



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

4th Session

Day 2

12th Assembly

HANSARD

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1993

Pages 5 - 28

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable Michael A. Ballantyne, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Titus Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Arngha'naaq, Mr. Arvaluk, Hon. Michael Ballantyne, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Mr. Gargan, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Hon. Rebecca Mike, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Mr. Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Michael Ballantyne):

Good afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to express the condolences of all Members to our colleague, Mr. Zoe, on the passing of his mother, Marie Agnes Zoe after a long battle with cancer. Mrs. Zoe resided in Fort Rae where she spent her life and had eight children. I am sure all Members join me in expressing our deepest sympathies to the Member and to the Member's family. Thank you very much.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Cournoyea.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 2-12(4): Absence Of Mr. Kakfwi

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I have two statements. The Hon. Steve Kakfwi will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend a meeting of the Western Arctic Regional Leaders Meeting.

Minister's Statement 3-12(4): Sessional Statement

Mr. Speaker, in terms of a presentation, I would like again to state our appreciation to the staff of the Legislative Assembly and the people who went to a great deal of effort to have a very successful opening of this marvellous building.

Mr. Speaker, considerable progress has been made since the Assembly took office in October of 1991. All of us have been involved in the process and this is an appropriate occasion to reflect on what has been accomplished and to indicate what has been planned for the final two years of our term.

The amount of change we have brought about is substantial and the amount of effort and time we've put into the business of the House has been unprecedented.

Setting the stage for change, in a time of economic restraint and declining revenues, hasn't been easy. There are many important tasks facing all of us.

They include improving the structure of government because the system we inherited was designed for earlier times. It didn't work as well as it could and it was expensive to operate.

As a result, the government and the Committee on Reshaping Northern Government embarked on an ambitious plan of consolidation that combined a number of government departments and eliminated a number of boards that had outlived their useful purpose. Similar steps have been taken throughout Canada and at the federal level.

In addition, the government undertook a process of decentralization in order to get more jobs out into the regions. Health insurance services opened its offices in Inuvik earlier this month and a similar office is scheduled to be opened in Rankin Inlet in January. Earlier this year, the petroleum, oil and lubricants program was moved to Fort Simpson and the Public Utilities Board and Highway Transport Board were located in Hay River.

As well, privatization of liquor warehousing services and print and design operations are getting the government out of running things that are better left to the private sector.

Privatization means more money in the hands of the private sector. For instance, at least \$600,000 worth of services will be purchased each year from the private sector with the closing of our in-house print and design shop.

Another way to stimulate local economies is by improving local housing markets.

It took a lot of debate to reach a consensus, but we also implemented a staff housing strategy designed to get the government out of home ownership and its landlord relationships with its employees. And part of the strategy involves selling government-owned houses.

Since the strategy was implemented, 89 units of staff housing have been sold throughout the territories and another 91 sales are pending. An estimated half

million dollars worth of construction tools and materials have been purchased by the private sector by new owners to renovate or reinsulate their houses.

The Assembly also adjusted the capital planning process to give northern contractors more time to plan for the construction season and to maximize job opportunities for northern workers and it has refined the ways it deals with legislative proposals.

Together, we are making better use of our financial and human resources, while attempting to find new sources of revenue and employment opportunities from increased economic activity in both renewable and non-renewable sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we also wanted to give communities greater responsibility and the resources to deal with programs that matter most, like education, economic development, housing and social services. This is being done through the community

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transfer initiative and we are presently in various stages of discussions with 29 communities throughout the territories.

The community transfer initiative is extremely important to the Northwest Territories where strong families, well-educated youth and a greater degree of community control are the keys to a better future. Placing responsibility at the community level will support our constituents in finding community-based solutions to the problems that they are facing.

At the same time, education and training, housing, job creation and social programs remain top priorities and are being protected. And by improving the way we do business, we have been able to fund initiatives that are important to our constituents.

For instance, by cutting back in other areas, the government was able to create jobs by introducing a \$6 million workers' training fund this summer, expand grade levels in 22 schools, implement new housing programs, improve airstrips and build new ones, enhance training opportunities in construction and conduct test fisheries work off Baffin Island.

Mr. Speaker, despite these initiatives, no one should conclude that our financial problems are all over. They aren't. We still have some tough choices to make. But compared to other jurisdictions, I think we're doing quite well.

So far we have managed to stay away from going into a long-term debt that would have to be paid off by our children sometime in the future.

While our budget may be severely taxed, our financial future is presently more secure than most of the provinces where the total provincial government debt is well over \$150 billion. This is in addition to the total federal debt of about \$400 million.

That much money would pay for the operation of our government for at least five hundred years.

Mr. Speaker, while Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly have made considerable progress since the last election, the next two years promise to be equally significant.

Administratively, the government intends to concentrate its efforts on taking care of business in order to make sure what began in 1991 is either completed, or nearing completion, by 1995.

That includes taking the next step in considering plans to turn the Northwest Territories Power Corporation into a user-owned utility that would give northern residents and organizations an excellent opportunity to invest in their future by giving them preference in the purchasing of shares.

Creating an investor owned utility means that a new northern company, regulated by the Public Utilities Board, would be formed. It would employ existing corporation employees, maintain their benefits and be financed through a sale of shares to the public, rather than being sold to a large corporation or a single investor.

The agenda over the next 24 months also includes steps dealing with the education system, labour-related concerns and plans to improve public access to government information.

As you know, the way in which we respond to the educational and training needs of young adults is the single biggest challenge facing us. Increasing enrolments are straining our ability to pay and are making it necessary for change and more of a creative approach.

The process of change started with the consolidation of the departments of Education and Culture and Communications. It will continue over the next number of months in a major consultation process with a series of round table discussions involving the departments and their various clients.

Mr. Speaker, education is a partnership and the government intends to seek public input on a discussion paper that will be used to finalize a comprehensive strategy and, by next spring, will guide the development and delivery of education, culture and employment programs to the year 2010. The Minister of Education will speak to this important initiative later in this session.

Mr. Speaker, education is more than just an academic experience in the classroom. Many people wanting a job need proper training. Because of this, and in order to maximize local employment and training in the construction of millions of dollars worth of capital projects funded by the government each year, we're introducing a new strategy called building and learning.

The strategy was developed by the Housing Corporation, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs and the Department of Public Works and Services. One of its key elements is to provide the kind of training needed to certify workers who are mostly self-taught and have little, if any, formal trades training.

Under that strategy, successful bidders on government construction contracts would be part of a community working group established to make sure the strategy is coordinated at the local level and that it maximizes training opportunities. The delivery of training programs will be written into the contract documents.

By taking this approach, the government expects that properly trained northern workers will recapture -- by the year 2000 - the estimated \$16 million per year in wages that are currently being paid to southern construction workers.

In other areas, Mr. Speaker, there is a need for a review of labour-related matters in the territories. Because of this, the government has established a commission to help prepare for the future of the northern workplace, a workplace which includes both the wage economy and traditional pursuits such as hunting, trapping and carving.

The northern workplace needs to be examined in the light of the many changes now facing us. Those changes include division, the settlement of land claims and negotiations for self-government, the transfer of government responsibilities and services to communities, and the changing northern economy.

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All of these developments will affect the relationships between workers, employers and communities.

The commission has been given two years to work with the public and northern organizations, identify concerns, and research policy options. Its final report -- to be published in the fall of 1995 -- is intended to provide a framework for planning which will be useful to everyone involved in the northern workplace.

Mr. Speaker, the government will also be introducing legislation dealing with access to information during our budget session next February. The Access to Information and Privacy Act will provide a right of access and a mechanism for the public to access all information held by the government, subject to limited and specific exceptions. It will also provide for the protection of privacy in respect to information relating to individuals.

Other important documents that will be brought forward during this session include papers on income support and training, Workers' Compensation Board reform, custom adoption, family violence and a response to the gender equality report.

Our agenda over the next two years also includes many activities that are mostly external to the daily delivery of government programs and services and have been the subject of strategy sessions involving all Members of the Assembly. These workshops are designed to identify the operation and constitutional decisions that have to be made over the next few years by the territorial government and Legislative Assembly.

The work to be done includes coordination of many complex and -- until recently -- uncoordinated issues, such as: land claims; implementation of post-claim regimes; developing a new constitution for the western territories; arranging for a boundaries commission to create the constituencies that will be required in the west and in Nunavut because of division; and working toward the creation of a Nunavut government by the year 1999.

All of these matters will require a federal government that is responsive to our needs. We can't take anything for granted at this time. Just because a new Liberal government took office in Ottawa earlier this month, and both of our Members of Parliament are on the winning team, doesn't mean our problems will go away or that our economy will improve overnight.

It does mean that we have a new opportunity to resolve some old problems, this time with a Prime Minister who is no stranger to the north. We have already started this process during meetings with Mr. Chretien and Indian and Northern Affairs Minister, Ron Irwin.

