and their duties and responsibilities to be, and their contribution to education, with guaranteed representation for First Nations? How does the member justify his position when we have in our schools already First Nation languages, elders in the schools, curriculum that is addressing First Nations culture? How does the member explain that 42 of our 503 teachers are graduates from the Yukon native teacher education program? And now this government's taking it even further through educational reform. I'd say that is a pretty good involvement of Yukoners and Yukon First Nations in their education in building Yukon's future. It's the children who are the priority here, not the member's opinion on governance.

Question re: F.H. Collins School, future of

Mr. Fairclough: I have a question for the Minister of Education.

In January of this year, the Department of Education held a public meeting at F.H. Collins Secondary School. The main purpose of that meeting was to focus on the future of the high school. Those in attendance were told that a consulting firm was conducting a study and that a report would be forthcoming in April of this year. Now, we know the minister has the report. Will he table that report?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, immediately upon taking office, this government did engage a consultant by the name of Holdfast Consulting to take a look at three different issues: the school in Copper Ridge; the educational opportunities in Porter Creek; and the future of F.H. Collins. The consultants have come up here, and they have had many different public consultations. There have been meetings with stakeholders and with an advisory group. The consultants are working on their report. They have submitted a draft report to the Department of Education. It is being reviewed and compared against the terms of reference to ensure that it meets the expectations. Once I do get a final report, I will comment on it.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, Mr. Speaker, I asked if he would table it. The minister does have the report, and he knows

it. There are many concerned citizens in Whitehorse and around and outside the city also. There are many questions that need to be addressed. Should the school be an entirely new facility, or should it be refurbished? Second, what facilities should it contain? Now, the minister probably knows, and he said it today here that Holdfast Consultants of Victoria were contracted to do the study. At a January meeting, a department official said it would be completed by the end of April. The minister does have the report, and he has had it for awhile now. Would he table that report?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clear up something for the member. His assertion on the floor of the Assembly today is incorrect. I do not have the report. The consultants have submitted a draft report to the Department of Education. It is being compared with the terms of reference. It is being looked at to ensure that it addresses the questions that they were tasked with. I understand that there are other questions that are being asked of them to ensure that the report is complete. Mr. Speaker, when I receive the final report, I will comment upon it.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister does have the report. What's the secret? Why is this such a secret? We're going to go on and on throughout this sitting and probably not see it if we continue, I guess, the way the government has gone in regard to reports. Now, this is starting to sound a lot like the education reform project papers. It's top secret. Now I'll ask the minister again. If it's a draft like he says, then when will we see it? It's government money that paid for this report, and I know the minister has the report. He's just using it and saying that it's a draft as a delay tactic.

Some Hon. Member: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of order

Speaker: The Minister of Education, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm afraid I can't let that one go. The member opposite is imputing false or unavowed motives toward me in his question here, and that's entirely inappropriate in this Assembly.

Speaker: Member for Mayo-Tatchun, on the point of order.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I've violated any section of the Standing Orders whatsoever.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I believe there was a point of order and that the honourable member was imputing motives to the minister, which is improper, and I'd ask the honourable member to retract that, please.

Withdrawal of remark

Mr. Fairclough: Okay, it's your ruling. I retract that statement.

What's the secret? Why doesn't the minister table that report? He has it in his hands.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'll try to convey the difference between a draft report and a final report. A draft report is just that

-- it's an incomplete report. There is a Department of Education responsibility to look at the report they have and to ensure that it meets the expectations of the contract that was originally signed.

There were questions the consultant was asked to look at and, in the normal course of doing business, we get a draft, compare it to the terms of reference, and ask if it's complete. If it's not complete, then it's not finished.

Once I receive the final copy, I will comment on it. But until then, I'll reserve my comments.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private member to be called on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. They are Motion No. 112, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and Motion No. 116, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, Vote 11, Women's Directorate.

Do members wish to take a brief recess before we begin?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 6 -- *First Appropriation Act, 2007-08* -- continued

Women's Directorate -- continued

Chair: The matter before Committee is Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Vote 11, Women's Directorate.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, further to our discussion yesterday on the main estimates of the Women's Directorate, I am very pleased to elaborate on some of the very exciting and

very worthy initiatives that the Women's Directorate has been embarking on over the last number of years.

One of the key mandates of the Women's Directorate is to work to enhance the social, legal and economic equality of women in the Yukon. We are working to do just this. Through policy work, training initiatives and public education, we are working to remove barriers to women's equality. Whether it may be working to eradicate violence against women and girls, working to enhance women's economic interdependence, or supporting the development and capacity of women's organizations to further advance women's equality, again we are working to do just that.

Over the last four years, our government has significantly increased resources available to women's organizations in support of their work to enhance women's equality while meeting our commitment to gender equality in the territory.

Since taking office, we have increased funding to the women's advocate program administered through the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. We have also been able to introduce two new funding programs in support of direct services and programs for women, research and policy development, education and social action on women's equality, the development in capacity of women's organizations, and work toward eradicating violence in our communities.

We are very supportive of the good work being undertaken by the Women's Directorate and all departments in support of women. We're very supportive of the work being undertaken by many organizations in the Yukon to further women's equality. We are very pleased to provide long-term sustainable funding in this regard.

Mr. Chair, there were some questions coming from members opposite yesterday with respect to aboriginal women and working to prevent and address violence against aboriginal women in our communities. Again, we are very pleased to be able to work with a number of different aboriginal women's organizations in the Yukon on a number of different fronts, whether that be the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, and so forth -- First Nations throughout the territory.

I recall -- it was about three and a half, almost four years ago -- when our Premier was the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, just shortly after we had reinstated the Women's Directorate. He, in his capacity, at a federal-provincial-territorial Status of Women ministers meeting -- they had identified aboriginal women's issues, particularly violence against aboriginal women, as a priority on the national front. So, in addition to working collectively on the national front, we would also work within our own home provinces and territories to do just that, as well.

Shortly after that conference, the Premier was able to make available \$100,000 in new funding for aboriginal women in violence prevention initiatives. Over the course of the last four years -- this is the fourth year in its making -- this particular initiative has made resources available to a number of different organizations in the Yukon as well as First Nation governments and so forth. They have had some great initiatives.

Just in the last year, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, through the Department of Education, received some funding for what we would call "young women regaining their power". It was an initiative in which a number of young Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation women took part in a number of workshops that identified how to recognize sexualized violence as well as being taught communication and self-empowerment skills. The women also learned about positive imagery and alcohol and drug issues.

Another important initiative that was funded -- the Ta'an Kwach'an Council health department was funded and, as a result, they were able to conduct a number of healing circles over several months, which incorporated healthy suppers, traditional crafts as well as heightened awareness about sexualized violence.

Those who participated in each of these initiatives learned more about self-esteem, healthy relationships, sexual abuse and violence, support systems, personal safety and other relevant topics. Another important involved was the White River First Nation. A group of women took part in a variety of cultural and learning events, including a trip to Dawson City to participate in the Moosehide gathering. It was a series of quilting healing circles as well as a healing workshop.

Throughout these initiatives, women gain knowledge about sexual abuse and other types of abuse, and they were able to develop the support networks for each other, which is so critical, particularly in rural Yukon.

Other initiatives were funded, including the Kwanlin Dun First Nation's, through their justice program. Again, this initiative was in recognition of the benefits of involving both women and men in community healing. Members of the community participate in a series of support circles, and as a result they focused in on residential school issues, impacts of cultural oppression and restoration of balance that has resulted from sexualized violence and trauma.

So a number of very good initiatives have been funded. Others include Selkirk First Nation, the Margaret Thomson Centre in Ross River, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, the Liard First Nation, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. So some very good, thoughtful, and innovative projects have been funded through that particular initiative.

As well, as I mentioned yesterday in my remarks, we are following up with the good work that was conducted at the summit, a forum that took place about a year ago in Ottawa, to speak to aboriginal women and violence in their respective areas of the country. Further to that, there is another summit to be held in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, coming up next month, in which the Government of Yukon is very pleased to be able to send a Yukon delegation of aboriginal women. That is currently being worked on in conjunction with our aboriginal women's organizations. Again, this is part of the Council of the Federation, spearheaded by the Premier of Newfoundland, and it is to discuss issues of utmost importance to aboriginal women. Of course, here in the Yukon, coupled with our two sister territories, one of those topics will be violence prevention, working toward eradicating violence.

We are also pleased in this budget to be able to provide new funding to organizations for women's equality. As I mentioned earlier, that particular fund is applicant-driven. It will result in long-term funding for a number of organizations that are successful, and it will support services and programs for women in the Yukon -- again, research and policy development as well as education, social action on women's equality and so forth.

So, again, this is a new funding mechanism that's being made available to women's organizations and to many organizations that do some very good, hard work on Yukoners' behalf in support of advancing women's equality.

In the past -- over the last few years -- we've also been able to assist aboriginal women with a number of policy forums, including self-governance on land claims and, for example, enabling First Nation women to develop a shared vision relative to participation in self-governance and other constitutional issues. We have also been able to provide funding for an aboriginal women's forum on violence prevention. I know that was very well attended. A number of rural women were able to take part in that as well.

We've also been able to assist with land claims training available for women's organizations. That was in direct response to community women. As a result, we've been able to make available a three-day training workshop to develop and offer courses focusing on women's roles, historically and currently, in the land claims negotiation process, as well as the implementation of our self-government final agreements.

About two years ago, we were able to institute a new position in the Women's Directorate, a First Nation coordinator/liasion to work with our aboriginal women's community. Also, another important role of that particular position in the Women's Directorate is to be the co-lead, in partnership with Justice, on our long-term public education campaign on violence prevention.

So the Women's Directorate has been very busy over the last number of years; we've been able to expand our support to our respective departments; we've been able to expand our support to women in the communities. There are a host of other areas, whether they are working with women on health issues, economics, women in trades, violence prevention and so forth. I am very pleased with the work being done and I thank them for that.

Mr. Elias: I think it's very appropriate to recognize the Women's Directorate staff and all the hard work and commitment they have done to achieve the department's goals -- the economic, legal and social equality of women in the Yukon. They deserve some congratulations. We recognize the department's and the minister's advancements in addressing aboriginal women's issues in the Yukon. There is movement; I've been hearing we're moving forward on that. It's good to see.

I do have some concerns with regard to rural Yukon and some things we can improve on. I have some questions for the minister with regard to the VictimLINK services. What is the caseload for that program?

I understand that midwifery is also an issue and has ties with the Health and Social Services minister. Does the minister have a hand in the development of that policy and regulation?

With regard to grandparents' rights and how many grandparents are out there looking after their grandchildren, with or without compensation -- does the minister have any information that she can shed light on for that issue?

With regard to the family violence prevention unit -- how many people use the unit and are there any statistics? These are some of the questions I have for now.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I thank the member opposite for the positive accolades for the work of the Women's Directorate. It's very much appreciated. We are very blessed to have such astute and great individuals working in that particular directorate. They are certainly working hard, and they are doing some great work.

The question pertaining to VictimLINK and the caseload -- that is actually formally an initiative being delivered through the Department of Justice, as I understand. It is a 1-800 toll-free crisis line available to all Yukoners, seven days a week, 24/7.

Through the Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice, we have been able to help assist in providing more information available about the phone number itself, about how to access that particular toll-free line. It was first instituted about three years ago, if I am not mistaken, and it has been provided courtesy of the British Columbia government in turn for Yukon providing victim services programming to communities such as Lower Post and Atlin, British Columbia. That partnership has been working very well, and it is due to the efforts of the Women's Directorate and Department of Justice. We have been able to make more information known about the number.

From what numbers I do have available, about 100 or 110 calls are made on a yearly basis. I don't have the exact numbers at my fingertips, but I know, for example, that 112 calls were made by Yukoners in 2005-06 for this very service. The Department of Justice would have that particular information more readily available for the members opposite.

As I mentioned, we'll continue to advertise. We'll continue to use innovative ways to make that information more readily available for Yukoners.

