

Whitehorse, Yukon**Wednesday, December 5, 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 International Volunteer Day**

Hon. Mr. Hart: I rise today in honour of International Volunteer Day. United Nations has designated today, December 5, for all people all over the world to pay tribute to volunteers and their worthy contributions. By generously donating their time, their skills, their talents, volunteers continue to improve our communities and the way we live. Yukoners represent a fantastic example of the spirit of volunteerism.

When there is an emergency situation such as the flooding in the southern Yukon this summer, Yukoners rolled up their sleeves and got to work. We feel safe here because there are several organized volunteer groups that are trained and ready to fight fires or search for overdue hunters or rescue people in danger or do what they need to do to help out. When there is an event to organize and run, Yukoners jump in with enthusiasm. Volunteers make hosting both large scale and smaller events possible, like the Canada Winter Games, Rendezvous, river and road races or other sport competitions, musical festivals, theatrical and artistic events, just to name a few.

When there are people in need, Yukoners readily lend a helping hand. There are people volunteering in health centres, in schools, with seniors, with food banks, with the homeless, coaching youth at risk, in the shelters and more.

There are others who canvass organizations, who will help to raise funds for important causes, like diseases or programs for disadvantaged children.

Some volunteer in the field; others work behind the scenes, sitting on boards and committees or in the office. Some volunteer through organized programs; others just do it on their own or when the need arises. Either way, their actions help make someone else's day much brighter.

It makes me proud to observe my fellow Yukoners helping out so generously. Last spring, we had the chance to show Canada Yukon's true volunteer spirit with the 2007 Canada Games. Thousands of Yukoners made hosting this event a reality. We couldn't have pulled it off without them.

During the games, Whitehorse was a sea of orange, with volunteers sporting their trademark orange jackets. Many people are still wearing theirs. It is a proud reminder of having volunteered for the biggest event ever hosted by the Yukon.

One of the legacies of the games was the opportunity to increase training for volunteers all over the Yukon and to intro-

duce so many new people to the personal satisfaction and rewards of volunteering.

In closing, I say thank you to all the Yukoners who have volunteered in so many ways over the years. I would also like to commend the Yukon Volunteer Bureau for its commitment to the community and its dedication to creating a strong network of volunteers in the Yukon. I'm pleased the Yukon government is able to help support your organization's valuable goals.

I invite all members of this House to join me in celebrating our past and current volunteers on this International Volunteer Day.

Thank you.

In recognition of Yukon Science Fair participants

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise in this House today to recognize the efforts of hundreds of Yukon school students who participated in science fairs at their schools over the past several weeks. Of those students, almost 100 advanced to the Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair held last Saturday at Yukon College. The science fair was a great success, but the success would not have been possible without the curiosity and enthusiasm of Yukon's youth and the support of their parents, brothers, sisters and teachers.

The full list of awards from the science fair is far too long to read here, but I would like to recognize three who distinguished themselves: David Lister, Miriam Ott and Talia Woodland, who will be travelling to Ottawa to represent the Yukon in the Canada-wide science fair in May.

Miriam Ott is a grade 8 student at Vanier Catholic Secondary School, and this is Miriam's second trip to the national science fair. Her project called "Home Invasion" was about the bacteria we share our lives with.

David Lister built an innovative device that actually generates electricity from snow, a very useful thing in the Yukon indeed. David is in grade 7 at Whitehorse Elementary School. David also won the Commissioner's Prize for "Best of Fair".

Talia Woodland, a grade 7 student at Selkirk Elementary School, built all the electronics for her project, a device to measure human response times to certain stimuli.

Mr. Speaker, too often we think of science as an esoteric undertaking that happens in southern universities that has little to do with our own day-to-day lives here in the north.

At Yukon College this weekend we saw real science being done by Yukon students right before our eyes. This is where the spark that can ignite the career in science begins. Our world faces a future full of challenges for our environment, economy and society. Mr. Speaker, after reviewing the results from this weekend's science fair, I think we are in good hands!

Congratulations to all the students who participated in the regional and school science fairs and best of luck in their future scientific explorations.

Once again, good luck to Talia, David and Miriam as they represent the Yukon in Ottawa this spring.

Thank you.

In remembrance of James McCullough

Mr. Hardy: It is with great pleasure that I rise to pay tribute to a man we in the New Democratic Party will never forget and to whom we will always be grateful: James Bain McCullough. Two of his children join us today in the gallery, James and Lesley McCullough.

The senior James McCullough was born in Ontario in 1932. In 1952 and 1953, he was in the Royal Canadian Navy in Korea fighting, as he would put it, communist aggression in the Far East. Most of Jim's 75 years were spent as an activist. He believed, as he said, in fighting class oppression in Canada.

Finding work with the Yukon Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources in 1974, he moved his young family from Ontario. He began his long-term objective of fighting class oppression by immediately becoming involved in both the Yukon Employees Union and the Yukon New Democrats. All four McCullough children -- Lesley, James, Helen and Scott -- became adept at an early age at walking the picket line with their brothers, sisters and parents. Three of the children still make their home in the Yukon.

Jim was initially a volunteer with the union but eventually became their business agent. With the Yukon New Democrats, he ran for territorial election in 1978 and for the federal seat in 1980. In both campaigns, he distinguished himself as someone who was a very forceful opponent.

Jim was also very well-liked. His broad approach to life and politics meant that he was almost universally accepted, despite often occupying positions that were lightning rods for criticism. He firmly believed that maintaining your principles need not necessitate closing yourself off to those who might not share them. He believed that most people were nice and sincere in their views, even if sometimes misguided. He did not feel that there was any value in burning bridges or holding grudges in a relatively small territory where people were often going to be in contact with each other.

Jim's intelligence showed no boundaries. He was a whiz at Trivial Pursuit and, at a moment's notice, he could expound on the most esoteric of topics.

He was a voracious reader who devoured everything from detective novels to comic books to Russian literature. He often spent money that was scarce on buying his children whatever they wanted to read. His advice was that you should never travel anywhere without a pocketbook -- and a spare. I totally agree with that.

A noticeable weakness of Jim's was nice clothes. Anyone could have style that was not the product of expense but rather of attitude -- and an iron, he said. He often told the story about how he once saw a woman in a daffodil yellow suit and a matching hat carrying a sign that read: "Eat the rich." It wouldn't have been half as effective, he said, if she had been wearing overalls.

To take a position with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Jim left the Yukon in 1984. He travelled frequently to the north in his new capacity. He treasured the time he spent in the Yukon as an activist on behalf of working men and women of the territory.

Jim, the Yukon now enjoys some of the fruits of your legacy. We miss your commitment very much in our struggles.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Are there any introductions of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hardy: I would like to welcome representatives of the labour movement and some people here from the Council of Canadians to observe our activities today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any 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 today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue expanding education and training programs in areas of particular relevance to the north, such as First Nation governance, mining, tourism, resource management, construction north of 60, health care professionals, care providers and teachers.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to expedite the implementation of proposed whistle-blower legislation that would protect Yukon government employees who feel compelled to bring forward concerns about political interference in the performance of their jobs.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to

(1) table the letter signed by the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party to the federal government on the Kyoto Accord, showing if the Government of Yukon has signed off on this letter;

(2) table the Yukon Party government's draft action plan on climate change; and

(3) table the Government of Yukon's position on the Kyoto Accord.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to work with affected Yukon First Nations and conduct proper snow removal on the existing access roads into the bison harvesting subzones to help Yukoners reach the bison harvesting targets.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse

action plan, in particular by increasing the inspection of licensed operations.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by replacing the current driver's licence with identity cards with security features.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by reducing bootlegging.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by implementing a communications campaign for citizens to assist the RCMP.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by accessing the B.C. 24-hour substance abuse crisis line.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by adding addictions counselling physicians to the telehealth network.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by expanding the outreach of alcohol and drug services to the communities.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by increasing the availability of addictions counsellors for students.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by printing a substance abuse resource directory for Yukon communities.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by expanding the training on addictions issues offered to communities.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by increasing counselling for children for substance abuse.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by establishing community planning and development and funding for substance abuse reduction plans.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by improving alcohol and drug education in public schools.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by mounting the public education campaign targeted at youth.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by increasing support for high-risk young women.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to take long overdue action to implement the Yukon substance abuse action plan, in particular by establishing the community harm reduction fund.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a ministerial statement?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Kyoto Protocol

Mr. Elias: World leaders are meeting in Indonesia this week to plan the successor to the Kyoto Protocol. One of the holdouts against the accord is our own national government. In fact, the federal Conservatives have attracted criticism from around the world for their failure to meet the targets under Kyoto.

As is the case with many issues, the Yukon Party government looks to the federal Conservatives for direction. For a number of years, the Yukon Party actively campaigned, both inside this Legislature and outside it, against Kyoto.

The Minister of Environment has been asked this question before and has not answered it. I'll ask it again: does the Government of Yukon support the Kyoto Accord? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: As the member opposite is quite aware, two Environment Yukon representatives are attending

the conference of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol or COP 13 - Conference of the Parties -- in Bali, Indonesia. We are part of that Canadian delegation. The Council of Yukon First Nations is also attending that meeting. This is our opportunity to demonstrate leadership on the issue and to make important international contacts and to share experiences and strategies with leading experts in the field.

Yukon does have an important voice to bring to the international table to ensure that the circumpolar north is considered in the discussions, and that proved to be the case in Montreal. So, again, for the member opposite, yes, we are represented at that meeting.

Mr. Elias: True leadership would have been if the Acting Minister of Environment were down there representing Yukoners' issues. The world's attention is focused on the meeting taking place in Indonesia, and the Yukon has no political representative there. Bali is the largest stage in the world to discuss and make decisions on the biggest issue facing the north. It just shows the Yukon public how this government is failing to provide leadership on this issue. The minister obviously has other priorities, like spending more money on office furniture this year than on a climate change action plan. We have a strategy with no timelines, no budget and no action.

When is the minister going to get on board with the rest of the world and make this issue a priority?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, I draw attention to *Hansard* where I asked in this House if he would pair with me -- meaning that he would not vote on issues to not change the balance within the House -- I would have been happy to attend. The member opposite refused to do that. I again refer him to *Hansard*, showing again, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party's leadership and their interest in the subject. We are represented there; we are represented by very good bureaucrats, who bring the message to Bali and to those meetings. We have every faith in the work that they do.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, a few short days ago, this Yukon Party government was asked to put its signature on a letter to the Prime Minister. The letter asked the Prime Minister to secure the best Kyoto phase 2 agreement possible at the meeting in Indonesia. It urges the federal government to meet new emission targets and to actually support the Kyoto Protocol. The Leader of the Official Opposition has signed it. The Leader of the Third Party has signed it. Will the government, by adding its signature to this letter, demonstrate its support to fight global warming?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: As a government, of course, we are fully aware of the vulnerable effects of climate change and, in many ways, how terribly little we can do to prevent it, yet we are the main recipients of the effects. So that's why we are proceeding with a climate action plan and why we are doing what we can to establish a centre of excellence here.

For the member opposite, signing a letter that would arrive in Bali likely well after the event seems a little bit too late and too little. But that's certainly the Liberal approach to it.

Our approach was to negotiate with our federal counterparts over the past few months and to give the good officials who are attending and representing the Yukon government

instructions and ideas on how to proceed there. What the member opposite is asking us to do is to do too late what we have been doing for many, many months.

Question re: Medical travel program

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Yukoners are frequently sent to either Vancouver or Edmonton for medical help not available here in Yukon. For many, this is a very stressful time because of the nature of their illnesses. For others, it can be on the verge of a traumatic experience. For many, especially those from rural Yukon, it may be their first trip to a large city where they have no family or friends.

Other territories have in place residences where these people can go for support and assistance. The Larga House in Edmonton is an example. My question for the minister: what plan does this government have to offer assistance to Yukoners similar to what is already enjoyed by residents of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the member's suggestion; however, I would point out that the service we offer is, in many ways, better than that offered by N.W.T. and Nunavut. If the member is trying to compare some of these areas, it is comparing apples to oranges. We do not have residences in place. We do, however, provide support through our medical travel program.

I would point out that under the previous Liberal government the assistance to people travelling outside the territory was not made available until the fourth day. We made it effective on the second day of travel outside the territory and increased it from the previous level of \$30 a day to a new level of \$75 a day. That does not cover all the costs, but it is significant assistance. If the member would compare it to any health system in the country, he would see that we do compare very well. Most jurisdictions do not offer similar support, including some of the larger provinces where they have travel within jurisdictions -- they do not offer any support to people.

Yukon citizens are well provided for in this area, and the enhancements we made to the medical travel program come at an annual cost of \$1.6 million.

Mr. Mitchell: I do appreciate hearing what the government has done to improve existing programs and I thank the minister for doing so; however, this is not a case of having to reinvent the wheel. The service I describe is operating now in Edmonton and I believe it's working well.

I know that Yukon's Member of Parliament has also made inquiries and is fully prepared to assist with any matters relating to the federal government. As the minister is fully aware, this is a territorial matter. There is more we could do.

Given the department is aware, will the minister give the House a timeline as to when we could see some real action and solutions to this matter, such as I've expressed today?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Real action and real solutions? There was the enhancement of an additional \$1.6 million in funding the territorial government made in 2006 to the medical travel program. We made the subsidy assisting those travelling outside the Yukon effective on the second day of travel rather than on day four, which had been the case under previous gov-

ernments. Previous governments did not address this issue. We more than doubled the subsidy that was provided to assist those travelling outside the territory.

I would point out that, if the member wishes to compare access to care and services Outside, Yukon citizens, in some areas, receive the best access in the country because of our options for accessing services in Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary. In fact, we will cover further elements in this area with the wait-time funding we received from the federal government -- that being \$4.3 million over three years, which will be used, first and foremost, to implement our commitment to put in place a wait-time guarantee for mammography screening, and it will also be used to enhance Yukon citizens' timely access to medical services in B.C. and Alberta.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, we are trying on this side to offer a constructive suggestion to the minister. I don't think we need to debate whether or not existing programs were good enough in the past. Every government continues to improve them.

This service goes far beyond just having a place to go with a friendly face waiting for you, Mr. Speaker. It's an advocate for Yukoners who are experiencing city shock. The case of stress when facing medical issues is well-documented. Stress affects a patient's well-being; it can affect the severity of their illness, as well as their rate of recovery. I can appreciate that the costs are a factor, but there is money in the bank. INAC can be billed for non-insured patients.

This is the right thing to do for compassionate reasons and it's the right thing to do for medical reasons. Will the minister give assurances to the House that he will look into establishing such a facility, make such a facility available to Yukoners and commit to implementing this service before the spring sitting of this Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: No, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite simply does not get it. The member does not recognize the high quality of services and the level of services that are provided in the territory at Whitehorse General Hospital that are above and beyond what either of the other two territories is able to do.

The member opposite does not understand the fact that we have invested in areas that are far more cost-effective for providing timely access to care inside the territory and outside the territory. It is access to services through effective investment, although we have areas where we want to and will shorten the wait times -- through working with the professionals, of course, in these areas -- and we are ensuring access to services that the N.W.T. and Nunavut do not have.

The solution the member proposes is not as cost-effective as further investing in increased specialist services inside the territory and increased access to medical travel in B.C. and Alberta. That is what we are doing. It is what we will continue to do. We are taking the most cost-effective steps to assist Yukoners.

Again I point out that Yukoners' access to services and the level of assistance provided by government when compared with other jurisdictions in many areas makes us the very best in the country. In other areas, as far as patient navigation is con-

cerned, we have already announced an agreement with the capital health authority in Edmonton. It is in the process of being put up and running. It will also be implemented in Vancouver --

Speaker: Thank you.

Question re: *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement*

Mr. Hardy: Earlier this year, an agreement between British Columbia and Alberta called the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement went into effect; in short, it's called TILMA. This was a deal that was signed in secret by the premiers of those two provinces with no public consultation and no debate in either provincial legislature. Basically, it is a corporate bill of rights that would prevent governments and other public bodies from adopting regulations that would restrict or impair private investments.

