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The Honourable Michael Ballantyne, Speaker

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MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Titus Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Arngha'naaq, Mr. Arvaluk, Hon. Michael Ballantyne, Mr. Bernhardt, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Mr. Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. John Ningark, Hon. Dennis Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Todd, Hon. Tony Whitford, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Michael Ballantyne):

Orders of the day for Wednesday, December 11, 1991. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Madam Government Leader.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Ministers' Statement 8-12(1): Economic Outlook, Mining And Oil And Gas

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, I would like to tell Members about some recent developments that give us reason to be encouraged about the future potential of our economy.

Despite the economic downturn that is hurting all regions of Canada, there are a number of positive developments happening in the non-renewable resource sector of the Northwest Territories. There are, for instance, a few very promising mineral properties. Some of them continue to be explored and may be approaching the development stage.

The operators of the George Lake Gold Property, after almost 10 years of regional prospecting, detailed exploration, intensive diamond drilling and \$25 million of investment, have been encouraged by the results. The operators expect, in the near future, to decide whether or not to increase their investment in the North by funding a costly underground exploration program, and that program should tell them whether they do or they do not have an economic mineral deposit.

Other gold properties in the Northwest Territories that have warranted continued exploration include the Nicholas Lake deposit north of Yellowknife and the Crown-Ulu deposit north of Lupin Mine. Both are being drilled intensively in hopes of justifying the next stage of evaluation, an underground exploration program. At Meliadine River, north of Rankin Inlet, a more recent and less well advanced gold exploration target is rated very highly.

Mr. Speaker, 75 per cent of the value of mineral shipments from the Northwest Territories are zinc and lead. A series of these base metal deposits have been discovered over the years. The best known is the Izok Lake zinc, lead, copper, silver deposit located 250 kilometres south of the Coronation Gulf. Transportation, or more correctly the lack of transportation facilities, is the critical factor as to why very little work has been done on these particular properties. If the transportation hurdle can be overcome, then the prospects for a new zinc-lead mine will increase significantly.

As most of you probably know, local, national and international press has picked up on the announcement that diamonds have been discovered in the Northwest Territories. The announcement that the first drill hole yielded 81 diamonds, some of them gem quality, must be viewed as very encouraging. Even before the announcement, word of the

diamond discovery had spread, and there has been a tremendous surge in staking of mineral claims.

Recent scientific research on diamonds, how they are formed and how they are found, suggests that the Northwest Territories should be considered a good place to explore for them. We must realize, however, that it will take a lot of time and money to determine the true significance of this diamond discovery.

Mr. Speaker, in the oil and gas sector, I am pleased to inform Members of the results of a recent call for bids for exploration rights in the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea areas. Shell Canada, the successful bidder on three land parcels in the Mackenzie Delta, has promised a work commitment totalling in excess of \$53 million on lands in the Delta surrounding their Unipkat discovery. This is very welcome news to a region that has seen a very severe economic downturn over the past several years. The bids are encouraging because they come at a low period for the oil and gas industry. They provide a signal that the major players in the industry recognize the exploration potential of the Delta area.

Mr. Speaker, other planned oil and gas activities include Esso Resources' three million dollars seismic program this winter. Three boreholes will also be drilled this winter in the Delta for research purposes. This work will be done jointly by the Geological Survey of Canada, Shell and Esso. Esso Resources will also be continuing with delineation drilling at Norman Wells this winter.

In the Sahtu Region, the Chevron Fort Good Hope block has, unfortunately, been relinquished. This has resulted in a very significant loss to the region, and to Fort Good Hope in particular. The lack of exploration success does not, however, mean that there is a lack of potential in this region.

The Mackenzie Great Bear Development Impact Zone Society is working with the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources on the development of an oil and gas rights issuance proposal in the Sahtu region. Through the issuance of new exploration rights, we hope to replace some of the opportunities that have been lost as a result of the shutdown of the Chevron-Fort Good Hope venture.

Meanwhile, the Norman Wells project is pumping oil at the rate of 30,000 barrels a day and is now earning the federal government revenues in excess of \$55 million per year. The fiscal and financial benefits for the Northwest Territories from this project are minimal. With the successful completion of the Northern Accord, however, a portion of these revenues should accrue to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

There will also be other opportunities for the generation of fiscal and economic benefits that we will be able to realize through the sound management of our oil and gas resources once the accord has been signed and implemented.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we can certainly be encouraged by these developments in the mining, oil and gas sectors, despite low prices, industry lay-offs, and regulatory

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uncertainties. The challenge now is to seize these opportunities to ensure maximum benefits for Northerners and minimal impact on the environment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Cournoyea. Ministers' statements. Mr. Patterson.

Ministers' Statement 9-12(1): Mine Safety Act

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the past week I have toured an underground mining operation and have spoken with labour leaders and mine management to hear their views and to let them know that the occupational health and safety of miners is an extremely important issue to our government.

As a result of concerns in this area, I am announcing today that the government has concluded that the proposed new mine safety bill tabled in the previous House will not go forward in its present form and that a new consultative process will be undertaken. The government still wants to have initial comments on the draft bill and regulations. Many interested parties have already given a great deal of thought to the tabled document, and we do not want their efforts to be lost.

Mr. Speaker, the new consultative process will take place under the auspices of a mine safety bill committee that will have an independent chairman who is knowledgeable in mining, two representatives from industry, and one representative each from unionized and non-unionized labour. We expect this committee to begin its work in January.

Good health and safety legislation must satisfy three requirements. It must be acceptable to workers; it must be achievable by management; and it must be enforceable by the regulators. To allow those directly affected by the legislation to participate in its formation will create a better climate for its administration and its effectiveness. I believe the establishment of this committee will meet these requirements. Work of the committee will hopefully lead to a new Mine Safety Act for introduction at the Assembly's fall session in 1992 or, at the latest, during its budget session in 1993.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to announce that interim amendments to the existing Mining Safety Act will be introduced at the 1992 budget session. These amendments, in part, flow from the coroner's inquest into the death of a miner in Yellowknife last year.

In conclusion, I am looking forward to working with labour and industry to develop effective new legislation to present to this House which will meet everyone's desire for a safe, healthy and productive workplace. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

Ministers' Statement 10-12(1): General Direction Of NWT Housing Corporation

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government is very aware of the importance of proper housing in the Northwest Territories. Our severe climate makes it essential that everyone have an adequate place to live. Inadequate housing is often a contributing factor in poor health, failure of children at school, family violence and problems on the job.

As Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, I am fully committed to continuing and expanding the efforts of our government to meet the North's housing needs.

The government is strongly committed to encouraging home-ownership to foster pride and personal responsibility for the operation and maintenance of housing and reduce the dependency on government associated with public rental housing.

The HAP, home-ownership assistance program, has been positively received by most northern residents. There are, however, many residents who do not qualify because their incomes are either above or below the current income criteria. The government is committed to exploring ways and means to expand eligibility for HAP housing and to develop new programs if necessary to address the needs of those not covered by existing policies and programs.

As new housing must continue to be provided in every community of the NWT for many years to come, there are excellent business, employment and training opportunities available to our residents. To provide these opportunities will require close coordination and cooperation between the NWT Housing Corporation and the various government departments. The government is committed to having the construction and maintenance of housing carried out in a manner which maximizes employment and job creation

opportunities for the local residents of every community.

Mr. Speaker, the government is totally committed to make northern community government, in the broadest sense, a reality. The people at the community level must assume greater responsibility and accountability for meeting housing needs. Decision-making must be at the local level if communities are to control their own destiny. Communities, too, must be allowed to establish priorities among the various services and programs which they are responsible for.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the support and strengthening of community government, the government closest to the people being served, must be given the highest priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Ministers' statements. Mr. Ningark.

Ministers' Statement 11-12(1): Our Way Of Life

HON. JOHN NINGARK:

Mr. Speaker, the culture and lifestyles of many people in the Northwest Territories are based on hunting, trapping and fishing. These activities are healthy occupations, both mentally and physically.

As the Minister of Renewable Resources one of my priorities will be to educate people throughout the world about the way we live. This needs to be done because traditional lifestyles continue to be threatened by the activities of the anti-hunting and anti-trapping lobbies who use written materials and television to promote their cause.

Mr. Speaker, our ways of trapping and hunting do not hurt the environment. The land, water, fish and wildlife have always provided food and clothing. Our survival as a people depends upon their survival. We must send this message to the rest of the world. Because of this, we will be working on a new strategy to promote the trapping and use of furs, both here in the Territories and elsewhere. In addition, we will take

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our message to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held next June

in Brazil. There will be people there from all countries of the world.

In the NWT we will be broadcasting television spots that profile and promote individual trappers and their lifestyle. We are also working with the schools to help our children learn about our ways and our environment.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly have emphasized over the years that we must continue to protect the rights of our people to harvest our renewable resources. I agree. All of us care deeply about our great land, and over the term of this government we will be working hard to help ensure that the hunters and trappers in the Northwest Territories will be able to continue their traditional pursuits. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Funding For Church, Fort Providence

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later this week Members of this Assembly will return home to spend the holiday session with their families, friends and community people. All across the Northwest Territories people will be enjoying Christmas services in their community churches. In Fort Providence, however, the church will be empty for the third Christmas, despite a resolution and promise from this government last July that the church would be renovated.

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to learn that the expenditure of \$25,000 for capital renovations to the church has been cancelled. My heart goes out to the people of my community, especially the elders who have been dreaming of the day when they would once again worship in the church where they were taught Christian ways by their parents and grandparents.

How does the government expect to retain any credibility with the communities when projects such as this are frozen by bureaucrats in Yellowknife due to a financial crisis that surfaced overnight? I attended the standing committee on finance meeting as recently as

September, and there was no mention of any financial crisis. The people of my constituency want to know how the Government of the NWT got into so much financial trouble so quickly without any warning. A \$65 million deficit does not just happen overnight, and voters want to know if these financial problems were hidden from them and us until after the election.

I would like to close, Mr. Speaker, by stating that the life of an MLA is difficult enough due to prolonged absence from our families and the communities and keeps us from the traditional activities which some of us love. We do not need the additional burden of having our hard work and commitment to the interests of our people dismissed with the stroke of a pen by corporate-style government.

The elders of my constituency relied upon me to do the work on their behalf; to achieve the aspirations of their communities. I will work hard on their behalf to convince other Members of the need for these renovations. I guess that is why I am particularly hurt, Mr. Speaker, by the fact that the Minister of Culture and Communications does not realize or care about the effects of his decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Members' statements. Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Process For Dealing With Business In The House

MR. ANTOINE:

(Translation) Thank you. I am going to be speaking in my language. Since the beginning of this session of the Legislative Assembly I have sat back and listened. I have been a chief for a long time and have attended meetings for over 10 years. Every time I go to a meeting, there is one thing that is always talked about. When we talk about something, we finish talking about it and then we make resolutions on it.

When we talk about things in this House here, it seems like things are going in all different directions. I do not feel it is going right for me. I am just telling you what I think. (Translation ends)

I have been here since being elected as an MLA, and I am concerned about the way business is conducted in the House. We say we want to make the Legislative Assembly as northern as possible, yet we follow parliamentary procedure and the orders of the day. I find it very confusing, because all these years

as a chief and going to different meetings, we have an agenda and we deal with the agenda; we make an agreement and move on. But what I find here is that we are going all over the place. Only at certain times can you ask a question, and only at certain times can you speak. If we are going to make it a truly northern-type of meeting it should reflect how meetings are conducted in the communities. This is rather foreign to me, and I am saying this because I have a certain amount of frustration in how things are being done in here.

