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The Honourable Michael A. Ballantyne, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Titus Alloo, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Arngna'naaq, Mr. James Arvaluk, Hon. Michael Ballantyne, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Mr. Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Hon. Rebecca Mike, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

SPEAKER (Hon. Michael Ballantyne):

Good afternoon. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Mike.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 59-12(3): Family Violence Prevention Workshop

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Mr. Speaker, family violence is a serious problem which affects people in all our communities. The cooperation of all levels of government, community organizations and individuals is necessary if people and communities are to be given the support they need to heal themselves. It is particularly important for people who work at the local level to have strategies in place to help those in abusive situations, and to help break the cycle of violence.

I am pleased to say that a number of government departments cooperated in the organization and funding for a two day training session for people who work in the area of family violence prevention in the Keewatin region. The session began Wednesday and ends today. Approximately 50 people representing each Keewatin community are attending the workshop which is being held in Rankin Inlet. The training session will help participants identify the types of family violence most prevalent in their communities and overcome some of the barriers to dealing with these problems as a community-based team. The participants include representatives of the RCMP, schools, community health centres and various projects funded by the Department of Social Services. The NWT family services developed and is delivering the workshop.

The workshop was organized by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health and the

Department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs. It is being cost-shared by the RCMP, Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment Programs.

Mr. Speaker, family violence is an important issue that can only be resolved if everyone works together. The workshop being held in Rankin Inlet is an excellent example of this kind of cooperation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Item 2, Ministers' statements. I would like to recognize in the gallery a former colleague, Mr. Nick Sibbeston, former Premier of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On PanArctic's Plans To Dump Waste Metal In Arctic Ocean

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of days ago Mr. Pudluk made some startling statements and Mr. Whitford had some very interesting legitimate questions about what the government will do about PanArctic's plan for ocean dumping of scrap metals in Arctic waters.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent a great deal of my life in the north Baffin where PanArctic was most active in their oil and gas exploration. Burning and burying of garbage and scrap metal was a common practice by PanArctic and was never acceptable to the people of the area but was reluctantly tolerated. Now they want to dump scrap metal in one of the most sensitive ocean ecosystems of the world, according to the scientific community. As the Minister of Renewable Resources stated yesterday, if PanArctic is allowed to dump in the ocean then there is nothing stopping PanArctic and other companies from doing it again and again, for they would have already set a precedent in obtaining ocean dumping permits.

In today's world our strong concern for the environment and the need to protect and preserve the most sensitive areas means we can no longer tolerate senseless practices of waste burying and ocean dumping. Mr. Speaker, I want to state today, where are the animal rights groups when we need them?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, PanArctic sends their fully loaded ships to the high Arctic and they return south empty. Why can they not take the garbage and scrap metal back for recycling and incinerating? This should be a simple axiom.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, although Inuit have never fully accepted it, the federal government has taken it upon themselves to be guardians of the high Arctic on our behalf and trust. How are they then allowing this kind of irresponsible action in the eyes of the world? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Page 852

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Lewis.

Member's Statement Re Decentralization Of NWT Science Institute

MR. LEWIS:

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned the government seems to take the real and potential value of the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories too lightly. A new proposal by the Minister of Education is that it should be part of his very large department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs, under the college system. On the surface it seems like a modification of the previous government's position that proposed the institute be split into two parts. What it does though, Mr. Speaker, is to even further reduce the ability of the institute to fulfil its mandate under the act which created that institute.

I know everyone is not convinced we need a science institute. I feel very strongly about it though, Mr. Speaker, and believe it should play a major role in the years that lie ahead. If you look at the development of each of our provinces you would be convinced that economic progress depended on the research and development that was undertaken in those jurisdictions. I am thinking of the development of wheat in Saskatchewan, the forestry in British Columbia, the fishery in Atlantic Canada and technology in Ontario and other parts of the country.

Our modern world in large measure depends on scientific advancement. The manner in which the science institute is being pulled and pushed suggests to me that our government does not share that view. It makes me very pessimistic in the face of the challenges we will face in the decades ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Gargan.

Member's Statement On Request For Transfer Of Community Health Representative

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am becoming increasingly annoyed with the decisions made in the Department of Health. During the Deh Cho Tribal Council meeting in Hay River on September 9 through 11, a motion was passed that program funds and PYs for community health representatives should be administered by the band councils. Mr. Speaker, this was done in the belief that Ms. Cournoyea's government is committed to community transfer. In fact, her implementation plan for reshaping northern governments talks about, "community ownership of programs and services which are controlled by local people." Six months later her Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs stood in this House on September 15 and stated that, "It has been my view from the beginning that aboriginal people have the inherent right to govern themselves. That includes everything which the government has the capacity to govern, legislate on and, perhaps, more. That has been my approach."

That was not the approach taken by the Department of Health when they were asked to consider the community transfer of the community health representative position. Mr. Speaker, the department's response to Chief Landry of Fort Providence was patronizing and it slams the door on any departmental consideration for this initiative. It states that because community health representatives perform an important health education function they must be part of a team and that this can only be accomplished if the program is administered within the Mackenzie regional health services. This means within the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker, within Yellowknife.

How dare those departmental officials make these comments to a Dene chief. How dare they assume that if CHRs report to the band they will be less effective as health educators or a less important component of a health team. Mr. Speaker, Dene look after their community health needs including health promotion and education. For hundreds of years before there was a Department of Health or a centre square tower, or even a Government of Canada, it is time that

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Gargan, your allotted time has lapsed.

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, it is time the senior people in the Department of Health recognize that we have never given up that right. They have to start to honour the commitment this Cabinet has been making in this House. It is time to consider transferring health resources to community control now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Patterson.

Member's Statement Re Decentralization Of NWT Science Institute

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my time as an MLA, Members of this Assembly have always enjoyed and valued a close working relationship with the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories. After all, the Science Institute reports to this Assembly and, in effect, is a servant of this Assembly. It is incorporated in our own legislation.

Most of the years I have been an MLA the Science Institute met annually with MLAs, reported to us on their work and formally or informally accepted MLA's

advice on research and other priorities, although this has not happened recently. I recall the work done in the past by the Science Institute in areas such as moose hide tanning techniques, uranium mine tailings clean up and the slow-poke reactor where this Assembly requested help from the Science Institute on specific issues of concern.

The Science Institute has had amongst its members distinguished Canadians and eminent scientists. It has attracted significant federal funding from the national research council and other third party funding sources.

Mr. Speaker, this government earlier announced the Science Institute would be decentralized to Inuvik and the Baffin. Recently, the new Minister of Education announced, at a public meeting of the Arctic College board of governors, his view that the Science Institute should, perhaps, be incorporated with

Page 853

Arctic College. Does this represent a change of government policy? Has it been decided in Cabinet? Have the views of the Science Institute or MLAs to which the Science Institute reports been sought? These are questions which must be answered.

Mr. Speaker, this is our research and development capacity. It is critical to our future. Changes must be carefully and thoughtfully planned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 411-12(3): Decision Process For Granting Education Leave

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, this is in response to a question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell on March 4 regarding education leave for territorial government employees.

In 1992, 13 employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories were granted education leave. This compares to 26 in 1991 and 33 in 1990.

The decrease from 1991 to 1992 was the result of a 50 per cent reduction in funding for the education leave program.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 460-12(3): Actions In Response To Federal Funding Cuts

MR. ARVALUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Government Leader. The honourable Members are aware that the honourable Mr. Don Mazankowski delivered an economic fiscal statement in the House of Commons on December 2, 1992. The federal government announced it will be reducing a number of expenditures to commence at the beginning of the 1993-94 fiscal year. The impact of those reductions to programs and services in the north is expected to be severe. Given the very serious impact that these expenditure reductions are likely to have on important NWT programs and services, and recognizing that the Prime Minister has cancelled his previously scheduled meetings with her, can the Premier tell the House what steps she will be taking to address these damaging cutbacks?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question 460-12(3): Actions In Response To Federal Funding Cuts

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, we know we have a window of opportunity before there is another statement made by the Finance Minister. What we are doing, and began working on yesterday, is preparing a series of missives to be sent to the Prime Minister expressing our concerns on a number of issues, including the cutbacks on, for example, the friendship centres and the aboriginal language programming. We realize it is very serious. We know the communications in these hinterlands are very important. We will be sending these communiqués to them just in case the meeting does not happen before the Finance Minister has to make a statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier today about the changes which seem to be suggested by various announcements by Ministers with respect to the Science Institute. I would like to ask the Government Leader the possibility of combining the Science Institute with Arctic College, or incorporating it into the operations of Arctic College. It seems to be a new direction for the government from what was previously announced, I believe by the Minister of Finance, the notion of decentralizing the Science Institute to the east and west. Is this new idea government policy a result of a Cabinet decision, or is this speculating and musing on the part of the Minister of Education, alone? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if we could say it is policy, but I can say it is not musing. I want to assure the honourable Member that this is not integrating. There is no intention of downgrading the valued work of the Science Institute, but to attach it to some academic body so it can work in collaboration with this academic body and they can lend each other the resources and support that is required. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear those assurances from the Government Leader. Could I ask the Government Leader, since this is not a final decision and is not yet government policy, will the

views of the Science Institute and Members of this Assembly be sought and considered before the government does finally make a decision on the future of this very important institution? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, like I said, this is not a change in direction of decentralization, it is just making a decision on what is the best way to decentralize the Science Institute. How can the operation of government be placed in such a way that a coordinated effort can realize maximum benefits from any organization? Certainly, we are willing to consult if Members feel we are taking something away or want input into how that move takes place. Mr. Speaker, I believe

Page 854

the responsibility of research is very important. As much as possible, in how we are trying to organize our activities, we can find mixes that will allow us to make the best gains from the resources we are expending in those various areas. This is what we are attempting to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, these explanations are helpful and I want to make it clear that I may well conclude there may be merit in the proposed suggestion that came from the Minister of Education. Rather than have it floated at an Arctic College board of governor's public meeting, which is the first occasion Members of this Assembly might have heard this idea, I wonder if the Government Leader would agree that once a plan has been worked out, hopefully in consultation with the Science Institute board itself, something could be presented by way of a statement or an announcement to this Assembly so Members can be given notice of how this is going to work and perhaps have an

opportunity to discuss this matter in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 461-12(3): Incorporation Of Science Institute Into Arctic College

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister responsible will be pleased to circulate the plan and consult with Members who are interested in how this is going to evolve. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 462-12(3): Disposal Of Waste Materials In Arctic Ocean