Over a year ago, the Yukon was invited to sign on to this agreement and officials in the Department of Economic Development have been analyzing TILMA since that time. My question: how much has that analysis cost so far? How is it being conducted and when will it be completed?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The process was not done in secret. It was not done without debate, and in effect it is a continuation of a process called the Agreement on Internal Trade, or AIT. That has been going since 1994. In fact, the Yukon signed on to it in Ottawa on July 18, 1994, and there was a further signing ceremony in Yukon on September 14, 1994.

All jurisdictions, with the exception of Nunavut, have been involved in that for many years. I am pleased to say that Nunavut has now signed on as well.

British Columbia and Alberta have continued that into what is now called TILMA. We have been invited to look at this, and we will be looking at it in great detail. If we see a benefit at all on that, then obviously we would go out to public consultation. That analysis is going on right now.

Again, Mr. Speaker, our government prefers to deal with fact, not fantasy.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, am I being accused of lying in this House by that kind of statement? It was a labour movement that brought it to the attention of Yukoners, not this government. I am sure the minister is aware that TILMA is hitting some pretty choppy waters, even in B.C. right now. Last week, for the second time this year, the B.C. government was forced to back down on a bill that would allow it to use public money to pay off fines levied by a private TILMA dispute panel. There are problems around this. These fines could be as much as \$5 million for each complaint.

I am sure the minister is also aware that the Province of Saskatchewan has decided that it wants nothing to do with TILMA. I have said it before and I will say it again: we don't need TILMA any more than we need a sledgehammer to drive a finishing nail to solve this problem.

Instead of putting more resources into studying an agreement that is sputtering and dying, why isn't this government simply working with other jurisdictions to iron out the very limited number of trade and mobility concerns that do affect the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, we much prefer to deal with fact and not fantasy. We prefer to look at that trade agreement and see if it does have benefits for Yukon.

For instance, the member opposite is correct that Saskatchewan backed off the agreement. They backed off because of an impending election. They backed off from the entire agreement. I suspect that now, with a new government, they may be looking at it in longer terms.

We need to look at that document. It is not a document that we will simply sign or not sign. There are good things; there are bad things. There are exceptions for Alberta; there are exceptions for British Columbia. There are exceptions within the agreement in internal trade -- and there have been for 13 years.

We will analyze the situation, see what is best for the Yukon, and bring the appropriate things out to full and total public consultation.

As the Member for Porter Creek South said, it was a complex document. Mr. Speaker, it's 34 pages, but it is complex. It is complex in many, many ways. We prefer to deal with fact, not fantasy.

Mr. Hardy: I think the people of this territory would like to see some fact around what is actually happening over there because I don't think all the facts are being put on the table by this minister.

Now, it's interesting that the vehicle purchased that we've been discussing this week was eligible for the Yukon business incentive program. Under TILMA, that program would be out the window. It would be considered a trade restriction.

The Yukon government could end up buying its car in Wetaskiwin, Alberta or some other place. Under TILMA, municipal governments could see many of their bylaws being challenged by outside business interests. Under TILMA, we could be forced to adopt lower employment and safety standards for Yukon workers.

Why is the minister even considering a deal that could hurt Yukon business owners, that could handcuff municipal governments, and that could undermine the hard-won rights of workers?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, we prefer to actually analyze the situation and to know what we're dealing with.

The business incentive program, or BIP, could potentially be not acceptable under TILMA. It's not acceptable under the Agreement on Internal Trade, and that's why we negotiated an exception to that.

There are exceptions. There are things that are good for the Yukon. There are things that are bad for the Yukon. That's why we definitely prefer to deal with fact, not fantasy.

For the member opposite, I'm very happy to table right now a copy of the Agreement on Internal Trade, since the member opposite says it's in secret. It is readily available on the Web, and I will ask the department today to put a link to it on our Web site. People can read it for themselves. But remember, there are things that are good and there are things that are bad. We negotiate line by line. We do not simply accept one or the other. We deal with fact; we'd rather not deal with fantasy.

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Mr. Hardy: Now, during the brief time the Liberals were in government, the NDP caucus pushed them to introduce legislation to protect whistle-blowers in the public service. They answered, "We're working on it." During the first four years of the Yukon Party government, the NDP caucus pushed them to introduce whistle-blower legislation. "In due course," they said. More than a year into their second term, there's still nothing to protect public employees who expose wrongdoing in the workplace. How can the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission justify the continued delay on a promise that was actually written in the Yukon Party's last election platform?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee discussing that, I would like to answer the member opposite, because it would appear that he hasn't been speaking to the member of his own caucus who sits on that committee. The committee has had a number of meetings. It has hired consultants. It is working very closely with the Legislative Assembly Office. I think we're making some degree of progress in identifying some good points and some bad points that need to be ironed out. The committee is meeting regularly, and I would invite the member opposite to talk the member of his own caucus who sits on that committee.

Mr. Hardy: We on this side of the House like to deal in fact, not fantasy. That's what we're getting from the other side. I do talk to my colleagues.

On March 30, 2004, we introduced a private member's bill to amend the *Public Service Act* to include whistle-blower protection. We briefed the government; we briefed the opposition party. We were told that the Public Service Commission has been working on this issue. Then the government did what it does so well. It came up with a stalling tactic. Then the Liberals came up with a way of stalling it even further. In May of this year, a select committee was finally struck to look into it.

In the meantime, has the minister's department had any discussions with the public sector unions about what should be included in whistle-blower legislation?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I am very pleased to hear the member opposite say that he is trying to deal with fact and not fantasy, which raises the large question of why he's asking the question when his own caucus member sits on that committee. The committee is making progress in trying to determine exactly what it is that should be brought out to consultation so that it is done in a more meaningful way. I invite the member opposite to talk to his own people about that.

Mr. Hardy: The minister didn't answer the question. I wish he would listen more closely. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a clear need to get on with the job. Just this week, a long-time government employee took the courageous step of disclosing something he felt was unethical and possibly illegal that has taken place in the workplace. We have written evidence that this employee expressed concerns to management about this matter while it was happening, but nothing was done about it. The employee took the matter to the Ombudsman's Office and was told that the issue didn't fit the Ombudsman's mandate.

In the absence of effective whistle-blower protection, what recourse is available to a public employee who observes what they believe to be wrongdoing in the workplace?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: The member opposite is once again asking us to discuss individual personnel matters on the floor of this House. As he pointed out, there was no action taken, so I'm not really sure what his point is. But again, for the member opposite, we cannot discuss individual personnel matters on this floor, as much as he would love to continually bring those things up.

Question re: Fleet vehicle supply contract

Mr. McRobb: It's not hard to tell that the Yukon Party government would prefer the issue of how it politically interfered in cutting a deal on a contract would just go away, but, just like the notorious tow truck incident, it won't, and for good reason.

All week, the Highways and Public Works minister has remained in denial, but internal government documents reveal how this story just doesn't add up. Correspondence that we've obtained from department personnel tells a much different story, one of political influence and actions deemed illegal and unethical.

Let's zero in --

Some Hon. Member: Point of order.

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Kluane just made the assertion that the action he attributes to the government was deemed illegal. That is clearly in contravention of our Standing Orders and I would ask that you have him retract that statement.

Speaker: Member for Kluane, on the point of order.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, these words were used yesterday. They come from the internal documents and they were used to describe the level of political influence. I would just ask that you remain consistent in your rulings.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: On the point of order, I knew this was going to come back and bite me. Yesterday I missed the terminology that was quoted from a document. I refer members back to a ruling on December 13, 2004, in which I cited, "If a member wishes to cite or quote from a document that contains unparliamentary language or does not adhere to proper form, the member must paraphrase any offending portions so that it will conform to the rules and forms of this Legislative Assembly."

Therefore, there is a point of order, and I ask the honourable members to keep that in mind.

The Member for Kluane has the floor.

Mr. McRobb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very difficult to sugar-coat those words. Let's zero in on another of the minister's contradictions.

On Monday, he said the department decided the amount of money billed was not defensible. Is the minister not aware of

the legal opinion sought by his officials, which clearly stated otherwise?

Hon. Mr. Lang: I am not aware of anything of the sort. I followed a process and it was finalized. We had a Yukoner with a concern. He approached us. We did not deny that Yukoner the right to a hearing. The department handled it and the issue was settled. It was between two parties: the contractor and the government. There is nothing wrong with representing Yukoners. There is nothing wrong with giving Yukoners the right to go to their government if they feel that they've been treated in a harsh or wrong way. The doors are not shut on this side to that kind of dialogue. It was handled internally in the appropriate fashion, and it was finalized. That is the long and the short of it. A Yukoner actually got the ear of his government. Is there something wrong with that?

Mr. McRobb: Allow me to remind the minister about the legal opinion that was requested by his officials after they were advised by the Premier's office to find an alternative to charging the dealer. This opinion, provided by Justice officials, assured the minister's officials that the amount specified in the contract for damages was not negotiable. I repeat, "not negotiable".

The legal advice further concluded that it wouldn't even be necessary to justify the amount, because it was agreed to and signed by all parties to the contract. Why did the minister ignore the legal opinion and say in this House that the amount of money billed was not defensible?

Some Hon. Member: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Point of order

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

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: While trying to look up the Standing Orders, I believe that the Standing Orders that -- and the Clerk may correct me on this -- it is inappropriate to refer to legal opinions in this House.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The member already has had his chance on the point of order. There is no point of order. The Guidelines for Oral Question Period state that a question may not ask for a legal interpretation of a statute.¹²⁰

The minister has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect. I never asked for a legal opinion. I thought that was my job to represent Yukoners and Yukon industry -- people who are trying to make a living in the Yukon -- and we penalize those individuals and those corporations.

By the way, the Member for Kluane doesn't understand that. He buys his cars outside the territory, Mr. Speaker. We buy our cars in the territory.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I understand there is a point coming here. If the member would like to express that, go ahead, or I will just interrupt.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: It is, of course, improper to discuss personal preferences and purchasing power, as we did yesterday with the Leader of the Third Party. Those types of comments are inappropriate, and I would ask the honourable minister not to do it.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I apologize for bringing up where the member --

Speaker: Don't say it again.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I am sorry.

Speaker: Carry on, please.

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

So, he is incorrect. I never asked for legal advice on this issue at all. The department did their good work, and a Yukoner was heard and a Yukoner got the benefit of going to the government, which reviewed the billing process and found out that that individual had been penalized and that the amount of money wasn't defensible.

Mr. McRobb: Well, we know this is a very touchy issue for the Yukon Party. This legal opinion was requested by the minister's own officials after they were subjected to political influence from the Premier's office and perhaps from this minister too.

Let me quote from the legal opinion provided by Justice officials: "Liquidated damages mean simply a specific sum of money that has been expressly stipulated by the parties to the contract as the amount of damages to be recovered for a breach of the contract. Therefore, if there is a breach of the contract then the non-breaching party is entitled to the agreed-upon sum."

Given the clarity of this legal advice, how could the minister possibly say the amount of money billed was not defensible?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, again, the member is wrong. He's incorrect. I never, at any point, asked for legal advice. It was handled internally in the department. The decision came out of the department, and that's the long and the short of it.

A Yukoner -- a Yukon citizen, a Yukon corporation -- had a question about how this government penalized his corporation. We addressed it internally and, by the way, it was settled internally. It wasn't settled in a court of law. It was settled in the department. There are other avenues, Mr. Speaker, without this kind of dialogue. Everybody has the right to go to court. Maybe that's where this should have been settled, but it was settled inside the department and it was finalized inside the department. I at no point got any legal advice on the issue at all. The department went to work and did it.

Now, we have alternatives. As I said to the member opposite, they could go to court and settle this issue in court. Would that be beneficial to the territorial government? Would that Yukoner have got the right hearing? The issue was resolved internally. It was successfully resolved, and that's the end of it.

Question re: Fleet vehicle supply contract

Mr. McRobb: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have more questions for the Highways and Public Works minister on his 50:50 solution to contract issues. Yesterday, the minister said, and I

quote: "The Premier was not involved in this at all. He was just the messenger." In fact, internal government documents show that the Premier was quite involved from the get-go. They reveal that it was his decision to give a sweetheart deal to the local car dealer.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: We have discussed this before. That type of terminology, "sweetheart deal", will lead to discord.

The Member for Kluane has the floor, please.

Mr. McRobb: It was the Premier who cut the deal with the local car dealer.

Mr. Speaker, an internal document from the minister's own department said, and I quote: "You have been advised by the deputy minister to negotiate reduced damages" and "You will have discussions and look at reducing the amount they will be charged." It's clear this was political direction, not the please-look-into-it approach claimed by the minister. How can he deny there was political direction? The proof is there.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again, Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong. He's wrong. I had nothing to do with the internal negotiations of this contract at all, nor did I put the contract out for the vehicles.

There was a Yukoner with some concerns; he approached the Premier because of contact; he talked to the Premier, the Premier directed him to me, and I said to the department, "Go to work on this. If there's an issue where we can help Yukoners resolve things like this, go to work." And that's what happened.

The car dealership had all the rights in the world to go to court. They could go to court and fight this in court. There are other avenues, but we negotiated; we resolved this issue in the department, with no interference from me or the Premier. We didn't do it. The department did it -- and, by the way, did it very successfully.

They paid the penalty -- \$6,000, which, by the way, is not a small sum of money on contracts of this size, and it was resolved.

Mr. McRobb: Well, the minister isn't following along. He has spun out. Now, not long after --

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order. Order please. Characterizing another member as having "spun out" is not parliamentary at all. Please carry on.

Mr. McRobb: I meant the Highways and Public Works minister is spun out.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. We're not repeating these things, folks. When I say no, I mean no. The Member for Kluane has the floor.

Mr. McRobb: Okay, I'll try one more time. Not long ago, the Yukon Party Justice minister lost her job over something quite similar by interfering in the release of an impounded tow truck. There is nothing wrong with providing a

hearing to a contractor with a concern. There are processes in place for that to avoid political interference.

There is a big difference between asking the department to look into a concern and ordering them to cut a deal. The minister doesn't understand the difference.

Let's return to the correspondence, which indicated that the deputy minister was quite uncomfortable with the political interference. He asked for this direction in writing, but was refused and told just to get rid of the issue -- again, clear political direction to cut a deal.

How can the minister stand in this House and deny that the Premier interfered? I think it's in black and white.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Again I'll be very clear. I never asked for legal advice on this; I thought it was an issue between the department and a Yukoner. I did the appropriate things. The Yukoner came to us with a concern and the concern was addressed internally. That's the long and the short of it. I thought that was my job as an MLA. When I was elected, Mr. Speaker, I was elected as an MLA. I was out there to represent Yukoners -- access to government. The Liberal Party or the opposition is going to deny Yukoners the right to talk to their government.

My job, secondly, is as Minister of Highways and Public Works. First of all, I am an MLA. I talk to my constituents on a daily basis. I talk to Yukoners on a daily basis. I bring lots of issues to government on a daily basis, with overlapping responsibilities. I do that because that's my job. Maybe the Liberal Party doesn't understand what their job is. But first of all, you are an MLA. You represent your riding and when you are in your riding, there are other concerns that you can address. This issue was not a legal issue.

Mr. McRobb: Well, the minister doesn't know where the line is for his job, Mr. Speaker. The minister said something the other day about being accosted by a member of the public. I'll remind him that it is his job to serve the public and he shouldn't demean people with concerns. It's unfortunate that the Yukon Party views having to speak with the public as being accosted.

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

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the assertion that MLAs on this side view running into members of the public as being accosted is a slanderous assertion by the member opposite. I would ask you to have him temper his remarks.

Speaker: Member for Copperbelt, on the point of order.

Mr. Mitchell: The Member for Kluane is quoting the direct words used by the minister in answering the question yesterday and again in media interviews.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: I'll take the point of order under advisement. Carry on.

Mr. McRobb: Correspondence from the minister's own officials clearly sets out the facts. It's what is called a

"smoking gun". The minister, after getting direction from the Premier -- the messenger -- ordered his department to cut a deal. That's wrong, and the minister should know that.