With respect to the issue of midwifery, yes, the Women's Directorate will be very much involved in the review and consultation process associated with midwifery. Midwifery is but one more choice in terms of making birth options available to more women in the territory. We are appreciative and very supportive of making more options available to moms in the territory.

As I understand it, the Department of Health and Social Services has been in discussions with a number of advocates for the regulation of this profession. I guess the question lies in whether or not it should be regulated and, if so, how it is to be done. That will be part of the review and will be a very inclusive review, engaging women in the territory over the next while.

Yes, we have dedicated an individual, who is available to work with the Department of Health and Social Services on that particular file.

For the family violence prevention unit, I do not have those numbers available. That agency is found within the Department of Justice. We have been able to enhance resources available to the family violence prevention unit over the last number of years. They deliver an incredible amount of good programming, which provides the front-line services to women and men, both perpetrators as well as victims of abuse, whether it be the victims program, women's program or the spousal abuse management program. They have been able to work very effectively with a whole host of various agencies throughout the government and non-government organizations toward healthier and safer communities in the territory.

I suppose that question would be better directed to the Department of Justice with respect to the actual numbers. I know they have, and will continue, to do some great work.

Mr. Elias: Recognizing the staff's efforts in participating and helping the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle develop its three-year strategic development plan, does the minister have any plans with regard to helping the women's circle achieve its goal? Would the minister provide seed money to develop a Whitehorse centre so the women's circle can initiate programming in our capital city and to fulfill its goals and aspirations of having an aboriginal women's centre located in Whitehorse?

I'll just save my next question.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you for the question from the member opposite, Mr. Chair. As the member opposite made reference to, we did make money available to several organizations a year ago for strategic plans. It was something that was readily received for the very purpose of putting together three-year strategic long-term range plans in order for a number of organizations to further advance women's equality in the territory. It certainly will come into great use in terms of being able to put forth applications for the women's equality funding that was just made available through this budget.

With respect to the question in regard to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, although I have not had any specific discussions with the particular organization the member refers to, I know that the Women's Directorate has been working with them and I understand that applications are being considered or thought about being made available to the northern strategy funding that is being made available as of the last year or so. That is certainly a funding mechanism of which Yukon Forum First Nation leadership has a substantial amount of direction over. So we certainly look forward to those applications.

Mr. Elias: In the efforts to move forward with regard to the Women's Directorate's strength and the department's strength, I'll bring up a question or concern that has been brought to my attention. I know a little bit about the history of this question. I'm just wondering if the minister has plans to reinstate a deputy minister of the department. Again, in the role of moving forward and moving into the future with regard to

the Women's Directorate and achieving objectives and strengthening the department, is that in the minister's plans?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm very pleased to respond to this question. I'll just remind the member opposite that it was actually the previous Liberal government that made changes to the Women's Directorate that no longer enabled the Women's Directorate to have the stand-alone authority. It was one of our government's platform commitments in the year 2002 to reinstate the Women's Directorate and restore it to its previous status prior to renewal that was undertaken by the previous government.

The member will recall that we also made the commitment to reinstate the Department of Tourism and Culture as well as the Department of Economic Development. I think all of those departments have been very well-received, and the move afoot to reinstate the Women's Directorate -- again, restoring it to its status prior to renewal -- was very well-received.

Basically, what this means is that the director of the Women's Directorate reports directly to the Cabinet minister on all program matters and has the full financial responsibility for the directorate.

The director of the Women's Directorate also has delegated authority in accordance with the *Public Service Act* to administer personnel matters.

More specifically, we are pretty much recognizing the Women's Directorate again, as we did previous to renewal, with the director reporting directly to the minister, a separate minister, and with the director being a full member at the formal deputy minister's review committee. The director has also been delegated authority with full capacity to administer personnel matters.

I think that it has been working very well and we are very appreciative of the director's good work and the work of the Women's Directorate. It certainly stands out very much since what it was previous to our election in 2002. In fact, just to further emphasize the importance of the Women's Directorate and to make it a little more accessible, we were able to find more readily available space on the front floor, so to speak, in the downtown core, which has also been more readily received and we have received a lot more traffic.

We are very much engaged. I know that there is also a social justice committee on which our director sits, and is very much engaged on all fronts, whether it be the *Children's Act* review, the corrections review or so forth. We are pretty much engaged on just about every file throughout the government.

Mr. Elias: I thank the minister for her response. Just in closing, and with regard to the departmental objectives and goals, what are the minister's plans for increasing program accessibility with regard to rural Yukon, especially to very isolated rural communities? As we all know, the aboriginal statistics with regard to violence against women are very high, and the issues are compounded in the rural, isolated communities. My final question: how is the minister going to achieve those departmental objectives in isolated rural communities, and what plans does she have to curb the violence against aboriginal women?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, our government is taking action on a number of different fronts to address violence in our communities. As I just elaborated, we have been able to make new funding available to respective organizations or First Nation governments, whether it be through the new women's equality fund or through the aboriginal women's violence prevention fund, as well. As well, we are working on a number of different initiatives, including our public education campaign on violence prevention against women and children. Again, the goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of violence in our communities and how violence affects everyone, what resources are available and how we can further support victims of abuse.

Through the good work of our front-line workers within the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services, we continue to make counselling and treatment support for victims of abuse available. As the member may recall, I think it was almost two years ago, our government introduced amendments to the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, which included a broader definition of family violence to incorporate emotional abuse. It also includes stronger penalties for convictions of family violence.

We have been able to enhance resources to our family violence prevention unit. We have been able to introduce Victim-LINK, which is available throughout our communities. We have been able -- through a number of women's organizations -- to help build further capacity and support network circles in our communities.

The Women's Directorate, in conjunction with Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues, was able to work with the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors to come up with a priority housing policy. One area to be targeted was victims of abuse who were fleeing violent situations. That was released earlier this year by Yukon Housing Corporation. I think it's a very good policy and makes priority use of our social housing available to those most in need.

We have been able to increase funding to a number of women's shelters throughout the territory. We have been able to help fund self-advocacy training for women in rural communities to enhance access to our legal system.

We have been able to enhance funding to our crime prevention victim services trust fund as well, which makes more dollars available to programs that address victims and crime prevention needs, which is certainly available to all individuals throughout the territory.

We have also been able to expand the domestic violence treatment option, which is now offered in Watson Lake. We have been able to provide assistance by way of a program -- a new treatment program for children who witness violence -- through the Department of Justice.

We have been able to enhance dollars available to the kids recreation fund, which is available to all citizens of the territory.

I guess the thing to say is that stopping violence in our communities is not just a government matter; it takes a community effort to raise awareness and to address this situation in our communities. In the Women's Directorate, we provide pol-

icy, education prevention work, and we work with our front-line workers in the departments of Health and Social Services, Justice and so forth. We work with our women's shelters, community service agencies, our educators, and our childcare operators. Again, we work with all professionals to stop this problem.

Again, what we will and what we can do is continue to investigate additional means to address violence in our communities. We will be focusing on counselling and information support and providing offenders with the treatment to help them change their behaviours.

We know that through the good work of the Department of Justice we have the Community Wellness Court, which is a relatively new initiative in the country. It is being tried in the Yukon over the next three years. It actually makes provisions available to offenders who suffer from mental illness, FASD, or addictions to receive the treatment they require.

And so, again, by making available programming to help offenders change their behaviours and learn new ways of dealing with issues and take responsibility for actions, these are all ways in which we can certainly work to effect changes. We will certainly continue to do so.

Mr. Edzerza: I'd like to start out today by also thanking the staff within the Women's Directorate for the work that they accomplish. I know they have a very hard struggle ahead of them. I think it was already stated that this program was axed by the previous Liberal government, and I am pleased to see that it was reinstated because women are very important in society and they've always played a very important role. Throughout history, women were severely mistreated. Historical philosophers, for example, helped create very negative opinions about women and what their role in society is and was. It has required a lot of work for women to try to establish a sense of belonging again in society.

It is without a doubt that they still have a very hard struggle ahead of them to gain equality, as I've heard stated here already in talk about equality for women. It's going to be very difficult. I sincerely hope and pray that society will deal with women on equal grounds.

I know that we cannot change history, but we can change the future, and that's what this is all about. I heard the minister say that this was the biggest budget ever for the Women's Directorate. However, I feel that it still isn't enough. I feel that it is inadequate. Hopefully by the end of this mandate we won't see a budget of \$1 million, but one of \$5 million plus.

It's sad but true that it appears money is one thing that seems to be able to promote values and whatnot in society today. I guess one question I do have for the minister is this: what is being done about harassment of women in the workplace? Does the directorate have a responsibility in this area?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Chair, the actual lead on workplace harassment is the Public Service Commission. Perhaps the member opposite should have better directed that question to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. Certainly, if anyone were to approach the Women's Directorate, they would be referred to the lead agency, the Public Service Commission, or perhaps even PSAC, their respective union.

Mr. Edzerza: I thank the minister for that answer. I suspected that that is where it would go, but I feel strongly that there should be more focus in this area by the Women's Directorate to ensure that that is part of protecting women's equality. I guess probably some of the questions I do have are going to fall outside again, but I will raise it for the record and maybe the Women's Directorate can start looking at some of these issues because they do drastically affect the mental, spiritual and emotional health of women. That's what it is all about -- is trying to ensure that women's lives are made more comfortable and they are more accepted in society.

I know there are a lot of single mothers throughout the Yukon. My heart goes out to these individuals because I've witnessed first-hand how hard a time they have in being responsible for everything. I wonder if the Women's Directorate has ever thought about maybe finding a way to intervene and help the single mothers, for example, perhaps obtain respite once in awhile and, if not, could they lobby the Public Service Commission on some of these issues?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to elaborate a bit further on the member opposite's earlier comments regarding workplace harassment. Through the Public Service Commission, we have a workplace harassment office. We also have a work diversity office -- I seem to recall that's the correct terminology for that office -- and our government created that particular unit in the Public Service Commission. They do some very good work in terms of reducing barriers to employment for women, aboriginal people, and people with disabilities, working to make the Yukon government a better service provider.

There are a number of workplace initiatives in place to create a harassment-free environment that respects the dignity and self-esteem of every employee. I seem to recall there are specific provisions through our collective agreement with both YEU and YTA, including letters of understanding, coordinating with our policies -- I refer to the workplace harassment prevention policies.

There are also separate courses made available, offered through the Public Service Commission as the lead agency -- a respectful workplace and promoting a respectful workplace as well. I know that those have been well-received, and more and more employees continue to access those particular resources.

I know that resources continue to be enhanced in the workplace diversity office and so forth.

On the Women's Directorate front, part of the orientation for Yukon government employees is a bit of information being made available about gender-inclusive analysis and the good work that is being done through the policy work within each of the departments.

We have been able to take much of this leadership by developing initiatives to strengthen the integration of gender-based analysis throughout government. We offer training courses in gender-inclusive analysis through the Public Service Commission for various employees throughout the government. Again, it has been very well-received and it is very much appreciated.

As I mentioned earlier, we're also part of the orientation to new employees. We have been able to develop new presenta-

tions for the branch to use and make available information about gender-inclusive analysis to new government staff as well. We've also been able to produce a guide -- an actual, official guide to gender-inclusive analysis. We've also undertaken a needs assessment survey on training in gender-inclusive analysis just to see if we're doing a sufficient amount of work there.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that we have also been working through the Department of Education in developing the gender equity in public schools policy. That was a policy that was developed about 10 years ago, and we have been working with the Department of Education on implementing a gender studies course at the high school level. That's a very exciting initiative and, as I understand it, this particular course would enable high school students to explore their place in the world around them and to examine issues like the media, the body image, women's history, gender stereotyping and so forth. We're working with the B.C. Ministry of Education as well, just to ensure that it is accredited.

Again, we'll be working with the Department of Education further to develop northern, Yukon-based content that makes it applicable and very relevant to Yukon, including First Nations. So that's a very exciting initiative.

In terms of the member opposite's comments with respect to single moms, I know that there are a number of different efforts being worked on again through our front-line delivery agencies housed within the Department of Health and Social Services, as well as the departments of Justice and Education. It's all-encompassing.