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Renewable Resources a few questions on the proposed dumping of materials into the ocean. In his response, he indicated the federal government was asked to look at an on-land disposal method rather than in the ocean. I got the sense yesterday that this question had already been asked, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask whether there has been any response to it, given the narrow window that we are operating under.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 462-12(3): Disposal Of Waste Materials In Arctic Ocean

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I have not received a response from the federal government yet, not from DFO or from Environment Canada. The company is required to have a permit in order to dump scrap metal into the ocean. They also require a blasting permit in order to blast the ice to make a hole to enable them to dump the scrap metal. They require two permits. To my knowledge, the federal government has not been very concerned about this. They say there is minimal impact if the scrap metal is

dumped. DFO seems to be open to giving the company a permit to allow them to blast. In those two areas I am very concerned. I have given the federal government three options in order to look after this problem. Either they find a way to dispose of this, the same way that DND is doing to old DEW Line sites, or they take the material to land fill sites in a northern community or take it back down south where it came from. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 462-12(3): Disposal Of Waste Materials In Arctic Ocean

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because both of those permits will be obtained from federal agencies, we may not be involved. Will we be involved in requests for permits to do on-land dumping?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 462-12(3): Disposal Of Waste Materials In Arctic Ocean

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since Lougheed Island is on territorial land, any permit required would have to come from the federal government. We only give permits on Commissioner's land. This includes about two per cent of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responded to one of my questions about the establishment of a territorial park at Campbell Lake near Inuvik. In his response on March 5, the Minister stated that regional officials are developing a work plan for the park. That plan will be reviewed and agreed to by the parks committee and

recommended for approval by the Minister. Once approved, the plan will be implemented. He also mentioned the make up of the park management committee. My question to the Minister is, what authority does the park management committee have?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

I guess they would not have authority, but they would certainly have a lot of pull with me, Mr. Speaker. If they were not happy, then I would not be happy.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Page 855

Supplementary To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Would the park management committee have any decision-making responsibilities? Can they make decisions on allocations of budgets?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

No, Mr. Speaker, they would not be able to make decisions, but they would certainly be able to provide advice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that while regional officials are developing a work plan, that members of the Gwich'in and other individuals from Inuvik are involved in the working of the development of this plan. From what I understand, these officials are going to develop a plan and give it to the committee. Who is involved in the development of the plan initially?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

The regional staff, Mr. Speaker, would be involved and they would have some support from people in Yellowknife. I am sure they are going to say to the committee, "Here are some of the ideas that we have been kicking around, here are some of the things that have worked in other parks in the Northwest Territories and here are some of the things that have not worked. Can we come to some arrangement on how you would like to see this park built and operated?" Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

MR. KOE:

Will members of local groups and organizations be involved in the initial development of the plan?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 463-12(3): Authority Of Park Management Committee

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to advise the region that they should consult with the people who are going to be on that advisory board, prior to bringing the plan forward to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question 464-12(3): Impact Of Changes To Federal UIC Legislation

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance should be aware of Bill C-113, which is presently going through the various stages of passage in the House of Commons. The bill would radically alter many aspects of the unemployment insurance plan. My honourable colleague for Thebacha asked the Premier about this matter on February 17, 1993, and was told that the Department of Finance was evaluating the effect of the new unemployment insurance plan. Mr. Speaker, my concern is for the seasonal workers such as surveyors, fire fighters, fishermen, et cetera. Can the Minister of Finance tell the House whether his department has completed its analysis of the impact that this federal legislation will have on northern workers?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 464-12(3): Impact Of Changes To Federal UIC Legislation

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, Members will recall the federal Minister came under intense pressure in the House of Commons over this particular bill and there have recently been more changes made. Yes, we looked at it the first time. There are suggested changes to that bill and we will look at it again and then come back with a report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Dent.

Question 465-12(3): Family Violence Prevention Workshops

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear the Minister today outline the training session for people who work in the area of family violence prevention in the Keewatin. The Special

Committee on Health and Social Services has heard many requests for this type of session in our community visits. A cooperative approach to organization and funding is a good one. Is this a one shot deal or is the department planning to organize similar sessions in other regions?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Mike.

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Pudluk.

Question 466-12(3): Ownership Of Arctic Islands

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Government Leader. To my understanding the high Arctic islands used to belong to Britain in the 1800s. My question to the Government Leader is, who owns the Arctic Islands today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Page 856

Return To Question 466-12(3): Ownership Of Arctic Islands

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, Canadian sovereignty.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

MR. ARVALUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Renewable Resources. The Minister mentioned he approached the federal

government three times with regard to a particular problem. I want to find out if he has other plans if he does not get answers to the three questions he previously asked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Renewable Resources has tried to find out what they would do next. Our lawyer will be looking into further plans with regard to this. We have been looking at other options which we may be able to use. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice there are three alternatives which the Minister has given to the federal government. Considering the time constraints regarding the plans for PanArctic to dump scrap metals in the Arctic Ocean, why has the Minister not made a fourth option, that is to delay the dumping until satisfactory arrangements can be made?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the options we are looking at. It requires a legal injunction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

MR. ARVALUK:

Mr. Speaker, has the Minister notified the federal government of that fourth option?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. I know ITC has applied under the Environmental Protection Act, section 86(4), that this section would allow any group to make a notice of objection for this type of dumping. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arvaluk, this is your final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why has the territorial government not done the same thing as ITC has done?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 467-12(3): Minister's Actions Re Dumping Of Waste Materials

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am keeping an open communication between my office and the federal Minister's office. We are not going to do that until we are sure we cannot get satisfactory answers from the Minister's office. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the questions earlier today on the Science Institute, I wonder if I could ask the Minister responsible for the Science Institute if he could outline the factors and reasons behind this proposed change to associate the Science Institute with Arctic College? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Science Institute, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, as a result of my musings and a change in receiving some instructions from my suggestions to Cabinet, what became clear to me was that I was not in any way reneging on the direction which had been agreed to, in fact, with the support of the honourable Member, that the Science Institute be decentralized. However, when I reviewed the situation I became concerned about the purpose of those decisions. I believe one of the aspects of the programming area presently absent from the Arctic College programs is in the area of science and technology. When I look at the people who are involved in the present board, I see some significant talent and expertise there which could help the college develop very important and northern relevant science and technology programs. The other aspects that concerned me, and is a role the science institute is now playing, is in the area of research. I believe it is time for us to take the initiative to give some credibility to the Arctic College

Page 857

system to be involved in the area of research, particularly in science and technology.

When I became the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Programs I took over the responsibility for the Science Institute, and I was quite concerned about the area of McGill University taking on a nutrition research project which should be conducted by a post-secondary institution in the Northwest Territories. It is my view that this is one of the tasks we should be looking forward to. I know there is some concern about how we were dealing with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I personally called Mr. Parker, who is the chairman of the board, to suggest to him that perhaps we should be working together to develop a

plan as to how we can approach the issue of decentralization of the Science Institute and how Arctic College could get involved in science and technology programming and research. I think it is a reasonable suggestion. It is my view we should also develop credibility in our northern Arctic College program and institution where we develop credibility in the area of northern science and technology. I needed the help of the board of directors and the Science Institute to go in this direction.

We have since formed a committee with Arctic College, the Science Institute and Department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs to develop a plan as to how we could do this.

This issue is a very complex one, it is not simple and it is my view that we should put all these groups together to come up with a plan to deal with this issue. I want to advise the honourable Members that this is not simply musing on my part but I thought we should, in fact, develop our northern institution with that view. Other post-secondary institutions in Canada cover the area of science and technology. I thought we should develop a plan as to how we can get our northern college into this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very glad we raised the matter in this House and we are now getting some detailed information on what the thinking is on the part of the Minister and what process is being formed. I take it the Minister will be meeting with the Science Institute board on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, having spoken to the chairman, Mr. Parker, I also had a chance to meet with the staff of the Science Institute in December, and I will also be

meeting with the board tomorrow at approximately 2:00 pm.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister visualizes these changes is it his intention that the integrity of the Science Institute be preserved so it retains its ability to obtain third party funding from the national research council, private industry and other potential funding sources? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 468-12(3): Reasoning Behind Proposed Changes To Science Institute

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly my intention to ensure whatever results from this has that particular integrity. Whether it is the Arctic College system or whether it is a structure which is new, those structures may require legislative changes. I would want to ensure, without doubt, that any replacement or any changes will ensure the integrity of any institution to continue to raise money either through third party or private donations for the purpose of research.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question 469-12(3): Report From Industrial Disputes Inquiry

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yellowknife MLAs were severely criticized by the federal government for making comments about the Giant/Royal Oak strike, since it is the position of the federal government that this is a matter between two parties and the jurisdiction for labour rests with the federal government, and that we should keep our mouths shut. However, Mr. Speaker, we have many constituents who were concerned. There was an

industrial dispute inquiry formed, using the two members of a commission which had been established by the federal government, to look into this industrial dispute. Since they only met for one day and the meeting was abandoned, has a report which was expected from that commission been provided to the Minister of Labour?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Item 5, oral questions. Item 6, written questions. Mr. Zoe.

ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 27-12(3): GNWT Contracts With Robinson Enterprises Ltd.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Government Services and Public Works. Would the Minister please provide the following information regarding GNWT contracts with Robinson Enterprises Limited, RTL: a listing of all contracts tendered or negotiated during the past ten years between each government department and

Page 858

Robinson Enterprises Limited showing the nature and location of work provided and total contracts costs.

I have a couple more, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Please continue, Mr. Zoe.

Written Question 28-12(3): NWTPC Contracts With Robinson Enterprises Ltd.

MR. ZOE:

I have a written question for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation. Would the Minister please provide the following information regarding the NWT Power Corporation contracts with Robinson

Enterprises Limited, RTL: a listing of all contracts tendered or negotiated during the existence of the NWT Power Corporation between the Power Corporation and Robinson Enterprises Limited showing the nature and location of work provided and the total contract costs.

Written Question 29-12(3): NWTHC Contracts With Robinson Enterprises Ltd.

I have a written question for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Would the Minister please provide the following information regarding the NWT Housing Corporation contracts with Robinson Enterprises Limited, RTL: a listing of all contracts tendered or negotiated during the past ten years between the NWT Housing Corporation and Robinson Enterprises Limited showing the nature and location of work provided and the total contract costs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, written questions. Mr. Koe.

