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The Honourable Michael A. Ballantyne, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Michael Ballantyne):

Thank you, Mr. Pudluk. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Madam Premier.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 5-12(4): Resignation

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I have an emergency statement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House that earlier today, I asked for and received the resignation of the Honourable Titus Allooloo. In response to a question in this Chamber Thursday afternoon, Mr. Allooloo informed Members that he attended a federal/provincial meeting in Saskatoon. In reviewing a chronology of events being prepared for tabling in the House, it came to my attention the Minister's statements may not be true.

As a result of investigations, including a personal meeting with Mr. Allooloo, I have determined that his remarks were not based on fact and constitute a serious misrepresentation to the House. This turn of events is regrettable.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the considerable work that Mr. Allooloo has done for the public and the Executive Council, but the House and the public must be able to rely upon the truthfulness of statements given by Members of the Executive Council. It is a principle that I am not prepared to compromise.

Mr. Speaker, in the interim, the responsibilities for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will be handled by the Honourable John Todd and the ministerial responsibilities for the Department of

Renewable Resources will be taken over by the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 2, Ministers' statements, Minister Todd.

Minister's Statement 6-12(3): Past Year Annual Report, Corporate Plan For The Future Of WCB

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'll be presenting two important documents relating to the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories. The first document, the 1992 Annual Report, is the official record of the year ended last December 31. In looking to the future of workers' compensation, I will also be tabling the WCB's three year corporate plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Act requires that the board prepare an annual report for the responsible Minister to approve and bring to this House. I'm pleased to present the WCB's annual report for the period of January 1 to December 31, 1992.

During 1992, the board handled over 3500 claims and was able to close 95 per cent of them within two months. However, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the year 1992 was a difficult one in many ways for the board. A combination of factors, including a multiple-death mine disaster, stretched the resources to the point that, for the first time in its history, the WCB was not in a fully funded position. While the news has not been all good, this report confirms that the WCB has operated in a professional and conscientious manner in discharging its duties under the act.

The year of 1992 also saw the final report of this House's Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards, and Commissions which recommended a review and a legislative action paper. The former Minister, Mr. Patterson, initiated the review which was conducted by the Chief Commissioner, Garnet Garven.

In order to increase the regional presence of WCB, board members travelled to the regional centres, visiting with hunters' and trappers' associations, labour and employer groups, government agencies and members of the public. From groups like the Fort Smith Metis Assembly and Kitikmeot Regional Council, to organizations such as NWT Chamber of Mines, the board began to actively seek out the concerns, issues and suggestions of its stakeholders.

I understand that this was the first time that the WCB has appeared in the communities of Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the board mailed thousands of copies of a newsletter titled, Directions, to stakeholders across the territories. This newsletter was not some empty marketing exercise. It identified key issues affecting the future of compensation and it presented the pros and cons of each issue. I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the newsletter will be continuing on a quarterly basis with the second issue of it having been just recently released.

The input received from these meetings and from submissions by the board stakeholders, have been very useful to the new

Page 54

board in developing the corporate plan which I will be pleased to table today. The requirement for a corporate plan, Mr. Speaker, is set out in the Financial Administration Act but this plan has not been created as a paper to be filed away. Rather, this three year corporate plan will enable the board to implement new programs and policies that answer a number of the important issues which directly affect the board's claims. Some of the initiatives identified in the plan have already begun, such as the newsletter, and the commitment to visit regional centres and communities. Others will take up to three years to complete.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to some of the more important initiatives. The board has realized that it is not possible to work in isolation. The WCB has therefore established agreements and understandings with several GNWT departments. Safety and education programs and the workers' advisor position are now clearly defined by the WCB and the Department of Safety and Public Services. The board's safety and the young workers' educational program will be offered through the Department of Education.

The board also entered into an agreement with the Department of Justice with regard to inmate compensation and is now in the process of developing an MOU with the Department of Renewable Resources for the administration of the harvesters' compensation program and one with the NWT Housing Corporation to ensure compensation is available to supervisors working under the access program.

Many of the aspects of this plan are internal to the board's operation. But it will be seen by claimants and employers in the form of improved efficiency, lower operating costs and faster turn around. Mr. Speaker, the board has reduced its number of internal committees, from six to three, in order to provide more detailed decisions and expedite hearings. The format of the review committee has been changed. Formerly an external committee, it is now chaired by a full-time staff chairperson.

If we can reduce or eliminate injuries, assessment rates will obviously decline. The board has recently received a report from the Safety Education Advisory Committee, a volunteer body of employers and stakeholders. This report should allow the schools and industries to assist stakeholders in reducing accidents at the work site throughout the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, over the past months, the Workers' Compensation Board has been working toward building a more efficient, less costly system, while at the same time ensuring that the WCB is more accessible and open.

Last July, the board adopted a new impairment rating schedule, moving away from the AMA guidelines which were proving to be unfair, inaccurate and costly. It's my understanding that the board is looking at revising the classification system and implementing a merit rebate surcharge penalty program.

The board has sublet its first-floor space to a tenant, saving about \$75,000 a year.

Rehabilitation programs are being carefully managed, to ensure that the services are targeted to the claimant's needs and abilities.

---Applause

The board has, however, adopted a funding strategy to return it to a fully funded position within one year, by a variety of means other than increasing employer premiums or reducing benefits to injured workers.

The primary aim of this corporate plan for the next three years is to maintain the benefits and remuneration paid to workers who are injured in the work place and at the same time achieve a balanced budget and a fully funded position.

The members of the Workers' Compensation Board are looking to the future of compensation in many ways. I believe that this new board is working to

serve workers and employers on an individual basis by responding more effectively to the changing economic environment in which we live, taking the necessary steps to improve the quality of services provided to our clients and ensuring that the lines of communication remain open between the board, its staff, its stakeholders and the public. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Mike.

Minister's Statement 7-12(4): Keeping The Circle Strong In Northern Communities Conference

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for alcohol and drug services, I wish to inform the Members of this Assembly that a unique international conference, "Keeping the Circle Strong in Northern Communities" will be held in Yellowknife, November 22 to November 25, 1993.

The conference is sponsored by Northern Addiction Services, with funding from the federal government and the territorial Department of Social Services. The conference agenda will focus on issues of solvent abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide and addictions; all of which affect each and every one of the communities we serve.