(Translation) What I am saying is that at the rules committee meetings we should talk about this and change them a bit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Members' statements. Mr. Lewis.

Member's Statement On Work Of Volunteers

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the public service. I worked in the public service for many, many years and one gets a little bit tired of hearing all this criticism of people who have dedicated their lives to being of use to the public.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that much of the voluntary work done throughout the Territories, worth millions and millions of dollars out of peoples' pockets and their time, is done by people who really believe they want to serve their community. However, it is very rare that I get up and try to retain a serious note all the way through, because people get a little bit down and become critical of those people who are always critical of those individuals who believe that in their lives they can do something useful with their time.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people in this community and throughout the communities in the Northwest Territories who do give up their time without payment so that they can be useful citizens. At 6:00 p.m. tonight there will be a turkey bingo at the Elks for the NWT Council for Disabled Persons. There are many people who are out of town, and the Council for Disabled Persons, in fact, serves a territorial function as an advocacy group for those people throughout the Territories who throughout their lives live with some degree of misfortune.

It is because of the work of many volunteers that do this work that those people get the support and assistance that they

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have come to expect over the many years. Many Yellowknife people give up their time so that this kind of service can be provided, not only for the people in Yellowknife, but for people throughout the Northwest Territories. However, in the flyer that went throughout the city over the last few days there was a mistake. The bingo is not a \$35,000 bingo; it is a \$3500 bingo. It begins at 6:00 p.m., with the doors opening at this time, and the bingo starts at 7:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Members' statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Member's Statement On Mathias Awa

MR. ARVALUK:

(Translation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start my statement, I would like to congratulate Mr. John Ningeongan of Coral Harbour on his successful election as mayor. I am looking forward to working with him during his term of office.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be able to say a little bit about my father, Mathias Awa, who is here today. Awa was born and raised in my constituency near Repulse Bay. His father, Uyarak, and his grandfather, Awa, were guides and companions of Knut Rasmussen on his Fifth Thule expedition. Mr. Rasmussen talks a great deal about his reports. When Awa grew up and got married, he worked hard on his trapline and managed to buy his furs while whaling at Arctic Bay. He and his wife carried them by dog team over the land to Igloolik in the summertime, in June. When he came to the fishing lake, he rafted the boat down the river, hauled it up and walked all the way back to pick up his wife and dog team. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we should start a new movie, "An Incredible Journey."

Awa's children are now well on their own. A couple of them you may well know: Simon Awa is an Inuktitut production manager with the CBC; Joanna Awa is with TV Aqsarniit as a former colleague of George Tuccaro, Paul Andrew and Marie Wilson.

My statement is not to tell you about how well we did, but rather to tell you that as a father, Awa worked very

hard with his children and helped them in achieving what they can do best, and he has been a member of the local education council as long as his younger children can remember. He is now 70 and is still working.

Mr. Speaker, my message is, let us all work with our constituents and urge parents to work with their children to stay in school and make the most of their abilities. We have been criticizing the Department of Education and school staff for lack of achievement by our children. The parents must take more responsibility in encouraging and supporting their children to work and stay in school.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let us tell our children that, whatever career they choose, they must work to be the very best they can be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Members' statements. Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Member's Statement On Plea Bargaining

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to address an issue of concern with respect to the justice system. The concern I would like to speak about is what the courts sometimes call plea bargaining. I would like to give an example of the outcome of a plea bargaining issue addressed by the Crown prosecutors.

Last summer, Mr. Speaker, my house was broken into here in Yellowknife and two gentlemen were charged. The first fellow was given probation for one year even though the RCMP had his fingerprints on the window. The second fellow, Michael Pritchard, was charged with break and enter and possession of stolen property. There was well over \$8000 of personal property stolen. The Crown wanted to avoid a trial and avoid convicting him, therefore, the Crown prosecutors made the deal. One of the young gentlemen got one day in jail, was fined \$575 and had to pay a \$55 victim of crime charge due to the deal that the Crown prosecutors made. If he had been allowed to go through the courts by being convicted, he would probably have had to pay restitution or possibly even be given a probation order.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about plea bargaining. I am concerned about this happening to someone else. I appreciate the efforts that were made by the RCMP, Constable Thalhofer in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the current Minister of Justice to address the issue with respect to the plea bargaining being done in our justice system. In my opinion, plea bargaining and making deals before going through the court system is definitely an injustice to the justice system. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Member's Statement On Outbreak Of E-coli 0157, "Hamburger Disease"

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a very serious epidemic in Arviat this summer. There were many people who were quarantined for many weeks at a time. The school was closed for the primary students for a number of weeks. All this was caused by a disease called E-coli 0157. The scientists or doctors who were doing the research were not able to determine the cause of this disease. They indicated that it was probably caused by the diet in the country foods they ate, and in the way they preserved this food. However, the people of Arviat have said, and still maintain, that it was caused by the water supply in the community.

Mr. Speaker, to this day the water supply in Arviat comes from a still pond. In making this statement, I would like to make the Minister responsible for Public Works as well as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs aware of this problem in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arngna'naaq. Members' statements. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Gary Bohnet, President of the Metis Nation.

---Applause

Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms. Cournoyea.

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ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question O4-12(1): Minister Calling For Resignation Of Director General, DIAND

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a reply to an oral question that was asked by Brian Lewis, the MLA for Yellowknife Centre, on December 9, 1991. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, our colleague Don Morin is a person who likes to tackle problems head on. He certainly took that approach as an ordinary MLA, and I do not expect him to do otherwise as a Minister of our government.

When Mr. Morin wrote to the Director General of Indian and Northern Affairs on behalf of the community of Fort Resolution, he signed the letter as the MLA for Tu Nedhe. In speaking with Mr. Morin, he now recognizes the awkward position cabinet Ministers sometimes find themselves in when they are asked to forcefully represent the interests of their constituents. He understands that it is not a government policy or cabinet practice for Ministers to request the resignation of public servants who, as Mr. Lewis stated, were simply doing their job.

As a result, Mr. Morin is now pursuing this issue through the proper channels. He has also assured me that if he has any more problems with the decisions of public servants, that he will discuss them with the appropriate federal Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Returns to oral questions. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Return To Question O5-12(1): Delivery Of Heavy Equipment

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a return to a question asked by Mr. Zoe on December 9, 1991, on the delivery of heavy equipment into Snare Lake by the Department of Public Works. This year the Department of Public Works has purchased a chemical fire truck, a front-end loader and a Honda ATV for Snare Lake. When the equipment was ordered, it was expected that a short access road would be constructed off the Neptune Resources, Colomac Mine winter road. This was the approach taken two years ago when the new power plant and three HAP houses were delivered to Snare Lake. The

road construction and freight haul were done by a private contractor.

With the closure of the Colomac Mine, a much longer winter access road must now be constructed and options are being reviewed. The Department of Transportation is co-ordinating the review of the options for the winter freight haul and a decision is expected by the end of this month. That road normally goes in in January. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Returns to oral questions. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question O32-12(1): Site Of 1994 Arctic Winter Games

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for sport and recreation. I have a newspaper clipping of September 23 with regard to Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta being chosen as the site for the 1994 Arctic Winter Games. I would like to ask the Minister why, for the first time, these games will be held South of 60.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O32-12(1): Site Of 1994 Arctic Winter Games

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This will not be the first time the Arctic Winter Games are held South of 60. When Quebec was participating in the Arctic Winter Games, they were held some years ago in Shefferville, Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I should first explain that the decision about the location of the Arctic Winter Games site is not actually made by the government -- perhaps the Member already knows that. In fact, the Arctic Winter Games are run by a corporation which is funded only in part by the government, and it is the corporation which runs the games and decides on the location. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I understand that because we now have participation from Alberta in

the Arctic Winter Games, from Northern Alberta, and because the sites for Arctic Winter Games do rotate from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, it is Alberta's turn to host the Arctic Winter Games after the forthcoming Arctic Winter Games this coming March in Whitehorse. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Oral questions. Mr. Gargan, supplementary question.

Supplementary To Question O32-12(1): Site Of 1994 Arctic Winter Games

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, back when Quebec was involved with the Arctic Winter Games, that was also selected as one of the sites. In what year did Alberta start participating in the Arctic Winter Games? I was not even aware there were people from Alberta participating.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Further Return To Question O32-12(1): Site Of 1994 Arctic Winter Games

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta contingent was involved in the Arctic Winter Games when it was held in Yellowknife in 1990. I believe that may have been the first time, I am not exactly sure.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Gargan, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O32-12(1): Site Of 1994 Arctic Winter Games

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, is it normal practice for the corporation to actually choose a site after only one year of participation? I find it quite unfair that they would be prime candidates for the 1994 Arctic Winter Games.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to giving honourable Members a full briefing about the significant preparations that are already under way by this small, but very enthusiastic, aboriginal community in Northern Alberta. I guess I am asking to take the question on notice. I do not know the precise answer to the Member's question, but I will get back with an answer to his question and also other information about the 1994 Arctic Winter Games and how the site came to be selected. But I understand that the community is already undertaking preparations to make sure the games are a success.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

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Question O33-12(1): Lake Harbour Airstrip

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation in regard to the airstrip in our community. There has been a concern for many years in our community. It is not just because it is too short, but it is also not on even ground and it is dangerous. There have been concerns about the danger of this airstrip. We have been asking for improvements to be made to our airstrip before a major accident occurs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Transportation, Mr. Alloofoo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

(Translation) I would like to take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. I would like to recognize Mr. John Hill, chairman of the Public Utilities Board.

---Applause

Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Government Leader. At the ordinary Members caucus we discussed concerns in regard to the Beatty report, as we have been doing in the House. There has been some indication in respect to a strategy being formulated for implementation of the Beatty report. I would like to ask the Government Leader if she would be able to give us a specific time frame as to when we would be able to know exactly what the strategy is and when the implementation is going to take place.

MR. SPEAKER:

Government Leader, Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker. I have not put it through cabinet at this time but as soon as I pass it through cabinet I will be willing to proceed immediately to have all Members have a copy of our strategy and our general implementation plan.

MR. SPEAKER:

If I could now recognize in the gallery the mayor-elect for Rae-Edzo, Dan Marion.

---Applause

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

I would like to ask the Government Leader when she plans to bring this forward to cabinet and when would she be able to advise Members of this House as to the time frame we are looking at.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Further Return To Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are working on it presently. I am not quite finished with the plan and the framework, but it is almost complete and this morning I did not have enough time to see where we were. I was hopeful it would be in the next few days. So it is just that we have not got all our paperwork together. There is a plan to have a cabinet meeting on Monday, depending on whether we are sitting or not; we have to work around the schedule. So it is really a matter of a number of days before I can do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell, another supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to basically tie down a time frame as to when we can be looking at this. I would like to ask the Government Leader, in the event that the House does decide to continue sitting into next week, will she be able to give us a specific time frame next week.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question O34-12(1): Time Frame For Implementation Of Beatty Report

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, if I can get it set and finished by this weekend, it will be this weekend; if I get it finished by Thursday night -- it will be just as soon as I get it completed. We are in meetings from about 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day and it is difficult to sit down and organize cabinet meetings or finalize our work plan. So as soon as it is available. If I can get it done by Monday, it will be available. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Question O35-12(1): Protection Of Northern Preference Policies

MR. TODD:

My question is to the Minister of Finance. I understand and appreciate that the Minister of Finance cannot attend the conference of financial Ministers of Canada that is now occurring, because of the pressing needs of this House. I am sure that one of the items for discussion at this conference will be the economic proposals contained in the federal government's constitutional package. Such a policy could adversely affect northern preference policies such as the business incentive policy. Will the Minister state categorically that he will fight these economic proposals on behalf of the government so that this government cannot only protect the northern preference policies we currently have, but implement even stronger policies?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Finance Minister, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question O35-12(1): Protection Of Northern Preference Policies

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Antoine

Question O36-12(1): Cabinet Working With Members

MR. ANTOINE:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Government Leader. If there is somebody working for us and they do not like it -- I was in Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte recently; I was all over these communities. They told me a lot of things. Maybe we could work things out and make it better.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea, Government Leader.