Written Question 30-12(3): Fort Resolution Sawmill

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. Would the Minister please provide the following information regarding the Fort Resolution sawmill: a historical review of his department's involvement with the Fort Resolution sawmill; the amount and purpose of all expenses of the Government of the Northwest Territories related to the Fort Resolution sawmill, including costs such as loans, grants, forgiven debts, court ordered payments and out of court settlements; a record of the production of the sawmill during its years of operation; the number of individuals and businesses employed or contracted by the sawmill; an outline of the plans for the re-opening of the Fort Resolution sawmill, including the amounts and sources of proposed government funding; and, a record of the events that led to the closure of the sawmill. Would the Minister please provide a return on it before March 16, 1993. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions.

ITEM 7: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Question 25-12(3): Firewood Offered For Sale By South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, this is a return to Written Question 25-12(3) asked by Mr. Lewis to the

Minister of Justice, concerning firewood offered for sale by the south Mackenzie correctional centre.

Prior to December 11, 1992, wood was sold according to a scale of quality. The best dry wood was sold for \$90 per cord. A second quality mixed green wood was sold at \$75 per cord. Seniors could buy wood at \$55 per cord. On December 11, 1992, the price of a cord of wood was set at \$95 per cord for all wood after the receipt of a complaint of unfair competition. Senior citizens can still purchase wood at \$55 per cord.

The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre has been cutting and hauling wood from the Birch Creek site this winter. Cut wood is stockpiled in the woodyard. Sales have been slow this winter due to mild conditions and the high price of \$95 per cord.

Approximately, 1,600 cords have been cut this fiscal year. The total number of cords sold is 1,350 cords, with another 50 cords donated to various service groups, the Hay River Reserve and parks. Ten retail clients in Yellowknife bought 500 cords. Another 900 cords were sold in the Hay River area. Approximately 200 cords are presently stockpiled.

There was no deviation from the pricing policy for any reason. All sales after December 11, 1992, were made at \$95 per cord.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, petitions. Mr. Pudlat.

ITEM 9: PETITIONS

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be tabling Petition 14-12(3) by a Lake Harbour residents requesting a day care centre within the community of Lake Harbour. Even though the community is small, we also require a day care centre for those working mothers within the community. The children within the community require suitable day care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 12, tabling of documents. Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Tabled Document 88-12(3), a copy of a motion carried by the Deh Cho Tribal Council during its Hay River meeting on September 9 to 11, 1992. The motion deals with community transfer of community health representative positions to the authority of band councils who belong to the Deh Cho Tribal Council. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 12, tabling of documents. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table Tabled Document 89-12(3), which was addressed to me from the Resolute Bay housing association on March 8, 1993 concerning Weber retrofit program and there will be no retrofitting for Baffin next year. The people of Resolute Bay are very concerned about this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 12, tabling of documents. Mr. Morin.

Page 859

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table Tabled Document 90-12(3), proposed terms of reference for the advisory committee on social housing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 12, tabling of documents. Ms. Mike.

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 91-12(3), Northwest Territories AIDS project review 1992.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 12, tabling of documents. Item 13, notices of motion. Mr. Koe.

ITEM 13: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 20-12(3): Tabled Document 66-12(3) And 84-12(3) To Committee Of The Whole

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 15, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that Tabled Document 66-12(3) titled, "Staff Housing Strategy -Responses" and Tabled Document 84-12(3) titled, "Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy Financial Impact Summary" be moved into committee of the whole for discussion.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time today I will be seeking unanimous consent to proceed with my motion today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Item 13, notices of motion. Mr. Morin.

Motion 21-12(3): Establishment Of The Advisory Committee On Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 15, 1993, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik that the Legislative Assembly hereby establishes an advisory committee on social housing.

And further that the following be adopted as the terms of reference for the advisory committee on social housing.

Purpose

- to provide ongoing advice from elected representatives to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly on broad territorial social housing issues;

- to provide a forum for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to share information and consult with elected representatives.

Structure

- three Members from the east;

- three Members from the west;

- chaired by the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Term

- for the duration of the 12th Legislative Assembly.

Mandate

- the advisory committee on social housing shall:

a) inquire into such housing matters as made by referred to it by the Legislative Assembly;

b) review major new or revised policies or programs proposed by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;

c) review major issues arising from existing policies or programs of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;

d) review the major housing issues arising from the community consultation undertaken by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation with members of the public, local housing organizations, community governments and interest groups;

e) provide advice to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly;

f) provide opportunities for all Members to raise concerns related to housing and to have input on housing issues on the review by the advisory committee.

Conduct of Business

1) The advisory committee on social housing shall conduct its business in a manner approved by the Legislative Assembly;

2) the advisory committee on social housing shall appoint a chairman, who shall be the Minister

responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and the chairman shall not vote;

3) the advisory committee on social housing shall appoint one of its members to serve as deputy chairman;

4) a quorum of the advisory community on social housing shall consist of four members including the chairman;

5) the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly shall jointly provide for those appropriations and necessary funds to the advisory committee on social housing to carry out its responsibilities;

6) the advisory committee on social housing shall ordinarily meet at times scheduled for session of the Legislative Assembly or for meetings of other special and standing committees;

Page 860

7) meetings of the advisory committee on social housing may be called at the discretion of the chairman or of a majority of the members to deal with matters as required;

8) travel costs for meetings of the advisory committee on social housing will be the responsibility of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;

9) the advisory committee on social housing will make regular reports to the Legislative Assembly through the deputy chairman;

10) the necessary administrative support for the advisory committee on social housing shall be provided jointly by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly offices.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will seek unanimous consent to proceed with my motion today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Item 13, notices of motion. Mr. Arvaluk.

Motion 22-12(3): Condemnation Of Federal Government Cuts To Funding For NWT Programs

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 15, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik, that this Legislative Assembly condemns the Government of Canada for its apparent lack of consideration to the people of the Northwest Territories with the expenditure reduction measures as contained in the economic and fiscal statement.

Further, that the territorial Minister of Finance make every effort to consult with his federal counterparts to ensure he has made aware the effects the federal expenditure reduction measures will have on people and groups in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Item 13, notices of motions. Before we proceed to the next item, I would like to recognize in the gallery the grade ten social studies class from Sir John Franklin High School.

---Applause

Item 15, motions. Motion 19-12(3), Appointment of Alternate Members and Final Report Date for the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I apologize. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 22: An Act To Amend The Mining Safety Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 15, 1993, I shall move that Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Mining Safety Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Kakfwi.

Bill 21: An Act To Amend The Reciprocal Enforcement Of Judgments Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 15, 1993 I shall move that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 15, motions. Motion 19-12(3), Appointment of Alternate Members and Final Report Date for the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 15: MOTIONS

Motion 19-12(3): Appointment Of Alternate Members And Final Report Date For The Special Committee On Health And Social Services

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a motion regarding the appointment of alternate Members and the final report date for the Special Committee on Health and Social Services.

WHEREAS, Members of this Assembly have been appointed to the Special Committee on Health and Social Services;

AND WHEREAS, the special committee has a concentrated work schedule over the remaining months of the committee's mandate;

AND WHEREAS, it would assist the work of the special committee if there were alternate Members appointed;

AND WHEREAS, Motion 40-12(1) had established the special committee and requires the final report to be presented by September 30, 1993;

AND WHEREAS, the Legislative Assembly will not sit again until November, 1993;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that notwithstanding rule 89(2), that the Legislative Assembly consents to the membership of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services include two alternate Members;

AND FURTHER, that the Special Committee on Health and Social Services terms of reference be amended to permit the presentation of the final report by November 30, 1993.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

Page 861

MR. SPEAKER:

Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Item 15, motions. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with my motion today to move two tabled documents into committee of the whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Koe.

Motion 20-12(3): Tabled Document 66-12(3) And 84-12(3) To Committee Of The Whole

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave that Tabled Document 66-12(3), Staff Housing Strategy Responses and Tabled Document 84-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy Financial Impact Summary, be moved into committee of the whole for discussion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Tabled Document 66-12(3) and Tabled Document 84-12(3) will be moved into committee of the whole. Item 15, motions. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Morin.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik that the Legislative Assembly hereby establishes an advisory committee on social housing;

AND FURTHER that the following be adopted as the terms of reference for the advisory committee on social housing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin, if I could suggest that you read the whereas and the further that, in order to save some time because we have already gone through the terms of reference, if I could get agreement from the House to consider the terms of reference read as noted in his notice of motion. Is that agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER:

They will be printed in Hansard as read. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion 21-12(3): Establishment Of The Advisory Committee On Social Housing

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly has expressed its desire to have a vehicle that would provide ongoing advice from elected representatives to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation on broad territorial housing issues;

AND WHEREAS the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has established a process that would allow for broad base input and consultations with individuals, communities, regions and aboriginal organizations;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions recommended in Committee Report 6-12(2) to the House that the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation introduce a motion establishing a special advisory committee on housing during the current session;

AND WHEREAS in accordance with the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions report that the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has tabled draft terms of reference for the advisory committee on social housing;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik that the Legislative Assembly hereby establishes the advisory committee on social housing;

AND FURTHER that the following be adopted as the terms of reference for the advisory committee on social housing:

Purpose

- to provide ongoing advice from elected representatives to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly on broad territorial social housing issues;

- to provide a forum for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to share information and consult with elected representatives.

Structure

- three Members from the east;
- three Members from the west;
- chaired by the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Page 862

Term

- for the duration of the 12th Legislative Assembly.

Mandate

- the advisory committee on social housing shall:

- a) inquire into such housing matters as made by referred to it by the Legislative Assembly;
- b) review major new or revised policies or programs proposed by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;
- c) review major issues arising from existing policies or programs of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;
- d) review the major housing issues arising from the community consultation undertaken by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation with members of the public, local housing organizations, community governments and interest groups;
- e) provide advice to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly;
- f) provide opportunities for all Members to raise concerns related to housing and to have input on housing issues on the review by the advisory committee.

Conduct of Business

- 1) the advisory committee on social housing shall conduct its business in a manner approved by the Legislative Assembly;
- 2) the advisory committee on social housing shall appoint a chairman, who shall be the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The chairman shall not vote;
- 3) the advisory committee on social housing shall appoint one of its members to serve as deputy chairman;

4) a quorum of the advisory committee on social housing shall consist of four members, including the chairman;

5) the Northwest Territories Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Legislative Assembly shall jointly provide, from their appropriations, the necessary funds to the advisory committee on social housing to carry out its responsibilities;

6) the advisory committee on social housing shall ordinarily meet at times scheduled for sessions of the Legislative Assembly, or for meeting of other special and standing committees;

7) meetings of the advisory committee on social housing may be called at the discretion of the chairman, or of a

majority of the members, to deal with matters, as required;

8) travel costs for meetings of the advisory committee on social housing will be the responsibility of the Northwest Territories Northwest Territories Housing Corporation;

9) the advisory committee on social housing will make regular reports to the Legislative Assembly, through the deputy chairman;

10) the necessary administrative support for the advisory committee on social housing shall be provided jointly by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and Legislative Assembly offices.