How many other times has the minister ordered his department to cut a deal or just get rid of an issue?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In this whole investigation, there is no communication from me to my department on any level. You're wrong on the fact that I demanded a legal --

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order. The minister must address his questions through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, he's wrong in the facts. Let's point out where he's wrong. He's insinuating on the floor here that, somehow, I communicated with my department to work on this issue. He's wrong on that; he can't produce one document that says I instructed my department to do anything of the sort.

He insinuated again that, somehow, I had legal advice. Show me the legal advice I got as Minister of Highways and Public Works. Again, he's wrong.

My job -- I'll remind the Member for Kluane; he might have forgotten -- is that I work for all Yukoners. If I can work with Yukoners to save them money and make their job easier, to do the business they do in the Yukon, come on -- that's my job and I work for all Yukoners. This incident is a prime example of government working with the general public.

The Liberals will deny Yukoners access to answering questions. In other words, the Member for Kluane states that this was an open-and-shut case. Obviously it wasn't. The department settled for \$6,000 instead of \$11,000.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 257

Clerk: Motion No. 257, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy by

- (1) providing an increased focus on Yukon College and its community campuses to establish more skills and trades training programs;

- (2) placing an increased emphasis in Yukon high schools on vocational skills and trades training as an alternative path of education with corresponding investment in space, equipment and teachers;

- (3) increasing the enrolment in the Yukon apprenticeship program that currently provides a certificate and on-the-job training for approximately 46 designated trades;

(4) promoting increased enrolment in the Yukon government's apprenticeship program;

(5) initiating a targeted marketing campaign to bring skilled Yukon workers back to the territory and attract new workers by advertising the opportunities that are available and the superior quality of life Yukon has to offer;

(6) working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders to reduce the barriers to First Nation employment to educate and train First Nation students in the areas of importance to them, including their land claims settlements and development activities within their traditional territories;

(7) developing measures to encourage greater participation in vocational skills and trades training by women, such as the women exploring trades program, persons with disabilities and students who do not wish to pursue an academic education;

(8) developing measures to encourage the underemployed, school dropouts and the working poor to pursue vocational skills and trades training; and

(9) working with the territories, provinces and the federal government to advance regional strategies to increase participation in the labour force and development of workplace skills.

Mr. Nordick: I would like to start off with a commitment we made in our Yukon Party platform in the election of 2006. One of the commitments was to expand and support alternative education, apprenticeship and post-secondary education by implementing a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy by continuing to expand education and training programs in areas of particular relevance to the north, such as First Nation governance, mining, tourism, resource management, construction north of 60, health care professionals and care providers, and teachers.

We also committed to work with communities, First Nations, Yukon College, and the private sector through the community training funds to train local residents for job opportunities resulting from economic activity in their respective regions. We also committed to continue to support alternative programming at the Individual Learning Centre that encourages high school dropouts to return to school and re-engage in learning.

We also committed to continue to provide home-schoolers with more access to program resources and funding, and we are still committed to continue to support the Teen Parent Centre to enable teen parents to complete their education and development of parenting skills. We also committed to continue to promote distance education and training in Yukon communities through Yukon College and by other means to improve services to the public and to make information more accessible to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, along with the other commitments, we also committed to establish Yukon College as a climate change research centre of excellence for the north and to build a cold climate innovation cluster situated at a Yukon College campus.

The Yukon Party government is supporting Yukon College and its community campuses in providing a variety of training opportunities for rural Yukon people: electrical program modi-

fications, welding, pre-employment courses, pipe trades modification courses, industry safety training courses, apprenticeship preparation program. Mr. Speaker, these are just five examples of many that we are committed to. One example: for the welding pre-employment course, we committed close to \$78,000.

Mr. Speaker, we are emphasizing vocational skills and trades training in Yukon high schools. As of October 12, 2007, there are nine high school students registered as apprentices. A pilot project was conducted in Porter Creek Secondary School for the delivery of level 1 carpenter curriculum for a small group of grade 11 and 12 students. The students in this pilot were not registered as apprentices until they obtained employment either as part-time or full time in the trade. One of the four students went on to pass his level 1 exam for a credit and subsequently entered into an apprenticeship.

Mr. Speaker, this apprenticeship unit is in discussion with the public schools branch to review the pilot and possibly implement similar courses in schools in Whitehorse and in the communities.

As of October 4, 2007, there were 365 Yukon residents registered as apprentices in 31 of the 48 designated trades in the Yukon. Of these apprentices, 68 were members of Yukon First Nations and 29 were women. This means that 19 percent of the group were Yukon First Nations and eight percent were females.

Apprenticeship registration is voluntary in the Yukon and depends on the willing participation of Yukon employers and their workers. Apprenticeship numbers vary from month to month depending on the availability of work and the number of graduating apprentices.

Over the past five years, 172 graduating Yukon apprentices achieved trade certification. Of those, 140 also earned their interprovincial standards red seal, meaning their certification is recognized across Canada.

I will give an example: in 2003, there were 23 certificates issued as apprentices. Out of those, 19 certificates were issued with the red seal approval. In 2007, as of December 4, there were 42 certificates issued. Of those, 33 were red seal certified. In total, since 2003, 172 certificates were issued and there were 140 certificates issued with interprovincial red seal approval.

During the same time period, 79 Yukoners who applied through the trades qualification program achieved trade certification. Of those, 67 also earned their interprovincial red seal. To date, there have been 79 certificates issued, and 67 were red seal interprovincial approved.

This government is committed to the apprenticeship program. The advanced education branch employs, as of October 12, a total of five apprentices under the Yukon government apprenticeship program -- YGAP. This includes four heavy equipment and truck transport technician apprentices -- three in Whitehorse and one in my community of Dawson City -- and also a parts person in my community of Dawson City.

Highways and Public Works transportation and property maintenance management employs five apprentices through their own funding. These include an automotive service techni-

cian, heavy equipment and truck transport technician, one parts person, a construction electrician and an oil-burner mechanic.

The Yukon Party government apprenticeship program was originally implemented in 1983 as an in-house apprentice training program to provide apprenticeship training opportunities for the unemployed apprentices and members of targeted groups within the Yukon government's workshops throughout the territory. Over the years, the level of activity has ebbed and flowed, relative to the overall situation of available funding and government priorities.

We are committed to bringing skilled Yukon workers back to the territory and attract new workers. In July 2007, the Yukon government received a report it had commissioned from the Chamber of Commerce on labour market initiatives. The report will help direct the framework of a labour force strategy.

It is important that the Yukon recognize the credentials and certifications of professionals and tradespeople from around Canada. This recognition will help encourage workers to move to the Yukon and help address the broad-reaching labour shortages in this territory.

If the Yukon fails to work toward full labour mobility, Yukon will restrict the immigration of Canadian workers to Yukon and exacerbate labour shortages. It is important that Yukon ensures its professional and trades standards match national standards in order for Yukon residents to move and work freely around Canada without encumbrance. While this approach may encourage Yukon residents to leave Yukon in search of more lucrative job markets, Yukon already faces a major labour shortage and will need to ensure there are no disincentives for Canadians to move to and work in the Yukon.

As a result of this agreement among Canada's premiers at a Council of the Federation meeting on August 10, 2007, Yukon has an obligation to remove barriers to labour mobility by April 1, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, our government and First Nation governments and the Yukon College will work with other stakeholders to reduce barriers to First Nation employment.

Education will continue to partner with First Nations on measures to address training needs. In 2007-08, for example, the Yukon government provided \$75,000 to Kwanlin Dun House of Learning, \$50,000 to Liard First Nation for a women-in-apprenticeship work experience initiative and \$57,500 to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation for heavy equipment training.

We need to encourage greater participation in vocational skills and trades training by women. Advanced Education partners with and provides funding to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology to encourage Yukon women to consider trades as a viable career option, and Skills Canada Yukon to showcase trades as a career option to youth in Whitehorse and communities.

Like many jurisdictions, Yukon has experienced record low unemployment rates with potentially fewer people entering the labour force than leaving. These two factors, along with the high demand for well-paying jobs in Alberta and British Columbia, are contributing to an increased difficulty in filling demand for workers in the Yukon.

A conscious effort is being given to increase the labour force's participation of underutilized groups in Yukon society. Initiatives are in place to have older workers, First Nation people and youth with disabilities play a greater role in the labour market.

We are encouraging the underemployed, school dropouts and working poor to pursue vocational skills and trades training. Yukon government is working cooperatively on a number of initiatives with the business community, industry, educational institutions and other governments in order to address the labour shortage issue.

The Canada employment insurance program has entered into a contribution agreement with the Department of Education for \$1.125 million toward costs incurred by Yukon for the training employment of insurance clients under skills development employment benefit.

Education in collaboration with Economic Development has begun preliminary work on the Yukon labour force framework that will seek to address current and future needs in the labour force.

For example, Yukon had signed an agreement with Canada on a targeted initiative for older workers that will bring to the Yukon \$666,000 in federal funds over a two-year period to address the training needs of older workers.

Yukon College is facilitating the initiative and will ensure that both Whitehorse and rural residents will be able to participate. Yukon College also received \$63,000 from the community training trust fund for this program. The community training trust fund continues to be used for employment-related training skills to develop literacy and upgrading.

Training is delivered through three avenues: community based, economic sector based and project related.

One training fund is the Klondike region training trust fund, and another one is the Carmacks Employment Training Society training fund. There is a whole list of training funds. I won't go into detail on the entire list. But the total fund is approximately \$1.5 million.

The Yukon government recently provided Yukon College with \$363,000 to renovate its trade wing to address the growing demand for trades.

The Yukon government has helped facilitate the establishment of the Yukon Mine Training Association.

In February 2007, the federal government announced its intention to develop new national labour market architecture. Canada has requested that Yukon fully develop the employment benefits and support measures, which are programs under part 2 of the *Employment Insurance Act*.

Over the next several months, develop and negotiate, mandate and enter into negotiations to fully devolve these programs. It is anticipated that between eight to 10 employees will be transferred, and approximately \$3.8 million in programming will be negotiated.

Fully devolving these programs will increase Yukon's participation and responsibility for providing employment and training programs to residents of the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to continue to advance regional strategies to increase participation in the labour force and develop workplace skills.

The Yukon nominee program is a national initiative under immigration agreements. The program has a business investment category and a skilled worker category. Recently the Department of Education developed a critical impact worker category under the Yukon nominee program, in line with this government's platform promises to assist employers in fulfilling entry-level positions that they have found difficult to fill.

Employers will find this mechanism easier to use than the federal government's temporary foreign worker program.

In closing, as I stated at the beginning of this debate, in our 2006 election platform we had committed to expand and support alternative education, apprenticeship programs and post-secondary education. That is why I move this motion to help the government implement a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, we are expanding and supporting alternative education programs in the Yukon.

Mr. Fairclough: I would like to respond to this motion, Motion No. 257. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward. I will also try to be short, if I can.

There are a couple of points that I wanted to make with regard to this motion. One is with regard to point 6 as outlined in the minister's motion. It is an issue that has already been brought forward to me. I will get back to that a bit later.

This motion is asking government to implement a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy. I am hoping that, with the points the Member for Klondike read out -- not only in the motion, but also in his description -- we will go forward and develop this strategy and not have one that has been thought up internally within the Yukon Party and therefore implemented in that manner. I say that because we on this side of the House have no problem with a motion like this, but we see this as being very successful if the Yukon Party takes it to the communities and develops it in that manner. I know that this has been touched on around the edges a few times by the minister, but I think it is really important.

I say that because of course the communities have been dealing with this. I have to say that when I speak with communities and First Nations about putting together strategies like this, Yukon College, for example, says that they have an excellent working relationship with First Nations, coming forward with new ideas and putting courses on that would benefit people locally in the communities. I can give you a couple of examples, also. Many, many years ago the First Nation brought forward and developed a training plan with the local community campus with regard to mining and mine training. I know the members opposite may want to touch on this a bit more too, but Yukon College and the community campuses worked with the community and First Nations to come up with this. It was very successful, I have to say. It was designed locally, and it was used as an example of how other communities could come forward with their own priorities as far as training goes in the community. Just in regard to the mine training program that

took place, everyone who went through that training program got a job in the end -- not just in the Yukon but elsewhere. Most of those people do still live here in the territory. So we on this side of the House are supportive of initiatives such as that.

Here was another one, and it was brought up here before, and it got some chuckles, I guess, from members on the Yukon Party side, but it was a training program that did not involve a whole lot of money. It was a training program in the community of Carmacks that attracted members from other communities to take that course. It was a camp cooking course.

I believe they went through the training trust fund for monies. It was only a few thousand dollars, but that was a course that was greatly needed at the time, and it still is. Many people gave a whole lot of compliments for that type of course to be offered. It just so happens that the community of Carmacks has pushed to have the course in that community.

Those were important for many different industries -- not only for forestry, but for the mining community and so on.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, if you're out there in mining camps, or where there's exploration or at the mine itself, the one thing that keeps people happy is being fed well. Having good cooks in camps really makes the difference.

I hope the Yukon Party, in bringing forward this motion urging government to do this, would work closely with the community campuses. I believe they have already started many different courses that could probably be all put together for the skills and trades training that the Member for Klondike talks about.

We in the territory, like the rest of Canada, recognize and are experiencing the shortage of workers in all sectors. We're competing with the rest of Canada; we're competing with the United States to bring a skilled workforce to the territory.

One example is in regard to our doctors and nurses. All the provinces and territories are putting together a package that's attractive for nurses and doctors to work in their province or territory, and we have to do the same thing. When we put together a marketing campaign for the Yukon, we have to have something for them too.

It's not enough to focus on one sector; we have to focus on all sectors. I know, for example, the nursing jobs are not the top jobs being looked at right now.

This past summer we experienced in the territory a shortage of people in the service sector. I think every community experienced that. I know we have talked about this through an amendment to a bill introduced in this House about trying to keep the immigrants in the territory. That's fine to have them as, basically, permanent members instead of on a work visa, but it does not take care of the immediate problems that we have right now regarding the shortages of a skilled workforce.

There is a big difference between the City of Whitehorse and the rest of the Yukon. I know the unemployment rate is pretty low right now, but in some of the communities it is still quite high, even though they have been working on putting together these courses and trying to get people job-ready for the impact that we see across Canada. We still have a higher unemployment rate in rural Yukon.

There are some ways we could have addressed that. Take, for example, government projects and just take one of them: the Carmacks school. There are many that are out there. If this Yukon Party government worked more closely with the community, we would have seen a lot more community people working on that project. These are skilled and semi-skilled people -- carpenters, electricians and so on.

If we did that -- the projects in the community don't have to go ahead while this major government project is there. We could have employed a lot more local people than we did on that project. In my view, it was not a complete success when it comes to employment of local people on that project.

That's not to say that the community was against an influx of people coming to the community to work, but they themselves would like to see those jobs. That particular project had employed quite a few people from out of the territory. I think it employed close to a dozen people who came straight from Newfoundland into that community. Many of those jobs could have been done by local people who were skilled and trained.

We are focusing on a comprehensive strategy, but maybe some of the strategy that government should be looking at is trying to employ those who already have the skills in things like government projects that we see across the territory. I would give that advice to members opposite. Perhaps they could work quite a bit more closely with communities when it comes to jobs that are being created. That is what it's all about.

The member is recognizing that the economy in Canada is definitely way up there and much better than it was before. The economy in the Yukon is the same. There is a demand for a good workforce.

I am a bit disappointed that the Yukon Party has been in power for over five years and we are just now trying to put together a comprehensive strategy. The work should have been done already. I believe that Yukoners saw the upswing in activity in the territory. We should have been preparing ourselves.

We brought it forward many times on the floor of this Legislature -- for example, with oil and gas. Where is all the training that should be taking place? Where will our skilled workforce be when that project suddenly comes? That is a huge one. We should be preparing. It's important that we do that and not be caught if it comes, with Yukoners sitting by watching other skilled workers coming to the territory and doing the job they could be doing.

I think it's fairly straightforward.