During this conference, the capital city of the Northwest Territories will be host to people from all across the NWT, as

Page 55

well as delegates from the rest of Canada, the United States and as far away as Norway.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in commending the efforts of Northern Addiction Services and its program committee for taking the initiative in putting together such an important and innovative conference.

By joining me, this will acknowledge a strong and unified commitment on our part to resolving the difficult and perplexing problems of solvent abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide and addictions. Qujannamiik.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Nerysoo.

Minister's Statement 8-12(4): NWT Workers' Training Fund

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in preparing the budget for the current fiscal year, the Financial Management Board approved the establishment of a one-time \$6 million NWT workers' training fund. The objective of the fund is to support training and employment opportunities which can be managed by community governments through local sponsors. An important aspect of the NWT workers' training fund is that it is available to all communities in the territories. Funding is allocated to each community based on working age population and the number of people seeking work. Proposals must contain a job training component for each participant and must provide future access to training by upgrading skills or job opportunities.

Since the projects are designed at the local level, the fund enhances community-based decision-making and provides the kind of training and work experience that is considered important by the community.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, 525 people have received or are receiving support for training and work experience through this program. Training proposals for another 22 people are currently being processed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs. The total value of these proposals is almost \$5.3 million. New proposals continue to be received by the department and we expect to spend a full \$6 million by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT workers' training fund has been a valuable addition to the job training programs carried on throughout the Northwest Territories. It has been particularly important in helping to address the specific training needs of the communities. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Madam Premier.

Minister's Statement 9-12(4): Report Of Special Committee On Health And Social Services

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the presentation of the report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services was very much appreciated by Cabinet and I am sure by all Members of the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of Cabinet, and more specifically, the Ministers of Health and Social Services, I would like to extend my thanks and congratulations to the Members of the special committee for a very thoughtful and considerate report.

Mr. Speaker, some work is under way in several areas in both the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services, which will resolve problems identified by the special committee. However, a great deal of work remains to be done and we look forward to reviewing the report in committee of the whole and receiving direction from this Assembly.

Again, I would like to thank the Members of the special committee for an excellent report. It will provide a solid foundation for change. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Madam Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement Re Louis Riel

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 16, 1885, Louis Riel was found guilty of treason by the Government of Canada and hung at Regina, Saskatchewan. Louis Riel was the Metis, French-speaking founder of Manitoba. The visionary who wanted to see the west free and a homeland for people to live together peacefully.

Last week, on November 16, 1993, 108 years since the death of the Metis leader of Canada, Louis Riel -- and I am sure my honourable colleagues will agree -- also commemorates and continues various forms of suffrage for Metis, not only in Canada, but in the north as well.

Over the past 20 years, issues such as Metis land base, health benefits, equity funding for Metis heritage and culture, criteria extending educational benefits for Metis and post-secondary learning institutions and equity for Metis women in the workforce are only some of the issues which northern born Metis have sought through the northern democratic process and through the territorial government.

Today, November 22, 1993, Metis can no longer identify as individual Metis on health care cards which have been removed, where once Metis could mark an "M" on our health care cards.

A ceiling has been imposed by the Department of Education for students on post-secondary education in the professions such as law, medicine and engineering. Whereby the average student including Metis students now have to pay tuition fees over and above the initial ceiling imposed by this government.

Funding criteria through contribution agreements remains stagnant for the Metis Heritage Association. Mr. Speaker, it seems when issues relating to Metis are proposed to be addressed, I certainly cannot use the words "proposed" and

Page 56

"implemented" because few services have been implemented, although many have been proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge this government to make every effort to address many outstanding issues which affect the daily lives of Metis people in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On High Cost Of POL Products

MR. NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT supplies fuel to 44 of our communities. In most of those communities, the GNWT owns the bulk fuel storage facilities. However, in at least one community, Cambridge Bay, a private company owns the bulk fuel storage facility. This company charges the GNWT a storage fee for POL products in order to receive a return on their capital investment. These storage charges are added

by the Department of Public Works and Services to the POL prices paid by consumers. In all other communities, where the government has spent millions of dollars in capital investments to establish and maintain their tank farms, no charges for the capital cost are factored into the POL prices paid by consumers. Mr. Speaker, this is an unacceptable and unfair situation. The GNWT, by passing on their storage fees, has created an inequity by passing on the responsibility to provide bulk fuel storage facilities in Cambridge Bay. Based on the GNWT's POL retail price list of November 1, 1992, Cambridge Bay and Bathurst Inlet consumers pay 95 cents a litre for gasoline. We share this distinction with residents of Snare Lake, as having the highest price in the NWT and possibly North America.

Mr. Speaker, the Kitikmeot region pays the highest cost of fuel oil products in the entire Northwest Territories. The average litre price for gasoline and heating oil in the NWT,-- again based on those GNWT retail price lists of November 1, 1992,-- per region is as follows: for gasoline, the Baffin averages 66.8 cents per litre, the Keewatin is 72.4 cents, the Inuvik region is 73.1 cents, in Fort Smith it's 76 cents and in the Kitikmeot it is 86 cents a litre; for heating oil, the Baffin is 59 cents, the Keewatin and Inuvik and at 63 cents, Fort Smith 65 cents and the Kitikmeot is 73.8 cents.

Four to five communities paying over 90 cents per litre for gasoline in the NWT are from Kitikmeot. Six out of the nine communities paying over 70 cents a litre for heating oil are from the Kitikmeot.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng, your allotted time has expired.

MR. NG:

I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue with his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Ng.

MR. NG:

Mr. Speaker, there is no apparent reason for the excessive POL pricing in the Kitikmeot compared to other regions in the NWT, with the exception of the GNWT unfairly passing on tank storage charges to consumers in Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be addressing this matter later on during question period. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Gargan.

Member's Statement On Alcohol And Drug Awareness Week, Fort Providence

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about the lack of response in Fort Providence to the activities held during the alcohol and drug awareness week.

The whole purpose of this week of activities was to increase the community's awareness of alcohol problems and perhaps to refrain from drinking and reflect upon our own circumstances.

On Friday night, there was to be an alcohol-free dance held in the community but, unfortunately, this had to be cancelled due to the unforeseen ferry shutdown. The community barbecue on Tuesday was very successful with lots of children participating. As a matter of fact, they just about ran out of food it was so successful.

However, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my disappointment about the attendance at the community feast on Saturday night. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of drinkers in Fort Providence chose to continue drinking rather than refrain for that one day. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was a large turnout of children who attended the feast without their parents. It embarrasses me, Mr. Speaker, that the parents or grandparents could not stop drinking for this one day to set a good example for their children. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am angry about the lack of response by the community to stop drinking and the fact that people would not take the opportunity to re-evaluate their life-style for this one little week.

We do not ask much of the community. Has booze become so important to these people that they are not willing to compromise even a little?

Mr. Speaker, I'm very disappointed that every time I go to an alcohol-free event I end up seeing the same people who I see at mass the following Sunday. As Dene people, what is the first priority? Is it booze or

our children? Our duty first and foremost, our sacred trust, is to our children, to provide for their care and education. Secondly, we as parents must try to set a good example for our children and live life responsibly.

Mr. Speaker, I have a message for the residents of Fort Providence. The Members of the community...

Page 57

MR. SPEAKER:

Excuse me, Mr. Gargan, your allotted time has elapsed.

MR. GARGAN:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, I have a message for the residents of Fort Providence. Members of the community who organized community events are getting discouraged. They are having a hard time justifying their time and efforts to put on an event that ends up being poorly attended because people are too busy drinking to be involved in our community.

It is time for those people with drinking problems to wise up and take some time to get involved with the community and to set an example for our children. Should volunteers, Mr. Speaker, be making these efforts, or is it a waste of time? Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is a waste of time and maybe we should look at stopping all social events.

Christmas is one month away and volunteers are required for the midnight mass. Anyone under the influence of alcohol will not be admitted under any circumstances. Please try to set a good example for our youth by attending this community celebration in a sober state. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Advisory Committee On Social Housing

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement will try to represent some of the views of the Advisory Committee on Social Housing.

The Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, with the cooperation of this Legislative Assembly, dissolved the NWT Housing Corporation board with the agreement to replace it with the Advisory Committee on Social Housing, including Members of this Assembly. However, Mr. Speaker, this committee has not been actively involved in strategic planning to deal with the housing crises that we are facing today. One example, the Minister wrote to advisory committee Members proposing to meet on Wednesday, at 6:00 pm after he returns from an Ottawa meeting on housing matters.

Mr. Speaker, we're starting to wonder whether or not the Minister and the president of the Housing Corporation take the Advisory Committee on Social Housing seriously. I, for one, did not have any plans to down play the former Housing Corporation board. Rather, I want to be active and as dedicated as they were in doing my job in that capacity. I am sure the other Members of the advisory committee share these same thoughts.

I'm not trying to down play the Minister's energy and hard work in trying to deal with that problem, all I'm saying is that we were appointed by this Legislative Assembly, let us participate so that the task will be easier.

Mr. Speaker, I have no choice but to bring this matter to the House. I will be asking questions of the Minister on this issue later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Health Insurance Division, Inuvik

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I was privileged to be in Inuvik to participate in the opening of the new health insurance services division. Mr. Speaker, it was over one year ago, on June 16, 1992, that announcements of decentralization were made. Inuvik was chosen as the regional centre for this branch of the Department of Health. There have been many positive effects of this decision, especially in Inuvik, where the 12 employees who were transferred, currently 10 are employed in the division. Of those ten, I think nine of them are from the Inuvik region. There are many people to thank and many departments and agencies involved in the timing of the opening. I would like to thank Arctic College for the decentralization training program they put in place for this, the Department of Health, all the new staff who were trained and are now working in these offices, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation who own the building these offices are in and lease back to the government and the people of Inuvik for attending the opening and witnessing this historic event.

In cases of decisions like this, I will personally continue to support initiatives to decentralize, not only in my own constituency, but across the north wherever it is feasible. When we make decisions such as this, it allows government to bring the delivery of their programs closer to the people of the north. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Lewis.

Member's Statement On NWT Council For Disabled Persons

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For 15 years the NWT Council for Disabled Persons has held a celebrity auction. In the past, I would offer to teach a class, any age, grade or level, except home economics. I taught the whole Jackson family for one whole day in Mr. Kakfwi's area at Fossil Lake. It was a real challenge. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank, on behalf of all Yellowknife MLAs and those people from out of town, who supported the NWT Council for Disabled Persons' celebrity auction on Saturday night. They were able to raise \$21,000 and more and more...

---Applause

...groups like this are being asked to try to find other ways of funding their organizations as the government's ability to fund these organizations is being reduced. I hope it is recognized that people do make a big effort and we should recognize that

Page 58

as we look at funding these very important social organizations. I would like to thank the following Members: Mr. Allooloo; Mr. Antoine; Madam Cournoyea; Mr. Nerysoo; and, Madam Mike for their assistance.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Liquor Inspection Services In Town Of Iqaluit

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although there is no liquor store in Iqaluit -- it was closed to over-the-counter sales in 1976 as a result of strong public pressure -- out of a population of 3,500 people, there were apparently 2,371 intoxicated persons incarcerated for their own protection in cells last year. Although many were repeat offenders.

At a recent Liquor Licensing Board hearing on an application by the Kamotiq Inn for a cocktail lounge licence -- which I am pleased the board turned down - - many long-term residents expressed their concerns about the lack of resources devoted to liquor inspections in Iqaluit. I have received more expressions of concerns from my constituents about the adequacy of liquor inspections in Iqaluit following a death by a stab wound alleged to have occurred outside a certain licensed premise in Iqaluit this weekend. Although I would like to stress, this it is not clear at all whether over-serving is an issue in this case.

In Iqaluit, sales from one licensed premise are reported to have amounted to approximately 24,000 cans of beer in one month. A sizable portion of the revenues of which went back to our government in the form of taxes and mark-up. However, the Department of Safety and Public Services has only budgeted \$25,000 per year for contract liquor inspection in Iqaluit. As I understand it, with the number of

licensed premises in town, this sum only provides for about one inspection per premise per week. About one month ago, the contract was cancelled by the town of Iqaluit. There has, therefore, been no inspection services available for that time. I know efforts have been made to replace that service. So today I will be asking the Minister of Safety and Public Services what steps his department is taking to provide adequate liquor inspection services for the town of Iqaluit. Qujannamiik.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Pudlat.

Member's Statement On Family Allowance

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement is regarding family allowances. The people who are employed do not receive family allowance any more. We have recognized that even carvers in the communities receive this even though they are employed. This is coming up more and more that they are not receiving the allowance they should be getting. I will be asking more about this information. It is very difficult to try to get income in the north. For that reason, I will say that family allowance is getting less and less. I will be asking to get more explanation on this. Even though they go to school, there are many families without regular income. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Whitford.