MR. SPEAKER:

Your motion is in order, Mr. Morin. To the motion. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to briefly commend the Minister for moving in this direction. I think we all know that because of financial and other pressures, changes are going to have to be made with respect to public housing. Difficult decisions are likely to face this new committee. However, I think this consultative approach whereby people affected become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem, is the best way to make progress with difficult issues in a consensus government. I cannot help saying if that approach would have been taken with the staff housing problem, we would not have had the problems with that policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson, if you could confine yourself to the motion, please. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I think I made my point and I was not on Cabinet when the policy was announced.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion please, Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in favour of this motion and I wish the Minister well. I think this is the way to deal with difficult issues. The committee will not have an easy job, but the process is the correct one. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question is being called. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to thank all Members who had input into developing this approach to consensus government. I think it is a good

Page 863

approach. I think with all Members working together, it should work. I look forward to this process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin has concluded debate as the mover of the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 15, motions. Item 16, first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 16: FIRST READING OF BILLS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the first reading of Bill 22.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Todd.

Bill 22: An Act To Amend The Mining Safety Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Mining Safety Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is in order, Mr. Todd. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 22 has had first reading. Item 16, first reading of bills. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi, you have to seek unanimous consent to move forward with this bill.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 21.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Kakfwi.

Bill 21: An Act To Amend The Reciprocal Enforcement Of Judgments Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is in order, Mr. Kakfwi. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 21 has had first reading. Item 16, first reading of bills. Item 17, second reading of bills. Item 18, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 2-12(3), The Justice House - Report of the Special Advisor on General Equality; Tabled Document 3-12(3), Report of the Commission for Constitutional Development; Tabled Document 49-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 17, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1993-94; Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy; Committee Report 10-12(3), Report on Tabled Document 21-12(3): Payroll Tax Act; Committee Report 11-12(3), Report on the Review of the 1993-94 Main Estimates; Committee Report 12-12(3), Report No. 4, Talking and Working Together; appearance by members of commission for constitutional development; Tabled Document 66-12(3), Staff Housing Strategy Responses; and, Tabled Document 84-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy Financial Implications Summary, with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

ITEM 18: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

The committee will now come to order. What is the wish of the committee? Which item of business will we be dealing with in this committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we deal with Tabled Document 49-12(3), Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Tabled Document 66-12(3) and Tabled Document 84-12(3). If, after we have dealt with those documents and there is still time, then I suggest we continue with Bill 17.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we have the concurrence of the committee to deal with those matters?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The documents will be distributed to each Member. We will take a 15 minute break and then return to deal with the matter. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Tabled Document 49-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy; Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy; Tabled Document 66-12(3), Staff Housing Strategy Responses; Tabled Document 84-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy Financial Implications Summary

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

The committee will now come to order. We have a package before us. You have been provided with three discussion papers. The first one is Tabled Document 49-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy. The second document is Tabled Document 66-12(3), Staff Housing Strategy Responses. The third document is Tabled Document 84-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy Financial Impact Summary. We are also provided with Minister Kakfwi's statement, Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy. Minister Kakfwi, would you like to proceed with your statement?

Introductory Remarks

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the discussion on the long-term staff housing strategy.

Over the years there has been a general recognition that the staff housing program must be revamped. The government, in 1979, participated with both public service unions on a task force on housing. The recommendations from that study are almost identical to the current strategy, but they were not fully implemented at that time.

In 1985, the Special Committee on Housing made recommendations to deal with the problems in staff housing. Again they were consistent with the long-term staff housing strategy. A motion was passed by the previous legislature emphasizing the urgent need for the government to get out of staff housing. This housing strategy represents the first concerted effort by this government to equalize rents and adjust problems which have been recognized but not solved since 1967.

This strategy is designed to increase home ownership and to implement rents which are closer to the costs tenants would be charged in private sector housing. Yellowknife was chosen as the base for these rents because they are significantly lower than the true costs of providing a unit of accommodation off the highway system.

At this point, only 1,400 of over 6,000 employees on our payroll occupy staff housing. Another 1,000 employees occupy public housing and over 3,500 obtain shelter on the private market. If only a small portion of staff housing tenants were to invest in their own homes, it would have a significant impact on the northern real estate market, the construction industry and business in general.

While many of our tenants can afford their own homes, it is clear that some would prefer to rent. With the exception of Hay River, Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Inuvik, this option will still be available to staff. The strategy has given careful consideration to the rental situation for low income tenants. Provisions have been built into the program to provide shelter assistance in the form of rental adjustments. This will keep shelter costs below 30 per cent of household incomes.

Mr. Chairman, Cabinet welcomes Members' comments on the strategy and we will listen carefully to what will be said. We appreciate the feedback we have already received from ordinary Members in the last few days, and the consultation which has occurred. This has helped us to understand the concerns and given us time to explore options to deal with them. If there are any questions, we would be pleased to answer them in as much detail as we can. We look forward to a healthy, rational exchange of views on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, in dealing with questions I would ask staff from the Department of Personnel to join me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Do we have the concurrence of the House for the Minister to bring in the witnesses from his department? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed, Mr. Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses.

Thank you. For the record, Mr. Minister, would you introduce the witness, please.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, I have the deputy minister of Personnel, Ken Lovely, with me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The floor is now open to general comments from the committee. Mr. Koe.

General Comments

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start by stating that since the Minister's announcement of the staff housing strategy, there has been much correspondence and all kinds of reaction from people who are affected and people who are not affected but impacted. The impact is territorial-wide, not only on the people who live in staff housing, but the businesses and people who live beside people in staff

housing and the people in public housing. The whole intent of the housing strategy is going to impact nearly all our residents. From what I understand and see in the documentation which has been provided, the only people who really are not impacted by this territorial housing strategy are people who are federal employees. We talk about equality and trying to establish equality in the north, yet we have an entire government that is not impacted by what we are doing.

Have any discussions been held with the federal government as to how they intend to deal, or are they going to deal with their employees who in many communities -- we have a territorial house and a federal house, they live side by side in the same size houses, yet even today the rental structures and benefits the feds provide to their employees are quite different from ours. I would like to start off by asking the Minister that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, the federal government is aware and has been informed of the strategy as we have set it out and they are watching this initiative with interest. I cannot say that as a government they are prepared to follow at this time. We have met with them and they are well aware of what we are initiating here. The Member should know there is interest on the part of the federal government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are there any general comments? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

The concerns which will be raised this afternoon are territorial-wide, in fact, residents in all our communities and all the territorial employees in the smaller communities. We know the strategy has already been in place in Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife and some impact has been felt in Inuvik because many of the residents there pay close to economic rent. There is an impact on many of the communities and the rest of the communities are the ones I have not mentioned

I am on public record as personally supporting the intent and direction the government is trying to take in the development of the staff housing strategy. I am also on record stating my opposition to the way the strategy is being implemented. There are many concerns regarding the inequities in the different communities and regions, and also within a community itself. There are many types of housing available. The state of the housing is quite different. You can have two four bedroom detached units but one could be quite aged and energy inefficient and the newer model could be quite different. So, you have many types of units which are available. The concerns in many cases are with the state of the unit once the customer has to pay for energy, the higher levels that one pays from one unit to the next. We know there are energy subsidies in some communities for power. However, the further north you go it is darker for longer periods of time and more power is required. There is some concern that people in the more northerly communities end up paying quite a bit more than people who have more hours of daylight. These are issues.

There is the issue of the impact of bringing in rents. The proposal is now at a 25 per cent rent increase plus user-pay for their power and utilities, and eventually user-pay for fuel. The levels of impact are going to vary by employee and by community. In many cases there is quite a variance in how much an employee pays. I know there is a proposed ceiling of 30 per cent on household income. Mr. Chairman, what I am raising are issues which residents have raised and tenants have raised. We have a great deal of correspondence from the Minister and his staff in trying to address this. However, there has been a problem in getting this information from the department or from government departments to tenants.

I have raised several questions, during session, regarding ways to encourage the departmental officials to talk to tenants. Some time ago, the Minister made the commitment to have staff go into each household and talk to tenants if they were willing to talk. From my understanding, the visits to my riding and the correspondence I have received from across the territories, all tenants want to talk and get a better understanding of this strategy.

I would like to stop now, Mr. Chairman, and give the Minister a chance to respond to some of the comments I have made.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, the Member has raised some good observations. It has been reiterated through a large number of letters and views passed on to us by tenants and people in the public, that we need to look at the impact this strategy could have or is going to have. We have certainly been doing this. We know the interest, as I said in mid-February when we announced some revisions to the strategy, we appreciate the majority of ordinary Members are supporting the objectives of the strategy. It is now a matter of arriving at an approach which is acceptable to everyone. We have taken this approach since then and we will respond to whatever suggestions the Members make over the course of the afternoon.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are there any general comments? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you. One of my concerns, and I have raised it in several ways in this Assembly, is the cost and impact, not only on the tenants but on this government. The budget which was proposed by the Minister of Finance has many implications that this strategy has on it. In February I asked a written question on the costs and savings to be realized from this strategy. The Minister of Finance passed a document to us which was subsequently tabled on March 8, the long-term staff housing strategy financial impact summary. I assume that document is in response to the written question I raised.