I do want to get into some of the surveys that took place across Canada, but I wanted to go back and talk a little bit about my disappointment in how point 6 in this motion reads. For one, they wanted to reduce the barriers to First Nation employment, to educate and train them.

We've talked a lot about education in the territory. First Nations have come forward; they've gone to the point that they've never gone to before with this Yukon Party government and that is to examine very seriously drawing down education and running it themselves, because they feel that there's a failure. There is a failure on the part of government -- not just the Yukon government, but the federal government as well.

It's unfortunate that we have gone that far. To come back and say, okay, we're going to emphasize teaching First Nations and training them, there's nothing wrong with doing that, but they are a part of the society here and they are part of the communities, so of course we need to be working with them.

In some of the communities, Mr. Speaker, the majority is First Nation. I would just like the member, the mover of the motion, to think about that a little bit. We'd love to make amendments to this motion, but we've experienced that before. We're not going to go there with the members opposite. We will be voting on the motion as it was read by the Member for Klondike.

I just want to point those things out for the member to seriously consider and not just take it as an insult or anything from members on this side of the House, from me, in this matter. Actually, it's a very serious issue.

When we look at the results of Canada's survey of global skills and shortage, two-thirds of Canadians claim that they are having difficulty with filling positions due to a lack of a skilled workforce and talent and so on. In Canada, the top 10 jobs that employers are having difficulty filling are -- and I've ranked them, and I talked about the nursing one, which is number 10 in the top 10 list. The top one was sales representatives. The second one is customer service representatives and customer support. Of course, those are ones that I talked about earlier. Everyone who walks into a restaurant, store, small business or a tourism operation can see this very clearly. Engineers are number 3. Drivers are number 4. Mechanics are number 5. Labourers are number 6. Chefs and cooks are number 7. Electricians are number 8. Skilled trades are number 9. Nurses are number 10.

I think this is important. It's reflective of the Yukon, also. We need to address that, and hopefully with this motion, should government carry it out in an expeditious manner, we could be addressing this as soon as this coming summer.

Now, there was also a CanWest News Service article dated January 14, and I'm not going to read the whole thing, but they say that there are simply not enough people -- human capital -- to train in order to get the job done.

This is in Canada. I think that's something else that is pretty important to address because the Yukon Territory needs to be working with other provinces and territories, of course, to ensure that we do have the people to train. And it's quite obvious that we need to have a lot more people in Canada because there are jobs there for them.

Here's another one. When it comes to mining, comprehensive research conducted by the Mining Industry Training and Adjustment Council-Canada found that the Canadian mining industry will need up to 81,000 new people to meet the current and future needs to fill positions vacated by those retiring.

I think this is quite important too, Mr. Speaker, because Yukon has always had that reliability of mining and mining jobs in the territory. We too, of course, are feeling the pinch in the mining industry of not having enough people to do the job. And, as a matter of fact, in my own little community of Carmacks, this is the experience, exactly as I said.

Many people have already done their mining career -- 30 years plus -- and moved on. I have a brother who has worked almost 35 years in the mining industry and is still there. He's working at Cantung but, of course, what's on his mind is retiring out of this industry. I also have friends who have worked quite a bit, say, in the coal mine in Carmacks, and have moved on to the Faro mine, and have gotten all kinds of training and skills in the mill, driving truck, and so on.

There are many truck drivers who come from Carmacks. BYG and Riddell Resources, when they were in operation, employed many of these skilled people from that community. What happened here was quite interesting. Even when BYG opened and they were looking for experienced miners, some of them who had worked in the mills had moved on due to the downturn of the mining industry, particularly when Faro shut down and many were laid off. They found some training and got permanent jobs. When a mine like BYG opens up and is looking for experienced and skilled people, these are the people who say that they want to stick to their permanent job instead of working for two or three years until things change again in the mining industry. It might have been a good move on their part at the time, because it was also the same time that the Yukon experienced Bre-X. What a blow that had to the mining community then. Of course, BYG did not last long. They were not in operation for very long at all. As a matter of fact, I think they have spent more years now monitoring and trying to do cleanup than the mine was operating this last time.

We recognize it, particular in the mining industry. We will be seeing a shortage. Of course we are basically going to have to compete with the rest of the world when it comes to skilled people.

In the trucking industry, it is estimated that the industry needs about 37,000 new drivers every year for the next three years. I have to say that some of the surveys that I have read out -- the top 10 list and so on -- were done in 2006, but I don't think much has changed over this past year.

The mining industry will have 81,000 new jobs and even the trucking industry, you know, will have 37 new positions over the next three years, so we're in trouble a bit here. We're going to be going through the same experience we had this past summer -- not only us, but the rest of Canada. So again, we're going to be competing with the rest of Canada.

There is nothing wrong with moving forward with the strategy that trains our local workforce or Yukoners so they can get these jobs, but we're hoping that it's looked at in a very careful manner, in that we look at the future and what it has to hold for these types of positions and do our training to make sure we have Yukoners working in those jobs and not training Yukoners to work in jobs in Alberta and so on. That would not be good for us.

I'll just read a few more. In the auto industry, for example, over the next 10 years, the projected range of positions is between just over 43,000 to 77,000. I have to say, though, that this survey was done in 2005. This is a little older one. I've been trying to look at some of the newer ones too.

Even the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council sees that Canada, for example, is going to be faced with a tremen-

dous number of people who are needed. For example, they feel that they will be unable to fill over 300,000 positions over the next decade. That's quite a bit. I'll read this one out because a lot of these jobs in the tourism industry are held by young people and students and students moving on into universities or whatever or getting more permanent jobs out there.

These are jobs that are really targeted to the younger sector.

Even in the Construction Sector Council, they feel that Canada will experience a national skilled worker shortage right up to 2013. This survey was done, I believe, in 2006. They are saying we are going to experience that right up to 2013. Of course, Yukon again will be impacted by that as our economy grows. It's something that we really need to think seriously about. This is all about the future, of course, that we're talking about, filling more jobs as we see them being created by the private sector.

The Canadian electricity human resource sector needs 17,000 new jobs over the next 10 years. This survey is a bit old. It's 2004, but even if it were updated, percentage-wise, it would probably be close to the same thing.

The installation, maintenance and repair service sector of Canada has 60,000 positions that are needed. They even break them down with 32,000 as electronic technicians and 22,000 as appliance technicians. These again are some pretty big numbers that we see, even though the motion is about getting a skilled workforce here in the territory. When there are jobs out there, they also attract Yukoners. We've seen a lot of them who did leave the territory and still haven't come back. We're still hoping to attract them here.

The Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada says the same thing. They see the need for some 78,000 individuals. A lot of them are bus operators. Here again, like the nurses, these drivers are getting up there in age. The average age is between 45 and 64 years old. I really think we may be experiencing -- I know that we will be experiencing this -- a tremendous number of people retiring and leaving the workforce. Down the road we will be faced with this again.

The Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists did a survey in 2005. They say that there is a need for 17,000 workers in 2005 alone. From time to time, our universities do address the issues of shortages of workers in Canada. In the nursing sector, the universities responded many years ago. There were a lot of trained people and they filled the positions that were out there. There was a bit of a cry that there were not enough positions for the nurses who had been trained through the universities. I think the numbers are quite a bit higher now in all sectors. We are finding it difficult, even through the universities and trade schools, to fill those positions.

Here is an interesting one. I am just picking them at random. The Conference Board of Canada writes that -- this is something I just talked about -- the first wave of baby-boomers will reach 65 in 2005 and they will begin to retire as early as 2007.

By 2025 -- here's a number that is kind of staggering -- Canada will face a skilled labour deficit of 1.2 million persons.

That in itself is a staggering number, and we in the territory will feel it again.

We support trying to get all the local people trained as much as possible. We support government's efforts in getting women into the workforce more, particularly in trades. We on this side of the House do not have major problems with this motion put forward by the Member for Klondike.

I did want to put on the record a bit of our concern with this. I really want the government side to look at working with communities to identify in the future exactly what's needed in the territory, and that's how we begin to start putting together and designing a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy and not just implementing one without the guidance of Yukoners. It has worked in local campuses around the territory, and it has worked well. They have responded. They have worked with other universities to bring to the territory whatever existing training courses have been out there, and I think that this government can do the same thing. I'm hoping that members opposite emphasize working with First Nations in regard to skills and trades in the territory a lot more seriously than the wording in point 6. I say that because the First Nations offer quite a bit to the territory in regard to creating their own jobs to employ their own members, and they've been doing this for quite a long time. They are involved tremendously in the Yukon economy, and they've kept businesses going here in the territory. They should be recognized for doing that.

I've heard some businesses say that if it weren't for them during the tough times, they themselves would be in trouble. These are big businesses -- Beaver Lumber, for example, and some of the automobile companies here in the territory. They recognize it, and they recognize the efforts put forward by First Nations. Some of these small communities certainly didn't grow with the private sector or people wanting to build homes and so on. But the First Nations have been building homes for quite some time, and we're starting to see a lot of the results of how communities are growing healthier, simply because of that.

I urge the mover of the motion to take some of the points I've raised seriously. We have made suggestions on the floor of this Legislature to guide government into looking at this in a serious manner. One of them -- and I've mentioned this through a motion that we haven't really had any discussion on, but maybe one of these times we can -- is creating a mine training school in the community of Mayo. This is not a new initiative put forward by government.

If members on that side of the House would talk to the Premier -- it was raised with him in his tour around the territory and it has been raised in the past. It has been talked about by the community of Mayo, in conjunction with the Chamber of Mines, and they're interested in it. I know that the Chamber of Mines is also interested -- if not Mayo, then perhaps Ross River, which is the other community that has been mentioned.

But when you look at the mining industry and the community of Mayo, they do have the facility there and the history there to do a good job in having a mine training school there. I'm not talking about a course; I'm talking about a school that could be housed in one of the buildings in that community.

We have seen it being developed -- a school, for example, in the arts -- in the community of Dawson City. I think the community of Mayo is also looking at something similar to this. It may not go on forever, but it will definitely be a step in the right direction.

I read that motion into the record last week, and I am hoping the members opposite look at that seriously. Perhaps one of these times we will have a chance to debate that on the floor of this Legislature. That may not come, as we don't always have the amount of time we would like to see dedicated to debating motions on the floor. Opposition parties do not have every Wednesday, as we also deal with government motions, as we are today. It prevents us from bringing every single motion that we would like to bring to the floor of this Legislature.

If the member opposite would like to talk with me in regard to that motion, I would be glad to sit down and talk to government on it. I know this has been discussed with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. We met with the president and he is quite familiar with it. They all know that this is a very good idea and it is something to look forward to in the future.

I will finish with that. I know there is quite a bit more that could be said about the different points that have been raised in this motion, but I would like to sit back and listen to what others have to say in regard to this motion.

Thank you.

Mr. Edzerza: I have a few issues I would like to bring forward with regard to this motion. To start with, this motion, I believe, is kind of like putting the cart before the horse. I believe quite strongly that the Minister of Education has a very strong and positive responsibility to ensure that the education reform process is well respected.

The question I would have is: why bring this motion forward before the education reform report is public and discussed? A lot of the education reform is going to be in jeopardy now, I believe, because the government is prepared to start developing policy around this specific area without respecting the recommendations from the education reform process. That could be viewed as really undermining the value of that education reform, which, I might add, took several years to do.

There are a number of questions with regard to this that are not answered. I would also like to state for the record that this strategy is weak and that it has nebulous phrases rather than active verbs to implement action. An example of some of the wording in this motion: (2) "placing an increased emphasis in," (6) "working in conjunction with".

Those do not constitute any action. I imagine you can work the issue for years and years with this kind of wording. It sounds impressive, but it doesn't describe any action. In that event, it's reading material. That's about all it will do. You can sit down and read this. It doesn't specify any specific action that's going to take place.

When it starts out with "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy by...", already I ask what skills are to be looked at and what trades. When is this expected to be written? It only says they will implement it. Has there been any

consultation with First Nations about this strategy or these proposed initiatives that are going to speak specifically to skills training? Has there been any consultation with Yukon College about this issue?

We go on to one where it talks about providing an increased focus on Yukon College and its community campuses to establish more skills and trades training programs. How do we provide an increased focus on the college? What does that mean? Is this interfering with the college's mandate? Is there any money budgeted for this? It sounds like it's going to be a very expensive initiative. Believe me, I would be the first to sanction it if the government were going to increase or double the Education budget. I do believe that education is probably one of the most important programs over which a government has control. It should have the highest budget, but it doesn't.

We talk about placing an increased emphasis in Yukon high schools on vocational skills and trades training as an alternative path of education, with a corresponding investment in space, equipment and teachers. Again, this is how to place an increased emphasis but there are no costs or budgets indicated or if it covers all high schools.

Does it cover all the high schools in the outlying communities? I don't know. How is it to envision that a student chooses the alternative path, or are they assigned to a vocational stream if their academics are low? Again, I believe that this is a very good initiative to be able to provide alternative paths in education, but how do you promote that? I believe I've stated many, many times over and over again on the floor of this Legislature that there are two untapped resources -- and that's not only in Yukon, it's right across Canada -- and they are women and First Nations. There's an abundance of women and First Nation people who, I believe, would rather enjoy taking an alternative path in education. This would be very expensive to put in all high schools. It's going to be a horrendous cost. Why not some kind of partnership with businesses or the college? When we talk about increasing the enrolment in the Yukon apprenticeship program that currently provides a certificate and on-the-job training for approximately 46 designated trades? What incentives would there be for students and the college, the business? Would it be in place to increase the enrolment? Well, government increased their number of apprenticeships. Government is one of the biggest employers in the territory. They should be swamped with apprenticeships if they were sincere about supporting the education program and the processes that the government of the day provides.

When we go to talk about promoting increased enrolment in the Yukon government apprenticeship program, what incentive is there to increase enrolment and what numbers are anticipated? We don't know.

When we talk about initiating a targeted marketing campaign to bring skilled Yukon workers back to the territory and attracting new workers by advertising the opportunities that are available and the superior quality of life that Yukon has to offer, this is very expensive and it does not have the results that incentive programs would have.

On this specific area, I know from experience -- I have a number of constituents who are First Nation journeymen car-

penters, for example, and they had to go to Alaska to get work. They couldn't get a job in the Yukon, and they're qualified journeymen carpenters. But they went to Alaska at the blink of an eye. One person went to Anchorage and got a job, and five of his buddies followed him. They were all hired instantly. But they couldn't get a job in the Yukon.

When we talk about working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders to reduce the barriers to First Nation employment -- to educate and train First Nation students in areas of importance, including their land claim settlements and development activities within their traditional territories -- again, all these First Nation people whom I'm referring to went to Yukon College here and got some of their upgrading courses done in B.C. Again, they were all working in Alaska.

We have to ask ourselves: how do we work with First Nations, the Yukon College and the stakeholders? I think there is a lot of trust involved here, and once the trust has diminished somewhat, it is hard to bring it back.

What are the barriers that will be addressed? It talks about barriers in there. One of the biggest barriers I know as a First Nation person is mission school victimization. That's a barrier. That's a horrendous barrier that has broken the spirit and will for a lot of First Nation people to ever be employed. Mental health is a very big barrier in the territory, not only for First Nations. There are a lot of other citizens in the territory other than First Nation people who have gone through a horrendous upbringing. If there could be one barrier that could be overcome, it would please me to no end if it were that one -- to be able to do something with the mental issues that have stuck with a lot of the citizens in this territory around the mission school era.

It's not only the mission school victims, it's now about the three or four generations of people from the mission school who are still having great difficulty in being able to hold a job and find the will or interest to go back to school.

One suggestion I would give is that maybe the government should look at training some of the First Nation people so they can be trainers in the community. There are quite a number of First Nation journeymen and journeywomen within First Nation communities. I believe it would be very uplifting for those individuals to be approached and asked if they would like to be trainers in their community.

I know that I was asked many years ago to take a course at the college so that I could be an instructor in the welding field. However, as it turned out, back then I wasn't all that healthy from the upbringing I had. I didn't like responsibilities of that nature. So it was a barrier for me, just like I'm talking about the barriers for a lot of the First Nation people who attended mission schools. It is very difficult to overcome a lot of those abuses. They do stop you from advancing, unless through some miracle you find the will to be able to move on.