The Minister of Health and Social Services made reference to childcare options. Certainly, one of the many important platform commitments was to make childcare more available, accessible and affordable. I certainly know first-hand that that is an issue in the territory. We will continue to work with our childcare providers and parents to ensure that we are able to meet many of these needs.

There is a lot of good work being done with respect to our departments and we will continue to work with those frontline service deliveries to ensure that we are able to meet some of these pressing needs in our communities.

Mr. Edzerza: Well, I do know that there is a collaboration agreement that was developed between Health and Social Services, Justice, Education and the Women's Directorate. That is why I am on this line of questioning because I believe through that collaboration agreement the door has been opened for the Women's Directorate to directly question these departments and ensure that some of the concerns that are not really out in the public can be addressed.

In the spirit of moving things along, this will be my final question: it is to ask the minister if any dialogue has taken place with these departments with regard to women's issues and whether or not the minister can lobby the other ministers to ensure that some of these issues are dealt with. Also, the final comment would be not a question but a comment: I do know that the minister is very capable of being able to stand on her own in Cabinet meetings, and to really get more money next year for this program, because I think it is dearly needed.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll take that as a compliment. I think we have been able to address many of the needs in our communities, not just Women's Directorate or Tourism and Culture or Justice but, all across the board, we have been able to work to address the pressing social and economic needs in our communities.

Maybe I'll just leave it at that. We will continue to work very closely with our departments. As the former minister, the member opposite, would recall, we are very engaged on a number of different fronts. I just spoke of working with the Public Service Commission on gender-inclusive analysis across the board, women in trades, gender studies in our classrooms and working with the Department of Justice to address family violence in our communities. Substance abuse is another important issue that we have been working with our many stakeholders to address, including young women at risk. We've been actively engaged in the review of the *Children's Act*.

We have corrections reform, the priority housing policy through Yukon Housing Corporation and working with aboriginal women in making land claims training available. We have been working with a number of different departments on violence prevention and education.

We have been working with *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, looking at impacts on women during various stages of proposals being reviewed.

We have been and will continue to be very active as that is our job.

Mr. Elias: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines of Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

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

Chair: Mr. Elias has requested the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all lines of Vote 11, Women's Directorate, cleared or carried, as required. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,161,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$12,000 agreed to

Women's Directorate agreed to

Chair: Is it the wish of members to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

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

Department of Education

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education. We will now proceed with general debate.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's my honour and pleasure to rise in the House today to present the 2007-08 budget for the Department of Education.

This is the first Education budget in this government's second mandate, and I'm pleased to say that this budget is reflective of the good work we've done in the past. What we've begun is very good, and this budget builds upon it. Our approach in developing this year's budget has been to focus on what we are doing and to continue to do it well.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$125,878,000. Mr. Chair, as you can imagine, careful planning for this kind of Education spending is critical to ensure that government resources are used wisely.

Before I speak to the numbers behind the 2007-08 budget, I'd like to speak about what is driving this year's budget: Education's mandate, vision, goals and activities that support the government's key commitment to a better quality of life, the environment and the economy.

Mr. Chair, our vision is for all Yukoners to have the knowledge, skills, opportunities and ability to participate effectively in their work and their communities and to promote a love of lifelong learning. I think it's important to pause and reflect on the vision that's stated. This is one of the key driving forces in the department -- indeed, the direction that government has set for education. I would like to pause there and allow the members opposite to comment on the vision. I think it's important that, if we can come to some kind of consensus in this Assembly and some kind of agreement that this is a vision that is suitable for the territory, I think that will be very helpful in going forward with the debate. So I'd like to hear from the members opposite about the vision, that being for all Yukoners to have the knowledge, skills, opportunities and the ability to participate effectively in their work and in their communities and to promote a love of lifelong learning. I'd like to hear if they find that that's an acceptable vision for education in the territory.

Mr. Fairclough: Is the minister finished with his opening remarks? I would like to go into debate on this department. I'll give him the opportunity to finish his remarks?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: What I am trying to do here is to work with the members of the opposition. We have all made a commitment to do that -- to work better in the Assembly, to try to work more productively for all Yukoners. I am trying to establish a common ground with the members opposite. I'd like to find out if they concur with the vision of education or not.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, this might be a surprise to the minister, but this isn't Question Period. It is general debate and we will debate the issues on our list. I want to make that really clear to the minister. He doesn't take breaks and he doesn't have to ask us questions. We are the ones who ask questions of the minister in this House. I'm giving the minister an opportunity here to finish his opening remarks and then I'll go into questioning on this department.

If the minister has more remarks before general debate, I would like to hear them. If that's it, indicate that is it and I will go into my questions.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It has been said many times in this Assembly that general debate is not a question-and-answer period; it's a debate. An involvement in debate is where both sides put forward their ideas. I've simply tabled the vision for education in Yukon.

Do the members of the Liberal Party or the NDP agree with that, or would they rather see the government go in a different direction or with a different vision? I think we can agree on this; at least I would hope so. This vision for education has been developed by involving others. I'd like to hear from the members of the opposition. Do they agree with that vision statement?

Mr. Fairclough: I don't believe the minister gets it yet. He has been newly elected and he doesn't have a lot of experience as a minister. If the minister has more remarks in the department -- if that's it -- I'll go into questioning of the minister. I'm giving him an opportunity to do it, but if he stands up and asks a question again, I'll go into questioning of the department and to heck with his opening remarks. What do we do here? If the minister doesn't want to do his job, then we'll go into questioning. I'm giving him that opportunity.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I believe our job as members of the Legislative Assembly is, number one, to act in the best interests of our constituents, and indeed all Yukoners, and, number two, I have a duty to put forward the budget from the Department of Education. One of the fundamental principles behind this budget is a forward-looking vision. The opposition members have a duty, as well, to their constituents and to all Yukoners.

I didn't think I was going to be asking too difficult a question of the NDP and the Liberals. Do they agree with the vision or not? It's a fundamental step. Can't they agree that the vision for the Department of Education is for all Yukoners to have knowledge, skills, opportunities and ability to participate effectively in their work and their communities and to promote a love of lifelong learning?

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to phrase this as a yes-or-no question -- can they agree with that or not? -- but I want to find out if they have a different opinion on this. If we're starting off on a different foot, fundamentally, I'd like to hear that. But if we can start off on a common ground, I think that would make our debate go a lot better.

I'm trying to work with the opposition to go forward and, hopefully, have a constructive debate on this budget. I'll continue. I do have quite a bit more in my opening remarks.

Mr. Chair, the principles that guide the work of the Department of Education are equity, respect, cooperation, diversity, innovation and leadership. Those are some of the principles that guide the decision making in the Department of Education. Do members of the opposition agree that those are good principles to use in decision making?

Mr. Fairclough: Does the minister not get it, Mr. Chair? We ask the questions on this side of the House, and since when does the government side ever really take seriously any comments that we make anyway? So why ask the ques-

tion? They are the government; they will do what they want to do. The minister is now asking for input, but he already has the direction he's going in anyway. So why ask the opposition these questions? We're the ones who are asking the minister about his spending authority that he's asking us to approve today, so the minister is already on the wrong foot. I think he's already feeling that perhaps he's in opposition. Shame on the minister for that.

We've given him the opportunity to make opening comments, and he says he's got more, and I'm going to give him that opportunity again, because we've asked for things like information. And guess what? The minister doesn't want to share it. He doesn't want to share that information with the public. So what makes the minister think that by asking and getting information from us on this side of the House that it would direct the way in which he is directing the department now when information is being kept from the public? If the member opposite is finished with his opening comments, then we'll continue. But he's not going to get anywhere with us by trying to ask us questions. He's the government; he's the minister, Mr. Chair, and he will be listening to the questions from this side of the House. I'm not sure what his agenda is here now, but I'm hoping that he would respect the process of this House and follow the commitment and the promise they made to the public to improve decorum in this House.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I think all Yukoners have a higher expectation of this Assembly. I think Yukoners expect that when a debate happens, it involves one side giving information and the other side giving information, discussion on the issue, a discussion about positions, allowing the principles and the beliefs behind these debates to come through.

I do want to take into consideration the thoughts and opinions of the opposition. Mr. Chair, all I have done is to ask the member opposite if he agrees with the vision of education, if he agrees with some of the principles that guide it.

It is a debate in this Assembly and I want to find out if the opposition agrees or disagrees. Perhaps the members from the New Democratic Party or the leader of the Liberal Party would put forward their thoughts on this. Do they agree that the vision for education for the Yukon is one for all Yukoners to have the knowledge, skills, opportunities and ability to participate effectively in their work and their communities and to promote a love of lifelong learning? Can we get some consensus in this Assembly that that is the appropriate vision for education? Or are they going to disagree?

Mr. Fairclough: Isn't that interesting? Sitting back and watching the whole Question Period with the opposition trying to get answers from the government side and we get stonewalled day after day after day -- and the minister is coming forward with questions to us? Shame on the minister. We are talking about the Department of Education's budget and this is general debate.

The House leader has something to say, direction to give to the minister. We know, for example, the Premier has some control over this department -- ultimate control.

Again, one more time, if the minister does not want to continue his opening remarks, I'll go straight into questions that we

do have for the minister. If he wants clarification on the direction of this department and which way to go and the principles that he just listed, then take it to the public -- be open, transparent and accountable. Maybe those are not words that Yukon Party government is very used to these days, but that is the advice I would give them -- take it to the public.

What happened to all the remarks that were made through the *Education Act*? Now we have the education reform, trying to reform our education system. The public will talk. Don't hide the information. Do the job as a minister. Outline what you have in your departments and we'll critique it.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I'm just going to go on record. I'm trying to work cooperatively with the members of the opposition. I'm trying to find out if they agree with the vision of education or not, and they have refused to make a comment about it to say they agree or disagree.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, the member opposite is saying, "You're the minister." I would remind the members opposite that they are elected representatives of their community, and if they have an opinion -- which I hope they do -- on the vision of education, I'm requesting they share it with all Yukoners and this Assembly.

I'll continue, Mr. Chair.

As we go forward with this debate, I do hope the members opposite will put forward their thoughts, ideas and concerns, but if we can't even have a discussion about the vision of education, I'm very frustrated by that.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member of the NDP is saying, "Lay it out one more time."

The vision of education is for all Yukoners to have the knowledge, skills, opportunities and ability to participate effectively in their work and their communities and to promote a love of lifelong learning. That's the vision this government is putting forward. It has been worked on with quite a few folks.

I'm not making a commitment that, if they come up and say something different, we'll change it immediately, but I will certainly take it under advisement.

If the members have something else they would like to offer to the vision for education, please share it.

Mr. Cardiff: I have to agree with the member for Mayo-Tatchun that we would normally ask the questions, not the minister. For the record, I can buy into that vision; I can also buy into everything that was in the *Education Act*, because it was brought forward by an NDP government close to 17 years ago or more. I also buy into a process that looks at the *Education Act*, makes changes to it that improve education for Yukoners, but also a process that is fair, open and allows for the full disclosure of information that is on the public record, basically. I'm talking about those so-called "position papers".

The minister wants to consult with the public about the future of education. I don't want to get too deeply into this. The reality is that the information that I've been asking for -- the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has been asking for, the Leader of the Third Party has been asking for, even people on the steering committee are saying should be public -- is information that has

evolved over 30 years and recommendations that have been made time after time after time. I think the public has a right to hear that and they have a right to see it. That's what is in those papers and what they have a right to see: all the work that has been done for almost two years now. I'll remind the minister that the education reform project started in August of 2005. It did some consultation with stakeholders; it took all that information and compiled it. That's the information that should be made public.

I can buy into a process that does that, and I can buy into a vision of education that includes the public having access to that information and the public being able to decide what the vision for education is -- not the minister, not me, not the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

So I've answered the minister's question, and now he can answer mine: does the minister support this statement -- this is out of the land claims and self-government agreement of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in. By the most-favoured-nation clause, at least four other First Nations have agreed that it will go into their agreements.