At the top of the list of issues we discussed was eliminating the recent federal budget cuts that have crippled our social housing program, along with resolution of our health billings dispute and removal of the flaws in our current formula funding arrangement that provides disincentives to economic development.

We also talked about the economic potential of the territories and the need for a federal commitment on the construction of infrastructure, particularly as it relates to the exciting mineral and diamond finds stretching north of this city to Izok Lake and Coppermine on the Arctic coast.

Development in this area will benefit not only the Northwest Territories, but all of Canada. It's important for the territories that we move toward great self-sufficiency. To do this, we need to develop these resources in partnership with industry, both levels of government and local aboriginal organizations.

I also informed the Prime Minister that territorial and community governments want to be active participants in the federal government's review of defence policy, particularly as it related to Arctic sovereignty and US/Canada agreements on the testing of military equipment, such as cruise missiles and low-level bomber exercises in the Northwest Territories.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way in the past two years. The challenge is to keep doing more. We have to make the territories better. We have to make it more accessible, make sure that essential services are protected and that the same choices and opportunities for a productive life are available to all residents of the territories, regardless of who they are and where they live.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Madam Premier. I would like to recognize Mr. Jack Anawak, the Member of Parliament from the Nunatsiaq riding.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Motion To Move Minister's Statement 3-12(4): To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move Minister's Statement 3-12(4) into committee of the whole. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Seconder to the motion? Seconded by Mr. Gargan. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On The Passing Of Mrs. Marie Agnes Zoe

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the ordinary Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to offer our condolences to our colleague, Mr. Zoe, his wife Dolly and their family on the death, yesterday, of his mother, Mrs. Marie Agnes Zoe, known by her friends as Mimi. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Zoe was 69 years of age when she was

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called to God. She has lived all her life here and around Rae. She and her husband Edward have eight children, six boys and two girls, all of whom are alive today and mourning their mother, as are the other residents of the territories who knew Mrs. Zoe. I have known our colleague, the Member for the North Slave, since the early 1980's, Mr. Speaker, and I have only to look at Henry to see that his mother must have been a very fine person. I wish to extend our sympathy to Henry and his family and to all of Mrs. Zoe's family on the loss of a mother and a good friend. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement Regarding Ethel Blondin-Andrew, MP

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I may have to ask for consent to continue. About a week and a half ago -- a week last Sunday -- I listened to the radio, while laying in my bed, to a broadcast which tests you on your ability to recognize a national or international figure on the basis of several pieces of music that are played.

The first piece of music had a very famous American singer belting out a piece from "Annie Get Your Gun." My wife turned to me and said, "Do we know anybody called Ethel, because that's Ethel Merman." I thought, yes. The last singer was Julie Andrews. On Saturday or Sunday there will be an announcement and the winners who identify this national figure will receive a certain prize. You only have a few days to get your answer into CBC, to Audio File, saying who this person is.

I made that statement today, Mr. Speaker, because Ethel Blondin-Andrew is a national and, soon to be, international figure. Not only was she on this particular Audio File I'm referring to, but she was also on Northern Exposure; another voice the satirists have to learn to imitate.

I make this point, Mr. Speaker, because yesterday we had a chance to meet the new Prime Minister, the Minister of DIAND, and Ethel, in the back room. She reminded me of a visit I made to Tuktoyaktuk in 1978, visiting her grade one class. She said, "Boy, things have happened, since the 1970s, to me."

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Lewis, are you going to ask for unanimous consent?

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement. I've broken every rule in this House and I know them very well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. You also gave me the opportunity for the first time to use my priority button

three times. Now I know how to do it. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please continue, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

You're very kind, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Members. The point I want to make is she has become a controversial figure in a sense because many people wanted to reserve her for themselves, for their own cause. But this person is something more than just somebody who represents, in the public mind, a group of people. She represents somebody who can deliver the major priority of the new government, which is to deal with employment and education.

I gave the little anecdote about her teaching background because she is going to have a major job to play in the future of this country, in a portfolio that affects every single Canadian. We should be proud of that fact, rather than find negative interpretations of the kind of assignment that she's taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ng.

Member's Statement On Appreciation Of John Ningark, MLA

MR. NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

My first statement in this House is a statement of appreciation. Mr. Speaker, I met Mr. Ningark in 1979-80 when we were both settlement secretaries for our respective communities. Now, 13 years later, we are both Members of this House addressing many of the same issues we dealt with back then.

When I met Mr. Ningark, he was an easy-going, hard working, caring and unselfish individual. Today, although we have both aged -- him more so than I --

--Laughter

...he remains the same caring, unselfish individual.

It is those traits that lead him to take on the additional responsibility of acting as the Kitikmeot representative of this Legislative Assembly, upon the resignation of the former Member this past winter.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour as my first Member's statement in this Assembly and our new home, to extend the appreciation and gratitude on behalf of my constituents and I, to my friend, the honourable Member for Natilikmiot for acting as our representative from February 5, 1993 until my election on May 10 of this past year. Qujannamiik, Mr. Ningark.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Koe.

Member's Statement On Congratulating The Inuit Of Nunavut

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the Inuit of Nunavut on two important events that occurred during this summer while the Legislative Assembly was not in session

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The first was the successful completion over the summer of the TFN claim. I'm sure that the celebration in Coppermine on July 9 will be long remembered by residents of Nunavut, as this represented the culmination of nearly 20 years of hard work by many dedicated people. Now the challenge is in making the claim work and ensuring that the terms of the agreement are met by the parties involved in the negotiations. I'm confident that there will be appreciable change in the life of Nunavut residents once the claim has been fully implemented.

Of equal importance, the passage of the Nunavut Act was given royal assent on June 10 by the Governor General. This act sets the stage for the division of what we know today as the Northwest Territories, into two new territories. This has long been a dream of many of the Nunavut residents, and required much hard work by them as they steadily worked toward the goal of Nunavut. I congratulate all those involved in this task.

A major change in the north will occur on April 1, 1999 when division will take place. There is much to be

done by both the people of Nunavut and by those of us who live in the western Arctic. We must begin our work immediately and with integrity as we set our houses in order before division takes place. In the meantime, as we work in this Legislative Assembly, we must continue to work toward common goals. The most important goal is that of delivering the best possible government for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Western Caucus and the Western Constitutional Steering Development Committee, I once again commend the Inuit for their achievements and assure them our full support in achieving their dreams. Qujannamiik. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Member's Statement On Appreciation To Nunavut Delegation

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of all Members of this House I would like to thank the residents of Nunavut involved in the opening of the new Legislative Assembly building.

The Nunavut delegation showed their kindness and diplomacy by supporting the construction of this building, although they may have wished to delay the construction of the building until 1999. However, with the principle of fairness and respect Nunavut citizens do not want either territory to be delayed unnecessarily because the other territory might not be ready.

On behalf of all Nunavut citizens, I wish the western Members success as they work toward the establishment of the new

At this time, I would like to recognize my mother who is in the public gallery today. On behalf of the Nunavut delegation, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. We are honoured by your mother's presence in our House today. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Patterson.

Member's Statement On Consensus Government

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we celebrated the opening of this new Legislature as a tribute to consensus government. We talked about how we would respect our diversities within the circle of this Chamber. We talked about how we cherish democracy. From its first days in office two years ago, our government has prided itself on support for communities. "Strength at Two Levels" -- not one level -- and the community transfer initiative are concrete examples of our government's off-stated commitment to develop and support stronger local governments.

Our government also prides itself on its consensus form of government where ordinary Members' views and input are sought and welcomed. We have a Cabinet which has pledged to consult with ordinary Members on important territorial initiatives and major developments in constituencies. In fact, when she was running for Government Leader on November 12, 1991, Ms. Cournoyea stated, "I think we have come to the conclusion that MLAs want to be more involved, and MLAs know their communities probably better than anyone else." In the same debate, Mr. Allooooloo, now Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, said, "This morning I was very impressed by all the MLAs' knowledge with regard to community needs. I was impressed with the vast knowledge and the valuable suggestions that the MLAs had.

This all sounds wonderful, Mr. Speaker, but when democracy was suspended abruptly in the town of Iqaluit on November 12, what was the involvement of the local MLA? What was the advantage taken of the wisdom of the local MLA? That morning, Mr. Speaker, a bureaucrat from Municipal and Community Affairs handed me a letter from Mr. Allooooloo, the Minister, dated November 10, signed by Mr. Kakfwi, with a copy of an order by Mr. Allooooloo to appoint a municipal administrator in Iqaluit, also dated November 10, also signed by Mr. Kakfwi. I was told on that date, while we met...