There seems to be one aspect missing and that is the aspect of person years. We know there is going to be impact on many government departments, Personnel, NWT Housing Corporation, NWT Power Corporation and MACA, in terms of the utilities and municipal provisions. How many person years are going to be reduced, saved or redirected from government departments because once this staff housing strategy is implemented, I assume there is some impact on maintenance staff and Personnel staff, because they will not have to keep housing records, check-ins and check-outs. There has to be some impact, not only financially, but in terms of the person years and

personnel this government employs. I would like some response to that issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance will be answering that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Lovely. Pardon me, Mr. Pollard, the Minister of Finance.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That aspect was considered because it appears to me if we are going to be able to down-size our budgets even further and as we get less involved in housing we should see some reduction in PYs. It was not something which could be calculated. It is not something which will really come into play that much in the first two years. There is a great deal of work. In fact, we are probably going to be spending more to access these houses, perform energy audits and visit with the residents of the houses in the first 18 months than we would normally be spending. There is also the question of upgrading in some of the units. I do not see us having a reduction in the first 18 months, Mr. Chairman. However, certainly down the road it is something which would look as if we are going to be able to save some PYs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are there any general comments? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the financial impact summary and in one of the responses made by the Minister of Personnel, visits will be made to each household where there is a government tenant. The purpose of these visits is to do an energy audit on the units, to remeasure them where necessary and listen to the concerns of the tenants. The Minister of Finance just mentioned it is going to take perhaps 18 months and a considerable amount of effort. However, in the financial impact summary this effort and the cost of doing these visits and energy audits is not reflected. I know it will involve staff travelling, it

will involve airfare, accommodation, meals and possibly extra staff. I am not sure what this government has in

Page 866

terms of energy efficient auditors. We used to have them, I am not sure if we still have them. How much or what is the projected expenditure to do these appraisals and energy work?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you like to have a staff member respond? Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding we are presently working out a travel schedule with existing staff within the Department of Personnel and DPW to carry out this work. We have no definite idea of how much it is going to cost because it depends on how meticulous we want to carry out these inspections and assessments. If tenants become very specific then it may take us a long time. We need to do the assessments before we can get an approximate dollar figure of what the costs might be for repairing and upgrading the units where required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

In terms of doing energy audits, from the circumstances I know about, many of the houses are old and energy inefficient. It may take and will take considerable time to do this type of work in all the communities, let alone the larger ones where there are many units. Does the Minister have any indication or any idea of how long all these visits, to do energy audits, to remeasure units, are going to take?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, we hope to do the job between next week and the middle of May. This is our initial assessment of how long it will take, although because of logistics, travel and other logistical reasons it may

take us longer than that. This is our initial project time we feel we need.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Are there any general comments? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the document, the financial impact summary, the revised numbers indicate a net increase, if the plan goes ahead as projected and in the time frames which have been indicated so far. Net increases in revenues are about \$1.5 million and projected estimated savings from other areas, water, sewer and power, is about \$4 million.

Last Thursday, the Minister said in the House that the strategy will make it possible for private developers to have confidence in developing accommodation for people in the private market. I believe that in level II and III communities the government guarantees occupancy for a certain number of units and pays the difference between the staff housing rates and the actual private market rates. In preparing the projected financial impact summary and the project expenditures, were the costs of paying the developer the difference in rates between the staff housing market and private market rental rate taken into consideration? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Pollard will answer this question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Chairman, none of those numbers are included in this financial impact summary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are there any general comments? Mr. Pudlat.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question and a comment. Mr. Chairman, first of all I will direct my question to the Minister. On the staff housing strategy, after the assessment the strategy was set. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister what kind of results came out of the assessment on the staff housing strategy? (English not provided)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

We are told we are not getting translation.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) The winters here in Yellowknife are shorter than in the eastern Arctic. I am not aware of which houses are older in which areas, but I think when you are going to be dealing with how much each unit costs per month, you will have to check the units to see if they will be using more fuel for heating. I think many of the older units need to be checked to see if they are using too much heat. I am not aware if the eastern Arctic communities have been informed on the utility rate increases. My question was with regard to consulting with the communities regarding... (English not provided). Perhaps, you would indicate to eastern Arctic communities of the utility rates of the staff houses. I would like to know when the results will come out of the assessment on utility rates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, the Member was asking if the assessments on the condition and age of the government staff units have been done. I indicated earlier that we will begin to visit communities to assess the condition and age of these units and the energy efficiency of these units beginning next week. We will continue to do them and hopefully we will be done by May 15. We will use this information to look at how energy efficient the government units are in the different regions. I know there are housing units built during a time when two by fours were still standard construction. All construction in the north has since changed dramatically. The amount of insulation and thickness of walls has gone up considerably.

Once we get an assessment of the actual condition and age of these units, we can then use the information to assess whether the rates being

charged at the community level for utilities is fair or not. For instance, the amount of electricity which is subsidized to Yellowknife rates, whether that is fair, the rates for water and sewage and eventually we will be looking at the consumption of fuel as well. This information is not going to be available to us for a few months yet.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Pudlat.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make my supplementary brief. With regard to the policy to

Page 867

increase the utility rates, is there a possibility of changing the rates after they have been assessed? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, if because of the condition of the staff unit the tenant is paying an unusually high utility rate, say for instance in their electricity and it is a direct result of the poor condition of the unit, we will make adjustments. We will either repair the unit or adjust the rent in a way which would be fair to the tenant.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make it clear that as an MLA and former Minister and also speaking on behalf of my constituents, even the ones who are most concerned about this policy, there is a realization that the government has to move in this direction. Rents have been neglected for many years and in some cases are artificially low, and that it is desirable that employees own their own housing and that the government eventually get out of staff housing. I would also like to acknowledge that the Minister has made a number of changes. There was a time when it seemed as if there was a change to the policy every week and it was very hard to keep up with them. However, the major changes are that the

hardship allowance was replaced and its connotation of welfare was removed. It was adjusted so as to be fairer and to better calculate the real income in a household. The policy was delayed in implementation from April 1 to July 1. There has been a delay in the implementation of the water and sewer charges. There have been commitments to energy audits and assessments of the conditions of units, with corresponding adjustments in rents and utility charges. There has been a commitment to sell in level III communities, and other changes I did not mention.

I would like to make some general comments about the problems with this policy which I have seen. First of all, it was very rushed in both the manner in which it was announced and in the time frame for implementation of the move towards market rent. In a recession in communities with the highest cost of living in Canada, to expect people to absorb housing costs of over 100 per cent in a year or even two years is too much. The rapid pace of the implementation also made a staggering reduction of disposable income and caused great concern among the business community, local stores and people who have been able to sell carvings and handicrafts to government employees. I must strongly recommend that to succeed with this policy, it must be slowed down. I want to say that many of my constituents were extremely anxious about this. The manner in which the announcement was made, just before Christmas, made them depressed, anxious and worried, and it has not helped enhance employee morale which I am sure is an object of the Minister of Personnel to ensure employee morale does not plummet.

Mr. Chairman, another major problem has been the formula for calculating rent and utility charges. The strategy sites equity as an aim. Yet, the crude measure of applying a square metre formula based on Yellowknife market rents in unfurnished accommodation when applied helter-skelter to units in communities from Grise Fiord to Sanikiluaq, is simply not fair. People say, "Yes, we acknowledge the Yellowknife market rent is less than the market rent in Grise Fiord, but Grise Fiord does not have supermarkets, highways and a thriving real estate market where employees can have alternatives if they do not want to live in government staff housing."

Mr. Chairman, the same applies to user-pay utilities. How can the government say it is equitable when it applies user-pay equally to communities which have very short daylight hours and extreme cold climates

compared to communities which are warmer and further south? The formula for rent calculation and utility calculation has to somehow take into account the differences in climate and the differences in costs. Let us not fool ourselves that people with families are going to get by with 700 kilowatts of power per month. They use much more than that.

Mr. Chairman, the government has indicated in the policy that it is designed to encourage people to obtain their own houses, to own their own houses, to buy government staff houses. The problem is the policy contained nothing but penalties for people who stayed in rental accommodation, and no real incentives for them to get into private home ownership. The household allowance is completely wiped out by this policy. That was traditionally used when it was implemented as an incentive, as a carrot, to people to buy or build their own homes. The government has said, "We subsidize power to the first 700 kilowatts, and there is also a subsidy on water and sewer," which I will acknowledge, although those costs are borne by all the residents of a community. However, Mr. Chairman, there is no subsidy on fuel. The very least the government could do, if it was going to eliminate the household allowance for electricity and water because subsidies are in place, is at least retain it for fuel where there is at present no subsidy in place. If that had been left in place, you would have some incentive for people to take the bold step -- and it is a bold step in many of these remote communities -- of going into home ownership.

I also have to note, Mr. Chairman, that although the Housing Corporation has started a program of home ownership which was announced this fall, it has not been coordinated with the government's new staff housing policy so we are not seeing opportunities for employees to access the Housing Corporation programs if they want to get out of staff housing.

I will give my own constituency as an example with approximately 275 to 300 employees. There are only a handful of detached units. Unfortunately, most of the houses in Iqaluit are multiple units which I do not think we have been shown can easily be bought by an individual. People who want to access the home ownership programs face several problems.

First of all, there are only three units available this year in Iqaluit for home ownership. I think that is because the expensive housing needs assessment which was done, never contemplated the needs of public servants who may want to get into home ownership. At that time, they were not going to be

under these pressures to move out. Secondly, as of today, there are only nine lots available if you do want to build. So, there are no opportunities for people to access these programs of the Housing Corporation. In my community, there is virtually no land if they did want to access the programs.

Page 868

The other problem with this policy, Mr. Chairman, and I am trying to be constructive in my comments, there was very poor, if any, consultation with the people affected and with the employees themselves. Mr. Kakfwi cited the 1979 joint working group between public service unions. People were asking if it worked well in 1979, why were employees not consulted in 1992, if changes were going to be made?

Mr. Chairman, with the greatest of respect to the hard pressed people in Personnel, they need help, they need advice. They have made some very serious mistakes in the way they have put this policy forward. The first mistake was they did not follow their own Residential Tenancies Act in giving notice. The notices which were given out in December were illegal according to the laws of this Legislature, they were not sent by registered mail or they were not personally served. My unilingual constituents, furthermore, for a government who is committed to official languages, were most offended that they did not get notices of these major changes in their lives and in their financial situations in their first language. The notices were given to my Inuit constituents in English.

There have been some serious problems with the manner in which this strategy has been implemented. Information tabled by the Minister of Personnel in this House has presented further problems. In particular, I am going to have some hard questions about the statements made in this Legislature and the documents before us about how tenancy agreements can be modified in order to encourage tenants to sign new agreements. I am advised the method the Minister has cited in these statements is also against the Residential Tenancies Act. Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is there is a need for a method of consultation so this policy can be implemented effectively. So far we have had no real meaningful consultation or, more importantly, a process for consultation. That has to be put in place if this thing is going to work.