So I'll read this statement: "In relation to education, upon the request of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in, the Tr'ondek Hwech'in and the Yukon shall" -- not "may", they "shall" -- "during the term of a self-government financial transfer agreement, negotiate the division and sharing of responsibility for the design, delivery and administration of programs delivered within the traditional territory relating to Indian student counselling, cross-cultural teacher and administrator orientation, composition of teaching staff, early childhood, special and adult education curriculum, kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum, and the evaluation of teachers, administrators and other employees."

Does the minister support that statement, and will the government support that position? That's the position that First Nations are taking. They don't necessarily want the Premier's alternative to this, which is the drawdown of education -- two separate school systems. They want to participate in the public school system, and they have a right to. It's right in the agreement.

So does the minister agree with that or not -- yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne for having the courage to enter this debate. I thought it was a fairly simple, straightforward one about the vision of education and whether or not they supported it, or if they saw education going in a different direction. I appreciate the member's comments.

As representatives in our public government system, our constituents have placed their trust in us to come to this Assembly and make decisions. One of those decisions is obviously the budget, which is based on principles, values, objectives, the foundation and the vision. I wanted to establish a bit of a dialogue with members in the opposition to find out their thoughts on education and where education should go in the territory.

Yes, Mr. Chair, there certainly is an education reform project that is well underway, and it has been tasked with identifying key issues and goals in education and outlining barriers and

recommending strategies to remove those barriers. We are embarking on a process. We are working with the Council of Yukon First Nations on this, with other First Nations and indeed with our partners in education. So I would applaud the member opposite for getting up and saying that he could agree with the vision. Is it a perfect system? No, it's not. It's one that's always in a state of reform or change or update. In fact, when we get into the line-by-line debate of the Department of Education, you will see where the Department of Education is responding to many of the concerns and issues raised by Yukoners. It may be First Nations wanting to have a say in curriculum design; we'll talk about that when we get into the First Nations programming and partnership unit. We can talk about the grade 5 curriculum and the grade 12 self-governance curriculum. We'll look at where the government is responding on these issues. We will talk about teacher and administration cross-cultural orientation and how that is happening. We will go into very specific detail about the programs that we have in place to do that if the member wishes.

The member has asked me specifically if I will agree with a signed First Nation self-government agreement. Well, of course, Mr. Chair. It was signed off by the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the self-governing First Nation. There are many of these aspects that the Department of Education is currently doing and many more that the department is looking at doing. As well, the education reform process is looking at how we involve First Nations and communities in the decision making. We are committed to doing a lot of these steps already. We're doing it. The department has been doing it, discussions are happening, negotiations are happening, and product is happening.

It doesn't sound like I am going to have much luck in getting the Official Opposition to put forward their comments or thoughts or whether or not they agree with our vision of education, so I will continue.

The first of our key strategic goals, before outlining the resources the Department of Education will be requesting for our various programs and services for the Yukon, is to support the lifelong learning process, including acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills for all Yukon learners so that they may participate effectively in work and their community. This goal is realized through our delivery of public education from kindergarten to grade 12 for over 5,000 students and through our support of post-secondary education.

Over 1,000 graduates of the public school system are currently receiving some kind of financial support from the Department of Education to attain post-secondary education or training. I think this alone is a very strong endorsement of the quality of our kindergarten-to-12 system, never mind the steady, gradual increases in student success rates we are seeing thanks to data from the student achievement tests over the past seven years.

The Yukon College student population is approximately 38-percent First Nation and this too is a positive indicator of our work.

In addition to providing financial support to post-secondary students, the Department of Education also adminis-

ters funds for the delivery of post-secondary education and training through Yukon College and community training funds. Community training funds are an important source of formal and informal trades training.

Our second strategic goal is to respect and strengthen the partnership of the Department of Education with teachers, parents, students, First Nation governments, school councils, Yukon francophones, the Roman Catholic diocese, the labour and business sectors, and the larger community.

Every day, the work we do is focused on enhancing the participation of our partners in education. We do this through a variety of ways: through our support of school council conferences, education reform, the First Nation Education Advisory Committee, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the literacy strategy review and the school planning study.

This work in building partnerships and engaging our partners in education often involves providing them with the financial support they need to build capacity so they can have a voice in planning and development processes. We value our good working relationship with Yukon First Nations and the francophone community, and we will continue to work on this area.

Our third strategic goal is to facilitate youth access in transitions to work or post-secondary education through the provision of adult education, training and employment programs. We see this goal as an important step toward building tomorrow's workforce and economy. Our total support for Yukon College this year is \$16 million and this is a reflection of how much we value this northern post-secondary institution.

Yukon College's academic and skills-based programs offer a wide variety of training opportunities to Yukoners. There are challenges for young people trying to break into the labour force, whether those challenges they face involve getting more education or acquiring the job-ready skills they need to secure and maintain employment.

To that end, we run the student training and employment program and the summer career placement program to help students earn money to pay for school and to help them acquire transferable skills.

Our fourth strategic goal is to manage resources effectively and efficiently. There are many groups requiring support from the Department of Education. Through smart fiscal management and thorough consultation, such as the literacy strategy review and education reform, we will make sure the resources are allocated where the need is greatest and the impact most meaningful.

The Department of Education works in partnership with the federal government under our labour market development and immigration agreements. Under a contribution agreement, Education co-manages \$4 million that is invested annually in the adult education and skills programs. In terms of immigration, we work with the federal government to administer the Yukon nominee program to fast-track immigration applications and the immigrant settlement services provided for newcomers to Canada.

Mr. Chair, I'd now like to speak directly to what the budget means in terms of the 2007-08 capital and operation and maintenance budgets for the Department of Education.

First, I'd like to begin by addressing the capital portion of this year's budget. The capital budget for 2007-08 is \$9,984,000. This budget reflects the fact that we are wrapping up some major capital projects and entering into a planning phase for our next series of capital projects.

As we are putting the finishing touches on the new school in Carmacks this spring, we are laying the foundation -- metaphorically speaking -- for several other capital projects involving our schools. This spring, we continued our extensive consultation with the public to facilitate the building and refurbishment of two Whitehorse schools. We will be receiving a final report from Holdfast Consulting, and this will help us move forward in providing the best possible education facilities for Yukon students in the near future.

This government is committed to being fiscally responsible with the hard-earned tax dollars of Yukoners. In the budget, you will see more new initiatives in operation and maintenance while this government completes the necessary planning needed to build the best schools. After the necessary planning is done, Yukoners can expect to see our commitment to building and enhancing Yukon schools reflected in the coming years.

Under the 2007-08 Department of Education capital budget, this government is requesting the following funds: to complete the new school in Carmacks, we are requesting \$236,000. The new school in Carmacks will be open for classes starting in 2007. The objective is to ensure that student learning is not disrupted by the move from one school to the next. This is now a project endorsed and supported by the community and is an educational facility that we can certainly all be proud of. I know members have seen the construction of it. Those who have seen it will agree, I am sure, that it is a beautiful facility and one that I trust will meet the community's needs for many years to come. This new school will serve kindergarten to grade 12-level students, and we are waiting to hear from the whole community on how they would like to use the multi-purpose space available at the school.

At F.H. Collins Secondary School, we are requesting \$367,000 to upgrade the ventilation in the industrial arts wing and a further \$158,000 to make improvements to the fire alarm system. Improvements to Whitehorse Elementary are budgeted at \$420,000. The Department of Education is currently proceeding with design and construction of the Whitehorse Elementary School drop-off, bus lay-by bay and staff parking improvements. These improvements are targeted at improving student safety. Now, Mr. Chair, I've met with the school council for Whitehorse Elementary on a couple of different occasions. They identified this as a key priority, as their highest priority for their school. Many would agree that this is something that has been an issue at that school for a long time, and I am very pleased that this government is able to work with the school council and to respond to the needs and develop a strategy and a plan that will address those things.

We expect that this project will be completed this summer in time for students to come back to school.

For general site improvements and recreation development throughout Yukon schools, the department is requesting \$250,000. Under our rotational school soccer field replacement and upgrade program, the department is requesting \$50,000 again this year. In order to accommodate the cost for the Christ the King Elementary School roof repair, the department is asking for \$315,000. \$472,000 is requested for the Jack Hulland Elementary School water service replacement. To replace the gym floor at St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction, the department is requesting \$210,000. For ongoing, routine projects such as school-initiated renovations, special needs infrastructure, various school facilities renovations, indoor air quality improvements, energy management projects, capital maintenance repairs and school painting, the department is requesting \$1.9 million.

Also, under our capital budget, the Department of Education is requesting funds to support our instructional programs. \$207,000 is requested to support our distance education programs.

Long distance education and technology-assisted learning programs are very important when you consider some of the geographical challenges we face in delivering education in our vast territory. Where our school populations are small, distance education and technology-assisted learning can help to ensure that students are able to enrol in the courses they need to make the desired transition to post-secondary education. I am very proud of our distance and technology-assisted learning programs in the Yukon.

Our students, on average, have the best access to computers in their schools. When compared to students across Canada, according to a 2004 national report issued by Statistics Canada on information and communications technology, they found that on average every 2.9 students in the Yukon have access to a computer with high-speed Internet at their school.

Mr. Chair, the national ratio of students to computers is 5.5:1. We have video conferencing facilities in all Yukon schools, which is a definite asset to student learning. Video conferencing is a very important component of our distance learning system at the department, as it connects teachers and students in the communities and also gives schools access to experts from Outside, including Canadian astronauts. We saw this not too long ago when Canadian astronaut Julie Pyette was here in the Yukon and that presentation was shared with schools in Vancouver and Ottawa. This was a bit of a turnaround where it was the schools in the other national and provincial capitals that were watching what was going on in the Yukon. It was a great event and I was glad to see so many people out talking to this astronaut and finding out how engaging space, science, engineering and technology could be. It was a great experience for many of the kids and many of the adults as well.

I'm really happy to see that the Yukon's education system is able to put on activities such as this -- to attract such speakers and to engage them to come to the Yukon, to give of their time, to work and encourage our Yukon students.

To provide school support for information technology systems, the department is requesting \$444,000. For routine maintenance on the EDUNet system, the department is requesting \$138,000. To improve and enhance school-based information technology, the department is requesting \$839,000.

Mr. Chair, I believe investing in this kind of infrastructure is money well-spent. To purchase school-based equipment, \$425,000 is requested. \$280,000 is requested to continue the replacement of our school vans. \$50,000 is requested for special education equipment.

The government is also committed to continuing its support of advanced education through the 2007-08 capital budget. Yukon College is the territory's primary purveyor of post-secondary education. We are very proud of this northern institution. We are very grateful for the quality education opportunities that they provide Yukoners.

Yukon College is a leader in trades education in the territory, and they are soon to open the School of Visual Arts in partnership with Dawson City Arts Society and the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation. They offer a full complement of academic courses, as well as certificates and diplomas. They also offer degrees through articulation agreements with other post-secondary institutions in Canada and Alaska.

\$750,000 is requested to support Yukon College capital expenditure. This sum represents our annual base support for Yukon College. A further \$101,000 will be allocated to assist Yukon College in furnishing the new student residence. The new residence will be a real asset to the college's education community once they are finished.

Under the 2007-08 capital budget, the department is seeking a further \$534,000 for Yukon College trades education infrastructure improvements. These funds are made available through a federal transfer under the Government of Canada's post-secondary education infrastructure trust, Bill C-48. In addition to promoting the skilled trades as a smart career option in working with Yukon employers as they develop skilled trades training opportunities in the workplace, we are also working with Yukon College to ensure that they have the best support they need to provide the best educational facilities possible for our apprentices.

Mr. Chair, I believe my time is done. I do have some other comments, though, regarding the operation and maintenance budget.

Mr. Fairclough: It would have been nice to hear the opening remarks from the minister in one piece, instead of having to be subjected to hearing it in three separate sections. Perhaps that's inexperience on the part of the minister. It would have been nice to have heard that all in one piece, so that we could follow along and ask our questions, because our first questions could perhaps have been answered in the rest of the speech -- too bad that we were subjected to that. Perhaps the minister got started on the wrong foot, but let's continue, because we're interested in education -- the public is. After all, we've had almost seven years of consultations with the public.