When we talk about developing measures to encourage greater participation in vocational skills and trades training by women, such as the women exploring trades program, what kind of money are we talking about here? There's a lot of money involved in this whole motion. It has very large dollar

signs attached to it. If the government is willing to really honour the financial commitment, I think it will be a very worthwhile endeavour.

Before my time ends here, I would like to put on the record some of the recommendations that came from the education reform process.

Recommendation 1 was that hands-on training and shop skills should be provided at the elementary school level.

Recommendation 2 was that the Yukon secondary school apprenticeship program should be revitalized and that students should get dual credits for apprenticeship coursework and a secondary school diploma. Recommendation number 3 was that, to prevent a shortage of technological education, instructors at the Department of Education should provide teacher training incentives for Yukon tradespeople, education leave for teachers to train in this area, and incentives to attract technology education instructors to the territory.

Recommendation 4: pre-trades training and promotion should be developed and delivered through partnerships between advanced education, community groups, training providers, industry and labour organizations. Programs that work in partnership with community-based organizations, First Nations, Yukon College and the Yukon government will be the most effective.

Recommendation 5: wage subsidies and/or other incentives should be considered for employers to increase apprenticeships and targeted trades, and with targeted apprenticeship groups such as women and First Nation people.

Recommendation 6: useful hands-on experience in communities without trades training facilities is needed. Distance education, on-line training and mobile resources and techniques may be viable options.

Recommendation 7: academic upgrading specific to the trades should be part of community training incentives. Pre-trades or pre-apprenticeship qualifying or training programs should include personal supports, such as communications and life skills training, academic upgrading and counselling.

Recommendation 8: aboriginal tradespeople should be used as role models, mentors and trainers in the communities and in schools.

Recommendation 9: Yukon First Nations should consider administering aboriginal apprentices through an organization that serves as employer and coordinator.

Recommendation 10: community organizations such as Skills Canada Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology should be supported with a variety of resources to enhance their capacity to deliver successful pre-trade training to Yukoners.

Recommendation 11: the department should provide schools, especially those in the communities, with funding to run a skilled, focused program.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, these are only part of the recommendations that came out of the education reform process. I would very much hate to see such a lengthy and in-depth process be undermined by a motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: It's my honour and pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to deal with this motion regarding asking the Government of Yukon to implement a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy. I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward. It is a very important issue, one that is brought to my attention on a daily basis, frankly.

There isn't a day that goes by, when I'm walking in the community or along Main Street or shopping in a store, where someone doesn't stop me and ask me what we're doing in education, or what we're doing with skills and trades training, and then they bring forward other issues of concern.

This is an issue that is very important. Indeed, education is essential to our continued culture, quality of life, protection of the environment and our continuation as a community. There have been a lot of questions and concerns raised, and this gives us an opportunity to discuss what the government is doing and plans to do in the area of skills and other training. It is very important.

As we've just heard, there are people who have questions about this. I would like to thank the Member for Klondike who, at the beginning of his speech today, went through each of these nine issues and gave concrete examples and specifics about each of them, describing many of the initiatives -- certainly not all -- the government is doing in these areas, and answered a lot of the questions people raise.

It's important we get this information out to employers, students, parents, other orders of government, the organizing bodies like the chambers of commerce and industry associations, to answer the question they have about what the government is doing to promote trades and education.

And again, I'd like to thank the member for bringing it forward today so that we have a forum to discuss this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members will note that this motion is urging the Government of Yukon to take action. The motion is not specific to the Department of Education. There is a very important reason behind that, in that we recognize that all areas of government have significant responsibilities in this area and that we take a holistic view toward providing education and training in this territory. Really, it has to involve all government departments. The Department of Health and Social Services has to be involved. They have to be involved both from a provider of service, looking at what training programs are needed in the territory, what skills and capabilities are required, but when they work with the Social Services department, we also have to identify what the clients of Social Services need.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, the recent announcement by the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding social assistance is a very progressive step in this area. Changes to social assistance rates and how they're calculated and how people can earn income while they're working on social assistance will have an impact on this issue. In the Department of Tourism and Culture, of course, education is a very important component. The Department of Environment, again, is very important. Economic Development's participation in this process is crucial. Working with employers, working with people who look at where different industries are heading, looking at what our

future needs are going to be, looking at what the territory is going to look like in 50 years and what we have to do to work with Yukoners to prepare them to take advantage of those opportunities. The Department of Economic Development's participation in this is crucial. Mr. Speaker, we've got the Department of Community Services, which again works with our Yukon communities, our municipal governments, our not-for-profit groups or non-governmental groups. We have to work with those groups to provide them with the skills and capacity that they need to do their good work.

Well, the departments of Justice, Education and Health and Social Services all work on initiatives together -- things like substance abuse, the substance abuse action plan, providing education and training opportunities in our correctional centre -- and Highways and Public Works hires many apprentices. There are apprentices who work in the Department of Highways and Public Works, and they are an important part of this overall mix.

The government takes a very broad view of this. I mean, there are nine items in this motion. The tenth could just as easily have been "and other initiatives that are important to Yukoners". But for many of the issues brought forward by members such as myself and others, some of the common questions were: What are you doing in this area and where are you planning to go? I'm glad to see that we had the opportunity today to bring this motion forward to provide some of those answers to the question: "What is the government doing in these areas?" But it certainly does not stop there. The 20 minutes I have today would not offer me enough time to go into detail about all the programs that even the Department of Education has in these areas, let alone all the other departments.

I should add that the Department of Education has been implementing a plan and has been developing programs and offering services to Yukoners -- I believe since the inception of the department. We continue to work to implement our strategies and programming to satisfy the needs of Yukoners -- the needs they have today and the need that future generations will have.

I am very pleased with some of the comments I have received so far from members of the Official Opposition. I am glad that both parties have had the opportunity to put a speaker up so far. I appreciate the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and his comments and his indication of his party's support for this motion. I will try to address some of the concerns he brought forward. I appreciate hearing the constructive criticisms. It does have an effect on the decisions of the government.

Education is one of those areas where we are constantly working with our stakeholders. In one discussion that we had, there was a list of all the stakeholders involved in education. They included parents, students, teachers, administrative people, different orders of government, employers and so on. The list went on to include religious organizations and language organizations. It was quite an exhaustive list. At the bottom, there was an acronym that was ENPM. The acronym ENPM stands for everyone not previously mentioned. The reality is that, with education, everyone is a stakeholder and everyone is affected by decisions in education. Everyone has an opinion

and we value them. I do appreciate receiving some of the constructive criticisms from members opposite.

I will endeavour to answer some of the questions raised by the previous minister when he commented on this in terms of what is going on.

There are significant steps being taken along these lines with many of these initiatives. In the Department of Education, we are working very closely on implementing these components, providing an increased focus on Yukon College and its community campuses. I know that the Member for Klondike put on the record many of the specific programs and initiatives that the government has been working on with Yukon College, but I should also add that there has been an increase in base funding for Yukon College since this party has been in power. The government has worked very closely with the college to cover the pension shortfall issue. This supplementary budget that is before us right now, for which I ask support from all members, including the members of the opposition, includes an economic increase for Yukon College.

This government has been very strong in supporting Yukon College and its community campuses. We just need to look at the new School of Visual Arts that has been created in Dawson City. Look at the new residences at Yukon College that are providing assistance for people coming in from Yukon communities. Those are concrete examples.

Placing an increased emphasis on Yukon high schools and vocational skills and trades training -- we recently announced the increase in funding for skills in vocational education and experiential education that has gone directly to the schools so that the schools can have control over how that is expended, within parameters, of course, to provide the best kind of programming and support in their school. That is already indicating how we are supporting and how we are planning to continue to support our high schools and also elementary schools.

Increasing the enrolment in the Yukon apprenticeship program -- I'm pleased to announce that today we have 373 individuals indentured into the apprenticeship program. That is a record. That is the highest number of apprentices ever registered in the Yukon. I had the privilege of speaking at the apprentice award dinner last Friday, and when I made the announcement then, I believe the number was only 365. So in the short number of days since I had the opportunity to shake the hands of those people who had become full journey-level inter-provincial tradespeople, we've had more people come on board and register to begin their training in their career in trades. Also we have a growing number of people of First Nation ancestry registering in these programs and, again, we have a record number of women being involved in trades training and apprenticeship programs, many in non-traditional areas.

I should add that many of those people who have completed their apprenticeship training received their red seal certification. This is the interprovincial certification that recognizes their qualifications across Canada. Indeed, by having that now recognized nationally, it removes an internal trade barrier. There was a time when there were barriers to having tradespeople go from province to province. Now, by eliminating that, workers or tradespeople have an opportunity to have their cre-

dentials recognized across Canada. I think that all of us in this Assembly would recognize that removing that internal barrier has been very positive for the country.

The motion also speaks about promoting increased enrolment in Yukon government's apprenticeship programs. I think I will leave that to the Minister of Highways and Public Works to bring forward some information about how apprentices are working in his and other ministers' areas.

Initiating a targeted marketing campaign to bring skilled Yukon workers back to the territory is an important thing. Currently, as I mentioned, we have 373 Yukoners involved in trades training. It is very important to encourage those people to return to the Yukon. We also now have over 1,000 Yukoners who received the Yukon grant who are participating in post-secondary education. Many of those students are at outside universities and colleges. In fact, our Yukon students go to over 130 different post-secondary institutions across Canada. We should all recognize the value of that. It is also very important that many of our students return home and bring with them the skills and education that they learned in their education.

Mr. Speaker, item 6 speaks about "working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders."

The Member for Mayo-Tatchun brought this up. He flagged it as another area that would require additional effort. I would just like to provide a bit more information to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun to make sure that he has some of the latest information about what the governments are doing in this area.

You'll recall that the territorial government worked very hard with the federal government on the northern strategy trust. This year, for the 2007 approved projects, they include \$700,000 for a project called "Training to develop municipal and First Nation government capacity" where communities will oversee training for elected officials and staff from municipal and First Nation governments to deliver municipal-type services. There is \$250,000 for the Southern Tutchone Tribal Council's new mandate implementation. A key project is the community capacity training in mediation and communication in conflict. This is \$150,000 to provide training to develop community peacekeepers, mediators and negotiators.

There is over \$1 million for an executive development program. This is to develop comprehensive Yukon First Nation executive leadership and management programming. There is over \$1 million in this fund.

There is \$950,000 for the capacity development for land and resource management development. This is to assess First Nation capacity in the areas of land and resource development strategies for improving capacities and to develop a long-term capacity strategy through education and training.

There is over \$375,000 for cooperative education programs for Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation university students. There is funding available for boards and committee leadership training services. This is to develop and deliver training for members of boards and committees for other enhancements such as one-on-one consulting with board members.

I'm certainly not going through every project here in the northern strategy -- just the ones that are germane to the discussion here today.

As well, there is educating and empowering aboriginal youth to conduct education workshops, educational assessments and other after-school tutoring for youth with learning disabilities. And there is \$600,000 to work with Yukon First Nations public service, to work cooperatively among Yukon First Nations to develop effective human resource initiatives and practices. Those are just some of the over \$15 million in northern strategy trust programs.

Again, I have to apologize -- there is so much information available about what the government is doing in many of these areas and some of the directions we're going. I think it's very important to work comprehensively -- that means to work with all the departments and also to work with our partners and keep an eye toward the future.

I'd ask all members to support this motion. I believe the Liberal Party has communicated that they will be in support of this, and I would ask all members to support this very worthwhile motion.

I know there are other members who want to put on the record some of the initiatives that they are doing, so I will allow them the opportunity to speak to this motion.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing this motion brought forward by the Member for Klondike, it's a timely time for this motion because of the industry we see outside the territory and the opportunities we have to work within our schools -- vocational skills and trades training. And, of course, this government has been very bullish on moving forward with our trades - our apprenticeship program.

The statistics today are interesting on how many people are in the programs today and what we do offer in the college in the five short years we have been in government.

It's a tribute to the community that this kind of thing is going forward in our community. I would certainly like to expound on the fact that the apprenticeship program, our college and the need for employees in the different trades -- the member opposite was talking about apprenticeship programs and government is a big part of this. We work with apprentices in the Department of Highways and Public Works. We have a varied department, with operators, mechanics and all the pertinent trades that it takes to maintain the 5,000 kilometres of road that we have to work with on a daily basis. That is being done as we speak.

The Department of Highways and Public Works moved forward with a training program for four communities -- going out and training people in the communities to be operators. We have done that very successfully. I am looking forward to the next program that we are going to put together.

When we go out and train Yukoners in the smaller communities, we encourage them to stay in the communities. It is important for the fabric of our communities and the Yukon as a whole that we get people in these communities trained to take jobs. As everybody knows, there is a retirement issue in the

territory, as there is across Canada. The best trained people are located in these communities because they live there. I think that we have ignored that in the past. We've ignored it to our own folly, because there are people in the communities who can contribute, work and produce what we need in those communities. Hats off to the Department of Highways and Public Works for doing that good work.

Of course, Energy, Mines and Resources is another department that is moving forward with commitments to industry to work with them and First Nations to address the shortage we have in the mining community -- understanding that four or five years ago there was no opportunity for that kind of work in the territory. We had an economy of younger people moving away, younger people going out and getting college education or training, and not having an opportunity to come back home because there was nothing to come back home for. From a government point of view, that is not an easy thing to turn around. It's not an easy thing to turn around at a training level, but it's also the perception that there are no jobs here. We've certainly turned the corner on that, and the perception out there now is that the opportunities are in Yukon. More and more of our young people, whether they're professional or in the trades -- the workforce is coming back home. I see them daily out on the streets, working.

I see children who went to school with my children now in the apprenticeship program, working toward a goal, working toward a trade, and at the end of the day there are job opportunities. That's very important. It's very important to not just train people, but to offer a job at the end of the training. To put people through a training program and then at the end of the training program not have an opportunity to go to work is not a positive experience for an individual. So now that we have jobs out there, there are opportunities out there. Individuals can go to work. Industry is certainly looking for a workforce.

If you look at our smaller communities -- in Ross River, for example, I'm not sure what the figures five years ago were for unemployment, but I'm sure it was way up there.

Today, with the opportunities offered in that area, in that community, there are people working in the field with industry and contributing. As far as a training program is concerned, in Energy, Mines and Resources, with the help of Economic Development, we've put the Yukon Mine Training Association together. That's a government partnership with industry because industry is an important partner in any of these education parameters we put together -- the industry where these individuals will work. They can offer resources, which they have offered. For the Yukon mine training program, industry came to the mark with quite a few thousand dollars.

Now, with the First Nations, territorial government and industry, we're putting together a training program that we're moving out into the communities. We're working to address some of the issues that industry sees out there. Industry is saying that we need to train individuals for these specific fields and that the opportunity to work will be there at the end of the day.

The Yukon Mine Training Association is a partnership between the Yukon mining industry and First Nations. They are

committed to working together to maximize employment opportunities emerging from the growth of the mining sector and related to resources in the north for First Nations and other Yukoners.

The YMTA funds training projects to increase the profile of employment and opportunity in the mining sector and facilitate the delivery of targeted skills and training programs in the mining and related resources sector, in the midst of an expanding sector in Yukon.

The Yukon Mine Training Association also works to ensure that safety training is developed and delivered as part of the mine training initiative. The parameters were put together by that partnership.

What is the program objective? The overall objective of the YMTA is to provide leadership and awareness in the development of employment skill initiatives to meet the needs of the mining industry, First Nations and Yukoners. Applicants must meet the following objectives. Number one would be to ensure First Nations and other Yukoners receive skills needed to access jobs in the mining sector. That would be number one because, again, that is the team that is put together with industry to train individuals to go to work in that field.

Another one of the objectives is to ensure First Nations and other Yukoners are able to retain the jobs required. In other words, there has to be a job at the end of the day of the training program. It is also to ensure that ongoing needs for a labour pool for mining projects are met. In other words, we are not only looking at today's market but we are looking at a five-year program.