I would like to endorse some of the comments made by my colleagues about costs. Mr. Chairman, since

the strategy was announced there have been all kinds of commitments made about energy audits. In fact, the energy audits are going to be done by two departments of this government. Assessment of each unit in consultation with employees both for purchase, where they want to buy a unit, and for rental adjustment, if they feel their unit is substandard. Mr. Chairman, the costs of this work and the time required are staggering. I am really impressed the Minister thinks it can be done this spring. I know there are some 500 houses in Baffin alone. I know something about the logistics of travel in the Baffin. I think this is a major cost and major time. I do not think the time estimates are realistic. Mr. Chairman, there are going to be costs to repair these houses, there are going to be costs to meter these houses, there are going to be costs of turnover, and it is \$30,000 a pop for a teacher who gets discouraged and decides to leave because of this policy. I do not think these costs have been reflected in the financial impact summary which is before us.

The \$3 million additional power subsidy cost required for the employees who will go on residential subsidy has also been recited over a year's basis. Mr. Chairman, what the government has not clarified is the likelihood that this subsidy, because it is going to come out of the revenues of the NWT Power Corporation, will be passed on to rate payers, every power customer will bear this cost. So, this is a cost which I think is going to affect individuals in our communities and companies in our communities.

The strategy is justified as a cost saving measure, Mr. Chairman, but, in fact, there are staggering costs which I do not think have been recited here. I think there are more PYs and more travel than the government has imagined which really should be reported to this House in some manner. In closing, whatever changes are made to this policy, and I hope we will be discussing some changes today, there is going to have to be some flexibility because there will always be special circumstances. The strategy and the department is going to have to show some humanity and some ability to be fair to deal with individual cases. Also, Mr. Chairman, there is going to have to be a process to deal with issues that I know will continue to come up.

I have not mentioned some of the technical problems. I do not know if this committee is the place to deal with them. The government has promised they will look at a way of charging tenants who live in multiple row units, utilities in a fair manner. I am told there is no cost effective way of metering heat in multiple

units. I think we need some good answers to these technical questions. How can this be done? I also know the government is hoping the private sector will step in and pick up opportunities to provide housing to employees. I do not think a good job has been done of consulting the private sector. I think questions have yet to be answered about how or whether the government will break into those many long-term leases which are in place. I understand a number are being tendered at this very moment in various communities to meet the pressing staff housing needs which we have at the moment. I do not know what work has been done to ensure that we have or solicit cooperation from the private sector in order to take advantage of these opportunities. There needs to be a mechanism, Mr. Chairman, ongoing to deal with some of these problems.

We have heard the Minister of Housing set up an advisory committee. I believe some kind of a working group needs to be set up that will take some input from the private sector, they know something about housing and construction in the Northwest Territories. The department, with the greatest of respect, does not have all the necessary knowledge and expertise within its ranks to deal with these questions. I think the Minister would be well advised to develop some process for consulting and dealing with these, sometimes technical and sometimes very detailed issues which are coming up, about which I have received no satisfactory answers.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, the timing has to be adjusted and the formula for rent and utility charges have to be adjusted to take into account the great variations in our communities. If we believe in the principle of equity there have to be real and improved incentives to private home ownership. There has to be better coordination with the NWT Housing Corporation's programs, with MACA's land development plans in communities where land is in short supply, and there has to be an ongoing mechanism developed for consultation and for tackling these problems with the people who are affected, not just tenants, but the real estate and construction industry in the Northwest Territories. If changes are made along these lines

Page 869

I think the department has a possibility of making this thing work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments. The Member started out by saying he wanted to make it absolutely clear he is supporting the objectives. I am like Little Red Riding Hood, wondering are you sure you are the granny because everything he said since then makes it difficult for me to see where it follows. I appreciate the Member needs to get these comments on the record. There are questions which need to be answered. I know we are not dealing with the entire body of government employees here. We are dealing with about 1,400 employees. I still say that it is more unfair to the rest of the government employees, the public and to this government to leave things as they are. It is absolutely essential, after all these years, to make the commitment to follow-through on this initiative. We are not going to be able to answer all the questions the Members may have. We have not removed all the rocks and boulders from this level playing field we are trying to create, but it is going to be created. We cannot wait until we think out everything perfectly in this imperfect world. I know what is fair is that we initiate this work and we do it now. It will be a strategy that is going to create better use of resource and some economic incentives for people at the community level for corporations and create more certainty for individual government employees.

There is no way we can plan to the point where there is going to be 100 per cent satisfaction for each Member of this Legislature. We are not going to give complete 100 per cent satisfaction to the unions, to each tenant and government employees across this country, nor to the different businesses that have opinions about the impact of this strategy. As I said, my sense is that we have generally agreed on the basic objectives of this strategy. We are at a point where we are trying to decide what changes should be made to the implementation of this strategy that would meet with the demands of the Members of this Legislature.

We know there has not been consultation with each tenant. We know other initiatives in the past and contemplations by previous governments to tackle this rather difficult issue has lead previous governments to sit back and defer this issue because of its monstrous implications and incredibly complex organizing of information which has to be undertaken. Politically, it was just not considered astute to tackle it previously. We know and we all accept the fiscal

condition of this government is such that we have no choice at this time. I think it is politically understood this is the way to go and we are merely trying to find some ways to fine tune the strategies so we can get on with it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

General comments? Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to monopolize this, but I just want to assure the Minister that if there are some changes made, if the shock affect is reduced, and I think 25 per cent was a very hard hit in year one in the middle of a recession, if the implementation is staged in a more reasonable manner, if the formula for rents and utilities are adjusted to reflect inequities we know exist in climate and in the cost of living in our communities, if there is some kind of a review or consultation process developed to monitor and get constructive criticism on the issues that will arise in this very complicated manner, if there are some incentives for private home ownership, then the strategy can be successful. I want to be constructive in my comments, but I cannot ignore the many issues and problems which have been brought to my attention and have already forced the government to make major revisions.

Mr. Chairman, before I let other Members speak, I just want to elaborate a bit on the point about encouraging incentives to private home ownership. You know, Mr. Chairman, I think this should be seen as an opportunity for the many employees, and many of them are my constituents who are lucky enough to live in detached units, who actually want to buy their units. I think they should be given strong encouragement. I was very alarmed because one of my constituents has been very anxious to buy his unit and there were some signals given that it would be made easy and it would be encouraged, then he got a letter saying "We will have to look at the government's overall housing requirements before we decide whether we can sell your unit." This was in Iqaluit.

Mr. Chairman, free advice to the Minister, make it easy for those employees who want to buy houses to buy the houses. Take into account the age and depreciated value of those units because this is a quick way to getting to your objective of getting out of staff housing. You could almost give away the units or make the price so reasonable that it will not be greater than the employee's current rent or maybe

even a little less than their current rent, and the government will be laughing all the way to the bank. There will be a private market created in the communities. There will be private tradesmen who will be employed or who will create businesses. There will be all kinds of tremendous spin-offs.

Even in Iqaluit, where there is a growing private real estate market, the employees who have approached your department and asked for help are still waiting. They are waiting for the assessment, they are waiting for word on the process and they are getting all kinds of precautions about the government maybe needing your unit after all. If you are making it hard for people in Iqaluit to buy units, then how on earth are you going to do it in the level III communities where the bank will not finance, with all the revenues you are going to get from the sales, or set up a mortgage program? Allow them to purchase on a lease-to-purchase arrangement. Make it easy for those who want to buy, this is a way of achieving your objective.

I am not sure, with the greatest of respect to the bureaucracy, that they have the will to give up these great responsibilities they have for maintenance and repair, et cetera. I am not sure the signal has gotten through to the bureaucracy that the object is to get out of staff housing and you should be encouraging sales. I would like to see a change in the signals which are coming out to those individual employees. I am sure the Minister agrees that they should be encouraged.

If those changes, Mr. Chairman, can be put into affect and we can make some further compromises that will lessen the hit affect and improve employee morale and reduce the danger of turn over, then I think we will make progress with this strategy

Page 870

and you will find you get support from many employees and MLAs you have not enjoyed up to date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, I think once the Members decide to consolidate in some way what it is they are recommending to this government, we can respond.

As far as Iqaluit is concerned, the Member should know we are open for business with the tenants who

live in staff housing. If the tenants wants to purchase their unit, we will do everything we can to help them purchase that unit and there is no intent to hold back units from those people. We have made it as a statement and commitment from this government and we intend to honour that. If there are difficulties then we are prepared to deal with them. If they have difficulty in arranging financing, we will be prepared to help tenants either through arranging for mortgages or arranging lease-to-purchases. We are, as I say, open for business. I think if the Member continues to support this initiative, he will probably be credited with kick-starting real development of a real estate market in the future capital of Nunavut. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

General comments. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every community in the territories in our jurisdiction is unique in itself. No two communities are identical. I have three communities in my constituency, they are: Pelly Bay; Taloyoak, formerly known as Spence Bay; and, Gjoa Haven. Gjoa Haven is on an island and it is very flat with no protection from the wind. They are about 80 to 100 miles apart. In a general sense, they are in the same geographical location, but they are different in climatic conditions.

Mr. Chairman, when the system makes comparisons between Pelly Bay and Yellowknife, which are about 800 miles apart, assessing the rent to the Yellowknife rate causes me some concern. Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to ask a question to the Minister for the NWT Power Corporation. Last month, in the House, the Minister said there would be an annual reduction of \$1.2 million in the corporation's revenues. She also stated that the corporation's operational costs had decreased. Can the Premier advise whether the loss in the revenue is the same as, or less than the savings in operating costs which she referred to? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Madam, Government Leader.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Chairman, that is correct. Those are the figures which we have from the Power Corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Is the Premier implying that the loss in revenue will be the same or less in savings in operating costs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Presently, for communities outside of Yellowknife, the territorial power support program is in effect, as each and every Member of this House knows. Customers are subsidized at the Yellowknife rate for the first 700 kilowatt hours. The Minister knows that in more northern communities where it is darker for a longer period of time, the customers will end up spending far more than 700 kilowatt hours per month. Will the Minister consider increasing the subsidy to 1,000 kilowatt hours for those consumers in the more northerly communities which have shorter daylight hours? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Mr. Minister. Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

The use of power and how the Power Corporation adjusted rates in communities are presently being analyzed by the Public Utilities Board on rate and rate structure and how we are going to rezone. The use of power and how it is being charged is going to the Public Utilities Board at this time. Those considerations are taking place during that analysis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once the analysis has been concluded, I wonder if the Premier would

consider my question seriously and, perhaps, determine whether she will take some action on this issue? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Chairman, including that one, there are a number of other things we would be looking at in terms of the zones which would be established. I know it is being considered now on being fair to communities which operate in different zones and what the cost of electrical power is. As well, there is also another analysis completed of how we are going to stabilize the charging of POL products. That is all encompassed in what we are going to come out with in terms of a fair rate over the Northwest Territories, considering the different areas people are living in. I will reconfirm that to the people who are doing that work at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Pudlat.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a short question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. During 1992, I received a response to my question. She stated a study was being conducted on utility rates. There has been a concern to reduce the rates below 700 kilowatts per hour. This was a grave concern to many residents. Is the study being conducted right now? If the study is finished, my question is would the rate be stabilized or increased after the study? Will the study be available at the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Madam Premier.