I know the member opposite is asking questions of us regarding the principles of education that the department is guided by -- or the minister is guided by. I don't know what the

minister would like us to say that would have given him direction on this or if it would have even resulted in any change in the direction the government is going.

Perhaps if the minister had tabled some information that we requested, we could give more informed direction to the minister. If he had tabled his secret reports, for example, perhaps we could move ahead on this matter.

Let's go back a little bit. I'd like to take the minister back a little bit, his party being in government for the last five years -- four and a half years. Education has been a big issue. First Nations have raised it, they've talked about it, they want change, they want improvements. This is an issue across Canada -- I know the minister is going to say that too.

They want some changes; they want some reform of our education system. That is what they wanted. How did that happen? How did the Yukon Party even get into that position of taking on a project such as this? Well, I'll tell the minister, just in case he forgot.

I know the minister might remember a couple of demonstrations that took place outside of this Legislature. Does everybody remember that? The reason why that happened was because this Yukon Party did not respect Yukoners in general and First Nations in the education process. They did not respect them as having input or even as a senior government. That is why they had to demonstrate outside of this House -- twice -- with support from people across the territory. What did the Yukon Party do? Well, they had to think about it because this was a very, very, very serious matter. You don't get people in the Yukon demonstrating a whole lot against government and it happened twice here -- by First Nation people.

I'd like the minister to picture in his mind what some of those signs said. Does the minister remember them? That was pretty serious. So the government decided they had better do some education reform; work with First Nations and look at the education reform project.

I just want to remind the minister that people don't forget those types of things -- not the way they are treated -- and they will voice themselves again whether it is through members on this side of the House or directly through their own First Nations or the community school councils or whatnot. I hope the minister does not forget that.

So the government forms an education reform project which is supposed to be at arm's-length, according to the members opposite. Where is that going now? I do have some questions in regard to the education reform.

I'd like to get there. I'd like to hear what the minister's thoughts are about the Premier's position on this whole matter. But first of all, I'd like to ask the minister this -- and the third party was going on about that a bit. It's regarding the self-government agreement of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in, section 17.7. The Premier said -- and I don't believe this is right, so I'm going to ask the minister -- that they are already in negotiations with Tr'ondek Hwech'in under section 17.7. Is that correct? And can the minister tell us when the meetings take place and how many times have they met with them, specifically on their self-government agreement, under section 17.7?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The member opposite has just characterized my beginning comments as "getting off on the wrong foot". Mr. Chair, what I did was state what this government sees as the vision for education and asked if members opposite agreed with that. I sincerely believe that that would be a constructive discussion to have. Perhaps we could have found some common ground here.

Members from the third party said, "Yes, they could buy into that." But I don't know how the Official Opposition feels. I'm not even sure if we can have a common ground.

The vision provides significant direction toward the mission, toward establishing the goals, and then ultimately to the programming decisions that we make and the budget items that we have in here. I thought it would have been a productive discussion -- a bit of legislative renewal, of trying to work with the opposition. But the member opposite has characterized that as being a waste of this Assembly's time -- why bother because we weren't going to listen to their comments anyway?

Well, frankly, Mr. Chair, if that's the belief of the members opposite, then I question why they would even want to show up or come into this Assembly. If they have so little regard for this Assembly, why participate?

Mr. Chair, the purpose of the debate today is to discuss and debate -- it's not a question-and-answer period, but indeed a debate -- the Department of Education's budget for the year.

Before the members pass judgement on it, I'd like to provide them with some more information about what's actually in the budget, some of the accomplishments of the Department of Education, some of the directions we are planning to go in, and maybe that will clear up some of the misunderstandings that members have about where the Department of Education is at and the direction that it's going in.

We've had many discussions in this Assembly about the increased economic activity in the territory, the need for more skilled people to participate in our workforce. One of the tools that we in government and we in the Yukon have to prepare Yukoners to be able to take advantage of new opportunities is the education programs through Yukon College. Some of the programs there, which I know are very near and dear to the hearts of some of the members opposite, are the apprentice programs. Indeed, I think that there are journey-level people on all sides of this Assembly.

I'm pleased to report that apprentice levels at Yukon College are now at very high levels. Enrolment has increased by 90 percent over the last four years, and the government wants to support this growth. That's because ensuring the Yukon's labour market has an adequate supply of skilled tradespeople is an important step to ensuring the long-term health of our economy.

We'll also work to address this through the community training funds. The community training funds will be renewed at their previous levels. The department is requesting \$1.5 million to support localized training initiatives throughout the Yukon. Community training funds often provide important informal training in the skilled trades and other vocation-related activities. Sometimes short-term training opportunities in communities are just what people need to be able to seize

local economic opportunities, and that's just the gap that the community training funds filled.

Mr. Chair, to support the development and the completion of a student financial assistant on-line system, we are requesting \$35,000. This on-line system is going to greatly improve the ease and efficiency of the application process that Yukon post-secondary students undertake each year while they are attending school. Students will be able to submit applications on-line, which will speed up processing times. Students will also be able to check the status of their applications on-line at any time.

This is very important, because many of our students -- I believe we have a little over 1,200 students involved in post-secondary education -- are attending institutions across North America. I believe there are over 100 different institutions that Yukoners attend. They can graduate from the Yukon's public school system and then apply to schools virtually across North America -- any institution that is accredited in their jurisdiction is acceptable to the Yukon. We have Yukoners that go to the centre of excellence in education for their particular field from coast to coast to coast and, indeed, off the coast. I know of a couple of instances where people attend educational centres in Hawaii. With many of our students studying across North America, it's important that they have ease in accessing student finances.

To continue our support of the Yukon Work InfoNet, or YuWIN, we are requesting \$35,000. This Web site is a great tool for anyone seeking employment in the territory. Not only does it function as a resource for all jobs advertised in the local media, it provides information on career planning and job search tips.

In order to provide funds for youth-at-risk initiatives, we are requesting \$200,000. These funds are provided to Yukon College to run the Yukon employment strategy, the YES program, at various campuses throughout the territory. Developed in partnership with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the program enables Yukon College to host an 18-week program that targets youth-at-risk between the ages of 15 and 30.

These youth are considered at risk, because they have previously had difficulty obtaining the work experience necessary to enter the workforce. The YES program consists of 14 weeks of subsidized work and four weeks of pre-employment training and post-work counselling. The federal government also contributes up to \$150,000 toward this program annually.

The 2007-08 operation and maintenance budget will see support for several new initiatives and increased funding we are introducing this year. Our most important work at the Department of Education is to ensure that Yukoners have the skills and education they need to support their families and to participate fully in their communities and the workplace.

The \$115,894,000 dedicated under this year's operation and maintenance for the Department of Education will help us to support Yukoners on their journey of lifelong learning.

First, I would like to address the funds the department is seeking on behalf of advanced education. Through a partnership with the federal government, the Yukon government is

pleased to introduce two new initiatives targeted at labour market development. To support the targeted initiative for older workers and the immigration portal, the federal government is providing \$600,000. I am confident that both of these projects will have considerable impact on our labour force development in the Yukon. The targeted initiative for older workers will provide Yukon College training geared to re-engage older people in the workforce. When we look at the demographics of our population in Canada, it is clear that certain populations are facing greater challenges than others when it comes to engaging in the workforce. The targeted initiative for older workers will help people 55 and older to gain the technology and life skills they need to secure and maintain employment. Our older workers are a resource that requires further development -- something this new program will provide. Also, this kind of project has the potential to have a very positive impact on the quality of life of participating older workers.

The immigration portal project will involve the development of an on-line resource to effectively provide immigration information to potential immigrants. When people from outside of Canada are looking at immigrating to our country, we know the more streamlined and accessible we can make our information, the more success we will have in increasing our immigration rates.

The immigration portal will have Yukon-specific information available to anyone interested in immigrating to Canada and living in the territory. This government is committed to reducing immigration red tape and fast-tracking immigration applications so Yukon businesses can have access to the workers they need to flourish.

In addition to the targeted initiatives for older workers program and the immigration portal program agreements, the Department of Education also works in partnership with the federal government under our existing labour market development and immigration agreements.

Under a contribution agreement, Education co-manages \$4 million that is invested annually in adult education and skills programs. To continue our support in alleviating the Yukon College pension shortfall, the government is requesting \$866,000.

A further \$270,000 will be provided to Yukon College to implement the foundation year of the School of Visual Arts in Dawson City. This funding, in addition to the capital funding to which I referred earlier, is an important part of this government's support for Yukon College and the excellent programming it provides to Yukoners.

An additional \$104,000 is requested under the 2007-08 budget to support the very successful Journey Far carvers program administered by Sundog. This program is making a meaningful impact in the lives of participants, all of whom have been identified as at-risk youth. It's a unique opportunity for them to use and develop their artistic abilities while receiving some guidance on things like life skills and how to market their work.

Because the government is committed to indexing the Yukon student grant to the actual cost of living, we are requesting \$102,000. When Yukon students are making an effort to

improve themselves through post-secondary education and training, we want to ensure that the financial barriers to completing their education are minimized. Indexing the Yukon student grant to the cost of living is a support we can provide that really makes a difference to the success of our students studying both in the Yukon and outside the Yukon.

This program complements other programs we run, such as the student training and employment program and the summer career placement program, which pay students a good wage for summer work and provide them with the skills they need to enter the workforce.

To support apprenticeship training in the territory, the Government of Yukon continues its partnership with the federal government. As a result, \$200,000 is reflected in this budget for apprenticeship training, a sum that is entirely recoverable from the federal government. This, in addition to the funding for trades education infrastructure at Yukon College campuses, is going to make a real impact on how we are able to train apprentices in the territory. This government is proud to be part of the solution to the skilled labour shortage.

Now I would like to speak to a number of initiatives that will support the work of the public schools in 2007-08. I am pleased to say that the operation and maintenance budget will continue to support all new public school initiatives introduced by this government during its last mandate. The Individual Learning Centre, launched in February 2005, continues to be a complete success in re-engaging high school dropouts back into lifelong learning. The full-day kindergarten and the home tutor program will continue to receive support under this year's budget. I know at least one member on the opposite benches has asked me about the home tutor program, and I am happy to say that the home tutor program will continue to receive support under this year's budget. These initiatives have proven to be very important and meaningful for people throughout the territory.

Other programs that the government has supported through its last mandate will also continue to receive funding. Reading Recovery and the Wilson Reading System are very important learning tools for school communities, and they give students a solid start in school learning. We continue to receive very good feedback on all these programs.

In order to accommodate a base adjustment for the 2006-07 year for the Yukon Teachers Association collective agreement, the Department of Education is requesting \$781,000 in this year's budget. Also, to support the Yukon Teachers Association collective agreement in the 2007-08 fiscal year, we are requesting \$1.6 million.

Mr. Chair, we believe that our teachers are at the heart of learning, and we want to take great steps and efforts to attract and retain the best teachers that we can to the Yukon.

To continue our support of the canines for safer schools program, we are requesting \$77,000. This is a part of a very important drug abuse pilot project brought forward by the Porter Creek Secondary School Council. We are very excited about working with the council on this community project.

As we discussed in this Assembly, the Assembly supported this initiative and recognized that there may be hurdles to over-

come with the project, but we are all committed to seeing a reduction of substance abuse in the school. The Department of Education will continue to work with the Porter Creek Secondary School Council to find solutions and effective programs.

\$419,000 is requested to support the facility management agreement with the Department of Highways and Public Works, property management branch.

\$613,000 is requested under this year's budget to cover the increased cost of heating our schools and administrative buildings. And, as Yukoners are aware, fuel costs are rising and our schools are currently affected by those rising costs.

A further \$1 million is requested to support teachers and paraprofessional full-time equivalent increases in Yukon classrooms.

The Department of Education and the Council of Yukon First Nations will continue our joint commitment to the education reform process, and that is reflected in this year's budget. The education reform project will complete their project this September. The 2007-08 project budget is \$392,000, and the total expenditure for all years will be approximately \$1.6 million, which is within the estimated budget.