Return To Question O36-12(1): Cabinet Working With Members

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, really that is what the Ministers are here for, but one of the ideas that I would like to see -- I know people disperse and go back into their

communities, but I would be willing to personally meet with each of the Members before they go and ask them to outline the specific needs and requirements so that we can at least put them in the overall planning of where we are going. As well, if we delay the budget a bit, to work it into the whole relationship between the cabinet Ministers, the overall planning, the standing committee on finance -- I realize that when people are new oftentimes you feel that you are lost in the whole process. I would be willing to do that before you go home, even if it has to be over this weekend, just to try to get your requirements into the general discussion and then when we come back again it can go in the process again with the standing committee on legislation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question O36-12(1): Cabinet Working With Members

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I would like to ask the Government Leader if and when the Ministers will be planning to travel into the communities. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Further Return To Question O36-12(1): Cabinet Working With Members

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, we have not set an agenda at this point in time. A lot of our planning goes around when the meetings are happening in the Legislature and when the standing committee on finance is going to hold their meetings because many of us are involved. I know a lot of us are interested in getting those dates set for community travel, so as soon as many of the outside meetings that we are compelled to be at are set, then we can work in the community visits.

If the honourable Member is interested in any specific Ministers travelling to his constituency because of particular needs, I would suggest you approach the individual Minister to express that concern and perhaps work out a schedule when it is appropriate for yourselves. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Dent.

Question O37-12(1): Ordinary MLAs On Beatty Report Implementation Strategy Group

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Government Leader. I appreciate that we have been given a commitment to get the timetable for an implementation strategy in the near future. I think there is some concern on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that because of the impending break over the Christmas holidays and the apparent desire of the government to move fairly quickly with some of the recommendations from the Beatty report, I wonder if the Government Leader will agree today, that to facilitate the concerns of ordinary Members being addressed during the period the House is not in session, to commit to having three or four ordinary Members being made members of the overall implementation strategy group.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea, Government Leader.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice. I will see what I can do and come back to the Member tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Todd.

Question O38-12(1): Implementation Of Northern Preference Policies

MR. TODD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Government Leader. Given that the Minister of Finance has agreed that he will support strongly the northern preference policies, my question to the Government Leader is this, Mr. Speaker: We have heard much in the last three or four days regarding the implementation and recommendations of the Beatty report. What we have not heard are the economic effects of the recommendations on northern business. In reality, the size of the pie for northern business is getting smaller. As an economic component of the Beatty report, and to ensure that northern business

gets more of less, would the Government Leader commit this government to implementing both a "buy North only" policy and a "tender North only" policy, before the end of the fiscal year?

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea, Government Leader.

Return To Question O38-12(1): Implementation Of Northern Preference Policies

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I think we attempted to get that initiative ahead a couple of years ago. Certainly I can say that I have a commitment to do that. We will try to get that process in place. I do not know if I can meet your deadline by the end of the fiscal year, but we will commit ourselves to try to reach that objective. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Todd.

Supplementary To Question O38-12(1): Implementation Of Northern Preference Policies

MR. TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would, therefore, the Government Leader also, in consideration of this, consolidate the development of these policies under one Minister, possibly the Minister of Finance, so that the co-ordination of these policies could be handled more efficiently?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Further Return To Question O38-12(1): Implementation Of Northern Preference Policies

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I will commit to look at that and try to achieve that goal through the implementation committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question O39-12(1): Medical Services For Metis And Non-Status People

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In October 1990 this Assembly accepted a motion that the Minister of Health make renewed attempts to find solutions to provide medical services to the Metis people of the Northwest Territories on the same basis as those provided the status Dene and Inuit under the Indian Health Policy. In February 1991 the then Minister of Health verified her support for improved Metis health benefits. My question is for the Government Leader. What is the status for securing funds to provide continuing medical services to

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the Metis and non-status people of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Return To Question O39-12(1): Medical Services For Metis And Non-Status People

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, since the time of the request to have the Metis health benefits the same as the status people, we have been working with the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories to establish what the membership might be. As a result, what we have in the budget planning process are the three options that can be adopted within the budgetary system. This is along with a number of other requests. The work has been done and it requires a decision in terms of planning our overall financial obligations. It is in the process and it is there to be considered. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question O39-12(1): Medical Services For Metis And Non-Status People

MR. KOE:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What is the time frame for a decision? When do you see a decision on this issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Further Return To Question O39-12(1): Medical Services For Metis And Non-Status People

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, that proposal or submission is in the process and it will be within the budget planning process which will come forward to SCOF, standing committee on finance, June 7, 1992.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O40-12(1): Minister Of Youth

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Government Leader who the Minister of Youth is.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Return To Question O40-12(1): Minister Of Youth

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Youth falls under the same departmental responsibility as previously.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Question O41-12(1): Moneys Spent To Date On Expo '92

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Expo '92. In this time of financial restraint, I want to know how much money has been budgeted for Expo and how much money has been spent to date. I would like a progress report of some sort. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Expo '92 is being funded through a four million dollar revolving fund. I do not have those numbers presently on how much of the four million dollars we have spent or how much revenue we have received, but I will get back to the House tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O42-12(1): Total Review Of Department Of Social Services

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Social Services. The day before yesterday I asked the Minister whether he felt the Department of Social Services needed a total review. He made comments last summer that he would review the department with a fine-toothed comb. Recognizing that there is a different Minister, but the department is still the same, I would like to know if he still feels the department needs a total review with a fine-toothed comb.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Whitford, Minister of Social Services.

Return To Question O42-12(1): Total Review Of Department Of Social Services

HON. TONY WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report is giving us some recommendations. I am taking all those recommendations under advisement, in consultation with my colleagues, to see what we can do with the two departments. I want to reserve the opportunity to have a view of all the programs we have and the problems the department faces, before I go ahead with any fine-toothed comb review. I think that some of the things that have been a problem will be addressed in this review we are doing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question O42-12(1): Total Review Of Department Of Social Services

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

It is interesting how comments change from day to day, Mr. Speaker. On Monday the Minister indicated, "I think the Member will be pleased with the direction we are going in." So what is the direction he plans to be going in?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader, Minister of Social Services -- it is your choice, cabinet. Madam Government Leader.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Point of order, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I directed my question to the Minister of Social Services. My supplementary is being directed to the Minister of Social Services, therefore I would request the Minister of Social Services to reply to my supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell. My understanding of the past practice of this House is that a question directed to a Minister can be handled by that Minister or can be handed off to another Minister. It is the choice of cabinet. They will bear the consequences of that decision. But it is appropriate for the Government Leader to answer the question. Madam Government Leader.

Further Return To Question O42-12(1): Total Review Of Department Of Social Services

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to verify that in the "Strength at Two Levels" report and the consolidation of the Department of Health and Social Services -- while we are going through that process I would consider in doing that job, it would create, in fact, a complete review of the Department of Social Services and what they are doing and the conduct of business. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question O42-12(1): Total Review
Of Department Of Social Services

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Social Services -- whatever Minister may want to answer, it is certainly up to them. The Government Leader indicated that she will take the report that has been tabled in the House, "Strength at Two Levels," to determine what should be reviewed in the Department of Social Services. Does the Minister of Social Services feel that the Department of Social Services needs a total review -- the comment he made prior to this report being tabled in this House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Social Services.

Further Return To Question O42-12(1): Total Review
Of Department Of Social Services

HON. TONY WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I did make those comments prior to any knowledge I had of the "Strength at Two Levels" report. Since then, I want to have the opportunity to review both of the departments under my direction here before I make any comments on which direction it is going to go. But the direction will be progressive.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O42-12(1): Total Review
Of Department Of Social Services

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, does he know today, as he stated on Monday, the specific direction that he is going to be going in? Can he advise the House today?

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it "he" is the Minister of Social Services?
Minister of Social Services.

Further Return To Question O42-12(1): Total Review
Of Department Of Social Services

HON. TONY WHITFORD:

We are working together as a team; we are discussing this in cabinet and at this moment we do not have a specific target but we are working toward making these two departments better departments.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

Question O43-12(1): Status Of School For Lake
Harbour

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been a concern for some time by my constituents. There have been deaths of students who are out of our community. There are a lot of people who go outside of our community to go to school. I do not want an answer right now, but perhaps later on. Our school was deferred to be completed in 1992. There are a lot of students who are enrolling in that school in my community and there is not enough room in the school now. It is very hard for the parents of the community when their children have to go to school outside the community. Can the department assure me that the school in my community will not be deferred again?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Education, Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question O43-12(1): Status Of School For
Lake Harbour

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we all know that the capital projects that are going to be built in the communities have not been started yet; they are still being discussed by the government. I think you have all heard that the capital estimates will be dealt with in February. We will find out whether the school Mr. Pudlat is talking about will be deferred or will go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Todd.

Question O44-12(1): Escalating Costs In Legal Aid

MR. TODD:

My question is to the Minister of Justice. Given the current increase in the rate of crime and the need for legal aid and the fact that up until 1989-90 the federal government was cost sharing the cost of legal aid, what steps, if any, is the Minister of Justice going to take to ensure that these spiralling costs are going to be brought under control? Because it is my understanding that in accordance with the Beatty report the federal government has put a cap on their contribution to the cost of legal aid.

MR. SPEAKER:

Justice Minister, Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O44-12(1): Escalating Costs In Legal Aid

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is absolutely correct that the legal aid cost sharing agreement with the federal government has been frozen at 1989-90 dollars, and we are facing a serious shortfall in the amount of money available for legal aid, compared with the demands on the system. I want to assure the Member and the House that I have given this problem priority attention. I had a chance to meet briefly with the Legal Services Board shortly after my appointment; they have now presented me with a report that they had commissioned on legal aid. I have also the benefit of the recommendations of the "Strength at Two Levels" report on that subject, and this week I am meeting with my department to consider what steps will be necessary in order to deal with these financial problems that the Member has alluded to.

I expect that I will have to make decisions soon in order to deal with the issue this fiscal year. Fortunately, I will have the benefit of this review that has been done under the auspices of the Legal Services Board and the "Strength at Two Levels" report to guide me in tackling the issue.

Today I do not know what can be done, Mr. Speaker, but I expect that by the end of the week the department will be making recommendations to me about necessary steps that will have to be taken, and I will keep honourable Members informed as those decisions are taken. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Todd.

Question O45-12(1): Scheduled Airline Services Rather Than Charters For Court Circuits

MR. TODD:

Given the current financial crisis we are currently in and the fact that the justice system, in my opinion, seems to be bankrupt, has the Department of Justice given consideration to using regular scheduled service in transportation rather than chartering across the Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O45-12(1): Scheduled Airline Services Rather Than Charters For Court Circuits

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the honourable Member does appreciate that the judiciary is a separate branch of the government in our political system. Any Minister of Justice, even one concerned about costs, must be cautious about giving directions to judges about how they should do their work. So I want to make it clear that any

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savings on the cost associated with courts and court charters, in my opinion, must be reached through the co-operation of the judiciary and not by any directions coming from the government.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my officials have been discussing this matter of the increasing costs of administration of justice in the NWT with the judiciary, with the RCMP and with the Law Society. I do believe that all of those key elements of the system are aware of the escalating costs and are prepared to take the necessary steps to bring those costs down wherever possible, even in the face of increasing crime rates and in increasing demand for their services.