Page 871

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Chairman, I would be very disappointed if we have not concluded the analysis and the study much before the next sitting. As soon as the Public Utilities Board has finished analysing the rate structure review, we can circulate that information. I can

assure the Member there will be no changes to the subsidization of power rates unless we make some policy changes in the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are there any general comments? Mr. Arngna'naaq.

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too am very concerned about this. I attended a meeting in both of my communities with the government employees who are very concerned with regard to this strategy. I think if the department had taken the necessary steps to consult employees in a timely manner, then this so-called strategy could have been implemented without a hitch. I believe that because I know the employees agree the government should get out of housing. With the recession, all sectors of our society are suffering and this government is no exception. Employees know the difficulty the government is having at the present time, which is why they had agreed to a zero per cent increase for this year. They also agreed to a 1.8 per cent increase in wages for next year. Even though the cost of living is still rising, this is what they had agreed to. I think the gall of this government to introduce a strategy such as this is appalling. The employees I have spoken to know and understand the strategy, and believe the government should get out of housing. However, the way in which the strategy is presently laid out, this is no time for the housing market, of which there is none to speak of in the east, to make any kind of adjustments.

The process of implementing the strategy has to be changed to make it more equitable and more timely. In the meetings I held with my constituents and those who are government employees living in government units, some of the comments I heard are very similar to the comments made by other Members from the east. A large portion of available housing does not meet minimum standards for rentals. It was noted also that a housing unit at Yellowknife prices is not at the same standard for a unit at the same price in Baker Lake. Units have not been maintained so, in the majority of cases, current residents would not consider purchasing their unit. As well, due to the cost of living, residents could not afford mortgage payments for units based on Yellowknife markets.

In apartment blocks or row houses where they are paying rent, water and sewage would be shared. There is no way those who are single occupants are

energy conscious or who must frequently travel should be expected to pay the same amount for heat, water and sewage as those who occupy space continuously, or those who have more than one person living in a space. In a recessionary year, when the collective agreement allows no increase in salary, how can the government think of raising rent by as much as 25 per cent, when there is no increase in salary to absorb any part of the increase?

In Baker Lake, the average cost of living food basket is currently \$378.39. In no way can current GNWT salaries absorb a 25 per cent increase, as well as the cost of utilities. In Baker Lake, there are eight months of winter and 4.5 hours of daylight which necessitates a high volume of fuel oil and electricity. In Baker Lake, and other Keewatin communities, there are no options in the type of heat they produce. They are dependent on the transportation costs, which are high and dependent on the sea lifted fuel. Yellowknife, at this point, has a choice including fossil fuel, wood, fuel oil and electricity. Because of the small number of available units, many employees are over-accommodated and were forced by lack of availability when hired to accept inappropriate accommodation. We have a number of employees who are over-accommodated, therefore, will be paying for that and it is not by choice.

The entry level and relatively low level employees, although well-skilled, have indicated that as single income families with children, they will not be able to feed their families. The alternative, if they consider the north their home, is to resign from the GNWT and apply for UI benefits, or if ineligible, request social assistance. All are aware of the new UI guidelines and will make their decision regarding continued employment so as to maximize benefits.

I have also noticed in the last few days of this session, the Minister has tabled a number of letters which are in support of this strategy. I also know he has received letters which are very strongly opposed to the strategy and the way it is being implemented. I have a copy of a letter which was sent to the department. I have not tabled it to this point. This is from a gentleman in Baker Lake who is resigning from his position and he had just been hired. His letter was in reference to a letter of January 8, 1993, and with the information he received, he stated, "Presently, my net pay is around \$600 every two weeks or \$1,200 a month. My rent is going up to a total of about \$310, plus my power is about \$300 per month averaged out. I will then be left with only about \$600 per month. My son is in day care at a cost of \$400 per month. This

leaves me with \$100 per pay period for food, clothes, phone and all the amenities you may have in today's society. As you can see, this is even less than people would receive on welfare. Therefore, I cannot afford to work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. When I was hired, there was no mention of rental increases or of paying power bills totally, therefore I feel that the Government of the NWT has not acted in good faith to me or others, but rather acted in an underhanded action." This is the kind of letter which is being received by the department, which to me at this point, are being avoided, or seem to be. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that if there is any way we could slow this process down and reduce the impact on our employees, the people who are employed by this government, the better this strategy will work. I do not think this is going to work unless we change the way this is being presented at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The concluding part was a question to the Minister. Mr. Minister.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments. I should point out a couple of things. We did make a modest increase to rents about two years ago. That was under a different government, a different collection of Ministers. That caused a huge uproar regardless of the proposed five per cent increase. I think Members have to appreciate that this came from people who were paying no

Page 872

more than \$300 a month in many communities for their houses. It also came from government employees living in the next town who, for the same unit, were paying well in excess of \$900 a month. So, regardless of the amount of rent tenants were paying at that time, the uproar was consistently loud and the outrage was well enunciated. I know in some of the Member's communities the tenants were already paying in the neighbourhood of \$1,000 a month or so. In our constituencies there are already people who are paying about \$300 a month for the same size unit. Regardless of it, the people are just generally opposed to any type of increase. I raise that because I know there are huge inequities in the amount of rent we ask different employees in different communities to pay, for generally the same type of units. Members should know, as well, that at one time housing was

part of the union negotiations; it was part of the collective agreement. It was legislated out because whenever it was time to sit down and negotiate, I understand this was the deal which would make it or break it. No matter what was talked about, invariably it was housing. If you wanted to talk about salaries, rents came into it, subsidies came into it. Some years ago the government decided to legislate the housing out of the collective agreement. It is a highly controversial, highly emotional issue. I know people have grown accustomed to the system, however unfair and inadequate it is, and it is difficult to deal with it. I think however well thought out our strategy may have been, if the Members support it and they make good suggestions we would be supportive of making some changes. Once Members decide the substance of the proposed changes that we will make then we can respond.

I should comment on the tabling of letters. I did table two letters, I believe. One was from a private businessman who complained that because of the huge subsidies and benefits that this government, he says, lavishes on its employees, he as a private businessman continually loses good employees to the government. He feels it is time there is a more level playing field for people who are trying to run a business; quit having everyone running to the government because it is such a heavily subsidized employer. I had thought it was very bold of this man to write the letter and so I asked if he would mind if I presented it so Members could enjoy the flavour and view of this gentleman. The other letter I tabled, which was from a local citizen, was because here was a woman who was bold enough to put her thoughts down on paper. In the face of a huge pile of letters which I know we have all amassed protesting this initiative from the tenants and other people involved who felt they needed to protest, I never felt the need to table these, though I would have no objections to it if people felt that way. I think we all receive copies from our constituencies. The Government Leader has received numerous letters. They have been passed over to me. I have tried to respond to every last one of them in the course of the last few months. I just wanted to say that because I did not want people to think I had any other motive in tabling those two letters. I thought they should be recognized for what they were.

Regarding examples such as the Member raised about the huge impact the proposed changes are going to have on the take home pay and income of these individuals, we have said people are not going

to have their rents taken of more than 30 per cent of their income and we will make adjustments for the anomalies we know exist right now. We are prepared to sit down with each individual Member who has constituencies with unique situations in order to help them deal with the impact of the strategy. This offer was made and it still stands. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the 11th Assembly, one of the main focuses of our work was economic development. When the proposal to change the staff housing benefits of our government was made, it was not popular. In fact, it was very difficult for many of the members in the level I communities who were going to be affected right away. I remember being lobbied a great deal to oppose this initiative, and to do everything I could to stop it. I have respect for my constituents, and I think that as far as I was able I was in large measures successful for explaining to people the reason for it and why we were going in this direction. As a result, I think many of those people who were reluctant ended up buying their own houses and were very grateful they had that chance. They had been pushed into it in a sense. So, there was never much beefing after that happened because things turned out very well for quite a large number of people.

I should point out it was part of the work of the last Assembly to try to find ways of stimulating the economy. It was fairly clear to me that this was a large sector of our economy, the business of the provision of housing. If we could find a way of getting more people involved in it, outside of government, it would send several messages out. One of those messages was related to the dependence on government. We have always pointed out that one of the things we have to break down is the mentality that everything comes from the territorial government, that the territorial government will look after you from the womb to the tomb. I think the argument was well made that by stimulating the private market, instead of just having the government as the landlord, you could have anybody in the Northwest Territories as your landlord. As long as you had a reasonable regime in establishing rents then in the long run that would be a satisfactory arrangement. In addition, people could see how it would stimulate other smaller industries related to the upkeep, maintenance and

construction of houses and so on. I think everybody was eventually brought on side to say this is obviously the way to go. As long as it is handled very carefully and it was done in a way that was equitable, then it would go through with the majority of people seeing the logic of it as the next extension of the development of our economy.

The only criticism I have is that there were things which could have been done better, but there is no point living in the past. We have to look ahead to see what we should do to resolve some of the outstanding issues. I feel very strongly that what should happen is you should find some way of not simply appearing to do this as an isolated unit in Yellowknife which is somehow remote from the realities of the regions and the communities, whether they be very unique problems or not which have to be addressed. I would urge the government to somehow -- I know we cannot go back, but one of the admissions was trying to get a small group to work out some of the complex details which still lie ahead, even when you go ahead with the strategy the way it is outlined.