The Department of Education is requesting \$223,000 to support the Council of Yukon First Nations in their delivery of education support services. This line of funding represents a \$53,000 increase to support the operating cost of the Yukon Native Language Centre and \$170,000 of new funding to provide salaries for support staff for Education.

At the Department of Education we have a very good working relationship with the Council of Yukon First Nations. Our staff attend the Chiefs Committee on Education meetings as well as meetings of the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee. These kinds of connections have greatly benefited both CYFN and the Department of Education because the lines of communication are open as we work to reach a common goal -- that being increased First Nation student success.

A number of Department of Education initiatives over the past few years are improving how we incorporate First Nation culture and values into the classroom. This year we will provide \$589,000 in funding to staff the Yukon First Nations programs and partnership unit at the Department of Education. I am pleased to say that this unit continues to grow and provide a unique and helpful service to the Department of Education and the larger education community in the Yukon. At the various meetings I have had with them, I have been very impressed with their passion, commitment and their involvement with and dedication to increasing educational opportunities for all Yukoners.

Also, the Yukon Native Language Centre itself will receive \$405,000 under this year's budget. This year we are increasing the funding to the Yukon First Nations elders in the school program by \$20,000. This program is integral to bringing the model of traditional learning into Yukon classrooms and making the classroom a more relevant place for many Yukon students.

Under this year's budget, we will also be providing \$15,000 for a counselling support worker for Champagne and

Aishihik First Nations and \$15,000 for a youth counsellor for the Teslin Tlingit Council.

To develop and expand First Nation curriculum and resource development we have committed over \$500,000 this year. A grade 5 unit on traditional governance and a grade 12 First Nations law and land course are currently under development.

In October 2005, the Department of Education published and launched the first early reader books created that focused on Yukon First Nations culture and traditional knowledge. We will be introducing more books to the series in the coming years.

All these materials are currently under development in partnership with the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee and its working groups.

\$20,240 is dedicated to train all new teachers in Yukon First Nations culture during our new teacher orientation in August every year. I believe this was an item that was just brought up: cross-cultural teaching and administrator orientation. There are some additional funds in the budget.

There are more good points to add.

Mr. Fairclough: Perhaps the minister could look at the more experienced ministers on that side of the House and maybe do the job of opening remarks when he has an opportunity, rather than breaking it into four parts. That's a change for the minister. I'm not sure why he's doing this, but in that 20 minutes, guess what? The minister didn't answer the question. I'm going to ask it again and I'm going to ask a slightly different one in that regard. The Premier said there are negotiations taking place with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in under section 17.7.

What involvement has the Department of Education had in these negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Member for Mayo-Tatchun is correct; I did break with tradition. I was trying to engage the members of the opposition in a discussion about the vision for education. It was obviously a mistake. I get the message from the members of the opposition that they do not want to debate a vision for education in this Assembly. Period. Full stop. Don't ever bring it back to this Assembly again. Don't even think about debating a vision for education with the members of the opposition. Mr. Chair, I get the message.

However, that will not prevent me from discussing a vision for education with Yukoners. That's an incredibly important part. The education system in the Yukon exists to serve our children, their future and our communities.

There's a dual role of education. It's to ensure our children can grow up to their fullest potential. I know this is covered in the preamble of the *Education Act*, and heaven forbid I should bring up the preamble or purpose of education in a debate on education, but it's in there. Education is to prepare our young people to take advantage of opportunities in the Yukon and to take advantage of and participate in our democratic system in our communities. It's also to ensure we have young people in our communities who are able to provide the services the community needs. For example, to ensure we have doctors and nurses, to ensure we have highway engineers and people to

build our roads, to ensure we have teachers to teach the next generation -- these are some of the objectives of Education.

Heaven forbid I should want to debate those with the members of the opposition. Let the record reflect that I tried. I tried to engage the members of the opposition in a debate about the vision behind education and about the goals. That's the whole foundation behind why we're here and the items in the budget.

I know the loyal opposition's duty is to oppose.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Now they tell me, no, it's not. The Leader of the Liberal Party is saying his duty is to ask questions. There's more to it than that. They have a duty to represent their constituents.

I'm not going to say they're not doing that, but what I'm going to say is we expect them to have a position that isn't just to say, "No, no, no. Our job is only to ask questions and it's your job to come up with answers."

Well, we're having a debate here, and a debate means that you put forward your information, your thoughts, your interest, your criteria of success. How will you measure the success of something? It isn't to simply ask questions without having an opinion of your own. And that, Mr. Chair, is what I was asking for: what is the opinion that the members from the opposition benches represent? I've got the message loud and clear: don't ever bring up the vision of education again.

I'm not always the quickest learner, so I might try this again. I might do it in the future, because I think it's beneficial to the direction of education in the territory.

Right now, the members in the opposition benches don't seem too interested in debating the budget as it's presented. Instead they are asking about a specific self-government agreement clause that was signed off by the Government of Canada, by the Government of Yukon and by the First Nation. I will certainly live up to the obligations and commitments that the government has made. If that means working with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in and having discussions with them, I certainly will. If they want a discussion about Indian student counselling, cross-cultural teaching and administration orientation, composition of teaching staff, early childhood and special education curriculum, kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum, and the evaluation of teachers, administrators and other employers, by all means we are open to have those dialogues.

I will add for the member opposite that the department has already had many of those dialogues and is putting forward many different opportunities to address a lot of these issues and concerns. We have some very important tools in our system now. We have teachers who listen to parents; we have principals who listen to parents; we have principals and teachers who work with school councils; we have the Department of Education that works with school councils; we have a First Nation Education Advisory Committee that meets regularly with the Department of Education.

We got a lot of tools out there, Mr. Chair. We need to learn better, all of us, how to use them. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has asked me how the community has an involvement in the selection of the principal. As I said in the Assembly

a week ago, the *Education Act* provides a responsibility for a school council to be involved in that selection process. It's in the act. There is a tool that's out there, so let's work on it.

This is a government that has made a commitment to work toward reforming education, to address the needs of the various different stakeholders and partners in education and to provide the best education system possible for Yukoners. I will say on the floor of this Assembly that we want to involve Yukoners in the education system. I also want to involve the members of the opposition in this debate, but they haven't been able to put forward a position or even comment. They seem to be fixated on the position that their duty is just to ask questions and that's it. Well, I would like to see more. Let them provide some options and put forward their opinions. What do they, in the opposition, stand for? Is it just to oppose or is there something they want to share? There is an opportunity in this Assembly and in this debate to share their ideas.

If they're going to say that there is something wrong, tell me why. What are the criteria with which they want to judge the system? It is easy just to oppose for opposition's sake and say that they don't like this or that part, so they will not agree with it. Come on, we can use this Assembly as a better tool than that. We can work with the members in the opposition and find a way for them to influence government. That is the whole point of this debate. It is to explain the situation and the rationale behind a decision. If they have concerns, I would like them to raise them, so that I can take them under advisement and find ways that I can address the system or change it in order to best respond to the needs they have brought forward.

I think that's how the system is supposed to work.

We do need to steer this debate back toward the budget and the budget of the Department of Education.

I apologize to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun that my remarks are taking longer than he expected or longer than is traditional. Yes, I tried a different approach to it, but I do want to get some feedback from the opposition benches on some of these initiatives. There is a lot of good stuff going on in the Department of Education. There are a lot of initiatives underway that members may not be aware of, so I think it's important to go through some of them and to look at them in detail.

I left off a moment ago talking about teacher orientation. We at the Department of Education recognize that teacher training and making people aware of the unique Yukon context is very important. For that reality, we have dedicated over \$20,000 to train all new Yukon teachers in Yukon First Nations culture during our new teacher orientations in August every fall.

Also, to provide cultural enhancement programming for Yukon schools, we will continue to provide over \$300,000 a year in funding. This includes funding to do everything from making mukluks to schools undertaking bison hunts. Many of the members of this Assembly have had an opportunity to go to some of these school feasts where it is a wonderful opportunity for the school to do a very important experiential type of program, to learn from the experience, to come back and share with their fellow students and with their community. It's a great example of a project that engages students, gets them to learn

by experience and teaches them the value of sharing and giving back to the community. We will continue to support cultural enhancement programs with a contribution of \$305,000.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cardiff: Point of order, Mr. Chair. I just want to cite something here. In the Standing Orders 19(b)(i), it says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member speaks to matters other than the question under discussion." I just want to make something clear to the minister. He is asking members of this House for permission to spend \$126 million of taxpayers' money and, without that authority, he can't spend anything, and he needs to remember that. The minister is stalling here today.

Chair: Order please. Could the member please specify what the point of order is?

Mr. Cardiff: I did, Mr. Chair: 19(b)(i). The minister was not speaking to the question, which is the budget. He is talking about whether or not we are engaging in debate; that is what he is doing. He is not answering questions that were put forward on behalf of Yukon people about why he should be given the authority to spend that money. He should stop the childish games and answer the questions that are being posed by the members in the Legislature.

I have been listening and, quite frankly, he wants to talk about what the use of the Assembly is and whether or not it is a valuable debate. It is his job to answer the questions. The matter under discussion is the budget, not whether or not we are having a good debate. I would urge the minister to answer the questions and get on with it.

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order, but if there were, it would be Standing Order 42(2), not 19(b)(i). I would urge all members to keep the general debate on the Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I will try to learn my lesson, that this floor of the Assembly is no place to discuss the vision for education, the goals of education, or the principles by which we should measure our system.

I will focus my attention now on the budget expenditures and try to convey how the Department of Education plans to spend the tax dollars it receives. I hope this satisfies the members of the opposition. I am trying to respect their position; I'm asking for it, but I'm sensing from them very strongly that they do not want to share with me information that I have asked for, but I will do my best now to answer their questions.

I'll provide a little bit of additional background on where the budget is heading. They raised some questions about how responsive the Department of Education is to the concerns raised by people of First Nation ancestry; I'm trying to respond to them. I'm detailing that there is over \$300,000 in our budget to provide for cultural enhancement programs. I don't know if the members opposite agree with this or not -- frankly, they've already decided that they're not going to share their opinions

with me. If they vote for the budget I will assume they are saying no to everything. I've asked for their opinion, but they don't want to give it. I will assume then if they vote no -- if that's how they choose to vote -- that they are saying no to everything.

Mr. Chair, in this budget we are requesting the support of the Assembly to spend \$540,000 on the Yukon native teacher education program. In addition to what I have already announced today -- funding for schools, teachers and programming -- the total Yukon government investment in First Nation education initiatives is over \$5 million.

Indeed, we have taken the concerns that have been raised with the Department of Education and have been raised with teachers, principals, administrators and elected officials very seriously. We are making changes in programming and changes in budgeting to respond to those needs.

Also, we are promoting and supporting the French language aspect of our education system. Promoting and supporting French language and culture is very important to the Department of Education. We are pleased at the development and progress of the late French immersion program at École Whitehorse Élémentary and the French intensive language program at Holy Family and Vanier. We continue to receive a lot of positive feedback on these programs.

Also, the department continues its support for the francophone school board. Recently we completed discussions with the francophone school board and, in response to concerns they have raised, we are working with them to develop an experiential learning program in French at the high school level. I am pleased to say that the department will be providing \$100,000 toward this program. This experiential learning program will be an exciting new initiative for École Émilie Tremblay, and we look forward to supporting the francophone school board through the development and delivery of the program.

Our experiential learning programs in English continually offer a unique opportunity for Yukon students. These programs are special, because they expand the conventional boundaries of the classroom to different hands-on learning environments like sailboats, mountain tops and theatres. We look forward to supporting the francophone school board in offering this kind of programming to its students.

I would like to thank my Cabinet colleagues and the Department of Education staff who were involved in the crafting of this blueprint for learning in the territory. I would also like to thank all Yukoners who continue to express their needs and aspirations for education in the territory. The government is listening to the feedback on education opportunities and we are constantly making improvements and changes to ensure that the education system reflects the values and goals of all Yukoners.