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson, you've exceeded your allotted time.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the indulgence of the House to continue my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, on the morning of November 12 I was told by a bureaucrat of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs that while we

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met, the mayor, council and town senior administrators were being dismissed by an administrator who had been appointed by Mr. Allooooloo and sent to my constituency to do that deed. Mr. Allooooloo had not consulted me or informed me in any way about this drastic action. Even though, Mr. Speaker, I had been requesting information from his office, his staff and other Ministers of the Cabinet about developments with the town for weeks.

Mr. Speaker, the manner in which this was handled and the absence of process consulting in a consensual manner with the MLA -- the elected representative of that constituency -- in this House, was completely unacceptable to me. I suspect it's completely unacceptable to other Members, as well.

I have, to this day, Mr. Speaker, still not received an adequate explanation of why I was not given the courtesy of being consulted or even informed as the elected representative of the community of Iqaluit, before such an important decision was taken. Or, indeed, why Mr. Allooooloo seemed to have disappeared around that time. So much for taking advantage of the wisdom of MLAs and their superior knowledge of the communities. So much for Cabinet Ministers working with and being accountable to MLAs and their communities. So much for consensus government, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. I've just had a request from CBC, TVNC is on a delayed feed. CBC is trying to get today's footage for media national broadcast

tonight. They would like to come into the gallery for ten minutes to get full shots. I will allow them in the gallery unless there are any objections. So, I am going to ask, is there any objection by any Member to have a CBC television crew come in the Assembly for ten minutes?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk, if you could inform them that they're welcome to come in...I'm sorry, in the Chamber itself. They want to get shots direct instead of from the top. I said the gallery, but it's the Chamber itself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER:

Okay, please inform them, Mr. Clerk. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Member's Statement On National Addiction Awareness Week

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opening of our Legislature was a significant event, particularly the northern talent event. What was more important was the commitment not to serve any alcohol during the events as we all know this week is national addiction awareness week. I am happy to advise my constituents that alcohol was never at any time considered to be served during these events.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding a number of events are taking place this week which started last Sunday with an addiction awareness presentation by Dave Poitras and it was sponsored by Thebacha Campus. The opening ceremonies took place on Sunday evening with our Mayor, Dennis Bevington; our Metis Nation President, George Kurszewski; Peter Paulette, representing the Fort Smith Native Band; and, David Poitras, our program director for the alcohol and drug program. The opening prayer was given by Amie

Tatson, who is one of the individuals successful in maintaining sobriety over the past few years.

On Monday, November 15, there was an open house at Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre hosted by the alcohol and drug counsellor, Una Simon and staff of the friendship centre.

On Tuesday, there were posters displayed at JBT Elementary School throughout the week.

Yesterday, there was stew and bannock at lunch hour prepared by Valerie MacKay, the victims' assistance program worker, and the helpers at the friendship centre.

Today, once again, there will be displays at the Northern stores which are sponsored by the Al-Anon group.

Tomorrow, the walk for sobriety will start at JBT Elementary School at 3:00 pm, which is sponsored by JBT Elementary School children and teachers. This event is also assisted by the town of Fort Smith and the RCMP.

Tomorrow night there will also be a teen dance hosted by the Teen Warriors at the Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre, and on Saturday, a sliding party.

These events take time to organize and I would like to encourage my constituents to participate in as many as they can, particularly the walk for sobriety, tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, these alcohol and drug workers work long and tireless hours to serve our constituents. During this session I will be advocating on their behalf to look at increasing the pay for these individuals who are so committed to assisting people to attain sobriety in our respective communities. I'd like to extend my congratulations to the Fort Smith alcohol and drug program and staff, and to the community who are working together to make this week's national addiction awareness week a success.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell. Mr. Gargan.

Member's Statement On Inmates Prohibited From Voting

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak, yet again, on the issue of the unconstitutionality of our legislation which prohibits inmates from voting. Some Members of this Assembly may recall that I raised this issue during the 11th Assembly. As well, I have made several statements on this issue during the 12th Assembly.

For those Members unfamiliar with the issue, I will briefly outline the background of this issue. Section 28(3) of our

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Elections Act provides that a person "undergoing punishment as an inmate in a prison for the commission of an offence" shall not be entitled to vote. This conflicts sharply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 3, which provides that, "every citizen of Canada has a right to vote in an election of Members of the House of Commons or of a Legislative Assembly, and to be qualified for membership therein."

Mr. Speaker, many provinces across Canada, and the federal government have electoral provisions similar to ours which prohibit inmates from voting. In the 1990s, several court challenges to these provisions were launched. Some were successful, others -- for reasons of timing and pending elections -- were not.

As a result of the uncertainty on this issue -- and my concern that our legislation in this regard may be unconstitutional -- I moved a motion on July 3, 1991, asking that our government refer this issue to the courts by a ruling under the Legal Questions Act, as to where our Elections Act was constitutional.

A territorial election was impending and I was concerned that our government might be acting in an unconstitutional fashion by refusing to allow inmates to vote. I was further concerned that an inmate could possibly stall the election by bringing in a court challenge to our legislation on the eve of the election.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sad to say that this motion was defeated. Many Members spoke against this motion because they felt it meant that prisoners...

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Gargan, your time has elapsed. Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get unanimous consent to continue my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GARGAN:

Many Members spoke against the motion because they felt that it meant that prisoners would have the right to be MLAs. Other Members, such as the honourable Dennis Patterson, said that the issue on whether prisoners in jail should vote in the territorial election should be a decision made by people elected in this Assembly. It was said that we were abdicating our responsibility by referring this matter to the courts.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the government did not choose to have a recent debate in the House on the issue, nor have they presented amendments to the House on the Election Act. The issue was simply swept under the carpet as not being an appropriate item on this House's agenda. Nor, Mr. Speaker, did the media recognize this as an important constitutional issue. Rather, I was mocked and ridiculed in the media for raising a very important issue of the fundamental and democratic rights of all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada has now ruled on this issue. In one ruling, on an almost identical provision in our Elections Act of May 1993, the Supreme Court said that these provisions preventing inmates from voting were clearly unconstitutional. I understand that many decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada are often long and complicated because the questions raised are so complex. This is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The judgment of the Supreme Court on this issue was unprecedented in its brevity -- it was short and to the point -- an absolute prohibition on voting is simply unconstitutional.

I am concerned that this House has made a mockery of this issue, which is such a clear violation of all persons' constitutional rights. I am also concerned that the media made light of this very important matter. Mr. Speaker, I have always been known as a fighter for the underdog, and I will continue to fight for issues I believe important and worthy of protection, regardless of prevailing public winds. Mr. Speaker, I

will be making further statements on the issue of justice in the days to come. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Item 2, Members' statements. Mr. Whitford.

Member's Statement On Appreciation Of New Building

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to stand here in our new building today to make a Member's statement. I too, Mr. Speaker, would like to say a few words of congratulations on behalf of all the people of Yellowknife South and all the people of the Northwest Territories on the completion and the opening of this, their Legislative Assembly building.

We are very proud of our new home and optimistic that it will serve as a working place for all northerners. We, here in Yellowknife, are also very proud that many of our professional and trades people, apprentices and crafts persons, were involved in the design, construction and finishing of this unique building. They are very proud of a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, although this building will stand in our city, it is not and will not become only a Yellowknife institution. It is, and will remain, a place to represent all northerners. We, here in Yellowknife, will be the caretakers on your behalf. Yesterday was a historic day for all people of the north and a special thank you goes to all the people involved in working so hard to make that day a remarkable and memorable one. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Item 2, Members' statements. Mr. Pudlat.

Member's Statement On Summer Games In Cape Dorset

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am standing today to say that I was in Cape Dorset in August.

There were games held in Cape Dorset in the summer and there were people from the Baffin there. I would like to say that I really appreciate those people who came to participate in those events. We, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, have to work together to get our people to participate in these

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kinds of events. It is very important that our people are together. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and MACA for providing funds for that event. I would like to thank the community of Cape Dorset for organizing the games very well. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Item 2, Members' statements. Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Opening Of New Building

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) I am going to speak in my own language. This is the very first time I am speaking to you in this new building. I want to speak to the opening of this new building that occurred yesterday. There were a lot of people that participated in the opening of the new building. They included the chiefs, elders, mayors, the president of the Metis Association, and a lot of officials from the municipalities. There were also many people from all across Canada, including Speakers from the provinces.

The Speaker for the federal government was here, the new Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien and his wife, as well as the Minister of Indian Affairs. They were all here to participate in the opening of the new Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank them for that. They said it was expensive to build this new facility. The media have talked about it. I imagine it was expensive, but past governments had to rent rooms and meeting places from such places as the Yellowknife Inn. I imagine that this building will pay for itself in the future. This is a facility that represents all the people in the Northwest Territories.

As MLAs, we are representing them and we are working on behalf of them. This building represents all of them. When we think of the future, every time they

have meetings here, we will be working for the betterment of communities.