Page 873

Just one short anecdote before I finish, Mr. Chairman. Almost 30 years ago I was paying \$90 per month for rent. There was a real uproar when it went up to \$95. It was just awful. People were very concerned because of this extra \$5. At that time you were also given food rations and that was about \$35 per month. That stayed solid. They kept on paying you money and you got your food. Everyone was upset by the \$5 increase in rent and it had not changed for a long time. There was a symbolic thing that happened, suddenly out of the blue the \$5 arrived. Because there had not been a proper softening up, then people were not happy. So, the suggestion that you can ease people into this a little better may be one of the ways of solving it. Even that \$5 many years ago, which came out of the blue, people fought against it because they had not been given the proper notice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a brief comment to make with regard to government staff housing. With regard to the comments which I have just listened to, I agree with most of the comments which are being raised. In the early part of

December, we were informed about the long-term housing strategy. This was a big shock to many of the Members when it first came out. This subject has been an ongoing issue for some time now and I think we have been able to give some thought to this. Like other problems, this is an issue we will be dealing with for a long time. Like any other issue, there will be many problems arising from this increase which is going to be imposed in the future. The government was able to be informed from the communities with regard to their concerns. As Members here, we all realize we have different problems we will have to deal with. The problem of utilities and food costs and with regard to different climates in our communities, we all have different problems which arise. Some of the communities rely on fuel for heat, and we realize that some of the other communities also have wood stoves which they can use in their homes. These are the two different ways of heating homes. We also know that in some communities, some government employees end up in houses which would be completely different units if they were in the south. For example, if they are going to try to purchase their own home, if they are going to try to purchase a three bedroom home the employee can run into a problem where it would be too big for the employee or too small. Perhaps, the unit would be too old. This would be another problem that would arise. If the unit is too old the problem would be that he would not be able to come up with the extra funding to renovate the unit.

When this issue arises whereby the housing would be based upon Yellowknife housing, I think many problems will arise if you are looking at the communities which are not on the highway system. The food costs are much higher and I will give you one example. Yesterday, I purchased a couple of wheels for my car from a tire outlet. For two tires it cost me \$400. If that was in our community of Resolute Bay, for instance, when they arrive there you would have to add an additional \$100 to the purchase price, which would bring it up to \$500. These examples which I am using regarding the tires are of light weight. I know that food prices, especially when you order by volume, can be very heavy in freight. This was a concern by the communities which are not on the highway system. If they are going to standardize these issues they should also consider standardizing food prices.

These changes which are about to be implemented, it is not so much that we are against them, perhaps if they had been informed in advance, perhaps by a year or two or up to three years in advance, had they

been informed of the long-term strategy it would not have come as such a shock to the government employees. However, it came upon them so suddenly and it was a shock.

In the meantime I am happy the employees are given the opportunity to purchase their houses if they want to. This will be reviewed. At this time I do not have many questions on this matter regarding the purchasing of the houses. However, I did want to make a short comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have heard very clearly the concerns of Members and I thank my colleagues who have contributed to this debate. I have a number of detailed questions which I would like to put forward so as to give the department notice of the issues which I think are still unanswered. I think the device of written questions will be a good way to deal with those issues. I would now like to introduce a motion, Mr. Chairman. In introducing this motion to the committee I would like to note that I have benefited from advice of the Ordinary Members' Caucus in developing this motion, and I would like to thank the caucus and chairpersons for their assistance.

Mr. Chairman, if I may I would like to move this motion which has been translated and is being distributed. It is a longer motion than usual for committee of the whole, but this is a complicated issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Please proceed, Mr. Patterson.

Committee Motion 81-12(3): Staff Housing Strategy

MR. PATTERSON:

Whereas the committee accepts the fiscal realities and endorses the basic objectives which led to the development of the GNWT long-term staff housing strategy; and whereas the committee is also concerned about certain problems respecting the communication, coordination, timing, inequities and other impacts of the strategy on employee morale; and whereas the committee endorses the following principles as critical to the resolution of these

problems and the successful implementation of the strategy:

1. The impact of the strategy should be reduced through a more graduated phasing in of the strategy;
2. In order to achieve equity among all employees regardless of location, the formula for rent calculation and increases, including utility charges, must be improved so as to reduce disparities within and between communities;
3. A working group must be established to study, oversee and recommend solutions on specific implementation problems;

Page 874

Now therefore I move, that the following primary objectives of the GNWT long-term staff housing strategy be accepted by this committee: the encouraging of home ownership and energy conservation among GNWT employees and the withdrawal of the GNWT from the provision of staff housing;

And further, this committee recommends to the executive council that:

1. The GNWT long-term staff housing strategy be phased in over three years;
2. Except in level III communities, rental increases should not amount to more than ten per cent in the first year;
3. A more equitable formula for calculating increases to base rent and utility charges should be devised for subsequent years which will take into account:
 - a) climatic variations which impact on the cost of utilities;
 - b) the age and condition of each housing unit;
 - c) an indexing factor which will take into account variations in the cost of living; and,
 - d) a corresponding phasing in of the housing allowance.
4. In level III communities, larger rent increases may be instituted in the first year, providing the housing allowance is provided to each employee;

5. The NWT property tax rebate be reinstated at \$400 per year.

And further, recommend that a working group be established and chaired by the Minister of Personnel to oversee and advise the Government of the Northwest Territories and report to the next and future sessions of this Assembly on further details and improvements to the implementation of the strategy, including: reasonable additional incentives to encourage home ownership; additional measures and clarifications to encourage the sale of staff housing; means to encourage private sector involvement in the provision of staff housing to government employees; improved coordination with the NWT Housing Corporation access program and integration of staff and public housing administration; technical problems such as metering utilities in multiple units and methods of renegotiating tenancy agreements in a manner which is in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the motion, I would like to thank the Members for the opportunity they provided to myself and Mr. Pollard earlier this week to hear their concerns regarding the proposed staff housing strategy. We have made note of the concerns from earlier letters and communications we have had. We noted the concerns. As a result, as a Cabinet we have agreed to make some changes to deal with them. In response to the motion I want to indicate to Members that I think the majority of the recommendations contained in the motion can be addressed and met by the government. We are prepared to make some amendments to the strategy which is called for in the proposed motion which the Members are going to vote on.

I agree as a Minister, as well as the Cabinet, that the strategy should be implemented over a longer period of time to give everyone a chance to prepare for staff to have time to budget for their shelter costs. We would agree to implement the strategy over three years instead of two. I still feel confident that the proposed rents are fair and equitable, but I agree that the issue of timing had to be addressed. We are now in a position to agree that the implementation should take place over three years. We, as a Cabinet, had

concerns about establishing another steering committee for the strategy. I support the desire of Members to be kept informed about the implementation of the strategy and to have some forum for suggesting solutions to problems as they are perceived or as they arise. Therefore, I suggest again that if Members want to designate two MLAs, I would be pleased to work with them to deal with problems as they arise. Generally speaking, I feel once we establish the policy and the direction, once we have agreed on the strategy, then the matter must be handed over to our officials to manage within the rules we have set.

Officials have been directed to implement the strategy over three years, to advise us of the changes which will be made, and to crunch the numbers. We will give direction to start the rental increases on August 1, 1993, with further increases over the following two years until full rents are reached on August 1, 1995. Our calculations indicate that increases of 15 per cent to the base rents will be required to equalize the three increases.

Rental increases will only be applied to base rents which do not include the charge for utility costs. This is a change from the original proposal which imposed increases on the total rental package. I recognize your motion would recommend that increases not exceed ten per cent in the first year. By calculating the 15 per cent increases strictly on the base rents, the impact on the tenant is actually less than the ten per cent recommended by the motion. However, in using this approach in level III communities, it will still not deal with the fact that tenants will be paying very low rents in comparison to their counterparts in level I and II communities. In order to resolve this problem without financial hardship to the tenants, we now propose to use the solution which was implemented for level II communities in the mid 1980s. That is, after the application of the 15 per cent increase to the base rents the rent will be increased by a further \$450 per month which will be entirely offset by payment of the \$450 accommodation allowance. That means for all tenants in level III communities, as soon as we implement the rent increases, the standard accommodation allowance will be available to them, starting on the proposed date of August 1, 1993.

Staff housing units, I believe, are generally in better condition than other houses in communities. To deal with some obvious problems where the units may be below standards, as I said earlier, a group of team officials from DPW, Personnel and the Housing Corporation will be visiting every community to

inspect and assess all units. Inspections will involve remeasuring to make sure the correct rent is being charged, conducting

Page 875

energy audits for units which appear to be using more energy than community averages and assessing the overall condition of the unit. We have proposed to have these visits take place between March 15 and May 15 of this year. In cases where the energy consumption is unacceptably high, the unit will either be repaired or the rent will be lowered in conjunction with the timing of user-pay.

Mr. Chairman, as a Cabinet we have tried to address the concerns and points raised by Members and tenants over the last few months, and have made these changes to meet what we believe to be the spirit of the motion which is now before you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Question has been called. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to say I will be supporting this motion because I support the objective of encouraging home ownership among all northerners. In particular, because I think that goal is something the Standing Committee on Finance has noted before that the NWT property tax rebate was introduced to the territories as a method of increasing, enhancing or encouraging home ownership. This motion directs the government to reinstate the property tax rebate to the level it was previously.

I think it is very important that as Mr. Patterson said in his earlier remarks, there has to be improved incentives to home ownership. I think this is one of those things we need to see. There are other areas which need to be looked at in terms of incentives for people in the north, but this is a real and concrete one which people are used to and I think we were quite offended when it was previously removed from the

government. I just wanted to add my support to the motion, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Question has been called. Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Thank you. Does the committee agree that Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Tabled Document 49-12(3), Tabled Document 66-12(3) and Tabled Document 84-12(3) are concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister and his witness for appearing before the committee. Thank you. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The motion to report progress is not debateable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

Good afternoon. Item 19, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Chairman.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 34-12(3), Tabled Document 49-12(3), Tabled Document 66-12(3) and Tabled Document 84-12(3), and would like to report progress and that these matters are concluded with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Seconded by Mr. Koe. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 20, third reading of bills. Item 21, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance immediately after adjournment. Meetings for tomorrow morning at 9:00 am of the Ordinary Members' Caucus. Orders of the day for Friday, March 12, 1993.

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

Page 876

9. Petitions
10. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
11. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
12. Tabling of Documents
13. Notices of Motion
14. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
15. Motions
16. First Reading of Bills
17. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 8, Payroll Tax Act
 - Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act
 - Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Mining Safety Act
18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 2-12(3), The Justice House - Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality
 - Tabled Document 3-12(3), Report of the Commission for Constitutional Development
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
 - Bill 17, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1993-94
 - Committee Report 10-12(3), Report on Tabled Document 21-12(3): Payroll Tax Act
 - Committee Report 11-12(3), Report on the Review of the 1993-94 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 12-12(3), Report No. 4, Talking and Working Together
 - Appearance by Members of the Commission for Constitutional Development

19. Report of Committee of the Whole

20. Third Reading of Bills

21. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, March 12, 1993.

--ADJOURNMENT