Mr. Fairclough: It's amazing -- I think the minister was losing his audience with his opening remarks chopped into four different sections, and still the minister didn't answer the question. That's part of the problem here. I know the minister says he's going to learn from all these mistakes that he's made in this House. It is a problem.

The minister says he wants debate to move along. We just want some information, and I think we and the public are deserving of that information. I have a real simple question for the minister, and it's about section 17.7 of the *Tr'ondek Hwech'in Final Agreement*. The Premier said they are in active negotiations. What involvement has the Department of Education had in these negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Department of Education and the Government of Yukon are open to discussions with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in. Should they wish to discuss this further, we will sit down at the table. Mr. Chair, my door is open. I'm willing to sit down and have these discussions. I'm more than willing to sit down and discuss how to make our education system better for all Yukoners.

We have an education reform project that is out there now, actively working with Yukoners as to how we can do that. If the leadership of Tr'ondek Hwech'in wishes to discuss this further, I'm willing.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to move off this one too, but what I'm hearing from the minister is that there were none. I'd like to ask this very simple question: to date, has the department had any discussion or involvement in negotiations under section 17.7 of this final agreement?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Yes, Mr. Chair, there have been numerous meetings with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in on this issue. If they wish to have more, we're amenable to that.

I brought the budget with me; I did not bring the day timer of every meeting ever attended by Department of Education officials.

Mr. Fairclough: Can that information be passed on then? I realize the minister doesn't have it. Can he pass that on by legislative return?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I want to move forward on these issues. I'm willing to sit down; the Department of Education is willing to sit down. We are always looking for ways to go forward with how to best reform our education system in order to meet the needs of Yukoners. We have a responsibility as a public government to provide education throughout the territory; we'll continue to do that. We have a responsibility to all Yukoners and indeed, we will work with Yukon First Nations as to how we can best build our public education system to meet their needs. In fact, if there is a community or school council out there that says they have a specific need, as per the *Education Act*, we'll work with them. We'll work with them on their school-based budgets; we'll work with them on their school plan in order to address their needs. The objective of education is to respond to identified needs, respond to the needs of the learners and respond to the needs of the community. Let's go forward. If there are issues that they or anyone else would like to discuss, please put them on my desk.

Mr. Fairclough: It sounds like the minister does want to provide some information to us in regard to these negotiations, and I appreciate that. I will look forward to reading about the numerous meetings they have had with Tr'ondek Hwech'in on section 17.7.

I'd like to move on; I'd like to talk about education reform. There is a lot of debate going on in the public right now. There

seems to be a difference between what the minister is saying and what the Premier is saying. I'd like to straighten that out with the minister -- get a clear answer from the department on what is on or not on for public discussion.

First of all, I will ask the minister about the education reform project and the team. It was supposed to be at arm's length from the government. Does the minister still feel that it should be at arm's length, or should it continue to be under the control of the minister and the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Chair, I have explained this to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun several times. I will do so again.

The education reform project was established between the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations. It was recognized that the principals on it would be a representative of Council of Yukon First Nations and the Minister of Education. We also recognized that there needed to be the participation of those Yukon First Nations that do not participate in the Council of Yukon First Nations. The opportunity was provided to them to allow for their participation.

It is the executive committee that is made up of me, Chief Joe Linklater and Chief Liard McMillan. We are the principals behind the education reform project. On the last letter of direction that was tabled in this Assembly, members will see that it is not just my signature providing direction. It is at the direction of the three principals. The three principals had an opportunity to meet, to assess the situation and, as we said in our letter, the principals of the education reform project have met and have determined the best steps forward for the education reform consultation based on our review of the terms of reference.

We are all committed -- indeed I would think all members of the Assembly are committed -- to building the best education system possible for the territory.

In this case, the principals on the education reform committee looked at where we were at, looked at the direction we were expected to go in our terms of reference, and provided some direction to the education reform team, as is our responsibility. It wasn't a decision simply made by one person; it was a decision made by the three members. We sat down, we had a meeting, and we co-drafted the letter in order to provide direction to the education reform team.

The education reform team has a significant task ahead of them, and that is identifying the goals in education that all Yukoners have. What are the barriers to overcoming them? What are strategies that could be implemented by the various orders of government?

Mr. Chair, this reform project isn't just about the changes that the territorial government will make, but there will be other recommendations to the other orders of government in the territory. We all have our own jurisdictions, our own responsibilities, our own involvements in education, and we're all going to make a commitment to go forward, make better decisions in the future, and make changes to our systems in order to best address the needs of Yukoners.

I hope this clears it up, once and for all, for the member opposite. We're working together on this project. We're work-

ing to see solutions created, and we all want to see all of our students in the Yukon do better in the future.

Mr. Fairclough: I know this might be a surprise to the minister, but he didn't answer the question again. How does the minister expect us to move along when he doesn't answer the question? Is this an arm's-length body or not? He could say yes or no. He doesn't have to go on to remind himself what the education reform project is made up of. We know on this side of the House; that minister might not know, and he needs a constant reminder from his notes.

So we want to move on with debate and not have the minister go sideways on our questions.

Okay. The minister is unable to answer that question. Let's try another one. Here's the difference between the minister and the Premier, and it is in regard to what the public can or cannot comment on in the education reform. The Premier says that governance is not up for debate. Does the minister agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I don't want to be a devil's advocate here or be accused of stirring the pot, but I do have a question for the member opposite: which definition of "governance" would he like to be used?

I'm sure if you ask the 18 members in this Assembly what "governance" means, you would probably get about 36 different answers. If by "governance" the member opposite means: how do we have more influence on how decisions are made at the community level? Yes, that is what the education reform team is out looking at. If by "governance" he means: how do we have more open lines of communication and more meaningful collaboration between the schools and First Nations? Yes, it is in there.

The Department of Education wants to work with its partners in education in order to provide the best possible public education system for all Yukoners. That will involve working with students, parents, community members, teachers, administrators, First Nation governments, the labour community, the employer community, the French community, the Catholic community, and indeed anyone else in the territory who has thoughts or input into education. We'll listen.

Look at some of the tools we have -- for example, school councils. They have significant authority in their schools. They work on their school plan to outline some of the learning objectives for the school. There is a role to play with the school council, with the administration and the staffing of the school. There is a role to play with developing local curriculum; there is a role to play with the expenditure of some of the funds I commented on earlier.

We also have avenues open for parents to bring forward issues and concerns. They can bring them forward to a teacher, to the principal, to the department, or meet with me, as I've met with many parents who have issues regarding education. We also have other forums out there, such as the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees, where there's an avenue for discussion and input. We also have the First Nation Education Advisory Committee where representatives of First Nations meet on a regular basis with the Department of

Education on how we as a department respond to the needs they recognize in their community.

We want to see a Yukon education system -- a public system -- that we as a public government have a responsibility to provide, and which involved Yukoners in the process.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister skated around that question. It's amazing. We're going to keep a tally here on how many questions the minister refuses to answer. Let me ask this question and continue along the way with the minister. He talks about different definitions of "governance", and so on. He probably has them all in front of him -- his different definitions of "governance". Which one of those definitions is off the table for public discussion? Can he tell us that?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: The Yukon government has the responsibility to provide a public education system in the territory -- one that is open to all Yukoners, one that is open to Yukoners who speak a different language, practise a different religion and have different ethnic backgrounds. We have a responsibility to all Yukoners now and in the future to offer a public education system.

We, as a publicly elected government and in this institution, have a responsibility to our constituents and to the taxpayers. Our responsibility is outlined in the Constitution of Canada under the *Yukon Act*. We have significant authority vested in this Assembly and the decision-making process. We are all involved in this budget right now. It will only be passed if a majority of people in this Assembly -- a majority of MLAs -- choose to vote for it.

We have a responsibility to our public education system. We want to work to make it better. We recognize the jurisdiction that Yukon has and we recognize the jurisdiction and authority that the First Nation governments have. We recognize the great lengths that they went to in having their rights recognized in their self-government agreements. We recognize their ability to provide the services they would like to have for their citizens. We, as a government, are responsible for the development of the *Co-operation in Governance Act*, which is a very good tool that the territorial government and Yukon First Nation governments will use now and in the future.

It recognizes what the member opposite comments about instead of the self-government agreements. Well, I mean, we recognize the self-government agreements; we recognize the different powers and responsibilities that the different jurisdictions have; and we worked with the Yukon Forum to establish a process where the various orders of government can cooperate in providing services and having discussions back and forth, in order to address the needs of all Yukoners.

Now, I don't know where the member opposite wants to go, and they have not been clear. There have been comments from the opposition benches that would lead one to believe that they want to see the territorial government divest itself or devolve its responsibilities.

Well, Mr. Chair, we have a responsibility to Yukoners and Canada, and we certainly intend to live up to our responsibilities.

Mr. Fairclough: Amazing. The minister didn't answer that question either. And I know why -- politically, it's a hot

potato for the minister. He doesn't want to go there. He doesn't want to contradict what the Premier is saying.

And here's the big difference between the minister and the Premier. This side of the House has not talked about devolving the powers of government over education at all. It's only the Premier's words. I know the members opposite might want to paint the opposition with that, but it's only the Premier's words, and now it's the words of the minister. It has never come from this side of the House.

We talked governance and putting Yukoners in control and giving direction to shaping our education in the future. That's what we're talking about on this side of the House. The member opposite has gone sideways on it again. We can't get an answer from him in Question Period, and we can't get an answer in Committee of the Whole. What do we do?

I want to say this to the minister: he needs to be very clear on this issue, very clear. Right now the public is not clear on where the minister and this Yukon Party are going with this issue; they are not clear. They are now questioning what education reform is all about and the minister knows that.

I know what is going on here and I think the public can read it too, and I don't really have to say it here on the floor. The minister wants to, but can't he see it? The minister needs to be very clear on this. We are spending a lot of public money on this education reform. It has been two years in the process and now a body that is supposed to be arm's-length from government is no longer. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Education, who thought he might have had some control over the executive committee, does not any more; the Premier does.

I watched the minister's face when the Premier announced this in the House. There was an expression of surprise on the minister. Everybody saw it, including the media. We watched this all go down, and I know the minister has to defend the Premier now because that is the way things work on that side of the House.

I don't think we are going to get an answer from the member opposite on governance.

We have been getting calls -- I'll let the Premier talk to the minister. He has to give him direction.

Okay, Mr. Chair, the Premier has given his direction -- it looks like it and the minister has his marching orders.

I am going to have to ask more and more simple questions. The minister is involved in the executive committee, to give direction. Part of the problem right now -- and we are getting calls about the scheduling of the meetings -- is we have meetings scheduled, for example, on a Friday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. in a community. How does the minister expect to have good public consultation with communities in regard to education reform when meetings like this are scheduled for Friday afternoon at 4:30 p.m.?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I need to clarify the member's question here. Is the member asking the Minister of Education to be responsible for booking meeting halls, putting up posters and scheduling meetings?

Mr. Fairclough: Keep that book handy, Mr. Chair, because we're keeping track of the minister's skirting around the question and not answering the question. How many times

has that been in this House now? That's a very poor mark on behalf of the Education minister -- that's a failing mark. Shame on the minister. My goodness.

Okay, Mr. Chair, he is the minister; he is responsible for education. The buck stops with the minister. Sometimes we feel that it stops with the Premier but it is with the minister. We are getting nowhere in discussions on education reform, while I thought we would make some progress here in Committee of the Whole. Maybe the third party can ask some very pointed questions in regard to education reform.

The expectations out there have been raised by the Yukon Party when they did not want to bring any of the *Education Act* review recommendations to the floor; they raised expectations by bringing forward the education reform project and now they're controlling it. That's a shame because that was part of their campaign commitment. In imagining tomorrow, I don't think anyone would imagine that the government would stifle debate in regard to public consultation on what they can and cannot talk about. That's what is happening; the minister knows it; it's about control over this whole matter. It's a shame, but let's move on.

I would like to ask a few questions about the Carmacks school. I don't even know if I want to go into the background on it and the planning process for the Carmacks school, but money was dedicated to building this school. It was \$9 million. We are overbudget now by \$2.5 million and this is growing. There is close to \$300,000 earmarked in the budget. That is to finish the project.