Member's Statement On Alcohol And Drug Abuse In The NWT

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join the Minister of Social Services in commending the efforts of Northern Addictions Services and the program committee for taking the initiative in putting together such an important and innovative conference. Mr. Speaker, we are all too aware of the effect substance abuse has on all of our people in our society in the north. Just today, I was listening to the radio and there was a very dedicated lady talking about the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects on young people and how much of an effort it is to

work with young people who have been affected, through no fault of their own, in daily living. The alarming thing, Mr. Speaker, is what is going to be happening 20 years down the road when these young people become adults and are attempting to join our society. If it is difficult for them now, it is going to be even more difficult then to cope with daily living. We, as a society, have to take heed of this problem affecting those children who are not even born, by encouraging people to drink responsibly. Mr. Speaker, even further than that, in concluding the remarks that the Minister had made, I think we have to go a little bit further than just saying nice things about having conferences and saying nice things about the dedicated workers.

I think we have to show our full support by ensuring that they receive a salary and wage that can help them to continue in the line of work they've chosen, that is comparable to other occupations. We not only have to say nice things about them and encourage them but we have to be able to accommodate them financially as well so that they can continue in this important field.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 32-12(4): Topics Discussed At Meeting With Prime Minister

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Last week, the Prime Minister of the country was here for the official opening of the new Legislative Assembly building as an invited guest. The Premier, Nellie Cournoyea, had a meeting with the Prime Minister during the Commissioner's opening address. On behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people in the Northwest Territories, I would like to know what happened during this private discussion with the Prime Minister.

I would like to ask the Premier to share with us what was discussed at this historic meeting. Would she tell the House what items were discussed and were there any agreement or

pledges of support on any of the key issues which northern people and this Legislative Assembly are facing today? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 32-12(4): Topics Discussed At Meeting With Prime Minister

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a brief press release out on that, but I'll just recap it for you. I had just under 20 minutes to speak with the Prime Minister, Jean Chretien. What I expressed to him was that we would very much like to get our financial house in order on a number of issues. I related to him that the number one issue was the housing issue and that the number two issue was the health billings issue. As well, I believe we very briefly mentioned the issue of the military, the review they are doing and the request for our involvement.

We talked mostly about a positive and more open relationship between the territorial and federal governments, and the relationship of the territorial government at federal-provincial meetings. There was a commitment, particularly to resolve the financial issues that are presently at stake. The Prime Minister indicated that he felt he had indications from the Members of Parliament, particularly on the housing issue, and that had to be resolved. He said he would do everything he could to try to come to a conclusion on that, including discussing that with the Minister of Indian Affairs.

I said I would follow up with a detailed letter on the concerns we have so that we might address them at a date in the near future when he had more time to deal with them. As well, I also indicated that there were land claims that were being settled and land claims that would be settled in a different manner, perhaps. That is all we had time to discuss, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 32-12(4): Topics Discussed At Meeting With Prime Minister

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier indicated that there was some discussion on housing. We all know that housing is not being funded by the federal government any more and we regard this as a crisis in the north today. Was there any strong commitment made by the Prime Minister to address this pressing issue? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 32-12(4): Topics Discussed At Meeting With Prime Minister

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to give overly optimistic results of the meeting, but when I did indicate to him that that was the number one issue, he said he would deal with the Minister of Indian Affairs on that matter. As well, I indicated that Mr. Morin would be meeting with the Minister responsible for Housing, which was previously CMHC, whether that exists or not.

There was a strong indication that he recognized that it possibly was an oversight. I did mention to him that we had come to some kind of understanding with the Minister of the previous government that there was an oversight in dealing with the Northwest Territories. It appears there was optimism. I believe that will be determined by our follow-up meetings with them, as soon as that's possible. Mr. Morin will be leaving later today to meet with the Minister responsible for housing. Upon his return, we'll assess all the meetings that have taken place, and continue to try to resolve it.

We also provided information to the Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, which we have been doing on an ongoing basis, and also to Jack Anawak. They are also coordinating the information and the priority as we indicated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. Last week, we also had another invited guest, the new Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Ron Irwin. I understand that Cabinet had a private meeting with Mr. Irwin. Can the Premier advise this House as to what issues were discussed with Mr. Irwin.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, all of the topics that were addressed with the Prime Minister were carried over into the discussions with the Minister of Indian Affairs. We concentrated heavily on the financial situation because the issues that were of concern relate to whether we can financially afford the resolution of those problems. The Minister of Finance is doing a follow-up on all of those areas so we can capsulize exactly what those discussions were.

The other issues we discussed included the northern accord. I did not discuss this with the Prime Minister because when I was about to bring it up, he indicated that he was interested in looking at the overall devolution of responsibilities to the territorial government, taking into consideration other interests, but moving ahead in that area.

All the issues that I related to Mr. Chretien were passed on to Mr. Ron Irwin in addition to the northern accord. In addition, we also discussed outstanding land claim issues, whether they should be under the comprehensive claim or go a different route with that as well. I don't know if I missed anything. I don't have a comprehensive list. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier advise us as to what kinds of responses Mr. Irwin made? Were they

positive, were they forward-looking or were they non-committal types of responses?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, if I read the Minister, the Honourable Ron Irwin -- given the financial situation in Canada -- I thought he was very, very optimistic and positive about the resolutions of our problems. It may be because he was new, but he was very positive and he thought there would be -- in terms of the global issue of where we are going as a territory -- that these issues could be resolved. On the housing issue he felt there could be some solution. It may be not be through the area of the Housing Corporation or CMHC, but another avenue of addressing the issue. However, he did admit that perhaps he was not as tuned in to his department, but at the same time he felt that our concerns were legitimate, should be addressed and we should move ahead as quickly as possible. It may be that because we have two very active Members of Parliament who we communicate with and try to keep the same message going forward that he was more optimistic of resolving these problems than I thought he would be. I hope if he can come even 75 per cent of the way that would be very good for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Last week we heard on the radio that an agreement was made to resolve the health billings for doctors. Can the Premier advise us, were any other types of agreements made with the Minister?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, there was no other arrangements or documents signed between the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories, at that time. That was the only document that was offered for us to conclude, and that's a \$ 7 million health physician arrangement that we had. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I read an article in the paper that the new Minister, Minister Irwin, was going to concentrate a lot of his efforts on one part of his portfolio, that of Indian affairs. He was going to leave the northern development issues to the various departments. Did Minister Irwin make any comment or statements to you as to how he was going to handle the development of the north?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 33-12(4): Topics Discussed With Minister Of DIAND