When we are representing the people, every time we have meetings, we set a certain amount of time.

When we meet in this Legislative Assembly, we are working on behalf of all the people in the Northwest Territories, so we have to work for the betterment of the people when we are here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. That concludes Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On MLA Consultation

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Government Leader. I'd like to ask the Government Leader, what is the overall policy in terms of consulting with MLAs and advising them of major changes or initiatives which are particularly affecting their constituencies? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On MLA Consultation

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the involvement of MLAs in planning, the involvement of MLAs in dealing with constituency matters has always been a priority of the Cabinet Ministers, to consult and provide information on events, activities and situations that we are dealing with in the constituencies. That is our overall policy here as Cabinet Ministers. We try, on every occasion, to do that. I believe that on a couple of occasions, for one reason or another, Members were not consulted on some initiatives. But overall, we try to make it a priority to deal with the Members with regard to their constituency matters. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On MLA Consultation

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to what the Government Leader has said, that the Cabinet Members do try to consult with MLAs to advise us of policies or any initiatives that happen in our constituencies, it's evident that the Cabinet Member did not advise my honourable colleague from Iqaluit. I'd like to ask the Government Leader if she can advise us as to why the Members of this House were not informed, even before the news media was informed, that the town of Iqaluit was shut down and an administrator put into place?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On MLA Consultation

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding the Minister did make an attempt to get a hold of the Honourable Member before the situation had come to a conclusion. Mr. Speaker, this particular issue that arose in Iqaluit has been a long outstanding issue. We have been dealing with this particular concern involving the community and the organization of the community for over two years and if we did neglect, I sincerely apologize on behalf of the Minister and also apologize on behalf of myself as Government Leader that we did not make that special effort or more effort to consult with the Member. However, I am aware that the Member was fully up to date on the issues that finally brought us to this conclusion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On MLA Consultation

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the Government Leader has apologized for the process used but it's been done

and I'm sure apologies would be accepted. But we're trying to address this issue so that it doesn't happen again in the future. I'd like to ask the Government Leader whether or not protocol at the very least, or a process is in place whereby Ministers are to advise Members of the

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Legislative Assembly of major decisions which affect their constituencies.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 1-12(4): Government Policy On
MLA Consultation

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that over the last couple of years we've been very diligent in attempting to reach the objective of consulting with MLAs in matters that arise in this category. Like the ordinary Member has suggested, this is an area on this particular occasion which was overlooked and the apology can't undo the matter. However, in the last couple of days since it happened, we are looking specifically at how we can develop a more formal protocol so it will not happen again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In Major
Developments

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. This is a major portfolio of our government and much of the policy and program issues relate very much to how much is it going to cost and so on. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance how he involves MLAs of major developments in his area of responsibility?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In
Major Developments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been a long-standing relationship between the Standing Committee on Finance and the Minister of Finance of the day that major developments would be passed on to the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance and hence on to the Members of the Standing Committee on Finance. If there were something large enough that I felt that it was necessary to advise all MLAs, then I would certainly do that. But normally I pass information to the Standing Committee on Finance. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of
MLAs In Major Developments

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Finance met yesterday with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and I saw them gathering in a room in this wonderful new facility of ours. So I'd like to ask the Minister then, on the basis of those financial discussions that he had with the Minister of DIAND, did he get in touch with the committee responsible for finance so that they would know exactly what happened at that meeting?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of
MLAs In Major Developments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, the meeting that I was at with Mr. Irwin yesterday afternoon, after the session, was actually a public affair. It was to sign an agreement with Mr. Irwin on behalf of the federal government and myself on behalf of the territorial government, with regard to a new agreement between us on physicians billings. And obviously once those documents have all been processed, I will advise the Standing Committee on Finance that we have reached an agreement in this particular area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In Major Developments

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Finance, on the basis of discussions he had with the Minister of DIAND, he then proceeded to discuss the billing issue with the media and I happened to be fortunate enough yesterday morning to hear this information on the radio, because, as I mentioned, I do get some of my information from the radio. So I'd like to ask the Minister, is that the way then that he intends to inform MLAs about what he's agreed to do with the current Minister of the federal government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In Major Developments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, my position with regard to the health billings agreement has not changed since the time that I informed this House that we were going to take it to the federal court. I have said, on a number of occasions, publicly and in this House that it would be my preference to negotiate this issue through our lawyers with the federal government. Yesterday, we were fortunate enough that Mr. Irwin agreed in a meeting in the morning that the way to resolve this issue would be to instruct our lawyers to negotiate the issue. That is merely a culmination of the goal I have been trying to reach for the past year, Mr. Speaker. I didn't feel I was making any radical new change in the way we were going to deal with this issue. I was merely saying let's be thankful that the federal government is prepared to accept our argument in this respect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In Major Developments

MR. LEWIS:

My question to the Minister of Finance is a very simple one. Could he explain to ordinary Members how we are supposed to know what has been agreed on, in terms of negotiating the total amount of money

we figure the federal government actually owes us? The only information I received was from the radio yesterday. I never got it from anyone else. It would be very embarrassing to me if I missed that broadcast and got nailed by a constituent on the way to work, which is very often the case, and he would ask me what exactly is this \$79 million? I would not have known that there had been an

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agreement to negotiate. My last information was it was a court case. So could the Minister explain to me exactly how that information was given to ordinary Members?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 2-12(4): Involvement Of MLAs In Major Developments

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, the House was advised by me when I tabled the court documents in this House last year. That was done to advise the House that we were taking this issue to court. I advised the House at that time that this was a matter of contract law. That we were taking the federal government to court because they had not honoured what we felt was an agreement. Since that time, as I have said before, I have said to numerous federal Ministers that I would negotiate this through our lawyers. It was not my preference to have this eventually end up in court. I have said it to Mr. Siddon, Mr. Mazankowski, Ms. Pauline Browes and I have said it publicly.

Yesterday, events were moving very quickly. We found out yesterday morning that this Minister was prepared to advise his lawyer to negotiate on their behalf, if we were prepared to do the same. We agreed immediately. We have not taken this issue out of court. It still remains in the federal court system and we will try to get an out-of-court settlement. The issue was moving very quickly yesterday and we took advantage of the fact that Mr. Irwin is prepared to say publicly that he would instruct his lawyers to negotiate with our lawyers. My apologies if we have not gotten the information out fast enough, but it has always been our position that we would like to negotiate this thing out and we just saw that as a culmination of our goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs about my statement today. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he was aware of my letter sent to the Minister of Finance about the financial situation of the town of Iqaluit? Was he aware of my keen interest in that situation? Was he aware of my efforts to promote a resolution of that financial situation? Was he aware that I was very anxious, was asking his office and his officials, on a frequent basis, what was going on? Was he aware of that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

The chair has decided that those four questions are rolled up into one generic question. So could you answer the generic question, Mr. Alloo.oo.

Return To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good to know. Since the Minister was aware of my keen interest in this very serious situation, in the second largest community in the Northwest Territories, and since I was in my office every day the week that the decision was made, notwithstanding whatever efforts the Minister might have made to get hold of me, was it the Minister's intention that I should be kept in the dark until after the decision was executed in my riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloo.oo.

Further Return To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree the process that took place could have been handled better. I attempted to contact Mr. Patterson prior to my meeting in Yellowknife and also to attend federal and provincial meetings. I was told he was in the standing committee meeting. Normally the standing committee cannot be disturbed, unless it is by a staff person. Since I was leaving shortly after my call, I asked my deputy minister to inform Mr. Patterson that this was coming to a head. My deputy minister called Mr. Patterson's office on November 10. He was not successful. Then he came over to the Legislative Assembly to talk to Mr. Patterson and he was still in the standing committee meeting, but he waited for him to come out. At that time, he was able to give him a copy of the letters sent to the town of Iqaluit and to the new administrator. It was not my intention to keep the MLA in the dark. I agree, Mr. Speaker, this could have been handled better and I apologize to Mr. Patterson for the shortness of consultation.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do acknowledge the apology. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, we work in a building that many people have commented has many glass walls. I think the Minister is aware of where the Standing Committee on Finance meets. I think the Minister is aware of the strong commitments, reiterated by the Government Leader, to open government. I have to ask the honourable Minister, did he really think that I would object to being called out of a week-long standing committee meeting to be told that the duly elected mayor and council of the second largest municipality in the Northwest Territories were being fired? Did he really think it was inappropriate to ask the clerk to get me or stand outside the glass walls of that meeting room and indicate his interest in seeing me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

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Further Return To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated before, the procedure we followed could have been handled a lot better. I truly apologize to Mr. Patterson that I didn't inform him. I attempted to inform him ahead of time. This was done on November 10 in the afternoon and I attempted on November 11, but I only had one hour because I had to leave on that day. I apologize to the Member that the procedure we used was not appropriate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'm told that the Minister attempted to call me but was afraid to interrupt the meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance to tell me that democracy was over in Iqaluit. I am told, Mr. Speaker, that his deputy minister tried to call me on November 10, but was unsuccessful. I would like to ask the Minister -- because he received a letter from me on November 12 objecting to my not have been informed or consulted in any way -- when he says that the deputy minister was unsuccessful in reaching me, how precisely was the Minister unsuccessful?