I have been asking questions of the government for three years now about when the school is going to be finished. There have been dates and times. We have had two years of construction so far on this school, which is very unusual. We see big buildings like Canadian Tire that go up in a matter of months, yet we can't get a project like this up and going. It is plagued with all kinds of problems. The costs are rising. I can see it and I think the minister can see it too: the costs will continue to rise before the completion of this school.

The minister said that 2007 is when they would be moving in. Last time I asked them this question, which was in December, he gave us a date of the middle of February for completion, and moving in students to that school. Now I think we are closer to completion of the school and we are getting in sometime in 2007. Perhaps it is December, when the school breaks for Christmas. Who knows?

The school has all kinds of problems. The commitment of government was to involve the First Nation. They were involved in the design, but not much more than that. When it comes to people working, the government also failed in that.

I have a simple question to the minister: can he confirm, then, that the school is \$2.5 million -- or close to that -- over its original budget? And can we expect that number to climb even higher?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I was proud to be a member of the previous government, which responded to a long-standing need in the community of Carmacks. People there have known that a school replacement was needed for quite some time. It's very unfortunate that the previous governments had not responded to

the need as they should have and built a school when it should have been done.

However, that being said, when we took office, we immediately went to work and had significant discussions with the community on the design and on options for the school. The ground was dug, the foundation was poured, and construction of a new school started.

The Member for Mayo-Tatchun was right. He was very correct when he said that it is a very complex construction project. I think other members have seen that, either when they have visited the construction site or had the opportunity to take a tour of it. When they took a tour, I hope they were wearing appropriate safety gear and that they weren't smoking near fuel tanks because everyone knows that you shouldn't do that around construction sites.

But when they were on tour, I'm sure they had a chance to look down at the floor. I remember standing in one place and looking at the floor boards that were going down. None of the sheets of flooring material had right angles on them. There might have been one right angle, but then every other piece was custom cut to fit, which, I can appreciate, probably caused the skilled tradespeople there no shortage of headaches in cutting all the flooring pieces to fit.

It is a very complex piece of construction. When one looks at the roof lines or at some of the unique features that were added to reflect the culture and the history of the community, there were certainly concessions in the design of the building to reflect the community. It certainly wasn't the case of taking a plan off the shelf and putting it there. No, this was a case of responding to many of the concerns and many of the issues brought forward by the community and building a school to respond to those.

Yes, there have been challenges with the construction of the school. The member opposite is very familiar with the issue of the soils and some of the work that had to be done to respond to construction problems. Every member in here who has tried to work on a home construction project or has gone to buy a two-by-four knows that the price of materials has increased. Anyone in here who has worked with a contractor or a plumber, carpenter, electrician or roofer, has known that many of the labour rates have increased. So, yes, there were cost overruns. It is certainly not a secret.

The original budget was set at \$9.4 million and now the budget is at \$11.5 million. There are monies in this budget to respond to completing the construction. It has taken longer. There were discussions about concluding construction of the school in time for students this year to spend some time in the school, but when we started looking at the completion dates and when that was communicated to many of the citizens in the community, there was a strong realization by many that moving to would be a significant disruption for the students in moving schools toward the end of the school year. So the decision was made not to put the kids through that type of process and to finish the school.

That's a decision made for the best learning objectives for the students. We do have great confidence that construction

will be finished this coming summer and the school will be open in the fall for the new school year.

I know that the member has raised issues about the number of people working there. I am told that there were as many as 16 different people working on the construction project at any one time and that numbers reached as high as eight people on-site at one time. There were members of the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation. It was great to see local employment. That is one of the objectives of some of these capital projects in a community. We have a responsibility to have a public school in the community. It is certainly one that meets the needs of the community and is a safe learning environment for the students. We responded in that way.

In our debate in December, the member brought up the issue of the old school and shared with me that there were people in the community who felt that it had more life in it; specifically, more life left in the gymnasium. I took those comments to heart from the member opposite. I recognized that he was sharing some of the views of the community and we are going to look at what can be done with the old structure. We took his advice and now we are acting on it. We are going to look at what can be done, if anything. I am not going to make any promises that something can be done with the gym, but we will take a look at it.

We responded to a concern that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun had brought forward. In this case, we responded to the concerns of the community to build a new school. We took into consideration some of the community's thoughts and ideas about designing it. We were faced with cost overruns due to problems with soils and labour and material increases.

We did address issues when members brought them forward about local employment opportunities. When issues are raised on the floor about health and safety opportunities, I know that the minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board -- which has the responsibility for overseeing the occupational health and safety regulations -- took those to heart and the department addressed concerns suitably.

I trust I've answered the member's question. I've tried to. Is there additional detail that the member opposite would like? Or is this the 19th question that I haven't answered?

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, mark this one on the paper there. The minister did answer the question, finally, because it was right there in front of him. Give him a hand. It was a budgetary question, so simple to answer. I thank the minister for that. I'm hoping that perhaps he can shorten up his answers to the question, because there is a lot and I know the third party also has questions.

With regard to the school, can the minister assure this House that there will be no shortcuts taken in completing the school?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Earlier today I was accused of micromanaging the education reform project. Then I was accused of not micromanaging it and not changing when they scheduled meetings. I'll try to take a shortcut in this answer.

There are design and code standards the building is to be built to. It's the purview of the Property Management Agency

to oversee the construction of the project. It's the purview of the building code inspectors to deem materials appropriate, to work with the architects and engineers to determine if the building is being built to specification.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to place my trust, faith and confidence in the very capable and competent minister responsible for the Property Management Agency and the minister responsible for the building inspectors. I'm not going to enter into debate in the Assembly on the merits of OSB versus good-one-side plywood. I'll leave that up to the building inspectors. It's the designers' and engineers' decisions. It's the contractor's decision to use materials that meet the needs, specifications and criteria. It's the inspector's job to go in there and determine whether or not the code has been followed. We have a system in place. Let's use it.

I trust I'm up to two in a row now.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, he's putting faith in another department, but he didn't give us the assurance, Mr. Chair. Hopefully we can get some commitments from this government and this minister.

There is a reason why I raised it. Community members have come to me, and I talked to people -- when we were given the briefing on Education -- about some of the concerns. Part of it is that, even though the building would meet code, there were other things about how it was originally designed and how it would look. For example, where there is wood on the walls, I have been told that they are now putting gyproc as a shortcut. It takes away from the look of the building.

I'm not sure if I raised this with officials during the briefing, but here's another one -- and people are telling me that this is happening. Insulation in the building -- you want to talk about energy efficiency? -- is not there in some parts of the building. Whether or not the inspectors catch it, that's a big concern to me. It's going to be a problem for this department down the road.

So I do want assurances from the minister that he would be on top of another minister who is responsible for doing inspections. I do want that commitment and it is very important.

The Minister of Education is just seeking reassurance from another minister -- I get that from the discussions across the way.

The minister did say "good-one-side plywood" -- you know what? This is really important. I know the minister is laughing at it, but in the gymnasium there is pine on the walls. You see this in a lot of gymnasiums. It is for looks, but usually it is good on one side and you glue it on the wall. Well, guess what, it was glued the other way around so the rough side is out. To the community, that is not right. For every other building -- if it is a private building -- people would demand that it be corrected. I am hoping that is the case and that the government will assure people in Carmacks that in fact what they did agree to as a design will be what is built.

Here is another simple question in regard to the school -- and I want to move off of this. There are concerns that because this took so long -- two years to construct, and last winter was a long winter and there was lots of snow. The roof was not done

and there were tarps over the roof, but the new school leaked into the library section all winter.

Can the minister tell us if that has been corrected? Can he assure us that we didn't create another environment to grow mould?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the Member for Mayo-Tatchun coming forward with his concerns. I recognize that, as a rural MLA, we have a lot of discussions with our constituents. When we are stopped at the store, we hear about everything, whether it's what paint is going on and where, who is grading the road or how long people had to wait in line to get a driver's licence. Anything with government involvement is raised with us. I appreciate the Member for Mayo-Tatchun bringing forward the issues that his constituents have raised with him.

Anyone who has built practically anything knows that there are compromises or changes made along the way. Anyone who has built a house knows that they might move a window here or there and that, when reality comes during a construction project, changes are made usually for the better.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Rouble: No, the Member for Mount Lorne says, "Not mistakes". If there are mistakes made, they have to be fixed -- if mistakes are made, if they have a significant impact on code, especially if they create a safety issue. Sometimes mistakes can be made by mixing even the right colour of paint. Sometimes there are aesthetic issues that some would argue should be corrected, but sometimes we do end up living with the colour of paint until it's time to paint again.

The Department of Education has some significant challenges, too, with some of its other buildings. For example, if I'm faced with a decision of repainting a freshly painted structure or repairing a bathroom that has mould in it, the decision is pretty straightforward. I'm going to spend the taxpayers' dollars addressing the health and safety concern. That's the priority. If the member opposite has specific questions about the building, I would ask him to ask the minister responsible for the Property Management Agency, which has the responsibility to do the construction. If he has questions regarding code infractions, I would ask him to address that to the minister responsible.

Mr. Fairclough: I'm asking these questions in Committee of the Whole to give some direction to the department to look into these matters, because they're serious. I could have easily asked these questions in Question Period, but we don't need to be looking at this project in any negative light. We've asked a lot of questions on it; the community is happy that they are getting a new school, but they want it done right. There are a lot of problems that happen in this school. I'll give the minister a couple more.

One of them is in regard to the siding. It went on; it came off; it went on. The paint is chipping off the siding already on this new school. It will cost the government \$30,000 to fix that. It's a mistake -- that's why I'm asking if there are additional costs to the completion of this school. That is very real. I know the minister doesn't want to open up a new school with chips of paint off the siding.

That's pretty serious. Again, I'm hoping that the minister would have addressed the issue of the roof leaking and this being a very serious problem in the community of Carmacks. As he recalls, while the school was under construction, the old school leaked all summer and was a very moist place and it did grow mould. There is a health concern there.

The new school is adjacent to the old school, which is full of mould -- or a good section of it anyway. That is a concern I raise here, and I'm hoping that members opposite take it seriously and I don't have to raise it in Question Period.

Here's another one that has been brought to my attention by community members. This school has been heated all winter by these big Herman Nelsons -- a couple of places around the school. Lots of fuel is being used, there is definitely a fuel spill around this section and what people have seen is that it was covered up with gravel.

Here's another one the minister and members opposite should take very seriously. If this happened anywhere here in Whitehorse -- if you spilled a 10-gallon can of fuel and it spilled over into somebody's yard, well, you're going to have to remove that soil, and it could cost a good chunk of money out of your own pocket to that person. \$10,000 could be a cleanup if you want to get equipment in there.

This is a very serious matter and the reason why I raise this is the issue of where the school is built -- the fact that it was built on top of or adjacent to an old garbage pit that was there for years. In my view, I don't believe it was properly taken care of, and I am hoping that the minister and the department look into this matter with seriousness and come forward with a really good answer and direction to go on and ensure that that doesn't happen.

Here's the reason why I am asking this. There are lots of reasons, but if you look right now at the students in the school, a lot of them are suffering from asthma. Part of this the community feels was that smoke from the local garbage dump, when they used to burn, would come right over the hill and go right into the vents of the school. Students, teachers and so on have been subjected to that for years.

What else have they been subjected to? They have been exposed to black mould in the school. The minister knows -- and if he doesn't, he can talk to the Minister of Health and Social Services -- that black mould is a very serious health problem. So this is a very big issue for me, and we, the community people, want to build a school, or a facility, that is healthy not just in programming but in environment.

I am hoping that the minister can answer a question -- although it is getting close to 5:30 p.m. -- and I would like the minister to bring back the answer to me.

Is the minister happy with the contractor who is building the school? Is he happy with the contractor? I would be very interested to hear what the minister has to say and hope it will be a very honest answer in regard to the contractor.

I have quite a few more questions on this school that I would like to ask the minister. It is getting close to 5:30 p.m., Mr. Chair, so I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Fairclough that we report progress on Bill No. 6.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.