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, he did not. He recognized the contraction, perhaps, of his portfolio and perhaps some other Ministers' involvement. Perhaps through his relationship with aboriginal bands in the past and the fact -- like I say, we have two very active Members -- he seemed to be very excited that he would be involved in the northern development part of the Northwest Territories or his portfolio. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the same issue, Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister addressed us last week he indicated that during the time he is Prime

Minister he intends to complete the process of devolution, of power to the territorial government. In the Premier's conversations with the Prime Minister, was there any discussion at all about the kinds of things that could be devolved to this government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the address of the Prime Minister of Canada to this Legislative Assembly was well received by myself. The steps he was willing to go in devolution were not discussed at our meeting, we delved with specific areas. When he made the presentation to the Legislative Assembly it was a welcome message to me that he was willing to go as far as he did indicating he was going to be open for these discussions. Even though it was not discussed at our meeting because -- like I said, we only had under 20 minutes. He never did indicate to me that he was going to make an announcement saying he was willing to devolve further, in our meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is under tremendous pressure to devolve powers to other levels of government, including the provisions of transfers to communities and there is also some discussion about regional forms of government. Does the government have a list of the kinds of things that it would like to have from the federal government in any terms of priority so we can look at where the power sharing should go from here?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Page 61

Further Return To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I think it's a well-known fact that the priority to us has been the northern accord. The Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs has given a definitive list after that, and I believe that's land and water, and also mining. Perhaps the Minister can specify in detail a little more exactly where those sit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were told 20 years ago that the northern program was going to disappear in Ottawa, but it still has a fairly big infrastructure which has to be moved. Was there any discussion about a timetable for disbanding that northern program which assumes a large number of resources?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, it did come up in the conversation with the Minister of Indian Affairs. I believe that's the next stage we're going to go to, to work on a timetable on how that can happen. There was interest but the discussion was not very long. It was just a statement that we should proceed to set some kind of timetable, but the inclusion of all the areas was not discussed. It was just a statement to set some kind of timetable with the priorities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have had a history of devolution whereby we've been very keen to take on powers. The Prime Minister did say in his statement that he would hand over powers to this government at a pace that made sense to us. I'd like to ask the Premier, today, if she would give us an undertaking that when we take over something from the federal government that we get the resources we need to assume that responsibility. It doesn't matter how badly we want it. Will she give that undertaking today that we won't take something just for the sake of getting it, but we'd want all the resources to do the job properly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 34-12(4): Prime Minister's Views On Devolution

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I can make that undertaking. I know there has been a sense of frustration that we haven't signed a northern accord, but that's specifically why we haven't signed a northern accord. We can't give you that undertaking that the parameters for the northern accord addresses that particular issue. Yes, I will. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

Question 35-12(4): Resolution Of Housing Issue With Prime Minister

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the matter of the housing crises and further to the Government Leader. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask, was the Government Leader, in her discussions with the honourable Prime Minister, able to convey the urgency of getting a resolution of this matter before winter roads and before tenders are awarded for construction for the coming year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Return To Question 35-12(4): Resolution Of Housing Issue With Prime Minister

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't mention winter roads. I did not mention all this. Having less than 20 minutes, as much as I could I talked about the well-being of people, the concern of health issues as it relates to housing, the backlog, the housing needs issues that have been identified and the concern for elders. However, I didn't mention winter roads or anything else. I hope the urgency was there in relation to the human well-being. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 35-12(4): Resolution Of Housing Issue With Prime Minister

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do realize it was quite a short window of opportunity on a very busy day. Could I ask the Government Leader, the Prime Minister undertook to look into the matter and consult with appropriate Ministers, did the Prime Minister give any indication as to how quickly our government would be able to get an answer on whether help would be extended in time to build houses for the coming year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 35-12(4): Resolution Of Housing Issue With Prime Minister

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, no, he did not indicate specifically on the timetable, but I believe that he was well aware that we were meeting with the Minister of Indian Affairs. As well, I did tell him that the Honourable Donnie Morin, Minister of Housing, would be meeting with the appropriate Minister, and immediately after that we would like to consolidate where we are. Then we would like to have a meeting with him in that specific regard along with the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the aboriginal organizations that have been tracking this particular issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 36-12(4): Reason For Disruption Of Ferry Service

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Transportation concerning the ferry at the Mackenzie River crossing. Last

Page 62

week some time, we experienced -- the first time for a long time -- a disruption. In fall, the ferry has been known to go right into December, but for some reason the ferry service was disrupted at the crossing. I just wanted ask the Minister what happened and if the ice-crossing is ready yet to be used by traffic.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Transportation, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know. I'll have to take the question as notice, sorry.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Item 5, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 37-12(4): Point System Used To Determine Allocation Of Housing

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Housing with respect to the point system that is currently used to determine housing allocations for public units. The point system used seems to be a cumbersome system which can be easily manipulated and doesn't necessarily identify individuals who are in need of housing. Therefore, I'd like to ask the Minister of Housing, would he undertake to review the point system that the Housing Corporation has in place to determine allocations for public housing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 37-12(4): Point System Used To Determine Allocation Of Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will put that item on the agenda of the Advisory Committee on Social Housing. I've talked to the Member previously about this and other Members have raised the issue, so we will review the point system.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

MR. KOE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. For several years now, I have been pursuing the issue of the development of a northern accord strategy, or a northern accord agreement, between the federal government and the territorial government. It's also a very big issue and has impact on land claim agreements. It's one of the outstanding issues in the Gwich'in agreement. Earlier today, the Premier mentioned that this issue was discussed with the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. Can the Minister advise this House as to the status of a northern accord agreement?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Madam Premier.

Return To Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the problems we've been having with the northern accord are all related to financial issues. We have chosen not to sign a final accord based on the previous government's offer. Like I said, we did raise the issue of the northern accord with the present Minister and we would like to resume negotiations at the earliest opportunity. If a few financial issues could be resolved, a final agreement could be struck in a relatively short period of time. The most important remaining issue concerns the Government of the Northwest Territories' access to a share of revenues from Norman Wells Crown interest, in order to establish a source of funding for oil and gas development purposes and the removal of the fiscal disincentive to encourage oil and gas development

costs by the perversity factor. Mr. Speaker, those are the issues that stand in the way.