So all I can tell the honourable Member is that I have yet to meet with all the actors in the system, including the chief judges of the territorial and Supreme Court, but I am aware of those concerns and I am aware that the judges are. The briefings I have had have led me to believe that scheduled services have been used, wherever possible and economic, by court parties in the past year and, in fact, charter costs have been reduced. There are times when it is more economical to use a charter, so the rule cannot be a blanket one.

But I believe steps are being taken to bring those costs under control as much as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

That was a bit of a long answer to a simple question. Mr. Todd, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O45-12(1): Scheduled Airline Services Rather Than Charters For Court Circuits

MR. TODD:

I hope that the honourable Minister is not suggesting for one minute that judges are immune from this House when it relates to financial aspects of the budget.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Further Return To Question O45-12(1): Scheduled Airline Services Rather Than Charters For Court Circuits

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

I am not suggesting that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arvaluk.

Question O46-12(1): Simultaneous Translation In The Courts

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Justice. As we know, time is expensive. I know it is expensive for the lawyers and the judges, extremely expensive, but it is also expensive to have a plane sitting in the communities when it is a charter.

The present court system in the Northwest Territories has to use a language of the accused or the defendant, and we do not utilize simultaneous translation in those court parties. It is a consecutive translation and takes a lot of time to relay the message to the accused or defendant, or to the jury. That is now being practised also in some communities. When will the Justice Minister utilize the simultaneous translation services in the courts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Justice, Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the excellent suggestion. I will take the question as notice and get back to the House as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Dent.

Question O47-12(1): NWT Participation At Expo '92

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and is related to a question asked earlier by the Member for Nahendeh. I welcome the fact that we are going to get an update tomorrow on expenditures in connection with Expo '92, but I wonder if the Minister could also advise, given our apparent financial problems, whether the government is reconsidering our participation at Expo '92.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Several days ago, Mr. Speaker, I asked the department to advise me on what commitments we have made and what contracts we have signed, what money we have spent, and whether or not it was possible to perhaps look at curtailing going there. I have not received that back from the department, so I will take the question as notice and report back to the House tomorrow or Friday, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question O48-12(1): MLAs' Contact With Workers' Compensation Board

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Workers'

Compensation Board. I had written a letter to the former Minister in August regarding some concerns I had with respect to the way the Workers' Compensation Board operates. One of the policies that the Compensation Board operates under is that Members that have a concern with regard to claims or concerns about their constituents have to go to the Minister rather than dealing directly with the board itself. I would like to ask the Minister, when was this policy directive given and by which Minister, that Members on this side have to go directly to you as opposed to going to the Workers' Compensation Board?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O48-12(1): MLAs' Contact With Workers' Compensation Board

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the fact that the honourable Member had been told by the general manager of the WCB that complaints or concerns about the Workers' Compensation Board should be dealt with by the Minister responsible for the WCB and that that policy was established by the board itself. I am aware of that correspondence.

Mr. Speaker, my attitude is that the WCB staff should be encouraged to respond, wherever possible, directly to MLAs if they have concerns about WCB issues, and that it should only be if the matter cannot be resolved at the staff level that the Minister responsible needs to become involved. That is the way it should work, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker. If that is not how it is working right now, then I will look forward to sitting down with the board. I am planning to meet with them at their next meeting in January and sorting out this arrangement so that problems can be dealt with, wherever possible, by staff dealing directly with MLAs; just as I would hope the board would be equally accessible to members of the public. I am willing to have that policy reviewed, Mr. Speaker, so there are not complications in getting problems solved. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Supplementary,

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Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question O48-12(1): MLAs Contact With Workers' Compensation Board

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am having a very difficult time with regard to the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board. I do not know how much control the Minister has with regard to the board itself or the kinds of policies that they implement, or the kind of internal rules that they implement with regard to eligibility of claims and that. I realize that the board operates on its own, independently, but I wonder if we should have the board operate more within this government.

I see that we are lacking somewhat in having issues resolved because of this difficulty. I am sure the Minister is having a difficult time in that area as much as ordinary Members are because of the independence of the board, and I would like to ask the Minister whether or not there is a future consideration with regard to a review of the board so that there is some accountability.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Further Return To Question O48-12(1): MLAs' Contact With Workers' Compensation Board

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the honourable Member will appreciate that I am still just getting familiar with the operations of this board, but I do know that there have been no less than two major reviews conducted of the Workers' Compensation Board by an independent body within the last number of years. Before I agree to the idea of another review, Mr. Speaker, I would like to try working out a satisfactory working relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board and its staff by sitting down with the board, describing the issues as I understand them -- and I have already heard comments from MLAs on some of the problems as they view them and I am open to getting other advice from MLAs and others about issues that should be dealt with. But I would like to try to sort those out by sitting down with the members of the board and seeing if new approaches and new policies can lead to better communications, particularly with MLAs.

I would like to ask the honourable Member to give me a chance to see if I can deal with his concerns. If I

find that I do not have co-operation from the board, then it may be necessary to review its status in relation to the government. But I would like to take the opportunity to discuss these concerns face-to-face with members of the board and see if they can be solved in that kind of a co-operative manner, and early in the new year.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O49-12(1): Moving Corrections Services To Department Of Justice

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Justice. Recognizing that the report, "Strength at Two Levels," states very little with respect to corrections, and recognizing that corrections is currently in the Social Services department, I would like to know if the Minister of Justice will take into consideration to put corrections in the Justice department where it rightfully belongs.

MR. SPEAKER:

That statement is a supposition at this point. Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O49-12(1): Moving Corrections Services To Department Of Justice

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, Members have been informed by the Government Leader earlier this week that as a priority the government will be proceeding with a recommendation of the "Strength at Two Levels" report on consolidating the Departments of Health and Social Services. In conjunction with that plan, as the cabinet moves to implement that recommendation, I believe that the proper place of the corrections service will be considered in the course of pursuing that amalgamation.

I have had some very preliminary discussions with the Minister of Social Services about that issue, and I think it is an option we will be considering, but I should say at this point that I have not formed any firm conclusions on that subject, other than to say it is an option that Mr. Whitford and I have discussed and it certainly will be explored as we move to implement this recommendation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question O50-12(1): Dismantling Of Western Constitutional Commission

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 11th Assembly did many stupid things, in my opinion: We set up new departments that we decide we do not need any more. That is one of them. We decided we wanted to confirm in the public's mind that we were kind of a Third World country with a Cadillac government in a Third World economy. We set up more work so that all our people -- all they were going to do is go to meetings and consult. A perfect example of this is the constitutional commission we have set up. It has a three-year life, and according to my arithmetic it is going to cost us \$5.334 million so people can go around talking to people.

Mr. Speaker, we did many, many things in the 11th Assembly that many of us thought were stupid, and we have a new report now that is going to tell us how we can undo all those things. Since there is a tremendous amount of criticism of all these things we did in the last Assembly which have proven not to be right, will the government, in addition to more of this restructuring that is going on, close down the commission? Because it is as exciting as watching paint dry. And look at all the other things we did in the last four years, which many of us thought were rather crazy, and we are now having to revisit. Will they look at all those things that are costing us money for the next few years and see if we cannot get rid of them?

MR. SPEAKER:

A rather lengthy preamble. Madam Government Leader.

Return To Question O50-12(1): Dismantling Of Western Constitutional Commission

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that many of these commissions are set up as a total government decision, not only cabinet Ministers but all the Legislative Assembly, and I think it is out of our respect for continuing change in the NWT, different aspirations, always to revisit these issues as they come up. I do not consider them stupid. I believe at

certain times we do certain things because they are appropriate at that time, or are thought to be appropriate.

In terms of the consolidation of government departments, this is thought to be a way of doing business more efficiently. These are not new things. We quote "Strength at Two Levels" continually. But all that is is a reaffirmation of what people have been saying all along, to try to put it into some focus.

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I know that in the past, when we try to deal with certain areas, the functions are in different agencies of the government; and any cabinet Minister can tell you very clearly, who has had these responsibilities, that when you have a certain responsibility and half of the decision-making is in another department and a quarter of it is in another, it is very difficult. So we are really doing a practical exercise in that regard.

As well, over the years, whenever we negotiate with the federal government, the federal government says, "What kind of vessel are you going to put this in so we have a clear line of what you are going to do?" For the time it is necessary to do that. But each time that we have people with new ideas and then we have some crunches that we have to live under in terms of financial restraints -- maybe we cannot afford all the things that are out there and all the priorities we set. But what we are trying to do now, in terms of "Strength at Two Levels", is to consolidate the ideas that have been collected from many regions and different people who have been in the process, to make ourselves more efficient and more credible.

I believe the exercise here, if people think that past decisions are not appropriate or if the commission -- the commission is a body of the whole Legislative Assembly, as thought to be appropriate, for dealing with the issues that are fundamental in trying to get some ideas on the western territory. If the Members feel it is inappropriate, well let us look at it. We do not make the decisions as a cabinet alone. Many of these broader decisions, such as on the Western Constitutional Commission, we made collectively. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

MR. SPEAKER:

Unanimous consent has been requested. Are there any nays? Unanimous consent has been given. Proceed, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O51-91(1): Update On Status Of Northern Accord

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Government Leader. Will the Government Leader be able to give the Members of this House an update on the status of the Northern Accord, taking into consideration the announcements that she made in her Ministers' statement today?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I will have a response and an update for presentation tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Mr. Pudluk.

Question O52-12(1): Creation Of Inuit Cultural Institute In Baffin Region

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Culture and Communications. There is no cultural institute in the Baffin Region, but there is a board. Has the Minister looked into the possibility of creating an Inuit cultural institute in the Baffin Region? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloofoo.

Return To Question O52-12(1): Creation Of Inuit Cultural Institute In Baffin Region

HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware that the Baffin Regional Council and the Baffin Region

Inuit Association have had discussions regarding the possibility of creating a cultural institute in the Baffin Region. I have said that once they come up with something, I have told them to advise me but up until now I have not received any response from them.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Todd.

Question O53-12(1): Review And Simplification Of HAP Eligibility Criteria

MR. TODD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, but he seems to be out of the House; so I will address the question to the Government Leader. Given the concerns expressed over the last two or three years regarding the home-ownership program across the Arctic, I wonder if the Minister or the Government Leader would give serious consideration to quickly doing a complete review on the selection criteria as it relates to HAP, so that we can have a simple explanation of how people can apply and be approved for the HAP program. It is far too complicated right now.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question O53-12(1): Review And Simplification Of HAP Eligibility Criteria

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have asked my department to look into HAP allocation. There have been a lot of concerns expressed by communities, so we are doing that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question was taken as notice. Mr. Todd, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O53-12(1): Review And Simplification Of HAP Eligibility Criteria

MR. TODD:

My question was about the selection criteria, not HAP application. There is a requirement for a review of the

selection criteria. What criteria do you have to meet to be a successful HAP client?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question O53-12(1): Review And Simplification Of HAP Eligibility Criteria

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess maybe I did not phrase it right. That is what we are looking at, is the criteria. I realize it is too narrow, and we are trying to expand it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I stand corrected. The question is not being taken as notice. The Minister said they were, in fact, reviewing it. Oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question O54-12(1): Policy On Travel Arrangements For Students

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Recently the Department of Education has advised many of the travel agencies across the North that they are attempting to formulate a policy to address travel arrangements made for students. Taking into consideration that in my constituency one of the Arctic College campuses are there and we do have

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a travel agency in my constituency, that even though the students are attending the campus in Fort Smith, their travel arrangements are made through out-of-town travel agencies. This causes some concern with respect to the students and confusion, both on the students' part and the travel agency's part. Will the Minister be able to advise me as to when he feels that this policy will be formulated to clarify the confusion that needs to be addressed with respect to travel arrangements for students? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister of Education.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question under advisement and get back to the Member as soon as I can.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Bernhardt.