The members opposite were discussing statistics and how the shortage in the mining community looks like 80,000 in the next four or five years. Those numbers are realistic numbers, but we on this side, the government of the day, have to deal with the cards we are dealt. We understand that there is a shortage out there. Certainly there is a shortage in the labour pool in Canada. It is a national concern.

Again, as we said on this side of the House, as government, we try to be problem-solvers. The problem is here. We are working with the cards dealt to us, and we have to address this in a way that we create an employment opportunity for a trained workforce.

Number four is to address existing and upcoming labour shortages in an integrated and coordinated manner. In other words, we are certainly aware of the shortages. The member opposite talked about training and people going other places. I would not diminish the fact that, if we train individuals in trades or professions, I would not encourage them to stay in the Yukon. The fact is that people move on in their lives and they move on with different opportunities. I think that as far as opportunities for the Yukon are concerned, our communities and territory have many things to offer for professionals and tradespeople. Tradespeople and professional people have opportunities in the Yukon to take advantage of this great, beautiful country and lifestyle. I think that when we compete with other jurisdictions, if we look at the statistics, we fare well on that side of the ledger.

It is interesting when we talk about education, and look at individuals and training people, how things have changed over the last 25 years. What keeps an employee happy? Wages used to be a big factor and how much work he was being offered -- in other words, maximize the bottom line at the end of the pay period. Now, if you do a management program, one has to look at lifestyle. I am not diminishing wages, but people and professionals in the workforce are looking at lifestyle. You have to offer a lifestyle that is compatible not only for the individual who works for you, but for his family as well.

So when you look at situations like mining camps -- let's say a mining camp like Cantung where they offer a two- or three-week package and there's a split between work and family life -- there are those opportunities.

As Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I can't see the old-fashioned idea that we will build a town around a mine, like we did in Faro or across the north. There was always a community that followed a mining opportunity. Those kinds of things are not part of our social fabric any longer. People want to go somewhere after their work period where there is a lifestyle that's compatible for not only the individual as a worker, but for the individual's family. Those things are on the radar screens.

When we're training, these training funds have to be available to all Yukon mining industry businesses. This is what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We're putting a program together with industry that trains individuals to work in our mining community.

You know, 25 years ago in the mining world, we had a pool of hardrock, underground miners who would come and go and move across this great country and work underground. Well, with the dip in the economy and the dip in demand for mineralization, those people have gone into retirement. We don't have that pool of individuals in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, B.C., northern Quebec and Ontario -- that whole core of a generation of underground miners who worked all across this country. We don't have them any more. So we have to train our youth to do those kinds of work. This government has taken the initiative to understand that.

If I were to go on to say that our training funds are available to all Yukon industry businesses, proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, mining industry, mining industry subcontractors and Yukon First Nations, governments and organizations, and that applications submitted in partnership are encouraged -- funding for safety specific training does not require a partnership arrangement.

What we're trying to encourage here, Mr. Speaker, is very important. Partnerships work. If we can put partnerships together, in essence, with First Nations' industry, First Nations and other Yukoners, they seem to be more successful, because at the end of the day, this training program has to benefit all Yukoners and, in turn, it has to benefit the territory and industry. When you enter into a partnership like this, we get buy-in, and that's important. We want buy-in from Yukoners, First Nations and industry to make this work. I am really impressed. I was impressed with Economic Development, which first brought this out the door, and, of course, with Energy, Mines

and Resources, which is taking it the next step. But I was so impressed with the individuals who came and discussed the issues with me. Because of the calibre of the partnership, it was very impressive. The individuals were very impressive because they are sincerely interested in this succeeding. This will only succeed with the resources that this government, industry and First Nations have put together, and at the end of the day we will have an ongoing training program for Yukoners so that all Yukoners can take advantage of the industry that is being brought forward today. The opportunity here from a training program is that now, when we talk to the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, there are safety issues.

There wasn't the issue out there on safety 35 years ago that there is today. There are hearing issues, on-site safety, and first aid that has to be done. All these things will be folded into our program, and we will go to work with industry to answer the questions they have and also train the individuals -- the youth of our country -- who make that decision to go to work in the mining industry.

With four or five mines, we will not supply 100 percent of the workforce. But we will maximize what we can supply with this training program. And, again, this training program will benefit all Yukoners.

In oil and gas, Mr. Speaker -- just one minute about oil and gas and understanding that the Mackenzie issue is coming to some sort of decision-making process at the moment. We do have an oil and gas training program. We have worked with the likes of Akita Drilling Ltd. We have sent individuals out for training.

But, again, I remind everybody that it will be nice -- with our training programs -- to have an opportunity to work here in the Yukon. So, as oil and gas grows, that will certainly be part and parcel of a training program. But what I want to see here today is the opportunity for Yukoners to not only go through a three-year program for apprenticeship but, at the end of the day, have an opportunity to work in the Yukon -- because 95 percent of our youth here in the territory would like to live in the territory.

So, the argument about moving or doing otherwise -- let's have the option to work here and the opportunity to work here.

Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Horne: I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. Every child is unique; every child learns in their own way. Any parent who has two or more children knows that no two children have the same interests or the same goals. Each has their own path.

In the past, Yukon students were encouraged to pursue their post-secondary education by attending university and getting a degree. I'm told that some students were discouraged from pursuing a trade-based career because it was felt that the trades offered limited options for earning potential or for long-term challenges to interest and sustain a worker.

Some were discouraged because the trades were not seen as being appropriate choices for girls. However, not everyone who graduates from high school wants to pursue further studies, especially in a setting where the emphasis is placed on

theoretical or abstract concepts. Some students prefer to learn and create in a hands-on environment.

As I said earlier, each child has its own interests and, for many Yukon children, a career in the trades or technology sectors would be very rewarding. Not everyone is cut out for a university education and that is no reflection on anyone's intelligence. It is just not their area of interest.

I just want to address the point being made that smart people don't do trades. In looking over the debates from previous years, I see how a member of the opposition liked to mention the lack of university education of one of my younger colleagues. I would have to say that I think our Minister of Health and Social Services acquits himself very well.

My point is that different people learn in different ways and have different areas of interest. We have to help people, especially young people, find that mix of interest and learning styles that works for them. Given the exemplary job my colleague is doing, I would say he has found the mix that is right for him. He has found his niche. What an enviable position.

I would also like to point out that a trade can be a very solid foundation for future successes, even in the so-called academic realm. I would like to mention a couple of guys who started out in the trades and went on to achieve great success.

The other day, I was reading about a man whose trade I believe was shepherding, although I understand he was also something of a carver. He went on to become the world's most respected lawmaker -- his name was Moses.

Of course, I think perhaps the world's most famous carpenter also went on to achieve some success outside of his trade. I and the rest of the western world look forward to celebrating his birth on December 25.

People who go into trades are not any less intelligent. I think it is time we gave the trades the respect and status they deserve.

During my frequent visits to my riding, which is comprised of three small communities, parents and children have commented to me about their desire to pursue their education in their home communities. Not very many months into this mandate, I had a very concerned parent approach me about their child, who was going to be coming to Whitehorse for schooling. Children mature at different ages and sending a 17- or 18-year old out of the family home to school, away from parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and extended family can be very stressful for both the parent and the child.

Not all of us as parents are comfortable with those kinds of choices. I can understand when my constituents call me and say that we need something for our children in the communities. It is for that reason that I strongly support the first element of this motion, which is to provide an increased focus on Yukon College and its community campuses to establish more skills and trades training programs.

One of the issues that has come forward time and again in my riding is the desire to create a school of mining. People in both Faro and Ross River have spoken to me about this. For example, the Town of Faro made a very strong presentation to me about this issue, citing the fact that they have a mine site and all the related infrastructure and equipment; they have

companies in the area looking for employees and have some of the people required to teach the programs.

I would also note they have an abundance of affordable housing for students.

We also have more jobs in the area than we have workers. It just makes sense to my way of thinking to explore this option and look at a school of mining in the area. I think it's an ideal spot for students to learn. I know it would help the town. Not everyone wants to go to a big city and a big school for their education. Some of us like to go places like Banff, for example, which is like Faro: a smaller community tucked away in the mountains, both with indescribable beauty.

I would also like to see an increased emphasis in Yukon high schools on vocational skills and trades training as an alternate path of education, with a corresponding investment in space, equipment and teachers. I appreciate the good work of my colleague, the Minister of Education, for his resolve in this area.

The next point in this motion is one that I thought so appropriate. This is an example of the trades teaching the universities how to educate. Who of us have not heard of the importance of on-the-job training in the area of trades? Practical skills are so important. It wasn't that long ago that a university education consisted of listening to lectures, reading books, writing papers and sitting exams. Then some universities began to realize that their students were not well-prepared for the so-called real world, as they had expected. This led to the creation of cooperative programs, which is really just another name for an apprenticeship. For instance, my daughter is working toward her master's degree in geophysics and has been accepted as an intern at CICERO, the Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo, Norway. This internship will give her invaluable hands-on training.

Let's give students the skills and experience they need to succeed. What better place to start than by leading the way here in the Yukon government?

That brings me to the fourth element of this motion which is "promoting increased enrolment in the Yukon government's apprenticeship program." I am sure the Minister of Highways and Public Works is already working on making this a reality. One of the tragedies of the Liberal regime was their almost total decimation of Yukoners in their 20s and 30s. Given the disastrous effect they had on the economy, most Yukoners became economic refugees, fleeing the territory to find jobs in other jurisdictions. It broke my heart to see U-hauls heading south, young families perched in the front seat, watching their extended families in the land that they loved, disappear in the rear-view mirror as they drove down the Alaska Highway, searching for a better life.

Mr. Speaker, so many of these young people have ties to this territory and they wanted to raise their families here. They want their children to be surrounded by their grandmas and grandpas and extended families. I am sure all members of this House can appreciate the importance of families, especially in the First Nation communities. We need to find a way to bring these young people home. Yukon is strongest when all members of our society live here.

A few years ago, seniors were moving south when they retired. What a loss that was for our communities. Fortunately, that trend has stopped and now many seniors choose to stay here when they retire.

But now we need to find a way to get that missing cohort back. I believe that people who have strong ties to the community, those who grew up here, have much to offer Yukon. We invested so much in training and educating them and now they are making some other jurisdiction a better place. Let's bring them home.

I support initiating a targeted marketing campaign to bring skilled Yukoners back to the territory and attract new workers by advertising the opportunities that are available and the superior quality of life that Yukon has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just the money that influences young people's decisions. It's the quality of life. We live in the greatest place in the world, with an abundance of nature. Who wouldn't want to live here? We have national- and international-class sporting facilities. This is a great place to live.

In visiting the communities in my riding, I have seen firsthand the importance of working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders to reduce the barriers to First Nation employment, to educate and train First Nation students in the areas of importance to them, including their land claim settlements and developing activities within their traditional territories. First Nations have so much to offer Yukon. Let's help by making it easier to acquire the skills and education needed to succeed.

In Ross River, for example, a representative of the First Nation impressed upon me the importance of education and training in accessing employment. We have willing and capable workers out there who just need a little bit of help to get their certificates and licences they require for employment. For example, in my meetings, it was noted that for those who want to engage in resource-based careers, simple things like helping them to get their driver's licence by having the examiner go to the communities go a long way to opening up employment opportunities.

Other First Nation people are interested in government and leadership. I have heard about some of the challenges young mothers have in balancing the needs of the young children, working at the band office and furthering their education -- perhaps "juggling" is a better word. These young moms want and need to be close to their family support network in their home communities. Asking them to quit their jobs, move to Whitehorse or Outside to get an education does not make a lot of sense.

The world has changed, Mr. Speaker. When you and I were children, it was much different. Now most of the First Nations in the Yukon have settled their land claims and have agreements that have fundamentally and forever changed the way of life and work in the Yukon. We need Yukoners and all orders of government who understand the final agreements. I support this government's efforts to address that.

In my opening comments, I noted that each child has a path that is right for her. I also noted that some young women were discouraged from pursuing trades education as some of

the trades, for various reasons, were seen as inappropriate choices for young women. In my trip to Watson Lake I found that many women were engaging in the carpentry apprenticeship programs. In Teslin it was the same. Our Yukon is changing. It is opening for women and for trades. I support developing measures to encourage greater participation in vocational skills and trades by training women, such as the women exploring trades program.

One television show features a team of professionals who rebuild a family's home in seven days. One of the team members is a young lady, a carpenter, who wears a pink tool belt, pink work gloves and pink work boots that are made just for women. I admire her creativity and her work. I am also convinced that we need more people -- women -- like her in the Yukon. I support developing measures to encourage the underemployed, school dropouts and the working poor to pursue vocational skills and trades programs.

A trade is a ticket to a well-paying job. We have jobs looking for people. We have people looking for jobs. What we need is a way to help match the right people to the right job. There are few things that help build one's confidence more than having a job that one does well. I support working with the territories, provinces and federal government to advance regional strategies to increase participation in the labour force and development of workplace skills.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of this House to support this motion.

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

Mr. Nordick: First off, I'd like to thank all members of the opposition for their comments. I did keep my opening comments quite short because I did want to listen to what the members opposite had to say. I do take their comments quite seriously.

As a brief summary of why we need to enhance skills and trades in the Yukon, I'll list off two industries in my community. One industry is the mining community. The mining community needs welders, mechanics, cooks, general labourers -- I could go on all day about the employees and skilled trades that they actually need.

One of those industries -- as a support industry -- is the trucking industry. The trucking industry needs mechanics, truck drivers, technicians, accountants and front-end people. There is a whole list of employees that the trucking industry needs.

Another support industry to the mining industry is a fuel company, and they also need the same mechanics, truck drivers and front-end people.

The member opposite was commenting on how we need to work with First Nations and communities on such a strategy. Well, these two companies I just listed in Dawson are owned by the First Nation. Of course we have to work with First Nations. We have to work with our communities. That's a given. It's very obvious to all members that we have to work with everybody in the Yukon.

Another industry in the Yukon is tourism. This, of course, is another prevalent industry in my community. The tourism industry needs cooks, housekeepers, bus drivers, mechanics -- I could go on for the rest of the day listing what kind of employees and what kind of skills we need in the Yukon.

These are just two specific industries that prove that the Yukon needs to focus on a strategic industries education and skills education strategy.

Mr. Speaker, besides these two industries, there are all the businesses that support these two industries, such as grocery stores, jewellery stores, clothing stores, restaurants and industry-specific stores that sell metal, like Finning -- those kinds of industries. Mr. Speaker, we will work with First Nations. We will work with communities and all Yukoners to develop this strategy. I thank all members for supporting this motion.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 13 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 257 agreed to

Motion No. 271

Clerk: Motion No. 271, standing in the name of Mr. Nordick.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Klondike

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide services for children with severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome in addition to the services already provided to children with autism, and create a family support for families with a disabilities unit.

Mr. Nordick: I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to this very important motion this afternoon.

The Yukon Party made a commitment to Yukon families and their children last fall to enhance services provided to children with disabilities. The November 2006 Speech from the Throne stated that my government is committed to expanding

support services currently provided to children with autism to include children with other severe disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a little time outlining for the benefit of all members of this Assembly and for the public, of course, the history behind the Yukon Party commitment. Under our government's leadership, we were the first jurisdiction in Canada to directly fund treatment and programming for children with autism. In 2003, the Health and Social Services minister of the day met with several families with children with autism spectrum disorder. As a result of this meeting and out of genuine concern for these families and their children, the minister established a working group to advise him on the necessary elements of services for Yukon children with autism.

In 2004, the working group provided a set of priorities and actions to help address gaps in services. Many of the recommendations that came forward required substantial additional resources, which were not available at the time. In March 2005, the Yukon Party government made funding available to these children and families. Mr. Speaker, I think it's worth repeating for the benefit of all present that we are not only the first government in the Yukon to allocate resources to help support these children and families, but the first in Canada. I make this point again, Mr. Speaker, because many of the members opposite like to assert that they and their political parties possess a more pure social conscience and a more refined sense of duty when it comes to the social agenda. It is my belief that they are completely incorrect on this. I am very proud to represent the Klondike constituents as a Yukon Party member.