Did he phone and there was no answer? Did the phone connection not work? Was he unable to leave a message on my voice mail machine, which was working all that week and gave me many messages while I was at the standing committee meetings? How was it that his deputy minister was unsuccessful in getting a hold of me on November 10? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I phoned the Legislative Assembly for Mr. Patterson and I was told by the staff that he was in a meeting. I didn't have a whole week. I think I had only about four hours. After the Cabinet made the decision, my deputy minister telephoned the Legislation Assembly and Mr. Patterson's home. One of his children answered, saying that he was not home. That was the night of November 10. The next day, my deputy minister

attempted to come here and see Mr. Patterson to advise him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Valiant efforts were made to get a hold of me after the decision was made on November 10. I'll accept that. I was only informed on November 12 at the same moment the deed was being executed in my riding. After I was informed, Mr. Speaker, I called the Minister's office. I called his executive assistant. I wrote him an urgent letter, expressing my grave concern about not having been given the courtesy of being consulted -- let alone informed -- before a decision on a matter I was very much interested in, was made. In spite of these efforts to reach the Minister, it wasn't until the caucus meeting on the following Tuesday, November 16, that the Minister even approached me to discuss this issue.

My question is this, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister felt it was important that the MLA be involved in this decision and if he failed to consult me prior to the decision being made, why did it take him four days following my letter of outrage to reach me, discuss the matter with me, or to get a hold of me in any way to apologize or explain why I had been left out of the matter? Why was I not informed before and then had to wait four days before I even had the pleasure of seeing the Minister, let alone bringing the matter up, at my instigation, at caucus? Why did it take so long? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 3-12(4): Minister's Knowledge Of Member's Concern

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, Mr. Patterson was informed by my deputy minister on November 12. The reason I was not able to see Mr. Patterson was because I was out of town. During that week, my intention was to go back to my constituents after the executive council. I was not able to go home so I thought I'd take a little break before session. During that weekend, I had a federal/provincial meeting in Saskatoon. I left on the afternoon of November 11. I drove to various places before attending the federal/provincial meeting. I came back, Mr. Speaker, on the night of November 15. The next day, I was able to approach Mr. Patterson. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome a former colleague and former MLA, Mr. Arnold McCallum, who is in the gallery.

---Applause

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

Question 4-12(4): Great Whale Hydro Project

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the environment a question. It has been over two years that I have been raising this question in regard to the Great Whale hydro project. It will have a great effect on the people around the Sanikiluaq area who are my constituents. They are very afraid that this is dangerous to the wildlife in the area and it will have a different effect on the people. I often go to Sanikiluaq and try to get their views. They were consulted about the Great Whale hydro project, and were asked questions which had nothing to do with the area itself, the area of Sanikiluaq.

It would have been more appropriate if those people who went to listen to the concerns about the effects it would have within the community, concentrated on this Sanikiluaq area. I would

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like to ask the Minister if there is going to be further consultation about this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 4-12(4): Great Whale Hydro Project

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a brief meeting with the mayor of Sanikiluaq -- I believe he is still in town -- about this topic. He wanted our support. The Member for Baffin South wants to find out more about the issues. There are a lot of issues that are being discussed. I can meet with him in person and update him on what is happening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Pudlat.

Supplementary To Question 4-12(4): Great Whale Hydro Project

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister said he had a brief meeting with the mayor of Sanikiluaq. Maybe he could get more information on the hydro project because the Sanikiluaq residents want to be informed. If he gets more information, perhaps he can report back to the Legislative Assembly and not just to me, individually. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 4-12(4): Great Whale Hydro Project

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, as a

follow-up to Mr. Patterson's questions. Mr. Allooloo did apologize for acting inappropriately. I would like to ask the Minister if he acted inappropriately at the time of the decision or after the decision was made?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Right after the decision of the Cabinet was made.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the City Council and Villages Act, there is a section 92 in which the Minister has the option of establishing a municipal advisory committee composed of at least two members of the community. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the representative is from the government and there is really no representation from the town of Iqaluit. I would like to ask the Minister whether he is considering that option?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, yes. I will be appointing a committee and I will be seeking the MLA's input about who those members should be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

MR. GARGAN:

Just one final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. By virtue of the Minister firing the Mayor and the council, the council is incapable of meeting their financial obligations. Is this government taking on that financial responsibility?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, in the event of a municipal corporation getting into debt, we use a process which would allow them to recover some of their shortfall. We do that a number of different ways. In hamlets, what we do is have financial positions monitoring on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The department prepares operational evaluations on legislative and financial administration and management capabilities of the municipal corporations. Those are the studies that identify problem areas.

When we detect problem areas, we normally go into a community and say, "This is our concern. Could we work together to find solutions?" In this case, in Iqaluit, the Member from Iqaluit knew very well what events had taken place. Like the Premier said, it started a while back, specifically in 1988. There have been at least four Ministers dealing with the Iqaluit problem. In February 1988, the problem areas were identified and recommendations on how to solve the problems were made. In the following year, 1989, our evaluators went back to the town and identified more areas. Our concern, in 1989, was that the previous recommendations of the report of 1988 were not acted upon.

It started from there. The relationship we have had with the town has been one of confrontation. At the end of 1990, we felt that the town was in a very serious financial situation. Their debt was gaining by \$1,500 a day in interest. We asked the council to see if we could work together but the town chose not to cooperate with our government. Therefore, we were faced with very limited options. When you are talking about \$4 to \$6 million, it is a large amount of money for our government, and it cannot be overlooked.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not too clear. I know that the Minister went back a few years about the problems that have developed up to this point. A decision was made by this government that the situation was out of hand and people were not acting financially responsible. They fired everybody and have taken over. My question to the Minister was whether, by virtue of firing the elected members of Iqaluit, this government is now obliged to take on the responsibility of the financial problems the town of Iqaluit is now experiencing?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 5-12(4): Inappropriate Actions By Minister

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, the recovery plan for Iqaluit is in place. The town of Iqaluit will still continue to receive the normal grants that this government provides to Iqaluit. Except now there is a town administrator, who I appointed as replacement of the council, to do the recovery plan. He is to give me reports on a weekly basis. My hope is that he will not be there more than six months. By then, I hope that things will be back to normal and the recovery plan will be back on track, thereby allowing the town to have a new council at the end of six months. That's my hope. If there are more problems at the end of six months, then obviously we will require more time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

You've had your full complement of questions, Mr. Gargan. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, get very concerned when there's a lack of consultation with MLAs on issues such as the one that happened in Iqaluit, and a lack of consultation with the respective MLAs. It seems to

me that there's only consultation when it's appropriate and when there's good news. We never get consulted when there's bad news.

I'd like to follow up a little more on the issue of Iqaluit and how things unfolded. My question is to the Government Leader. Who has the authority to make decisions to remove the responsibility of elected town councils, such as the one that took place in Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, on the direct answer to the question, it's under the Municipal Affairs Act. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the honourable Member for Iqaluit is raising the initial question of not being consulted. I would like to get that clarified because it's creating a misunderstanding. The honourable Member for Iqaluit was and is informed of the events leading up to the action taken in removing the mayor, council and SAO. The question is not that the action itself was not acceptable to the Member, but the concern was he was not apprised when that action was taking place. The action itself, on taking the responsible decisions is not the question. The only question the honourable Member is raising is that when that action was decided upon, he was not told when it would happen.

My understanding, Mr. Speaker, unless I can get clarification...

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier, there's a point of order. Point of order, Mr. Patterson.

Point Of Privilege

MR. PATTERSON:

Point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. With the greatest respect to the honourable Government Leader, Mr. Speaker, it is for me, I would humbly suggest, as an elected representative of the constituency of Iqaluit, to decide what the issue is in this matter. I have raised the issue today of the adequacy of consultation. I have not, myself, raised the issue of whether the

decision to appoint the administrator was justified or not.

With respect, it is not the Government Leader's place to tell this House whether I'm concerned about the rightness of the decision or not. That is my privilege as a Member. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

It's a point, Mr. Patterson, but according to our rules I wouldn't categorize it as a point of privilege. Madam Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the honourable Member clarifying that issue.