Question O55-12(1): Guaranteed Representation For Elders On Hamlet Councils

MR. BERNHARDT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. Would your department, along with this government, be willing to explore an idea regarding the Municipal Act to guarantee elders representation on hamlet councils?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O55-12(1): Guaranteed Representation For Elders On Hamlet Councils

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is the first time I have heard of that idea. I wonder if the honourable Member has considered other implications. It may well lead to other groups, for example youth or women, requesting guaranteed representation on hamlet councils. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, as a quick response to the Member's question, I will nonetheless be willing to consider the Member's suggestion.

I do believe that it might be appropriate to seek advice from bodies like the Association of Municipalities, with whom I expect to meet in the coming year, to see whether this is a concern they have about deficiencies in our municipal legislation. But the short answer to the Member's question, Mr. Speaker, is that I will be willing to consider it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Bill Erasmus, National Chief of the Dene Nation.

---Applause

Oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question O56-12(1): Transferring Money Through Northern Stores

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a concern that I would like to express to the Government Leader. Last week when I was in Yellowknife I went into Northern to transfer some money to my family in Fort Providence. At the same time, I also have one boy that goes to school here and we transfer money through Northern to him. I asked the clerk at Northern at that time what the intention is once Northern is transferred to Canadian Tire; whether or not that service would still be provided. The clerk does not know.

This is going to be a concern for a lot of students across the NWT, not only within my constituency, and also even people in Yellowknife that are broke; it is going to be a concern to them that they do not have the money to pick up at Northern today, when moneys are required.

Has Madam Minister looked at what could be done to help those people? Or have any of the other Ministers thought about the implications that the sale of Northern is going to create?

MR. SPEAKER:

Government Leader, Ms. Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I am like the clerk; I do not know.

---Laughter

I have not taken the detailed analysis of that, but to tell you the truth, I did think about it. I will check into the issue. I do not know exactly which stores are going to be sold, exactly. We can take a look at the implications of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question O57-12(1): Cost-Saving Guidelines For Departments

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Government Leader, in addition to all the cuts that she has announced to the House, has the Leader also asked each Minister to provide guidelines for departments on different ways in which they can conserve or save money? Has there been some kind of guideline given throughout the administration so that they can tighten up a little bit for the next few months?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question O57-12(1): Cost-Saving Guidelines For Departments

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, yes. This has been given out by the Department of Finance.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Question O58-12(1): Re-Use Of Inventory By Departments

MR. LEWIS:

Supplementary to the Minister responsible for Social Services, my friend, Mr. Whitford. Would it be such a detailed guideline that, for example, if you are an inmate at the Yellowknife Correctional Institute, instead of using your Bic razor for one shave, you have to use that for the whole week now, so you will be saving an awful lot of money by using that razor for a week rather than for one day?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Whitford.

HON. TONY WHITFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that is a question that probably would be better answered by the Minister of Finance.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, the razor is over to you.

Return To Question O58-12(1): Re-Use Of Inventory By Departments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, if the Department of Social Services is making those Bic razors go for a week instead of one day, I am simply delighted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

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Supplementary To Question O58-12(1): Re-Use Of Inventory By Departments

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have indicated to the government that we have very limited means and we have to really make huge savings. I would like to ask the Minister if these guidelines have provided the kind of detail where people would be so distressed, upset, angry, about -- I will not use the word "stupid" this time -- about unwise directives, that instead of just saving yourself a few nickels over a week or two, you are going to be rebuilding the correctional institute because of the kind of dismay you cause people who are being asked to follow unwise directives?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question O58-12(1): Re-Use Of Inventory By Departments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, when the Government Leader announced the 90-day freeze, et cetera, I think most Members would agree that there was an appeal process for all of the cutbacks, including vacancies, including anything that was considered essential. The Government Leader's office has been tremendously busy with appeals, and they have all been dealt with.

We have purposely said to Ministers and deputy ministers that they are going to have to use common sense and we are going to have to manage our way out of the situation. We are expecting those people in the departments who are receiving that direction to act responsibly. So if there are things going on in departments that are causing severe hardship or that are causing mental frustration or have the likelihood of causing, as the Member suggestions, some unrest in an institute, then we would like to know about it so we can correct it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Koe.

Question O59-12(1): Establishment Of Trust Companies Or Credit Unions

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Over the past years there have been studies done on financial institutions, looking at establishing trust companies or credit unions or other alternatives to assist in the cash flows my colleague mentioned. What new initiatives will this government be taking in regard to this issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance.

Return To Question O59-12(1): Establishment Of Trust Companies Or Credit Unions

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, the previous Minister had incorporated most of the loans into one consolidated loan fund, and that presently seems to be working quite well. There is quite a demand on that fund and I am presently doing a review of it. We are aware that the co-operatives are looking at some kind of banking institution, and we are awaiting that proposal.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pudluk.

Question O60-12(1): Difficulties In Joining Yellowknife Co-operative

MR. PUDLUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the same concern as the Member for Deh Cho about transferring the money to smaller communities. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. One time I applied for a co-op membership in this town and they told me I had to wait for 18 months to deal with my name and they would put my name on the bottom of the list. You have to be a member to buy anything from the co-op here. I know that anyone who comes to Resolute Bay does not have to be a member of the co-op to buy any groceries and clothing. Why is it so different here?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a limited co-operative, but I will look into the matter and get back to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Question O61-12(1): Winter Roads In Keewatin Region

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. The previous Minister of Transportation did a study on roads or highways in the Keewatin Region. What progress is being made in this direction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Transportation, Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question O61-12(1): Winter Roads In Keewatin Region

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the government has a transportation strategy that was developed by the previous government and that strategy is still on the table. We have to look at different proposals that were developed by the previous government, plus we have to deal with airports and docks for ships going into the communities, as well as roads. I had brief discussions with the new Government Leader with regard to the transportation strategy, and she informs me she would like to revisit that area very soon to see where we go from here.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Supplementary To Question O61-12(1): Winter Roads In Keewatin Region

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has there been community consultation with the communities affected? If not, will there be consultation at a later date?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question O61-12(1): Winter Roads
In Keewatin Region

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

What we find with regard to the development of the new winter roads is that there is a significant impact on the lives of the community people who have been isolated all their lives. There is also a significant impact on the environment when the roads are put in. There is ultimately going to be communication between our government and the affected communities. There will have to be a consultation process established prior to the planning of the roads.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Gargan.

Question O62-12(1): Custom Adoption

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Social Services. The Minister is aware that I have always been concerned about custom adoption. The process is done by a department, I believe.

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The recommendation then is given to the court on whether or not custom adoption should be granted. However, Mr. Speaker, the problem right now is that there is a review on custom adoption and there has been a review now for four years, and while the review is going on there is a stack of custom adoption applications that have not gone anywhere. The people cannot afford to wait for the Department of Justice to do the review. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not he might consider going ahead and direct his department to start processing those applications for custom adoption so that people would not have to wait for another four more years if the review continues as it has.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Whitford.

HON. TONY WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the opportunity to take that question as notice, and I will get back to the Member with a reply as soon as I can.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

Question O63-12(1): Communities Governed By
Chiefs And Band Councils Being Penalized

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Government Leader for answering my earlier question on working out some of the problems with the Ministers, but there is one area that has been a concern to me, and it has to do with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. The communities in my region of Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and Wrigley are governed by chiefs and band councils, and they are not under the MACA system. I feel that these communities are being penalized and kind of bribed by MACA to go onto the MACA system. I say that because they have very old equipment, like 1972 type equipment, that is broken down most of the time and being constantly repaired. They have no roads in Trout Lake or Nahanni Butte, and in Wrigley as well there were attempts by MACA to try to get them into the MACA system.

I want to ask the Minister if it is the practice of this government to penalize communities because they are governed by chiefs and band councils. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O63-12(1): Communities
Governed By Chiefs And Band Councils Being
Penalized

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Question O64-12(1): Services Provided To
Communities Governed By Chiefs And Band Councils

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know from the Government Leader if there is going to be any attempt to work more closely with the communities that are governed by chiefs and band councils with regard to providing them with the types of services that are provided to communities that are in the MACA system. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Government Leader.

Return To Question O64-12(1): Services Provided To Communities Governed By Chiefs And Band Councils

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the honourable Member that there is no intention or direction from this government to treat a community that is governed by a chief and band council less favourably than other communities. In the matter of the three smaller communities you are speaking of, these are new communities and when they were formed they were more traditional communities. I believe initially they did not get into the requests for community infrastructure because they were more interested in living off the land and being away from the big problems of infrastructure. Therefore, the requests were not put forward to change how they were living in a very small community. If their desires are changing, I do not believe that this government intends to or should be penalizing anyone. They should be put into the planning process like any other community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question O65-12(1): Legislation Re Establishment Of Northern Brewery

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Government Services. From 1979 until 1988 the government had a piece of legislation, which would be enabling legislation, so that we could establish a brewery in the Northwest Territories, so we could use our own water to manufacture a product. In 1987 the government met out at Snare Lake and decided that a priority for economic development was import substitution. Instead of

bringing all the stuff in from the South, we would make it here in the Territories. I tried to introduce a Private Members' Bill in 1988 but failed to get it through the House, mostly because of my own errors and so on, but now that we are in a new Assembly I would like to ask the Minister whether the government intends to bring that piece of legislation forward during this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ningark.

HON. JOHN NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since anything to do with liquor becomes a big issue throughout the Northwest Territories, not only in Yellowknife and in bigger centres, I would like to take that question as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question O66-12(1): Renewable Resources Funding Allocations

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Renewable Resources. I would like to ask the Minister how the funding allocations are done for local hunters and trappers associations. It varies. They have what they call the community harvesters assistance program and the organized hunts program, outpost camps, and also regional hunters and trappers associations that are given grants. They also have local hunters and trappers associations. The grants given to hunters and trappers vary from \$8000 up to \$48,000. I want to ask the Minister if he might be able to tell me how they determine, if there is a regional hunters and trappers association, how the grants are given to local hunters and trappers associations, as well as how grants are given for organized hunts.

MR. SPEAKER:

I think that one would probably be better put in the form of a written question, but Mr. Ningark can respond to that.

HON. JOHN NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be able to provide the Member with the information this week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Oral questions. Item 6, written questions. Written

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questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question W2-12(1): Renewable Resources Funding To Communities

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Renewable Resources. Will the Minister provide to this House a breakdown of how much funding is given to each community through: a) the community harvesters assistance program; b) administration and special projects; c) outpost camps; d) organized community hunts. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Written questions. Written questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question W3-12(1): Funding To Native Women's Organizations

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women or the Government Leader. The Status of Women Council has a non-native community worker who goes out into the communities to encourage women's groups through workshops and instruction. However, this community worker only visits 10 communities a year. On the other hand, the Native Women's Organization has members in all 34 NWT communities. My question is, could the honourable Member please inform the House why we have not provided adequate funding to native women's organizations at the community level?