As I said previously in a question that was relayed to the Government Leader, we have indicated to the Prime Minister and also the Minister of Indian Affairs, that it's very important if we are going to support the interest of the Northwest Territories' residents and people interested in development, that the first thing required is for some kind of development fund to allow individual corporations to get their foot in the door. We know the equity that has to be raised if you want to proceed. There are avenues if you can find some equity, but still there is often a requirement with development corporations where they don't have the equity. So it's very important that if we are going to take this responsibility, we recognize that and there should be a pool of resources, not only just to take over the responsibility, but to support the people of the Northwest Territories and groups to get involved in the development and have a share in what that development is. I believe this is the only thing that's holding us up right now and that we have to have some commitment on a development fund. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

MR. KOE:

Mr. Speaker, the development of an oil and gas northern accord is very important and is one of the issues -- and I think it's an outstanding issue -- of several of the land claim agreements. Can the Minister advise us as to whether or not she's been involving the aboriginal groups in the discussions in the development of a northern accord?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, all the aboriginal groups have the latest document on our submission. It hasn't changed for a period of time. So there may be a criticism that some groups will say we're not keeping them up to date, but

that's because we haven't had anything new to offer in the change of status.

The document itself and the proposal, if we call it that, to the federal government is well-known, well-distributed and well-recognized. We just haven't had any change in the last year and a half, and the areas where we feel there is a shortfall still remain the same. When there is a request for further information, we just keep sending the same explanation and I'm sure that everybody is getting fairly bored with it and

Page 63

wondering why there hasn't been any action on that part, but there has been no change from almost a year and a half.

If there was a change, we would convene a meeting. If there's change, I expect that we will want to deal with the organizations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

MR. KOE:

Mr. Speaker, given the recent discussions with both the Prime Minister and the new Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs on the northern accord, assuming that there are going to be some new initiatives happening, what time frame is the Minister looking at to begin discussions and try to wrap up the northern accord agreement?

MR. SPEAKER:

Madam Premier.

Further Return To Question 38-12(4): Status Of Northern Accord

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the follow-up communication to the Minister of Indian Affairs is being prepared under the auspices of the Minister of Finance, mainly because it encompasses a lot of financial issues. That communication should be going to tabulate what we felt the meeting was all about and we will provide a copy to you. Give it a few days and see if we can

come up with a timetable. We have the assurance of many of the major groups that they will support the initiative so we can move ahead. This document has yet to be concluded, but it will be forwarded very shortly. Then we will try to seek a timetable from the Minister of Indian Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Question 39-12(4): School Bussing Policy

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Programs with regard to student transportation. I tabled a petition on Friday. Before then, in speaking with the Minister, he indicated that the policy would be brought to Cabinet. I would like to know if this new policy has been brought to Cabinet.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 39-12(4): School Bussing Policy

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate to the honourable Member that the manner in which the formulas will be addressed in terms of providing funding to educational boards has been dealt with. The appropriate and necessary additional financing for transportation will be approved in this House through supplementary appropriation, to be voted on by all Members of this House during this session.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Supplementary To Question 39-12(4): School Bussing Policy

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know when the Minister expects to bring in the supplementary appropriations.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 39-12(4): School Bussing Policy

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not really for me to determine when the supplementary appropriation is to be brought in by the Minister of Finance. However, I can indicate to the honourable Member that, once the Minister of Finance has brought forward the supplementary appropriation to the Standing Committee on Finance and received their comments and advice, that particular supplementary appropriation will be forwarded to this House, hopefully during this session.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

Question 40-12(4): Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education. In November, 1992 there was a band motion on the interpreter/translator position being relocated on the reserve. Since the building on the reserve was to opened in March, I wrote a letter to the Minister on March 3, requesting him to relocate the South Slavey interpreter/translator position to the reserve. The response was that it would happen after the amalgamation of Education, Culture and Communications, and so on. The last letter I received was in November, 1992.

The response said that because the department was looking at reorganization and they were evaluating the positions, they weren't willing to consider the request at that time. This was one year ago to date, November 22. I would like to ask the Minister whether this evaluation has already been done one year later and whether there is an openness to -- through the community transfer initiative or other means -- transfer the translator/interpreter position to the Hay River reserve?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 40-12(4): Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the honourable Member knows that the request was made to a former Minister at a time when I was not responsible. However, I do want to indicate to the honourable Member that any options such as transfer to the community, under the community transfer initiative, is a policy of this government. If a request is made by a community to address that particular matter, then obviously I will be prepared to consider it.

However, I just want to remind the honourable Member that the responsibility of the interpreter/translator is to serve all

Page 64

departments and all agencies of government in providing this service to the community. In transferring and moving that individual to the reserve, that has to be considered as well. That's all I have to say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 40-12(4): Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the amalgamation of Education, Culture and Communications, has there been a review done? Has there been an analysis of the programs and services that the department provides? Have there been plans made for the future?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 40-12(4): Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can indicate to the honourable Member that not all assessments have been completed. I want to indicate that the reorganization of the department has taken place. We've restructured in terms of the responsibilities within the department, such as reducing management from 17 to 11 and reorganizing the way in which we

identify sections of the department. We are now reviewing not only the headquarters responsibilities but also the regions, including the idea of giving more responsibility to regional superintendents so they can make more decisions rather than having to rely on headquarters for making those decisions. That is what is occurring at the moment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 40-12(4):
Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Speaker, regardless of whether this analysis, evaluation and review is taking place, what seems to be the problem with relocating one position from Hay River to the reserve? The department is using the excuse that these things are happening, but that shouldn't stop the department from relocating one position. It is not causing any kind of disruption on their reviews.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 40-12(4):
Interpreter/Translator Position, Hay River Reserve

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the particular issue of the interpreter/translator relocating from Hay River to the Hay River reserve, I personally don't have a serious problem with it, as long as the services for which they are responsible -- and that is to all departments and agencies of government in that location -- are ensured. In the context of the community transfer initiative -- which the honourable Member for Sahtu, Minister Kakfwi, is responsible for -- if that request is made from the community, obviously it will fall within the possibilities of that transfer occurring, recognizing that the responsibility of that position is for all programs and services under that responsibility. That is the only major issue that has to be dealt with. If the honourable Member and the community can address that issue so that delivery of service accommodates the government, then without any question there will be little, if any, opposition to the idea of transfer.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Ng.

Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

MR. NG:

The question is to the Minister of Public Works and Services. Mr. Speaker, since my election I have corresponded and discussed with the Minister on several occasions the matter of excessive pricing in my constituency. The Minister has recognized the problem and has committed to rectifying it. In fact, I learned over the course of this weekend that his department has put into effect a temporary 11 cents per litre reduction in gasoline, heating oil and diesel prices, effective today for Cambridge, Bathurst and Umingmaktok.

---Applause

I acknowledge and thank the Minister for his initiative to address the excessive POL costs in my constituency. My question to the Minister is when will he be putting in a permanent fair pricing of POL products to all NWT communities, in order to eliminate or minimize the regional disparities in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We dealt with Mr. Ng's request as soon as possible. I agreed with Mr. Ng, as did FMB and Cabinet, that Cambridge Bay and the other two communities were not treated equally in the region. So, effective today, there is an 11 cent per litre reduction in retail prices for heating fuel and gasoline. By the end of the year, we will have a review of the whole Northwest Territories POL pricing done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ng.

Supplementary To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

MR. NG:

My question is what does the Minister consider a fair method to compensate the consumers in my constituency who have been unfairly carrying the costs of fuel tank storage charges of the government, through the purchases of POL products, over the past several years?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fair method of dealing with this is to deal with it as soon as possible. That

Page 65

is what I have done. It has been put into effect today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ng.

Supplementary To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

MR. NG:

My question is about retroactive compensation for consumers who have carried the costs of tank storage charges. I recognize that your initiative will look after the future, but what about the past?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't look at the past. There will be nothing retroactive. It is effective today and I thank the Member for thanking us for doing it so quickly.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

MR. NG:

Why won't the Minister consider compensating the consumers who have paid the carrying costs of the government tank farms over the past several years?

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 41-12(4): Fair POL Pricing Policy For All NWT Communities

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I never even considered looking at retroactive compensation. There is no reason to do so. We recognized the problem, we moved on it as fast as possible, and put it in place as fast as possible. I think it was a fair way to handle this situation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Question 42-12(4): Advisory Committee On Social Housing

MR. ARVALUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Why hasn't the Minister invited the advisory committee to meet with him on strategic planning and other processes, before the important meeting takes place in Ottawa, for which he will be leaving today?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 42-12(4): Advisory Committee On Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've kept the Advisory Committee on Social Housing informed on all new initiatives and all actions I've taken to date. I've had the help of the advisory committee this past summer

on some of the things we took part in to try and get funding reinstated for housing. I've had the honourable Member from Thebacha go to Ottawa with myself to attend a gathering of aboriginal people in Ottawa.

I've had Silas and James both attend the ITC General Assembly on behalf of the advisory committee. On October 18, I wrote a letter to the advisory committee requesting a meeting while the finance committee was in Yellowknife. I did not get a response. On November 16, I wrote a letter to all the Members of the advisory committee, laying out the plan we had to deal with the federal government. If they had any questions or any advice, I asked them to please inform me. I didn't get a response.

I'm leaving for Ottawa tonight to meet with the Minister responsible for housing. I think it is important that Members understand that in order to develop the strategy further on how to deal with the federal government, we have to know where they are coming from. Hopefully, when I come back from the meeting on Wednesday night,-- in the first available time slot to have a meeting-- I will meet with the advisory committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

Supplementary To Question 42-12(4): Advisory Committee On Social Housing

MR. ARVALUK:

Mr. Speaker, I have one supplementary. If that is the case, then why hasn't the Minister invited a Member of the advisory committee on this very important trip where he will be meeting with the Minister responsible for CMHC?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 42-12(4): Advisory Committee On Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did invite the advisory committee co-chairman, Mr. Sam Gargan. I explained the reason why I was going to Ottawa and what I thought I could get out of the meeting. Sam, in his own wisdom, thought there was no need for

anyone, other than myself, to travel. Basically, we are going to have a meeting in Ottawa with the Minister responsible for CMHC to find out if the new government has any intention at all of reinstating CMHC funding, to find out where they are coming from and also to educate them on the special housing needs of territorial residents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

To make sure there is no problem with identification, "Sam" is referring to Mr. Gargan. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

Page 66

Question 43-12(4): Funding For School Bus Transportation For Smaller Communities

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Education. Silas Arngna'naaq already asked this question to the Minister of Education. This is a supplementary to that question. I think the Minister is aware of my question. Will the Minister of Education inform me about the bus policy in the communities. All of the communities in the NWT are not provided with a school bus at the moment, like they are provided here in a larger community. The weather is always very cold in our communities, especially in the smaller ones with our lack of transportation.

My question to the Minister of Education is, has he been able to find any funding for school transportation for the smaller communities, especially for the younger grades?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 43-12(4): Funding For School Bus Transportation For Smaller Communities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify a number of matters before we get into the issue of purchasing buses as a department. I believe that the most appropriate way of addressing bussing - and I've said this previously as Minister -- is as a department I don't feel we should be in the business of purchasing buses. I believe the best approach for

us to take is to provide funding for bussing to all communities and to all divisional boards.

They then can contract someone in the appropriate community, so they can develop a program of bussing for students in that particular community. It only helps in terms of developing a business that will result in better returns for someone in the community, to receive resources that they can use to support their family and their community.

What has occurred to date, Mr. Speaker, is that there has been a review of the student transportation systems guidelines, which were in fact approved, in principle, as far back as 1989. But, no additional funds were approved to implement the guidelines. The criteria for bussing which, when approved in principle, was: funding would be provided to boards for students five to six years old, if they lived .5 kilometres or more from the school; students seven to ten years old, if they lived one kilometre or more from school; and students 11 and over, if they lived 1.5 kilometres or more from school. These criteria are now being used as guides in the approval of contributions to boards for bussing contracts.

Funding is also included in this area for transportation of students who require individual transportation support. In other words, we are also taking into consideration those students that are either handicapped or need special transportation to school.

So as a result of that, this consistent approach requires an increase of \$433,000 this year to base funding. This request has been submitted and, I believe, has received approval and requires supplementary estimate approval in this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Pudlat.