As a matter of fact, one of the main reasons I ran for the Yukon Party was its fine record on social issues. With the brand new funding in place to help families and children that was made available in March 2005, the government continued to conduct research from September 2005 to September 2006, guided by a steering committee that included Autism Yukon, the Association for Community Living, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Child Development Centre, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services.

I mentioned the steering committee to make the point that, despite the assertion of the members opposite that this government doesn't consult and work cooperatively with community groups, NGOs and First Nations, great work was conducted here and on many other files. Great work will continue to be conducted in a collaborative manner by this government. This government does good work on behalf of all Yukon citizens and works collaboratively on multiple fronts to ensure that we meet our legal obligations and do additional work to benefit those citizens who truly need the support of this government.

In specific terms, the work done on support for families and children with autism has informed the work that this government will continue to do to support children with other disabilities. The research conducted in 2005-06 included research done on the best practices associated with autism spectrum disorder. Interviews were conducted with Yukon families with children with autism; 45 service providers were surveyed to get

their input on how to move forward with the best programming for Yukon families and children. Reviews were conducted about various different services available in all other parts of Canada. Program funding recommendations were made and Yukon program guidelines were developed.

Not only does this government listen to the needs and concerns of Yukon citizens, it takes the time to do its homework and it puts resources into social programs that deliver the results for those who need them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be part of this effort.

I understand the Department of Health and Social Services is currently conducting research and doing homework on developing similar supports for families and children with other disabilities. During the last election, our government made a very clear commitment to build on the success of the autism initiative. The Yukon serves a population of children with a relatively large variety of unique disabilities, diagnoses and needs, making it quite challenging to respond effectively to them all.

Yukon has in many ways a limited capacity, based upon our size of population, to provide highly specialized services. The body of knowledge about various disabilities and effectiveness in interventions is always expanding, which also places pressures on government to respond to these needs.

Mr. Speaker, this government has met this challenge better than any previous government of the Yukon. For the record, I would also like to point out the very significant progress this government has made in support we have provided those individuals and their families who deal with the challenging effects of FASD. This Yukon Party government, through its five-step action plan, has significantly increased its support to these disabled individuals as well.

We support the Yukon Medical Association's research efforts at Whitehorse General Hospital. We have supported FASSY to a huge extent, way beyond what previous territorial governments did, and we've stepped in to support them further when the federal Liberal government abandoned them.

We've supported the Child Development Centre to a huge extent, providing them necessary funding to expand their services to children with disabilities and providing diagnostic services for children with FASD.

I would like to remind all members that the NDP wouldn't even recognize FASD as a disability, that they would simply bury their heads in the sand. Not a high point, Mr. Speaker, for a political party that likes to spend quite a bit of time patting itself on the back for being so responsive to the social agenda.

This Yukon Party government continues to meet these challenges head on, preferring to take action and actually doing the important work of government and delivering our commitments to Yukoners. This government will continue to fulfill its election commitments by enhancing and further coordinating services to children with disabilities.

I would also like to remind all members of this Legislature of the many improvements made last mandate and the several more already made this mandate to improve Yukon's childcare system. This government is listening to Yukoners.

This Yukon Party government has developed one of the best childcare systems in the country. Yukon may well be the best funded and best coordinated system in Canada. If not the best, we are certainly a very close second to Quebec.

We've improved wages for childcare workers. We've improved support for daycare and day home operators. We've increased the number of Yukoners eligible for a childcare subsidy. We've increased training opportunities for Yukoners who choose to work in this very important field. We've increased our support to improve capital infrastructure.

I was particularly pleased to work with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation to assist them in a significant investment in their new childcare centre in Dawson City -- another example of this government's good working relationship with First Nations -- a relationship that benefits all citizens in my riding of the Klondike.

I encourage my colleagues to continue their good work. They have my support, and I will certainly do my best to add value to this important work.

Mr. Speaker, as with the support to children with autism, supports to children with other disabilities should be as flexible as possible, so that the individual needs of these children and their families can be met to the greatest extent possible.

The goals of programming for children with disabilities should be to assist and support families, to care for and support the development of children with disabilities. I'd like to see a new program provide coordinated access to support and interventions, to support early intervention to increase each child's lifelong potential and to promote inclusion of children with disabilities in community living.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government with this kind of vision for the future of our territory and our children. I look forward to working with the Minister of Health and Social Services and my other colleagues to help deliver on this very important commitment.

I'm sure all of us on this side of the Legislature can look forward to the support of this initiative from the members opposite, as I know we can look forward to their support on this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the mover of the motion, the Member for Klondike, for his introductory comments on the motion. Let's look at the motion: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide services for children with severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome in addition to the services already provided to children with autism, and create a family support for families with a disabilities unit."

I will put the mover of the motion's mind at ease, since he said he hoped it would find support from all members. It will certainly find my support; it will find my colleagues' support; and although I certainly can't speak for the third party, I would expect it will find their support. Perhaps we will save this body four or five minutes and not have to call division.

It's a positive motion. It speaks to things that government should be doing. I think it speaks to things that the current gov-

ernment announced on September 26, 2006, during the election campaign -- that they would do this. They said they would form a unit within family and children's services branch called the family support for children with disabilities to effectively do what the name implies.

It's good that they do it. Contrary to the assertions being made by the mover of the motion -- and perhaps when he said "them", there were notes he was referring to and didn't think them through entirely before saying them -- I don't believe any member on either side or any party in this Legislative Assembly holds the copyright or patent on responsible social ideas or on caring about being socially progressive. I would expect that anybody elected to this body would feel that way. I think there have been examples of that from all sides of this House.

I have tried to thank the government for things they do that I feel are positive and I have done so on more than one occasion. If the member wants to take the time to do a *Hansard* search, I think he'll find that.

I would also point out some other things that could be done. Earlier today, I suggested one in terms of something similar to Larga House during Question Period. When the Health and Social Services minister said that we were already doing other things and doing more than had been done in the past, I acknowledged that and said that it was a good thing and we thank his government for that, but there is always more that could be done. Again, I think that there's more that could be done here.

In the last campaign, we also spoke to it, and it was before September 26 when we issued our platform. It was earlier than that when we spoke to some of these issues around Yukoners with disabilities. We said that Yukoners with disabilities face special challenges in our society. As a party, we recognize that more needs to be done to ensure that these people can participate fully in our society. We will consult with First Nation municipal governments and stakeholders, including business groups, to develop a Yukoners with disabilities act. We would establish a government-funded and -sponsored program in partnership with other governments to enhance the accessibility of our communities and develop a pilot return-to-work program with selected social assistance recipients.

There were many things we also said about improving health services. We would dedicate one percent of the health services budget to a Yukon health promotion fund to promote increased physical activity and healthy living for Yukoners of all ages. One percent of the health services budget is a considerable sum of money, since that's a budget of several hundred million dollars a year. We think that preventive medicine is, generally speaking, more cost-effective in a dollar sense and probably is simply better for people than only treating diseases after the fact. We would continue to fund autism programming and develop a sustainable health human resources strategy. We said we would work with health care professionals to open a collaborative health care facility in Whitehorse, and then something similar to that came out in the government's platform when it was issued. We often agree on some of these things.

As I say, this motion today is an idea that came from the government's platform. We are glad to see that they are moving

forward with it. Some services to these groups already exist, but I presume we are talking about improving and increasing the resources available to these groups.

I do commend the government for the increased funding that they have provided to FASSY. I also thank the government, and I do so from my own personal sense of appreciation that it's a positive thing to do, as well as on behalf of many constituents I have spoken to who have children who suffer from autism or some part of the spectrum of autism within their families. The funding that has allowed the Autism Yukon office to open up and do the good work that they do -- that's a positive thing.

I also know from talking to many of those parents that many of these children suffer from more than one disability. It's not only autism. There are other things that can affect some of these children simultaneously. I also know and have certainly had neighbours at various places I have lived who have children who have some of the other things that are talked about here in this motion -- cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy. I have known families who have both, one case or the other, in their families. I have a neighbour now in that situation and I had a neighbour at my last residence within a block as well. So, I would have to presume that there are more families than one might expect on the surface who are dealing with these serious medical issues.

I think that we will support this. There are some questions that I would ask and, perhaps if the mover of the motion is taking notes, in his closing remarks he can answer them.

Have any specific changes been made in the levels of service available to these groups within the last year?

Is there extra money in the current year's budget and what is planned for the future beyond what is in the motion itself, which is fairly small? If he wants to provide more details, what amount of additional resources are we talking about? Is there some order of magnitude of funding that perhaps his colleague, the Health and Social Services minister, has spoken of, that he might be able to tell us -- without violating any budget secrecy, but just a general idea of what we're talking about?

In terms of the families with disabilities unit, I would ask, when does his government anticipate the unit being operational? If he could answer that, it would be positive news for those families who are dealing with these issues. Will it have additional staff or is existing staff simply being moved around within the department to address these issues?

The level of support required will be assessed by a multidisciplinary team in consultation with the family and will be provided by an agency or individuals hired by the family. I believe that came from the Yukon Party platform. It says that this approach gives parents the control they need to help determine the kinds of therapies that work best for their children. That seems like a positive idea. Is there a limit to the amount of resources that will be provided to any given individual or will that just reflect the individual's needs and the family's needs? Is there any limit now, for example, with the support that is provided through Autism Yukon to families who are dealing with that? Are these services already covered by our health system?

These are some of the questions, but it's not my intent to speak for long today. I think the motion is a positive one. I have to again ask why the Member for Klondike feels the need to bring forward these series of motions about things that his government has announced. But if that's how he chooses to address things, so be it. We appreciate the chance to make positive suggestions and ask questions about it. As long as it benefits Yukon families, we will support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure to rise on this motion today. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward.

Since this is not the first time that the Leader of the Official Opposition has tried to put a bit of a negative face on the Member for Klondike for bringing motions forward, I do have to address this. The Member for Klondike is as much a member of this team as any minister is. I think it's fair to speak on the member's behalf and say that the Member for Klondike is as committed as any member of this team to delivering the commitments we made to Yukoners. He, like any member of this team, is very interested in bringing attention to the commitments we made to Yukon citizens, to talking about the plans and the manner in which we intend to implement them, and in speaking on behalf of his constituents to express their input in these matters.

I do thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for his support for this motion. I don't want to be overly negative in this debate about what is a very positive initiative. I do have to point out, however, that there is a great deal of difference between this government's record and the record of previous governments actually delivering on programs, services and supports to children with disabilities and their families -- rather than simply talking about it or feeling a desire to help. I believe that that is how the Leader of the Official Opposition put it. Feelings are great and intentions are great, but people need action. That's what we deliver.

I noted the Leader of the Official Opposition spent a fair bit of time talking about their platform. He failed to mention that in several areas their platform reflected announcements that members of this government, including me, made in the previous mandate prior to the election campaign being developed. That type of debate, frankly, has little to do with the issues. The issues here are about support that we can provide to Yukon citizens and children with severe disabilities.

As the Member for Klondike pointed out, this government is the first jurisdiction in Canada to fund treatment and programming for children with autism. It was under the watch of the Yukon Party that we implemented this funding. We were the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish this programming rather than doing the same as in other jurisdictions where the matter was resolved in court -- about the services to families of children with autism in particular and also for other severe disabilities.

In the last mandate, services were provided to directly fund treatment and programming for children with autism and to assist and involve their families in choosing those supports that

would be provided for their children. In other words, it's about choosing the programming and resources that would assist them and involving the parents in that decision, rather than simply leaving it to the experts to make that decision.

And, of course, as part of that process, as in the supports that would be extended to children with other extreme disabilities, it is important that the professional advice be involved, which is why we have and will propose to also continue involving the professionals in that advice. We want to ensure they are effective services but we want to provide parents with the element of choice and provide parents the ability to be involved.

Now, in the 2006 election campaign we made a commitment to fund specialized therapy services for children with other severe disabilities in addition to the services we had already funded for children with autism. In referring to the services provided to children with autism and their families in the last mandate, I would be remiss if I did not give credit to my predecessor as Minister of Health and Social Services for his work with the families of Parents of Children with Autism -- meeting with them, establishing a working group, and seeking their advice, recommendations and setting of priorities. That began under his watch, and it was in my term as minister that we actually implemented those services. I am pleased that we will continue to move forward on this by expanding it to children with other extreme disabilities.

In answer to the question that was raised as to when this service would be implemented, we anticipate the unit within family and children's services branch called the family supports for children with disabilities, which we committed to in the 2006 election platform, to be implemented and up and running in the 2008-09 fiscal year. As well, there will be an expansion of the support services for children with disabilities, including cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, Down syndrome and other extreme disabilities. We expect these to be up and running early in the 2008-09 fiscal year.

As I again emphasized, a key part of this is giving parents the control they need to help determine the kind of therapies that work best for their children.

The work done on supports for families and children with autism has informed the work that we are doing in extending this to children with other disabilities as well. I'd like to extend appreciation and thanks to the Government of Alberta, which has assisted us in developing programming based on some of the supports that they have in place. This is a key element of all of this -- ensuring that we are taking the action today to assist children, to assist families and to involve the parents in determining the appropriate therapies for their child.

This is in addition -- as I believe the Member for Klondike mentioned -- to other work that this government has done in providing support to children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and to organizations that support those children and individuals, beyond what previous governments have done, through working with groups such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon and the Child Development Centre in funding those supports. As well, another organization we work with in that area is Options for Independence Society.

This is a key part of the social conscience of this government and I again have to emphasize to members that, as much as we discuss this in a political forum, this is about something far more important than politics. This is about helping families; this is about helping children; this is about ensuring that no child is left without the appropriate supports and therapies that can assist them in becoming a full participant in society.

This is about assisting those with a disability so they can become full participants in society. That, of course, in the long term, has far-reaching benefits for other members of society, but most importantly it is quite simply the right thing to do for those families and those children. I believe, as I think do most Yukoners, that it is appropriate that we as a government ensure that those who have disabilities or are otherwise in need of government support are provided with support in the appropriate context and in the appropriate manner to help them live full lives -- whether that be through areas such as health services or areas such as this -- by providing supports, assistance and therapies for children with severe disabilities.

Yukon serves a population of children with a relatively large variety of unique disabilities, diagnoses and needs, and it makes it quite challenging to respond effectively to all of them, particularly considering our limited capacity in this territory with the total number of people. That is why a key part of this is giving parents assistance that they need and giving them some control in accessing services both inside the territory and in other jurisdictions within Canada, to help them gain those supports and access those services for their children.

Of course, acquiring knowledge of and assessing these services, particularly new therapies that come into place, take some time. One reality that is faced, which has been brought to our attention by families, is that therapies that show some promise have not always been in place long enough and offered to enough children to determine conclusively that they are effective.

The government wants to ensure that there is no funding of therapies or initiatives that might be harmful, but we deal with a number of services and therapies that have not necessarily been given the official stamp of widespread approval, but there is substantial evidence to suggest they may be effective. Certainly, there is evidence to make it very clear that there is no risk of it harming those children.

That is why, through the evaluation of expert advisors in these areas, a key part of this is that when there are services showing promise that they might help a child, we shouldn't wait five or 10 years for them to be officially reviewed in academic and research circles to be proven effective. In fact, yes, they could have helped many children, but because of review, delay and lack of action, many children were not helped. Our approach is to help those children through therapies, within reasonable parameters and with the involvement of their parents in accessing those services.

It is getting late in the day. I want to provide other members with the opportunity to comment on this motion. I hope they will be supportive. That being said, I just again want to emphasize the importance of developing this program and continuing forward with implementation in the 2008-09 fiscal year

and to thank the staff of Health and Social Services. They have been working on the programming in this area. They have been working with the Government of Alberta and health care professionals for, I guess, over a year and a half.