Question W4-12(1): Review Of Funding To Women's Organizations

In the past fiscal year the YWCA, a Yellowknife based organization, received over \$500,000 from this government. However, the Native Women's

Association, which unlike the YWCA has a membership which extends to all communities in the Northwest Territories, received only \$175,000. Could the Minister please explain why an organization that primarily serves Yellowknife has received such preferential funding status?

Supplementary to that, would the Minister advise the House whether the government is willing to review its entire approach to funding women's organizations?

Question W5-12(1): Funding To Native Women's Association

Mr. Speaker, my third question is that the Native Women's Association is an organization more than a decade old, with over 900 Inuit, Dene and Metis members and representatives in every community. It is on the verge of collapse due to inadequate funding. This organization provides programs to communities across the North. In view of this government's commitment to communities having more control over their own affairs and providing solutions at a local level, what funding is this government prepared to provide to ensure that the Native Women's Association does not collapse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Written questions. Written questions.

Item 7, returns to written questions. Returns to written questions.

Item 8, replies to Opening Address. Replies to Opening Address. Item 9, petitions. Mr. Arvaluk.

ITEM 9: PETITIONS

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present Petition 1-12(1) to this House on behalf of the residents of Chesterfield Inlet. Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by 167 people and requests that the RCMP place a full-time officer in Chesterfield Inlet. The hamlet of Chesterfield Inlet currently has a by-law officer. However, the by-law officer is ineffective and cannot properly deal with all related problems. Mr. Speaker, I support this petition and urge this House to give the same support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Petitions. Petitions. Mr. Pudlat.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have Petition 2-12(1) with regard to northern people that run their own business. I would like to be quite clear, Mr. Speaker, but it has something to do with the power rates. This petition probably affects all the NWT residents, but it is the business people that are worried about having to pay high power bills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Petitions. Petitions.

Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, tabling of documents. Mr. Pollard.

ITEM 11: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 9-12(1), NWTPC Cost of Service Review, December 1991, a report of the Public Utilities Board respecting the proposed cost of service methodology of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and an executive summary in Inuktitut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 10-12(1), a document prepared for the NWT Council for Disabled Persons which deals with respite care. We sometimes do not recognize, Mr. Speaker, that it is not only the disabled persons but the care-givers and the whole family that have problems. This is a suggestion for a policy proposal to be developed by government, if they would take a good look at it. There are two documents, one called "Respite Care" and the other one "Proposal for Respite Care Policy." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Tabling of documents.

I wish to inform the House that pursuant to section 21(1)(c) of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table Tabled Document 11-12(1), Report to the Chairman, Management and Services Board, on the examination of the accounts and financial transactions of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Fund for the year ended March 31, 1991, prepared by the Auditor General of Canada.

Tabling of documents. Item 12, notices of motions. Mr. Lewis.

ITEM 12: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Notice Of Motion 26-12(1): Contribution To NWT Council For Disabled Persons

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, December 13, 1991, I shall move the following motion: Whereas the council finds that the cost -- this is the Council

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for Disabled Persons -- of rental space is a heavy burden on its resources and has begun a drive to purchase its own building; now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Department of Social Services considers a contribution to the NWT Council for Disabled Persons building project.

MR. SPEAKER:

Notices of motions. Mr. Dent.

Notice Of Motion 27-12(1): Strategy Committee For Implementation Of Recommendations Of "Strength At Two Levels"

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, December 13, 1991, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that the Government Leader include three ordinary Members of this Assembly on its strategy committee for implementing the recommendations of the report "Strength At Two Levels."

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

Notice Of Motion 28-12(1): Custom Adoption

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, December 13, 1991, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for High Arctic, that this Legislative Assembly requests the Minister of Justice to undertake a review of all territorial statutes to ensure that, where appropriate, the definition of "parents" and "children" will include custom adoptive parents and custom adopted children, so as to ensure that the parents and children of custom adoption will be afforded the same legal rights as currently exist between biological parents, parents by legal adoption and their children. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Notices of motions. Ms. Cournoyea.

Notice Of Motion 29-12(1): Adoption Of Statute Roll, Third Volume

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I give notice that on Friday, December 13, 1991, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Legislative Assembly hereby approves the Statute Roll, Third Volume.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motions. Mr. Lewis.

Notice of Motion 30-12(1): Small School For Settlement Of Kakisa

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, December 13, 1991, I shall move the following motion: Whereas every community in the Northwest Territories has a physical structure for education with the exception of Kakisa; now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that this Legislative Assembly recommends that the Minister of Education considers the construction of a small education facility in Kakisa as a high priority in the department's plans during the next four years.

MR. SPEAKER:

Notices of motions. Mr. Gargan.

Notice Of Motion 31-12(1): Change In Voting Age For Elections In NWT

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, on Friday 13, December 13, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Legislative Assembly adopts that the voting age at an election in the Northwest Territories, be changed from 19 to 18 years of age; and further that this Legislative Assembly requests that the Executive Council introduce the necessary amendments to the Elections Act, Local Authorities Election Act and Plebiscite Act to give effect to any change in the voting age. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Notices of motions. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that Sam is only allowed to do two motions, which kind of illustrates my concern in my Member's statement about the process. I am doing this one for him.

Notice Of Motion 32-12(1): Adult Education Centre, Hay River Reserve

I give notice that on Friday, December 13, I shall move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that this Legislative Assembly recommends that the Minister of Education include an adult education centre for the Hay River Reserve when developing the department's five-year capital plan. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Notices of motions. Notices of motions.

Item 13, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Notices of motions for first reading of bills.

Because we still have two motions to go through it may take some time. We will recess for a short coffee break but I would like to ask all Members to remain in their places. Mr. Arvaluk's father, Mr. Mathias Awa, would like to make a presentation to the Legislative Assembly. If I could ask that Mr. Arvaluk bring his father forward in front of the Clerk's table to make the presentation.

---SHORT RECESS

I call the Assembly back to order. Item 14, motions.

ITEM 14: MOTIONS

Motion 19-12(1): Construction Of Community Centre For Kakisa

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the settlement of Kakisa does not have a building that would enable the residents of Kakisa to come together as a community;

AND WHEREAS the capital forecasting plan identifies a community centre for Kakisa to be built in 1993-94;

AND WHEREAS the community of Kakisa urgently requires a new community centre;

AND WHEREAS the existing building that is used as the community centre is an old garage converted to an office space which is heated by wood;

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that this Legislative Assembly recommends that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs consider moving the allocation of funding for the construction of a community centre in Kakisa up to the 1992-93 fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER:

Copies of the motion are found in your binders under your desk. The motion is in order. To the motion.

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MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been a Member for eight years and of the eight years I have basically distributed my priorities between the three communities I represent, one of them being Kakisa. During my first year in office I did a lot of the community of Fort Providence. During my second term I did quite a bit for the Hay River Reserve. In Kakisa, other than getting the allocation of one or two HAP units a year, no extensive progress has been made in that community, although I have been consulted by the communities on their requests and one of the requests is that they would like to have a community centre with a couple of offices in it. There is an allotment for construction to happen several

years from now, two summers from now. The motion suggests that we move the capital project ahead one year.

Mr. Speaker, during the next four years -- I have not consulted with the Members of this House with regard to the intention of the motion. I would like to remind the Members that we probably are going to be sitting for one week or week and a half at the most, and in order for me to consult each Member with regard to my intentions, it was very difficult for me to do. Even to consult the ordinary Members would be difficult because of the amount of time required. I apologize to the Members for not consulting them.

A review will be done in two years time and I would like to be able to determine the amount of progress this government has made, based on motions that are made in formal sitting. All the motions that are done by ordinary Members are supported by the Members themselves. Because I am the only one that knows what Kakisa looks like. I am also the only one that knows what Kakisa's needs are, as opposed to wants. I am also the only one that knows the people there and their aspirations. For the Members who are not too sure what Kakisa or the people of Kakisa are like, should not determine it by voting against my motion. They should support or respect the motion I presented on the basis that I am representing them and they are not. They should be supporting me on a motion of the aspirations that the community wants or needs.

Everyone in the Western or Eastern Arctic have a community gym, a multi-purpose hall, a community hall, at least a physical structure where people can gather. The community of Kakisa does not have any such facility. We have a building that I go to when I meet with people. It is the size of this public washroom here. When we have community feasts we find it difficult to have any kind of space available to talk or -- we do not even have a non-smoking section.

I would like to ask the Members' indulgence in supporting my motion. Perhaps I am jumping ahead of other Members by doing as many motions as I can, but that is the only way I might be able to get what I need for my constituency. I would hope the Members support my motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

The seconder of the motion. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know what Sam is talking about. I have been to Kakisa a few times and I feel they require such a building for a community centre. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Just on the process here. It seems to me that there was some general agreement that in the new planning process and in sort of delaying the budget, it was to give Members a more equal opportunity to feed into the development of a capital plan. As a cabinet the direction is given to us. It seems to me that there is a question as to the reason this is put on the floor. For some reason the honourable Member does not feel that the SCOF process is going to work for him, so he feels he wants to circumvent that process in dealing with his issue. And the reason he is putting the motion on the floor is, he wants to aim to the two year review to see whether his project is going to be considered and then he will make a determination.

But then again, is that also saying that every other Member should be putting all their motions for all their capital projects on the floor as well, and circumvent all the process that comes around in terms of the communities, the planning and the assessments that are done in terms of regional need. It seems to me it is placing an unfair advantage on the other people who are going to use the process for determining where their capital requirements are. In any event, it is an observation.

MR. ZOE:

Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Point of order. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Speaker, the motion clearly states to move the community centre in Kakisa up to the 1992-93 fiscal year. I do not know why the Minister is making comments in terms of the process that does not pertain to the motion itself.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I am speaking to your motion, what you stated when you were addressing it.

MR. SPEAKER:

That is not a point of order. It is up to the Chair to keep Members to the debate. I was allowing Ms. Cournoyea a little latitude to explain some concerns the government had with the motion. If she continued along that particular course I was going to make a point that she probably should be a bit more concise in talking to the motion specifically. But it is not a point of order. Continue, Ms. Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the motion had the argument that was placed by the honourable Member and I was placing my concern as the group of people that have been referred to, how do we deal with addressing the recommendations to the cabinet for the particular concern. Because it was my understanding that in the process everyone has to move into it and these motions would circumvent the other process other Members are using and that would necessarily give a higher priority. That is all I was expressing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Arvaluk.

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Correct me if I am out of order because I am new in this House, but I would like to know if the mover knows, before the other Members of this House, the exact capital budget already in place for Inuvik Region, Baffin Region, Keewatin Region, and also the priorities for consideration for different communities who may also urgently need that kind of facility? I am not saying I am against this motion, but the timing has to be very important in this case. We have had no discussion -- we call ourselves Members of the House in consensus government and after sitting for one week here we start making motions about building this here and building this there, without any consideration for the overall requirements for capital plans.

I cannot find myself blindly supporting spending the taxpayers' money without considering other avenues to go with. Perhaps in the budget session we will have that opportunity to sit down with Mr. Gargan and the rest of the Members of the House and try to determine what community most urgently needs

things. Maybe it is the Member's community, but I have no way of finding that out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

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MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say that I will be voting in favour of this motion, but I would like to make it clear that I am only doing it on the understanding that this does not circumvent the process, that the whole capital budget still will undergo review by the standing committee on finance. I do not think this necessarily means the process is being changed; it is perhaps a recommendation by a Member that the Minister take a second look at the capital plan before submitting it to the standing committee on finance.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support this motion for a very good reason. I sat in this House for four years, along with Mr. Gargan, and when we examined the capital plan under the able direction of Mr. Pollard, who was the chairman of the standing committee on finance, we found that by some strange, mysterious process, the vast bulk of capital moneys went into ridings where there were Ministers.