The matter and the decision is under the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, to take such action. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know it's under that act, but my question is who under the act has the authority to take this action?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

The Minister responsible for the Municipal and Community Affairs Department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. If it's the Minister's responsibility and authority, can the Government Leader inform this House as to who made the decision to remove the mayor,

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council, town administrator and replace them with a public administrator in Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 6-12(4): Authority To Remove Responsibilities Of Elected Town Councils

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the decision and the option chosen was by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, who sought the advice of Cabinet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this particular issue on the decision made by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, my question would be to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The decision to terminate the town council of Iqaluit, and the town administrator, was that the decision of the Minister of Municipal Affairs or was that the decision of the Cabinet? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made on the advice of Cabinet.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

The Minister indicated that the decision was made on the advice of Cabinet. The decision was made by whom on the advice of Cabinet? Can the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs please indicate that to this House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made by me.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, initially I was concerned with the process used of not consulting the Member, but now I'm more concerned as a Member because I seem to be getting conflicting information from that side of the House. Earlier this afternoon -- and I was listening with interest to this particular debate, Mr. Speaker -- the Minister indicated that this decision was made by Cabinet. He now indicates that the decision was made by himself on the advice of Cabinet. I would like to ask the Minister, can he correct, for the record, who made the decision, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs or the Cabinet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, the Minister has the authority to declare or order a municipal corporation to be under the control of a municipal administrator. For the purpose of the act, I as a Minister had to say I made the decision. What actually happened doesn't necessarily...It's not my decision alone. It's Cabinet's decision to do what the act says. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, since it's my final supplementary and I haven't been able to get a clear answer from the Minister, I'd like to ask -- and my questions are again to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs -- who is responsible for making the decision to terminate the town council of Iqaluit, and who is responsible for this particular decision that was done on the advice of Cabinet? Was it the Minister or was it the Cabinet? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 7-12(4): Decision To Remove Iqaluit Town Council

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my responsibility for these things to happen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be some confusion about many of the events which apparently have been clarified, but they're not clear to many of us. I know that on November 11, Mr. Beaumont left for Calgary, at least that was the local information.

When was Mr. Beaumont appointed to be the administrator of the municipality of Iqaluit? When was the appointment made?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, I believe it was November 12 that he was appointed.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

MR. LEWIS:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Beaumont left Yellowknife, as he was not able to play the piano at the memorial service on that day. The reason for it was because he had left and he was on his way to Iqaluit in a very round about way. So I would like to ask the Minister again, would he confirm that he was able to contact Mr. Beaumont somewhere in the air between here and Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

MR. LEWIS:

I'd like to ask the Minister then, when exactly was Mr. Beaumont contacted and by what means?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Further Return To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the letter was drafted to him on November 11. I'm not too sure so I'll check, Mr. Speaker, when he received the letter that appointed him and also gave him direction to be administrator of the town of Iqaluit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There still seems to be confusion as to responsibility for dispatching this individual to do a certain job. I'd like to ask the Minister, did he continue to exercise responsibility through the period until November 12 for whatever actions had to take place in Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't fully understand the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps the Member would like to clarify his question and restate it. Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

MR. LEWIS:

I do try to be brief, Mr. Speaker, but I'll expand a little bit. Since there seems to be some confusion about who is responsible for what, my question to the Minister is, since he has told us that he took some time off, could he indicate whether he continued to be responsible for that department up until the period of November 12, or had advantage of responsibility

already been given to Mr. Kakfwi because it was Mr. Kakfwi who signed the letter?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloofoo.

Further Return To Question 8-12(4): Appointment Of Iqaluit Administrator

HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

I believe, Mr. Speaker, when a Minister is appointed to look after a certain department they must be responsible. There are a number of times in the past, even though I was on holidays or taking time off, I had to make some decisions about my departments regardless of being on holidays. I believe, Mr. Speaker, I have to be responsible for all my departments whether I am on leave or whatever, as long as I am able to do so. From time to time, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister is not in Yellowknife, other Ministers can sign documents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. You've utilized all your supplementaries, Mr. Lewis. Item 5, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, it seems that we were initially confused about the process used, but now we're getting more confused. It's a good thing question period is just about over.

Mr. Speaker, it seemed that initially when we started questioning this issue in the House this afternoon, we were told that the Cabinet had made the decision. On the advice of Cabinet this decision was made on November 10. Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister tried to reach my honourable colleague the night of November 10. We were still in SCOF on November 10, you have to keep that in mind. However, in the afternoon they still couldn't reach him so they did this press release on November 12 and the Minister left on November 11. I would like to ask the Minister if he was here making the decision on the advice of Cabinet on November 10, then why did the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs sign the letter relayed to the Member for Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloofoo.

Return To Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure, I have to go back. I was informed by my office on Friday that the letter was signed by Mr. Kakfwi. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister whether this particular issue was faxed. How was the information relayed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloofoo.

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HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not too clear to whom this message was conveyed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Marie-Jewell, would you care to clarify?

Supplementary To Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe what I should have done was ask the Minister if he would agree to table the fax that he referred to in the answer to my question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Alloofoo.

Further Return To Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

HON. TITUS ALLOOFOO:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I will provide the information as soon as I can.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to that particular topic, I'd like to ask the Minister of MACA since the Minister of MACA had requested the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs sign this particular letter which was to relay the information, did the Minister of MACA appoint the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs as acting Minister of MACA on his behalf?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 9-12(4): Reason For Minister Signing Letter

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, no. As I explained earlier, from time to time important documents have to be signed by a Minister. If the Minister responsible for that particular department is not in town, then another Minister of this government can sign such documents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a former colleague, in the gallery, Mr. Bruce McLaughlin, former MLA.

---Applause

Item 5, oral questions. Point of privilege, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Point Of Privilege

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a point of privilege not to mislead the House, but on November 10 -- and my apologies -- we were in the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions as opposed to the Standing Committee on Finance. Thank you. Although, Mr. Patterson, I believe, was available.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. That is really not a point of privilege. It is a point of clarification but we have no such rule in our House. I have Mr. Whitford next. Item 5, oral questions.

Question 10-12(4): Hunting Ban On Ingraham Trail

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and it may be his responsibility as Minister of Renewable Resources. Mr. Speaker, annually, during the caribou migration, there is a ban on hunting along the Ingraham Trail for a mile and a half on each side of the trail, during a specific time. Several weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, we heard that there is a total ban on hunting along that corridor. There seems to be some confusion as to what type of hunting we're talking about here because I saw reports, Mr. Speaker, that said only rifles are banned. I'd like to ask the Minister for clarification of exactly what type of a hunting ban has been imposed on that particular stretch of highway.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question 10-12(4): Hunting Ban On Ingraham Trail

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, the new restriction of firing a firearm on Ingraham Trail applies not only to harvesting of wildlife, it's a firearm dischargement. Nobody in that area is allowed to discharge a firearm in the corridor which is 1.5 kilometres from the road, either side. It's a year round ban, whether it's for hunting or it's for discharging a firearm for other purposes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed. Item 6, written questions. We'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 10: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 1-12(4): Talking and Working Together

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the current and former Members of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. This committee was established by the Legislative Assembly in November of 1991 in response to public concerns with the delivery of our health and social services. I am pleased to present the final report, entitled "Talking and Working Together."

We would like to thank the many hundreds of young people, men and women who helped make this report possible. Our goal was to talk with and listen to as many people as possible during the course of our review. We are grateful to the people in every region who attended more than 200 workshops, meetings and public events.

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Special thanks are owed the dedicated front line workers who provide our health and social services under often challenging and stressful conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this report is dedicated to the residents of the Northwest Territories. We have heard their concerns and hopes on these important issues. We have tried to incorporate what we learned into our findings. And we urge our colleagues in the Legislative Assembly and the members of Cabinet to act upon the recommendations that have emerged from this process.

To begin, Mr. Speaker, it has become clear to the committee that the current delivery of health and social services in the Northwest Territories is not nearly as effective as it should be.

The committee believes the current system does not adequately reflect the needs and cultural diversity of our communities. Front line workers who provide programs are overworked, inadequately supported and unable to spend time working to prevent problems rather than treating them. Residents of the north expect this government to act quickly to address

the problems and concerns they told us about. As a major part of this action, they want to see more local control in the planning and delivery of these programs which are so important in shaping their quality of life.

While this committee was authorized to examine all matters dealing with health and social services, we focused our review on several key issues and groups. We examined the way in which these services are delivered. We considered how certain factors beyond the medical definition of "health" affect our quality of life. These factors include housing, lifestyle, the economy and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the World Health Organization's definition of health as, and I quote: "a state of optimal physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity." With this definition in mind, your committee examined issues of particular importance to several key groups in our society. These groups include elders, children and youth, and people with addictions.

We told the people of the Northwest Territories that we would take an open minded approach to these matters. At the same time, we explained that our objective was a system of health and social services that reflects six key principles.

Our system of health and social services must: meet the needs of the peoples of the North. It must be available to those who need assistance and it must be affordable. It must be relevant to the culture and healing traditions of our communities. It must encourage community involvement in developing and providing local programs, and finally, it must take a lead role in a strategy to promote wellness by removing the threat of violence and abuse from people's lives.