We often forget the many hours that officials spend in these areas when we deal with things in political debate, but it has been over a year and a half that the staff of Health and Social Services have been working on this programming. I want to thank those who have put the time into the development of these programs and for adapting the programs developed in Alberta to a Yukon context. The magnitude of scale and our small population in comparison to their large one required adaptation and change. Significant work has been done by staff in those areas. I want to recognize them for that and thank them for that. I believe that, at the end of the day, when this program is up and running in the 2008-09 fiscal year, we will have implemented a program and services that will make us equal to Alberta in many areas and better in some in terms of the support we provide to families with children with severe disabilities.

Of course, this is in addition to the support particular to children with autism that we implemented in the last mandate.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and thank members for their attention and encourage their support of this motion. I look forward to the implementation of this program. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward what I believe is a very important issue and initiative to the attention of this House, to the floor for debate and discussion.

Mr. Edzerza: The motion that was brought forward talks about those with severe disabilities. Society would be totally amiss if they did not think it important to assist those people with disabilities. The First Nations traditionally believe that people with disabilities are very special people. Part of our belief is that they have never really left the spirit world, that they live in both worlds; they have been able to develop senses that people never thought they had.

There are probably two questions I'd like to ask about this, and maybe the Member for Klondike will be able to answer them in his closing remarks. One question I've asked several times, even at ministers meetings in other parts of Canada, was if other governments and provinces would consider FASD as a disability.

It almost went through, except for one province that said, "No, it will cost too much money if you do that." I find that unbelievable.

FASD is a disability. No matter how you cut it, it is a disability. It's brain damage. I have questioned a lot of other government people across the country about how many severe FASD sufferers they know could just go to the hospital and have an operation on the brain and have it cleared up. Well, quite obviously, no one knew of any. So it is a disability. It's with you for life. You have to learn to live with it. I would encourage the government to really consider classifying it as a disability. I mean, after all, the Yukon has boasted, time and time again, about being pioneer champions on a lot of fronts.

They seem to like to have that title of being pioneer champions -- being the first to do something special.

Well, I would really applaud the government if they would do this: be the champions and take leadership on this issue of FASD and FAE. Classify it as a disability. Encourage other provinces right across the country to do the same.

For the second part, the motion states that they will create a family support. I fail to really understand what that means. Does it mean financial support? Does it mean counselling support? Does it mean respite or visiting home care? I hope it includes all of those.

If that is what is meant by family support, then this is a very strong motion. I would applaud the government if they would do what they say they are going to do.

I do thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward and I know we will support it.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Nordick: I'd like to start off by thanking all the members opposite for their comments on this motion. I did take into account the comments that the Leader of the Official Opposition and the member from the third party made about this. I do appreciate that once again.

I'd like to remind the member from the Official Opposition that our government was a leader in this. We were the first government not only in the Yukon, but in Canada, to directly fund the treatment programming for children with autism.

Of course there is always more that governments can do, but we were the first. That speaks highly of what we've done in this field.

Once again, I'd like to thank everybody for supporting this motion. I'd like to thank all members.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Agree.

Mr. McRobb: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Mr. Fairclough: Agree.

Mr. Inverarity: Agree.

Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.
Motion No. 271 agreed to

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. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*.

Bill No. 38 -- Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act

Hon. Mr. Hart: I am waiting for my official to get here, but I have a short speech that I can provide. Hopefully, by the time I'm finished, he will be here to assist when the time comes for questions.

I am pleased to speak on this bill which, when passed, will extend job protection to additional family members for compassionate care and bereavement leaves.

In June 2006, the federal government expanded the definition of "family" under the employment insurance regulations for compassionate care leave to include additional family members and others considered as family. This change created a conflict between the entitlements in the federal and the territorial legislation. Currently, Yukon employees falling under the expanded definition of "family" may qualify for EI benefits through the federal compassionate care leave program; however, they are not eligible for job protection under the Yukon legislation.

The impact of the changes on employers and the government are minimal, but to an employee facing the difficult task of caring for an ailing friend or family member, this amendment can make a critical difference by ensuring that they have a job to return to. Compassionate care or bereavement leaves are leaves without pay, so there's no salary cost to the employer. A further benefit of this amendment is the potential it has to reduce health care and home care costs by making caregiving by relatives or friends more feasible.

Employees will be able to apply for both compassionate care and bereavement leaves, so that their jobs remain protected if they need to attend a funeral of the person they have been caring for. The amendment will create the possibility to take a leave to care for an uncle or aunt, niece or nephew, a stepsibling or stepsibling-in-law, a foster parent or child, a ward or guardian, or a person considered to be a close relative.

By amending the *Employment Standards Act*, this government will keep Yukon legislation consistent with the federal employment insurance regulations, modernize legislation by recognizing the cultural variances of a family, and the changes

in the nature of who is defined as family in our culture as a whole.

It will provide job protection to a greater number of employees to care for their dying relatives and to attend the funeral upon the death of that family member, and to recognize the importance of a family providing care and comfort to a dying relative in their own home and/or community, who may otherwise require institutional care or care from strangers, often at a public cost.

We will be the fifth Canadian jurisdiction to expand the definition of "family" in legislation to include additional family members for compassionate care leave. Two others have indicated similar plans in the very near future.

I thank the members opposite for supporting the bill in second reading and look forward to their questions.

Mr. Inverarity: I talked briefly about this particular bill at second reading, and I'd like to add just one more comment. We're going to vote on it, and I think we want to move through it as quickly as we can.

The issue I brought up at second reading was the actual cost to the employers, which I don't think was actually analyzed in any depth. I'd like to talk on just one other short point, and that is that it's quite possible this bill could be received by businesses as perhaps overly interfering in their business. I think it does a disservice, somewhat, to employers and employees together in that many businesses, and the employees in that business, are seen as literally part of the family and structure of that particular business. By now having to legislate that, it's almost disrespectful to them to say they're no longer part of this family.

I think it would be natural for any employee of a Yukon business to count on their employer to do the right thing if and when an employee has to go on bereavement leave. Legislating it just adds another piece of legislation.

Now, unfortunately, we see this all too often, on the dark side of it, where employers look at using it to be counterproductive, to perhaps get rid of an employee they don't want. They see it as an opportunity, and that's the negative side to it.

I think we're going to continue and we're going to support this bill because it's important to ensure that employees have some fallback position if they in fact do have an employer that isn't supportive. But I find it highly unusual and, having been a small business owner, I know that it was very important for the well-being of my staff -- and quite frequently I've had a number of employees who have had family members die and pass on. I think that certainly any time this happened -- even with pay, in some instances -- they were given their bereavement leave.

In closing, we'll continue to support this bill.

Mr. Edzerza: I know the NDP caucus has, for many years, felt that a lot of definitions within Yukon legislation should be compatible with and mirror the ones from the federal government. We will be supporting this bill and we thank the minister for bringing it forward.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? Seeing none, we'll proceed clause by clause.

Mr. Inverarity: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill

No. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and title of Bill No. 38 read and agreed to

Chair: Unanimous consent of the Committee has been requested to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 9 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Hart: I move that Bill No. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Hart that Bill No. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 40 -- Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act

Chair: We will move on to Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*.

Hon. Mr. Lang: I'll just review the discussions we had when we were in debate on this Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*. The *Motor Transport Act* deals with businesses that move goods and people for profit within the Yukon. It reflects government's concerns that this important sector be healthy and ready to serve Yukon society and the economy. The *Motor Transport Act* requires transport businesses to go through an administrative process and, if successful in that process, to obtain a certificate or permit to operate the business.

Our government proposes repeal because the *Motor Transport Act* has now fulfilled its purpose and keeping the act in place any longer is unnecessary. This has not been a good use of government resources and this government is committed, again, to good governance.

The *Motor Transport Act* came into force in 1988, but it is in fact even older. Because this act replaced a previous *Motor Transport Act*, the former act even went so far as to require a prospective transportation business to prove why it was in the public's interest for them to be granted permission to do business.

The current *Motor Transport Act* reform performed that administrative process to allow transportation businesses permission to start operations more easily. The reform process required a member of the public to object and prove why it was contrary to public interest for the prospective business to start. That reform was a positive change that erased requirements on businesses. Eventually even that system became more restrictive on these businesses than was necessary for the benefit of the public.

This proposed repeal is a further step for positive change. The repeal will allow transportation businesses to operate with-

out an administrative review of the economics of the marketplace. The marketplace will determine whether businesses meet public needs for service. The marketplace is certainly resilient and ready to let businesses compete with each other without government-sponsored scrutiny and delay. This deregulated approach is hardly new in today's Canada.

In proposing the repeal, Yukon follows the path of other governments that have repealed similar laws and ended economic regulation of the transportation marketplace. These governments have repealed their version of the *Motor Transport Act* and in doing so moved to emphasize commercial vehicles and driver safety. Yukon is now doing the same.

It is interesting to note that in 1988, when this version of the *Motor Transport Act* was being introduced as new law in this Assembly, the government of the day was also discussing the recent birth of the National Safety Code.

Since then, Canadian governments have steadily taken up the National Safety Code as the single minimum national standard to apply to commercial vehicles and their drivers, shifting government's focus for commercial transportation away from economic regulations and toward safety regulations.

It is with great pleasure that I advise the members of this Assembly that the National Safety Code has been approved as new law for Yukon, as regulations created under the authority of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. The National Safety Code regulations were signed by the Commissioner on October 9, 2007, and will come into full effect on May 1, 2008. The Department of Highways and Public Works will provide assistance and education to the commercial transportation industry until then. I would be pleased to provide a copy of these regulations again upon request by the House.

Our government has also made a commitment to review and revise government regulations, policies and procedures to ensure they are fair and consistent to the local business community and, of course, to reduce red tape. The repeal of the *Motor Transport Act* combined with adopting the National Safety Code regulations are a positive step toward achieving that commitment.

To conclude, I would like to thank all members of the Motor Transport Board, which provided administration of the *Motor Transport Act*, for their excellent service to Yukon over many years. In fact, the Motor Transport Board has consistently recommended the repeal of this act in its annual report of recent years. Thank you, indeed.

It pleases me to say these law changes benefit Yukon society and economy. It is the right action at the right time. Thank you.

Are there any questions?

Mr. Mitchell: Not a single one, Mr. Chair. I thank the minister for that extremely detailed and proficient explanation of what is, in effect, a housekeeping bill. We understand the reasons for it. The Member for Kluane indicated at second reading that we had no issues with it, and that remains the case.

Mr. Edzerza: There is just one statement I'd like to make with regard to this bill, and that is that it's a prime example of why we really don't need TILMA. You can work these

issues out without having a big gun like TILMA. We will be supporting this.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Edzerza: I would request the unanimous consent of the Committee to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and title of Bill No. 40 read and agreed to

Chair: Unanimous consent of the Committee has been requested to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*, read and agreed to. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 7 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Lang: I move that Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Lang that Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: Order please. Committee of the Whole will now proceed with *Securities Act*.

Bill No. 41 -- Securities Act

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Chair, Bill No. 41, *Securities Act*, represents a significant evolution in the Yukon's legislative protection to Yukon investors in securities issued here or elsewhere across Canada.

The purpose of securities legislation is to facilitate the raising of capital while providing appropriate protection and remedies for investors. For the benefit of the Yukon public, investors and all persons with an interest in the Yukon securities legislation, I will take this opportunity to provide a brief summary of the act. Well, it might not be brief, but it will be there.

The act provides for the appointment of the superintendent responsible for the administration of the act, the powers and functions of the superintendent and the authority of the superintendent to delegate those powers and functions. The superintendent will replace the registrar of securities under the present act. The powers of the superintendent to delegate correspond with the powers of security commissions in other Canadian provinces.

This will facilitate the operation of the passport provisions.

Provisions dealing with legal proceedings and other actions initiated by or involving the superintendent are included in the proposed act and they provide the following coverage: services of document, admissibility of the evidence, compellability of the witness, sharing of the information with other regulatory or law enforcement agencies, the confidentiality and the public disclosure of the superintendent's records.

Many of these provisions are similar to the current provisions but they are set out in a more orderly fashion and more closely model modern provisions in the other jurisdictions.

Further, information sharing and cooperation provisions have been added to bring our law in harmony with other jurisdictions and to provide the legal underpinning for the information sharing required for the national system of regulation to function, since we share all the registration and filing information on a common database.

Under investigations, the act will provide for investigations by the superintendent or person appointed by the superintendent. It sets out the scope of such investigations and the powers that may be exercised in conducting an investigation. The powers are similar to those already available to the registrar under the current act, but the proposed act further enhances these powers to assist the Yukon and other jurisdictions in carrying out investigations. In order to ensure more effective joint investigations, provisions in the new act are consistent with those enacted elsewhere in Canada.

With receivers, the proposed act provides for the superintendent to apply to the Supreme Court for the appointment of a receiver, a receiver manager, a trustee or a liquidator of the property of a person or company in appropriate circumstances.

Similar authority is in the current act, but the provisions in the new act will be brought into line with those in other jurisdictions.

The act provides for reviews, appeals and administrative processes, including a review, by the superintendent, of the decisions made by the delegate of the superintendent, applications by the superintendent to the Supreme Court where a person has contravened securities laws, appeals of a decision of the superintendent to the Court of Appeal, the authority to hold joint hearings with other Canadian jurisdictions, the authority of the superintendent to make a wider range of both permanent and interim enforcement orders, the responsibility of directors and officers for actions of companies under the securities laws, and the circumstances in which the superintendent may order a person to pay costs of an investigation and/or hearing.

The review and the appeal route set out in the act is designed to work with the complementary review and appeal routes in other jurisdictions to provide for a clear appellate structure where decisions are made by the securities regulator authority under authority delegated to it by another Canadian securities regulating authority.

With regard to the marketplace, unlike the current act, the proposed act specifically authorizes the superintendent to recognize and give effect to the role that stock exchanges and self-regulatory agencies play in the regulation of the securities industry, including providing them with the powers necessary to perform any function delegated to them by the superintendent.

The proposed act includes a requirement that all market participants maintain appropriate records and make them available to the superintendent, as requested, as well as the authority for the superintendent to review the activities, businesses and conduct for market participants.

Under registration, as is currently the case, dealers and advisors would be required to register. Under our current *Securi-*

ties Act, underwriters are not specifically required to register, even though they are effectively trading in securities. Where underwriters are registered elsewhere across the country, but intend to distribute or operate in the Yukon, we require an undertaking that we will not sell in the Yukon, except through the registrant.

A new registration requirement for the investment fund manager is added. Investment fund managers are a proposed new registrant category under the pending CSA national instrument, NI31-103. The proposed new act relies on exemptions by rule or order, and we currently intend to maintain the status quo regarding the exemption for insurance products.

The legislative framework provides for the continued oversight of registrants, the standard of care for registrants in dealing with clients and the suspension and termination of registrations.

Under the present act, dealers are required to register if they are trading in securities. There is a long list of exemptions from this requirement, many of which are intended to exclude those who are not in the business of trading in securities.

A national registration rule is currently being developed that will establish uniform standards and requirements for registration right across Canada. The proposed act has been developed to allow the status quo to apply until the national rule is in place, at which point the new definition of "dealer" will be brought into force. As there is not currently a requirement that investment fund managers or underwriters be registered, provisions in this respect would not be proclaimed or enforced until the national rule is in place.

With regard to prospectus, the act requires the filing of the preliminary and final prospectus before an initial public offering can be made. Proposed provisions reflect the current practice in all Canadian jurisdictions. They include provisions that will permit the adoption of upcoming rule changes and are consistent with the recent amendments in other jurisdictions.

With regard to disclosure, the proposed act requires that issuers who are captured in the new definition of "reporting issuer" file disclosure documents on an ongoing basis with the superintendent to keep security holders abreast of any material changes regarding the issuer's business and finances.

Adding this requirement will make filing practices in the territory consistent with all other Canadian jurisdictions. The detailed filing requirements are already in national rules that we have not been able to adopt without the reporting issuer and the continuous disclosure framework in the act. The national electronic filing system is already set up to capture this information on behalf of the superintendent without additional cost to the filers.

Seeing the time, Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Hart that we report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 38, *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 40, *Act to Repeal the Motor Transport Act*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 41, *Securities Act*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.