Mr. Gargan's riding was on the bottom of the heap. Mr. Gargan's riding did not get very much capital. He is not a Minister. Mr. Zoe's did not. He is not a Minister. Mr. Pedersen was the Speaker -- and by supporting Mr. Gargan here, all I am doing is to suggest that maybe what will dignify this 12th Assembly is the fact that in the allocation of moneys, it will be absolutely clear that ordinary Members have made their feelings known and that the public knows they have made their feelings known. And if that is not reflected in the government documents that will be taken to the standing committee on finance, then it is because the government has decided that to ignore us is to not put our projects in the capital plan. For that reason I support ordinary Members' attempts to make sure that what the government brings forward is not simply what government Ministers would like to see.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the concern of some of the Members in respect to the process and the time frame that this motion is introduced, and I want to make it specifically clear to the Members that in the event that the support for this motion is here, it is not the fact that Mr. Gargan is circumventing the capital process; he is basically indicating as a Member what his priorities are for his constituency, and we all have agreed that these also have to go through the SCOF process, which is important to all Members. But basically we are indicating to the Minister that this is the priority issue that Mr. Gargan would like to address. The issue at hand is in the capital budget, and it is just a matter of the Minister's reconsidering whether or not he wants to keep it in that specific year in the budget or place it up another year. It is the understanding of the ordinary Members that we recognize this request will go through SCOF and will be given consideration like other Members' requests once it is through the process.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Bernhardt.

MR. BERNHARDT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being a new Member I have to side with the honourable Member, Mr. Arvaluk. If I am going to support this motion of Mr. Gargan's I might as well come forward and make all kinds of motions, too, that we need a whole bunch of capital projects. But I am not going to. I think there has to be a better system of delivering capital projects where they are most needed, not where they are most wanted. I can speak because in my years of living in Coppermine the only noticeable project was a tank farm which was situated in the wrong place in the community.

I am not going to support the motion. I am new to this ball game, and I have not learned the ins and outs of how this kind of system works, because I come from a more simple type of government where we could go on discussing items for any length of time, as Mr. Antoine suggested. Therefore I have to learn. Just give me a chance. But I am not going to rush through pushing capital projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some concern regarding this motion. I have seen so many other motions being put forward, and we have supported it in some areas. But for those of us who are from the Baffin Region, the Eastern Arctic, just to have the capital item in the planning stages -- I would like to support his motion, but I would like it to be treated the same as I would be treated if I made that kind of motion. If they advance a capital project in a community, the regional government will have to take something else that is in the capital budget and move it to a later construction date. In the Fort Smith Region, whatever is needed will have to be deferred so Mr. Gargan's motion can go ahead. If that is the way it is going to be treated, then I will support the motion. As long as my region will still be considered for construction of any project, as long as the Fort Smith Region's capital projects are going to be deferred, I will support it; but not as long as the Eastern Arctic capital projects are not going to be deferred.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

MR. TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to support Mr. Gargan in this motion provided that it is an expression of a protest rather than a change in the process.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting in favour of this motion because I, too, come from a community whose community centre is presently condemned and held together by patchwork and bits of money. Sometime during this process we will be hoping for some kind of new community centre.

One problem I do have is there is reference in the motion to a capital plan. That is one document which I do not have access to, and I do not know what other projects are in the plan and what has to be moved. Not being on SCOF, I have to defer to my colleagues on SCOF, but I support the motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Gargan, to conclude debate.

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the process is with regard to the allocation of capital projects. This is something new to me, when some Members are suggesting it has not gone through the standing committee on finance. Motions have never gone to SCOF before, unless it is a whole new process again. I missed the first day for two hours. Did something happen in those two hours that I am not aware of?

There are certain allocations to each region, and one region's allocation should not have any effect on other regions'. Also, we have not based any allocation on population, either. Should we also make that a criterion? I would like to ask the Members that. Should that also be part of the criteria for capital allocations, in order to be fair? I will go ahead with my motion in that it is the only way I know how to make my point in this House and make other Members aware that the aspirations of my constituents are just as important as yours. But this is the style I have chosen to use.

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I have also tried in the last eight years with countless letters for projects in my constituency. A lot of it has been effective because Members of my constituency have met with the Members here in Yellowknife. There are different little ways that Members make points in order to achieve what they need for their constituency. I am not suggesting for one minute that this style that I am using is a style that everyone else should use. Perhaps Members have other ways they might be able to achieve the same goals as I am. For me this is the best way of doing it. I like to have the people in the constituency hear what I am saying. I have written letters for them already, countless letters. The community centre was on the drawing board for eight years and it has been moved from 1994 and now I am suggesting it goes down to 1992.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a simple request, and I believe the allocation is something like \$200,000. That is what DPW spends to get one house in any of the other communities. So it is not asking for much. The need is there. Mr. Koe already said they have a community centre that is condemned, but I have nothing. So that is where things are at, and I wish

Members would support me. I am making the best of what I know what to do.

This has not bound the government -- my church is a classic example. I made a motion on that. It was passed -- and boom, the Executive Council suggests that maybe Providence does not deserve it this time around and with the stroke of a pen they can cancel any projects they want. The Members have to realize they will do that at every opportunity they get, unless we stick together as Members. Whether you do it in the form of a letter and send a copy to us or make it in this House, we have to support each other in order to make this government accountable. But if we have to nit-pick on little excuses not to support each other, then we will keep being fragmented; we cannot see ourselves being united in dealing with issues. Perhaps all the constituencies have desires, but we cannot support each other, and it would not matter whether or not this motion is passed, because the end result is that if we are not of one mind, all the motions that all the Members make would not make any difference if we have people opposing it and other people supporting it and some people still sitting on the fence and feeling they do not want to make a decision on that. We will find ourselves in trouble.

So I would like to ask the Members to support a motion that has been in the process for many years now. It is just a matter of determining which year it should be constructed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am allowing a certain amount of latitude in the debate this time. When we come back again we will refine the interpretation of the rules a little bit, but I want to get a sense of how the Members are communicating. I will let you know what my sense is at some future date.

Motion 19-12, Carried

The debate has concluded. All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. All those opposed to the motion, please raise your hand. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motion 20-12(1), Access to Information Act. Mr. Gargan.

Motion 20-12(1): Access To Information Act

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS a bill to implement an access to information act was narrowly denied passage during the 11th Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS all residents of the Northwest Territories are still without right-to-information legislation currently enjoyed by other Canadians;

AND WHEREAS any further efforts to embark on new legislative strategies in this regard will only delay the realization of the right to access information for residents of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS many residents strongly voiced their support for this type of legislation during the election campaign for the 12th Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that this Legislative Assembly adopt the principle that the Government of the Northwest Territories should have legislation that addresses access to information;

AND FURTHER, that this government introduce access to information legislation during the second session of the 12th Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Your motion is in order, Mr. Gargan. To the motion.

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the past two years I have been committed to seeing access to information legislation in place for the people of the Northwest Territories. Today I remain as committed to that goal as I ever have been.

The formal motion I have placed before the House, Mr. Speaker, would allow the 12th Legislative Assembly to express its support for that goal, as well. It would show the people of the Northwest Territories that its elected officials support the concept of "open government" and that we are willing to legislate access to information as one aspect of that concept.

My motion would also place the responsibility for bringing forward this legislation with the Government Leader and her colleagues. I am asking our House to adopt the principle that the Government of the Northwest Territories should bring forward this legislation during the second session of the 12th Assembly. The basis for my motion is found in the

four whereas clauses which Members will see on the page before them. I would like to make a few comments on each one.

Background About Private Members' Bill

Members may know, Mr. Speaker, that during the final session of the 11th Assembly I sponsored a Private Members' Bill that would have given the Northwest Territories its first Access to Information Act. This bill would have given the public a right to access information in certain records under the control of the Government of the Northwest Territories. However, the law would have also prevented the government from releasing information that violated individuals' rights to privacy or interfered with the government's duty to carry out certain executive functions. Perhaps more important, the bill would have given people a "right" to examine what government files say about them and to make sure it is accurate.

I am sure you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that the debate on my Private Members' Bill was long and at times difficult for each one of us. On July 6th the 11th Assembly voted that the bill should not proceed to third reading and the Access to Information Act died.

Other Canadians

With that vote, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Northwest Territories were denied a right that is presently enjoyed by other Canadians. Currently New Brunswick, Newfoundland,

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Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon have laws which specifically allow people to access government information. The federal government and the legislatures of Ontario and Quebec have also enacted laws that include rights pertaining to the protection of privacy as well as accessibility to government records. In British Columbia, the Harcourt government made the absence of an access to information act an election issue and anticipates that a bill will be brought forward in the new year.

Mr. Speaker, I was truly dismayed last July when the 11th Assembly failed to pass the Access to Information Act. I was troubled not only because of the decision but because of what it said about us. Our debate did not focus on the substance of the bill. In fact, when we tried to carry out a clause by clause

review, opposing Members would not present their views on the clauses -- they only shouted, "Nay, nay."

Mr. Speaker, you now that I felt then -- and I still feel -- that this sent the wrong message to political observers across Canada. That message was that the Northwest Territories has not matured to the point where people believe in the right of individuals to know what their government is doing -- that they are still as willing to accept closed-door decision-making by bureaucrats and councillors as they were when Stu Hodgson was Commissioner.

Public Reaction During The Territorial Election

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Northwest Territories sent out a different message during the territorial election. Across the North candidates were asked to take a position on whether or not we should have an access to information act. The voting public demonstrated, I believe, that right-to-information legislation is welcome and important, and something that northern residents desire.

Adopting The Principle Of The Legislation

With this motion we are proposing that the House adopt the principle that the Government of the Northwest Territories should have legislation that addresses access to information. I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the sort of motion where ordinary Members make a recommendation to the Executive Council and government Members abstain. This is a motion intended to demonstrate that this whole Assembly believes in the principle that there should be access to information legislation.

I plan to vote "yes" because I believe in it. If other Members wish to vote "no" because they do not, then their position will be clear. But I would ask my honourable colleagues, please do not abstain. This issue is too important.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you will personally recall that when the final vote was taken on my Private Members' Bill there was a "free vote" so Members of the cabinet could vote with their conscience on the issue. I would strongly encourage my eight colleagues on the other side of the House to follow the same procedure on the motion before us now.

What are the reasons we should embrace the principle that access to information should be

legislated, Mr. Speaker? 1) We should do it because the right of the people to know what their government is doing is one of the fundamental principles in a democracy. 2) Without that knowledge, it becomes impossible for voters to assess the performance of their elected representatives. 3) We should do it because right-to-information laws increase government responsibility and accountability. By making elected officials and key public servants aware that government actions are subject to public review, there is less danger that inappropriate or illicit decisions may be made about the use of government resources and public funds. 4) We should do it because in a free society every citizen should have the right to know what the government's records say about him or her and should be able to correct any untrue information, mistakes or omissions.

Mr. Speaker, those are the reasons why I believe strongly that this Legislative Assembly should formally adopt the principle that right to information legislation should exist in the Northwest Territories. Now, from time to time some "hidden voices" have been heard to say that the Northwest Territories does not need to have legislation that gives people the right to access government records. These voices have argued that the Access to Information Act will stimulate government employees to try to sanitize and edit records to stop people from finding out how they perform their work.