These are the principles that guided our review during a time of great change to health and social services throughout North America.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member from Thebacha, Mrs. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, to continue with the report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Health and social services are also being studied and reformed by governments in Canada and elsewhere. People are questioning the role of these services, how they should be provided and how they should be paid for.

A number of provinces have introduced extensive cost-reduction programs in this area during the past year. These steps have been taken in order to bring public spending more in line with the financial limitation facing governments at all levels.

These measures include the renegotiation of agreements between governments and doctors, budget cutbacks, the closing of hospitals and the full scale review of provincial health care and social welfare systems.

These and other actions are relevant to the study of our own health and social services. They reflect a number of general trends which cannot be ignored and which are already having an impact within the Northwest Territories.

Governments everywhere are trying to live more within their means. Health and social services are among the most expensive areas of government activity. The cost of providing these programs in the Northwest Territories is also increasing. This is caused by such factors as increased demands on the system by northerners, plus the high northern cost of operating medical facilities, social assistance, transportation systems and high technology equipment.

In general, people are living longer and are placing more demands on health and social services. The population of the Northwest Territories is no different. It is growing in size. It is getting younger, with about half of our residents under the age of 18 years. At the same time, people are trying to cope with a number of relatively recent health problems such as cancer, AIDS, diabetes, tooth decay and the effects of tobacco.

It is widely accepted that promoting physical and mental wellness and preventing disease are cost-effective approaches. This is reflected in the healthy public policy and healthy cities projects under way across Canada. Across the Northwest Territories, people are recognizing this trend and seeking to incorporate prevention into many health and social programs.

Governments everywhere are looking for ways to reduce the use of costly and often distant hospitals and other treatment facilities. In the Northwest Territories, people are looking to community and home-based programs as one way of providing more effective, flexible, and less expensive care.

People across Canada are requesting greater local involvement in the planning and delivery of health and social service programs. Residents of the Northwest Territories are no different. They want to make a slow to respond bureaucratic system more responsive to local needs. Here, as elsewhere, the future lies in developing new partnerships between individuals, communities and governments. When people achieve a greater role in shaping these partnerships, they will be in a position to develop more community-based solutions.

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We began our review process, Mr. Speaker, with these national and global trends in health care delivery in mind.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the title of our report, "Talking and Working Together," we believe that the best way to determine the effectiveness of our health and social services is to talk directly with the people who receive and deliver these programs. We decided to do just that through open and extensive consultations with the public and with front line workers across the Northwest Territories. As part of that process, we visited at least one community in each constituency. Meetings and workshops were held with more than 200 organizations. Public meetings were convened in 21 communities where we received more than 250 presentations. An opinion survey of 280 front line workers was conducted. Four interim reports were submitted to the Legislative Assembly. As well, a public information program was conducted to inform and involve people in our review.

These activities were designed to encourage as much discussion and information sharing as possible. Our approach to community visits reflected this commitment. We made sure we were able to spend as much time as possible in each community.

Our community visits often lasted two and even three days. We would split up into smaller groups so that we could meet with anyone who wanted to express their views. We tried to hear as many points of view as we could.

Mr. Speaker, we received an overwhelming response. People were pleased they were being consulted. They appreciated being made to feel a part of the process. They participated in our activities in great numbers. Workshops and public meetings were extremely well-attended in every region.

What we heard was both encouraging and disturbing. The people we met still had faith that their government has the ability to address the issues they raised with us. However, this faith is not endless. People across the north clearly expect the government to act on the results of our review, but they expressed scepticism about whether such action can or will be taken.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson, to continue with the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on these and other activities, we developed a number of recommendations for reform. We have put forward proposals that are realistic and affordable. In some cases, additional resources will be required. However, we are confident that this will result in long-term savings.

Our goal was not to make the system larger or smaller, but to make it work better.

Our recommendations outline specific actions we believe the government should take as quickly as possible, where results can generally be measured in a period of time. Mr. Speaker, the recommendations in the narrative section of the report provide a road map to guide the process of setting policy and procedures over the longer term.

It is impossible to fully examine either health or social services without considering both. As a result, we do not try to maintain an artificial distinction between the two.

In general, we heard that many people feel detached and distant from their own health and social services. They have little sense of ownership or involvement in the system. It is seen as slow, complex, confusing and unresponsive to the needs of the community. As

a result, many people told us that the current system does not meet their requirements.

This poor general impression stems in part from the belief that the system and its front line workers do not fully reflect the culture, traditions and healing practices of our communities. We even heard of people who are afraid to seek assistance because the system does not make sense to them.

Another general problem identified during our consultations was the lack of cooperation and coordination between government departments. A number of departments are involved in planning and providing our health and social services. They do not seem to talk to one another as often as they should. Too often we heard that information is kept within a department instead of being shared with appropriate personnel in other agencies who might be able to help in finding solutions for clients and their families.

Mr. Speaker, people were also concerned that the conventional approach to public education programs was not working. We heard over and over again that more discussion was required on a range of issues that affect our quality of life.

People told us that one way to address a number of their general concerns would be to increase local control over the planning and delivery of health and social services in their own communities. The current system is viewed as insensitive to unique local conditions, resources and requirements. We heard that greater local authority in these areas could result in better programs, run more efficiently and in an improved quality of life.

An independent review we conducted into the effects of local control over these services seems to reach the same conclusions. This review concludes that the benefits of local control include greater sensitivity to community needs, the involvement of people in shaping their own solutions, less reliance on outside agencies, increased effectiveness and greater public awareness of these issues.

We heard that the system should also shift its focus from institutional care towards community and especially home-based programs and services. People believe that this shift should also place less emphasis on the treatment of problems and more on the prevention of such problems in the first place.

transportation. Some people felt strongly that the confidentiality of their health and social service records must be maintained.

People we spoke with believe that those who commit abuse should not be treated better than their victims. There is a clear perception that victims are often placed at a disadvantage through no fault of their own. They usually have to leave the home, face a delay in qualifying for future housing and cope with delays inherent in the justice system. Quite simply, people want offenders to suffer more of the consequences of their actions. At the same time, they want victims to be helped to stay in their own homes and to rebuild their lives in their own communities.

We also heard a number of concerns about the workings of the social assistance program and the inadequacy of current income support benefits. We were told that these payments do not reflect the high cost of living in the north or the fact that these costs vary greatly between communities.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake, Mr. Charles Dent, to continue with the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our health and social service front line workers are generally respected as a valuable resource in most communities. It is also clear that they are being asked to do too much with too few resources. Most workers who participated in our survey of front line workers identified this lack of resources as the greatest problem they face in performing their jobs. Survey participants identified lack of appropriate training as the second greatest problem they face. As a result of heavy case loads, changes in cultural surroundings, a lack of support from local residents and staff "burn out," our system suffers from high staff turnover.

We believe that a number of steps can and must be taken to improve the delivery of health and social services in the Northwest Territories. Our proposals deal with such matters as the development of local initiatives, more use of telecommunications in

providing effective services, and provision of training in such areas as cultural sensitivity.

Mr. Speaker, the committee's recommendations in the area of health and social service delivery are as follows:

Recommendation 1

Amalgamation of the Departments of Health and Social Services should proceed immediately. The first step in this process should be the designation of one Minister responsible for both departments, by March 31, 1994.

Recommendation 2

The level of cooperation and information sharing between all government departments involved in the delivery of health and social services must improve, and the government should report to the 1994 fall session of the Legislative Assembly on measures taken to achieve this.

Recommendation 3

Greater authority should be transferred to regional health boards as they are willing and able to assume those duties.

Recommendation 4

Local health and social service committees must be recognized as essential to the delivery of these programs. The development of local committees should be encouraged and progress should be reported to the Legislative Assembly during each budget session.

Recommendation 5

An effective cross-cultural training program must be established and made compulsory for all new front line workers, and for those working in cross-cultural situations.

Recommendation 6

Traditional healing methods must be recognized, funded by government and incorporated into our system of health and social services.

Recommendation 7

Women should be able to make an informed choice about where they wish to deliver their babies.

Legislation should be developed to recognize midwifery within the health care system.

Recommendation 8

A policy of "zero tolerance" toward violence must be adopted by the government, and widely publicized.

---Applause

Recommendation 9

Housing and family violence programs must be reviewed to ensure that the offender, rather than the victim, suffers the consequences of domestic violence.

Recommendation 10

Every effort should be made to assist victims of domestic violence to rebuild their lives in their own communities.

Recommendation 11

An independent review of the medical air transportation program is required immediately. The results should be presented to the 1994 fall session of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation 12

Communities should be encouraged and assisted in developing their own medical ground transportation services.

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Recommendation 13

The Department of Health should encourage regional health boards to examine how health centre clinic schedules could better meet the needs of the communities.