Mr. Speaker, I find that this statement insults the overwhelming majority of territorial public servants who are proud of their work and make sound decisions that the public would respect.

When I was drafting my Private Members' Bill, I spent many hours reviewing research studies into what happens to a public servant when right-to-information legislation is introduced. I have found that, after the initial adjustment period, government officials become accustomed to working in an open-government environment and hardly think about it at all. If anything, it motivates them to strive for even higher quality in their work and encourages the government to develop more efficient record-keeping systems.

Mr. Speaker, the proof of this lies in the fact that of all the jurisdictions in Canada to enact right-to-information legislation, not one has ever repealed those statutes without immediately replacing them with another. If this sort of law has such a negative effect on the public service, why have other provinces not gotten rid of theirs? In fact, it is embarrassing to recognize that the Province of Saskatchewan gave

assent to its first Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act just 19 days before the 11th Assembly voted ours down. If it is such a bad principle, why did someone not let Saskatchewan know?

No, Mr. Speaker, one cannot avoid the fact that the government will work better when people are able to monitor what is going on. That is why we must embrace the principle of this legislation.

Government's Responsibility To Bring In Legislation

I want to say a few words about my views on the government's responsibility in this area. I originally sponsored the Private Members' Bill to establish an Access to Information Act. Members of the Legislative Assembly tend to use Private Members' Bills when they realize there is a need for law in a certain area that the cabinet is unwilling or not ready to legislate.

Mr. Speaker, throughout my eight years as an MLA, I have noticed that decisions about what should make up the public record have been made by the government Ministers rather than by the public. That is not the way it should be. Yet the Executive Council in both the 10th Assembly and the 11th Assembly did not bring forward the needed legislation. That is why I sponsored my own Private Members' Bill. However, the truth is that there are some definite advantages to having this legislation brought in by the government rather than as a Private Members' Bill. Four main reasons have convinced me that it will be best for the government to bring forward this legislation:

1) The government has a wide range of professional resources it can draw on in the Department of Justice and its cabinet officials. Private Members do not. A Private Members' Bill is

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costly and time-consuming to develop, and we have now entered a period of fiscal restraint.

2) Through my research I have come to believe that the very best access to information legislation establishes an information commissioner who is charged with responsibility for implementing statutory requirements of the act. A private Member would be unable to bring forward this sort of legislation because it carries direct financial implications. The government, however, is free to explore this promising approach.

3) The "Strength at Two Levels" document proposes broad changes to the organization of several government departments. I believe that this legislation would be most effective if it was developed in conjunction with the new systems and responsibilities for information storage and retrieval that will undoubtedly need to be developed as the departments are reorganized.

4) The Beatty report also carries some implications that, if implemented, may alter the framework for relations between the territorial government and community governments.

For those reasons I think it will be best for the Access to Information Act to be introduced as a government bill. I do not believe it will be necessary for the government to go right back to square one on this initiative. I believe that much of the initial groundwork has been completed when I was preparing my Private Members' Bill. I also believe that the Minister of Justice will give this matter the priority it deserves, and we should be able to have something before us during the second session.

The new process recommended by the standing committee on legislation, if adopted, will allow the House to give this bill an open and thorough public review. I have spoken with the Minister and told him that I am certainly prepared to forward the technical and resource information I have collected and to offer assistance in any way I can.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Zoe, as seconder.

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Speaker, I think all the points that I wanted to make were well covered by my colleague for Deh Cho. I would encourage all Members to support the motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Motion In Keeping With Government's Commitment

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do wish to make some comments on Mr. Gargan's motion, although I should say that I believe cabinet will abstain on this motion in that it does give advice to the government. But I

would like to reflect some preliminary views of the cabinet based on some opportunity we have had to discuss this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, as Members know, the Government Leader has already committed on Monday, December 9th, to providing Members with a comprehensive proposal at the next session that deals with the question. So Mr. Gargan's motion today is therefore certainly in keeping with our government's commitment. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Gargan's personal commitment on this very important issue. He is certainly a champion of access to information, access to government, and I would also like to say that I welcome the co-operative approach he has suggested in his remarks and his willingness to give the government and my department the opportunity to work co-operatively with him along these lines. I think we can do so, and I think that the co-operative approach, which was used in preparing the conflict of interest provisions for the last Assembly, shows that on major issues of this kind, ordinary Members can work with the government, with its resources, toward an agreed-on end.

Mr. Speaker, obviously there is, as Mr. Gargan has suggested, increasing demand for greater accessibility and accountability of governments for their actions and decisions. I think it is timely that this issue should be brought forward now, as we are embarking on major challenges in terms of reorganization and strengthening our governments at two levels.

I also believe that we can profit from the debates of the 11th Assembly and the hard work that has gone into the bill that Mr. Gargan referred to today. That work need not be lost as we start a new government and a new session.

I also believe that we began fairly auspiciously toward more openness with the very process that we agreed to, the open process for selecting the Government Leader and cabinet Members. I think that has underscored our striving for a more open government.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make some further comments on this issue and throw out some ideas, although I do want to emphasize that we will want to take some more time to consider how to approach this issue.

A Look At Needs Of Small Communities Required

In discussing this matter, Members of cabinet felt that it is important to look at the needs of small communities and the needs of residents whose first language may not be the language used in many government offices. For such people -- and most of them are represented in this Assembly there is a majority of Members who do represent smaller communities -- access to information legislation of the kind considered by the previous House could take those citizens to the first step in the process of examining government actions and making the government answer to them. That is, they would get the information and the document.

However, I believe that the majority of public concerns may go well beyond just getting a copy of documents of government papers. Just getting the information may not always necessarily solve the problem or answer all the questions. And getting the information also does not necessarily provide an independent opinion about whether the government has acted fairly in a particular situation. So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, based on some preliminary discussions we have had, that our citizens may also need some help once they get the information. Perhaps we could, as we look at this legislation, also consider a way in which people from small communities can get further assistance, once they have information, from a person who knows the government system and can speak what I would call "the language of government."

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Mr. Speaker, I refer to the concept of an ombudsman or an access to government Commissioner, or another name that we may find that is more appropriate to the North. Such a person -- and they exist in most jurisdictions in the country -- could be appointed by this Assembly and could report to the Assembly and could be given broad powers to investigate and get access to government information. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the way some ombudspersons work, they might be entitled to review information which could not ordinarily be released under traditional access to information legislation. In other words, such a person might even be given special powers that might not ordinarily be available to a citizen to assist an individual or perhaps even to assist an MLA.

The other point that I think we should consider as we move to meet the spirit of Mr. Gargan's motion, Mr. Speaker, is the special problem of people who may not speak the language ordinarily used by

government. Perhaps we should also look at a way of helping people to request information in their own first language. I think we may be able to come up with some methods that would help remove barriers of language as we strive to give people access to government. Perhaps as we look at the office of the Commissioner for official languages, there might be some way in which we could take advantage of the capabilities that we may be developing in that office to make it easier for people whose first language is not English to ask for information.

So, Mr. Speaker, I throw those ideas out only to give the Members of this House and the honourable Member some idea of the discussions that we have had already in government and some concepts that I have been considering as Minister of Justice. I do look forward to working with the honourable Member whose motion is before this House today to develop legislation in a timely way on a co-operative basis. I would hope that my ideas, floated here today, which I would describe as more along the lines of access to government as well as access to information, may also be considered ways in which the Member's concerns could be addressed as we move forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do say generally that the motion is consistent with commitment already in place by our government, and I look forward to working with the honourable Member and other Members to resolve this issue in a satisfactory manner to MLAs and to members of the public. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. To the motion. To the motion, Mr. Gargan. Would you like to conclude debate?

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I did during the election was that I sent the draft of this particular bill to all the Members, including all the candidates. I would like to, first of all, thank you, Mr. Speaker, when you were supporting my motion as the Justice Minister at that time, or supporting my bill. I also wanted to thank Mr. John Vertes, who was the legal lawyer for me when I was working on the bill itself. I understand that Mr. Vertes is now a Supreme Court justice. I would also like to thank the research staff, too: Alan Downe, Sandy Harris and Richard Bargery. They also worked on getting all the information or all the access to information that they could in order for me to do the work on drafting up a

bill itself. And, of course, I would like to thank the Members in this House during the 11th Assembly that supported it. Unfortunately, there are also Members that did not support it that are no longer with us. So I would like to ask all the Members to support me, including the Executive if they could, and I would also request, Mr. Speaker, that we have a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The debate is concluded. A letter was sent to all Members explaining the new procedure. There was criticism in the past Legislative Assembly that every time there is a recorded vote, it always started in this corner so the people who sat in that corner always knew how everybody would vote on every issue. What we have decided to do is that we will start the vote at the mover and then move to the left of the mover, so that we will move it around and there is not an advantage for one part of the House as opposed to another part of the House. A recorded vote has been requested, Mr. Clerk. All those in favour, please rise.

Motion 20-12(1), Carried

CLERK OF THE HOUSE:

Mr. Gargan, Mr. Zoe, Mr. Koe, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Todd, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MR. SPEAKER:

All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE:

Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Morin, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Patterson.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is carried, with nine voting in the affirmative, no votes in the negative and seven abstentions.

---Carried

Item 15, first reading of bills. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 15: FIRST READING OF BILLS

First Reading Of Private Members' Bill 4: Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Private Members' Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is in order. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 4 has had first reading.

Item 16, second reading of bills. Item 17, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. We will dissolve into committee of the whole and consider Ministers' Statement 2-12(1), Ministers' Statement 5-12(1), Committee Report 1-12(1), Committee Report 2-12(1), Tabled Document 3-12(1), with Mr. Pudluk in the chair.

ITEM 17: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

The committee will now come to order. Yesterday we were dealing with Ministers' Statement 2-12(1) and Tabled Document 3-12(1) and we were on general comments. Are there any further general comments? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Chairman, we only finished the formal session just now, and the Members have been sitting in this chamber for many hours, and I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

The motion to report progress is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

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---Carried

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 18, report of the committee of the whole. Mr. Pudluk.

ITEM 18: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. PUDLUK:

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Ministers' Statement 2-12(1) and Tabled Document 3-12(1) and wishes to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the chairman of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there a seconder to the motion. Mr. Koe. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 19, third reading of bills. Third reading of bills. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Members if I could go back to Item 6 written questions.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question W6-12(1): Age Requirement For Old Age Pensions

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion 36-87(1) was put forward asking whether people reaching the age of 60 could receive old age pension. There are not very many people who are still alive at 65 to receive the old age pension. Could the Minister responsible for Social Services find out what action has been done on that motion to date?

MR. SPEAKER:

Written questions. We will return to Item 19, third reading of bills. Third reading of bills. Item 20, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE:

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the full caucus immediately after adjournment this evening. Meetings tomorrow: at 9:00 a.m., ordinary Members; at 10:00 a.m., the standing committee on legislation; at 11:45, the Management and Services Board.

ITEM 20: ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the day for Thursday, December 12, 1991.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Oral Questions
6. Written Questions
7. Returns to Written Questions
8. Replies to Opening Address
9. Petitions
10. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motions
13. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
14. Motions: Motions 23-12(1), 24-12(1) and 25-12(1)
15. First Reading of Bills: Bills 1, 2 and 3
16. Second Reading of Bills: Bill 4
17. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: Ministers' Statements 2-12(1) and 5-12(1); Committee Reports 1-12(1) and 2-12(1); Tabled Document 3-12(1)
18. Report of Committee of the Whole
19. Third Reading of Bills
20. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Thursday, December 12, 1991.

---ADJOURNMENT