Recommendation 14

Regulations must be changed to allow people on social assistance to receive a greater portion of money earned through economic activity.

Recommendation 15

A money and budget management program should be developed and made available to long-term social assistance recipients.

Recommendation 16

Front line health and social service workers should be provided with greater training opportunities, and the government should present a report on progress made in this area to the 1994 fall session of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation 17

An employee assistance program should be developed and made available to health and social service front line workers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member from Natilikmiot, Mr. John Ningark, to continue with the report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another major area the committee focused on was issues of specific concern to elders. Mr. Speaker, elders share many of the views about health and social services that were raised by other groups during our review. But they also have a number of concerns that are unique to them and which deserve attention.

Most people view their respected elders as a valuable resource. They have much to offer our communities in the form of wisdom, instruction and counselling. But we heard that this great resource is not being used effectively in many communities. The problem seems to lie in finding the right opportunities for such involvement.

People support the idea of finding a greater role for respected elders in assisting local initiatives in dealing with alcohol, drugs and justice. They could also be involved in counselling troubled individuals and teaching traditional skills to young people through various land-based projects.

There is strong support for more local and home-based health and social services for elders. There is a need for respite care services for those who care for elders and for elders who care for others.

Overcrowding may play a role in a problem we heard about in a number of communities: the abuse of our elders, often in their own homes. This abuse may take different forms: physical, emotional or financial.

Finances in general are clearly a concern to many elders. We were told that efforts to earn extra money can help to increase self-esteem and provide an incentive to work. But the system seems to take part of that feeling away by deducting too much of this income from the next month's income support payment. We heard that current income support benefits are inadequate to meet elders' needs. These needs can be greater than provided for under the social assistance program, since elders often support not only themselves but their extended families as well. This problem also exists in cases where elders care for custom adopted children. In both cases, no extra income support is available to help them meet these added costs.

Home heating is also a major concern for elders. We heard that many elders do not understand why the fuel subsidy program may not meet all of their energy needs.

The committee's recommendations address these and other concerns raised by and on behalf of elders. We offer a number of proposals dealing with their role in the community, locally-based care and greater financial independence. They are as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Recommendation 18

A government contact person on programs for elders should be designated and provided with a 1-800 telephone line so that elders have direct access to a source of information and help.

Recommendation 19

A public education program should be launched to inform people that elder abuse is unacceptable and to let abused elders know where they can find assistance.

Recommendation 20

Respite care should be available for those who care for others in the home. A plan for such a program should be included in the government's 1995-96 budget.

Recommendation 21

The adequacy of income support payments to elders should be reviewed and the government of Canada must be pressured to conduct a similar review of its own program payments.

Recommendation 22

The fuel subsidy program should be reviewed and amended as required. The program objectives and purpose should be effectively communicated.

Mr. Speaker, a large segment of our population are young people. More than half our residents are under 18 years of age. Any review of health and social services must take into account the particular issues facing these important members of our community.

Few things disturbed us as much as what we heard about the extent and consequences of child sexual abuse in the

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Northwest Territories. People want greater recognition, prevention and community treatment in this area.

Many of these abused and other children can find little safety or support in their own homes. We heard requests for facilities in which children can seek emergency shelter and pursue safe recreational activity.

Foster homes are another form of shelter which was raised during our consultations. People told us that there is already a lack of foster homes in general and aboriginal foster homes in particular. We heard that the criteria for selecting these homes may be so narrow that they eliminate a number of otherwise qualified homes. At the same time, we heard that the rules governing the homes themselves may not be sufficient. Foster parents receive little or no information about the children they take into their homes. Parents also receive little in the way of ongoing monitoring, training or support.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Tony Whitford, to continue with the report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, many parents told us they needed reliable child care. We heard of a particular need for permanent policies and programs in this area. These programs could

include in-school or workplace child care services for young mothers so that they could continue their education or jobs.

We heard that one way to care for children even before they are born is for women to avoid drinking while pregnant. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects were mentioned as particular problems among children. People told us that they estimated that anywhere from 15 to 50 per cent of the students in a given school may show the effects of these conditions. We were disappointed to note that the government has yet to respond to our earlier recommendation, to undertake a clinical study to get an accurate picture of the extent of FAS/FAE in the Northwest Territories.

Here, too, we were told that government departments must cooperate more on matters involving children and children's issues. Sometimes public officials do not seem to communicate with one another. Sometimes there seems to be no one responsible for particular issues. We also learned that outdated legislation is an obstacle to effective service provision to children at risk.

Mr. Speaker, our recommendations for children and youth deal with such matters as suicide prevention, the need for new child welfare legislation, coordination between government agencies, safe shelters, overcrowding in the home, more effective and interactive public education programs and ways to encourage young people to pursue careers in health and social services. Mr. Speaker, our specific recommendations for children and youth are as follows:

Recommendation 23

Ways must be found to communicate more effectively with young people to raise their awareness of health and social issues that affect them.

Recommendation 24

Measures to establish in-school and workplace child care services for young parents should be encouraged and supported.

Recommendation 25

A permanent child care policy must be established.

Recommendation 26

The recommendations of the Family Law Review must be implemented quickly. The new legislative framework should be presented to the Legislative Assembly by March 31, 1994.

Recommendation 27

New and more practical criteria governing the selection, development and monitoring of foster homes must be developed.

Recommendation 28

Interdepartmental agreements must be put in place quickly to ensure that early intervention services are available right away. Due to the urgency of this matter, a report must be provided to the Legislative Assembly during the 1994 winter session.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my colleague, the honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Fred Koe, to conclude this report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, finally, an area of utmost concern to people throughout our consultation process was the area of addictions. It is believed by many that addictions are a major factor underlying many of our health and social problems. Our ability to address these problems today will largely determine the demands that may be placed on our front line workers tomorrow. This self-destructive behaviour produces physical, psychological, social, economic and legal problems. These problems affect those with addictions, their families and the community.

Our survey of front line workers identified alcohol and drug abuse as the major issue facing many of our communities. Communities wishing to rid themselves of these substances face a number of problems, including smuggling and other illegal activities. A number of other substances, including gasoline and solvents, are also readily available to those with addictions.

We were told that current treatment methods are not working. There is still a lack of public awareness, insufficient cooperation between government departments and inadequate community-based after-care programs. Treatment programs

are seen as largely ineffective on their own if no other follow-up measures are provided.

Incarceration is no substitute for rehabilitation. We heard support for community-oriented solutions, including the use of health, bush and youth camps. These projects are helping people to take greater control over their lives.

People favour programs which treat not just the individual but their families as well. Respected elders are seen to have a role in providing counselling in these situations. There is also support for more effective public education activities.

We heard that gambling has become more than just a popular fund raising and social pastime. For some, it has become an addiction in its own right. It is clearly a concern to people of most communities. A number of social problems have been linked to this increase in bingo and other gambling activities. These problems may include neglect of children by their parents, people gambling away social assistance payments, absenteeism from work and from school.

The committee's recommendations in this area deal with treatment and follow-up programs, greater recognition of the potentially addictive nature of gambling and encouragement of non-governmental organizations in the fight against addiction. Specifically, they are:

Recommendation 29

More effective public education programs must be developed which outline the dangers of addiction, including gambling and solvent abuse.

Recommendation 30

Local measures to reduce the flow of alcohol and illegal drugs into our communities must be actively supported.

Recommendation 31

Land-based programs for the treatment of people with addictions, and as an alternative to imprisonment, must be established.

Recommendation 32

Local initiatives to reduce the negative effects of gambling on the community must be supported.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes our final report. I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for their commitment and hard work and, most importantly, I would like to thank all the people who shared their concerns and ideas with us, whether by written submission, at public meetings, workshops or in private meetings.

Motion To Receive And Move Committee Report 1-12(4) To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I would therefore move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Charles Dent, that the final report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services be received and moved into committee of the whole for consideration. Mahsi. Qujannamiik.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Your motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 1-12(4) will be put into committee of the whole. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 12, tabling of documents. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table three documents that are a result of the work of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the first document is, Tabled Document 1-12(4) entitled, Frontline Workers' Survey.

Tabled Document 2-12(4) is the summary report entitled, Community Control.

Tabled Document 3-12(4) is the second volume of the community control study entitled, Technical Report and Case Studies. Mr. Speaker, the two summary documents are in both English and Inuktitut.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 12, tabling of documents. Item 13, notices of motion. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of

bills. Item 15, motions. 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. Item 19, report of committee of the whole. 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 and a Nunavut Caucus meeting at 6:00 pm tonight. Tomorrow morning there will be a meeting of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 9:00 am. Orders of the day for Friday, November 19, 1993.

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address

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10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No, 1, 1994-95

19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Sessional Statement
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, November 19, 1993.

---ADJOURNMENT