Supplementary To Question 43-12(4): Funding For School Bus Transportation For Smaller Communities

MR. PUDLAT:

(translation) Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I didn't expect to purchase a school bus. I was talking about the smaller communities. I understand some of the smaller communities received transportation assistance through their schools but others are not given this assistance. I'm asking if this assistance has been discontinued, especially for those communities that are not provided a school bus as transportation? My other question is, are we going to

establish a bus policy for the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 43-12(4): Funding For School Bus Transportation For Smaller Communities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to indicate to the honourable Member, as a result of the change for formula funding, we will be able to, through the new guidelines and criteria, provide the financial resources to the divisional boards to provide transportation in every community in the Northwest Territories. That is what we are trying to accomplish at this particular time. So the community that the honourable Member represents will receive the necessary funding.

The other issue that the honourable Member has raised is that we have the criteria and guidelines by which the funding will be allocated, across the Northwest Territories. I'd be pleased, Mr. Speaker, to provide them to all the Members of this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Question 44-12(4): Date Of Introduction For Supplementary Appropriation Covering Bus Funding

MR. ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance, concerning the Minister of Education's statement just now. His response was that the Minister of Finance would be bringing forward a supplementary appropriation for student transportation. I would like to know when we can expect to see this.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 44-12(4): Date Of Introduction For Supplementary Appropriation Covering Bus Funding

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two supps before the Standing Committee

on Finance at the present time. The second one is an exceptionally large supp and I'm not absolutely sure that particular document is in that supplementary appropriation. I will find out and report to the House tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, years ago when I worked on the tug boats on the Slave River, I recall seeing lumber mills along the river. There were at least three that I recall, that were cutting and producing lumber year round. Those, I believe, were independently owned and I think even the RC mission had a mill along the river somewhere and they produced lumber for quite some time. They were never supported by any government monies, at least that I can recall. I think there's only one left in the whole territories that is totally independent. This morning on the news, Mr. Speaker, there was some good news that this lumber mill in Fort Resolution has now opened, or reopened, with government support, and I want to ask a question to the Minister responsible for ED&T. If the Minister could tell me to what degree our government is involved in the opening of this mill and the continuation of its operation.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the government of the Northwest Territories is directly involved in this mill through the NWT Development Corporation. It is a joint effort with a subsidiary called Northern Forest Products, I believe, a small holding by the Nuni Development Corporation in Resolution. This project has had somewhere in the region of \$1.5 million in capital investment. It's anticipated, now that it's up and running, and with the price of lumber, we could be looking at 16 people employed in the mill and

approximately another 14 to 16 involved in the cutting of the logs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I'd like to continue on is, is this a one-shot infusion of money to get this going so that it can become independent and run on its own given the current market. Is this a one-shot thing or is this something that we're going to be seeing yearly?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not the intention to have any formal continuing subsidy on this mill. It's the belief of the NWT Development Corporation that we can run this thing and break even and perhaps even, heaven forbid, have a profitable situation. So it's not the intent to provide ongoing subsidies similar to some of the operations we currently have that are owned and operated by the NWT Development Corporation. There is however as I said, on the outset, a significant front end capital investment of \$1.5 million. However, we are predicting that there's somewhere between 30 to 40 jobs and, based on the research that's been done by Renewable Resources and ourselves, we're projecting somewhere between 20 to 25 years of renewable resource there that we would be able to access. It's our hope that we can log, I believe,-- I'm not very familiar with logs coming from the east,-- I'm told that we can log somewhere around five million board feet, I think. If we do that, we'd be in a break even situation and we would provide the community of Fort Resolution with a significant number of jobs at this time.

This project has the full support of the local settlement council, the Metis group, the Dene band and, of course, yours truly, Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not being mischievous, Mr. Speaker, these are serious questions I'm asking. How many mills do we now own, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 45-12(4): GNWT Involvement In Fort Resolution Sawmill

HON. JOHN TODD:

How many mills do we own? The NWT Development Corporation has an investment in the mill in Hay River, I believe, and this latest investment would make our growing acquisition of mills to two. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I move to extend question period. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Excuse me, could you repeat that, Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Yes. What I meant to say, Mr. Speaker, was I seek unanimous consent to extend question period. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I hear that very clearly now. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? I hear a chorus of nays. The request has been turned down.

Item 6, written questions. Mr. Dent.

Page 68

ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 6-12(4): Details And Costs Of Government Repaired Houses

MR. DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I have a written question for the Minister of Public Works and Services.

Would the Minister of Public Works and Services please provide details and costs for repairs or renovations to government owned houses, by house address, in all level I communities for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, and for the current year to this date?

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, written questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Written Question 7-12(4): New Social Services' Organization Chart

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three written questions. One is to the Minister of Social Services.

Would the Minister of Social Services provide to this House an organization chart which would reflect the recent personnel changes in the department, including names for the respective positions? Thank you.

Written Question 8-12(4): Staff Housing Unit Appraisal

I have a written question for the Minister of Personnel.

Would the Minister of Personnel please provide to this House a copy of the appraisal method used for the staff housing units which were sold in all level I communities? Thank you.

Written Question 9-12(4): Staff Housing Units Placed On Market

I have a written question for the Minister of Personnel.

Would the Minister of Personnel please provide to this House a list of all staff housing units which were placed on the market for sale through the real estate agent in Fort Smith? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell. Item 6, written questions. Mr. Dent.

Written Question 10-12(4): Government Of The Northwest Territories' Houses

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple written questions for the Minister of Personnel.

1. Were Cabinet Ministers offered the opportunity to purchase Government of the Northwest Territories houses?

2. If so, did any Cabinet Ministers take advantage of such an opportunity? If so, who and what price did they pay?

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions. That concludes item 7, we'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

I'll call the House back to order. We had concluded item 7. We'll go on to Item 8, replies to opening address. Mr. Lewis.

ITEM 8: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Mr. Lewis' Reply

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to Mr. Kakfwi. Earlier on in the day in my Member's statement, I mentioned all the people who, in addition to the Yellowknife MLAs, have always supported the Council for the Disabled celebrity auction, including yourself Mr. Speaker. I omitted to mention that Mr. Kakfwi had offered to make a Sahtu dinner with mountain sheep and a whole bunch of other stuff. I apologize to him for that. There is always a danger when you make a list of all those people that have helped that you leave somebody out.

Mr. Speaker, I decided to reply today because this is a new building and it is in my constituency. I am proud that after more than 20 years, the Government of the Northwest Territories now has a permanent home. Since 1967, there has been much discussion about committing ourselves to an investment in a permanent home.

To some Members, the idea of an Assembly building represented a continuation of a long succession of institutions imported from the south which were not reflective of the inspiration of northern people. We should point out that, in fact, this building involved all sitting MLAs and a tremendous amount of consultation before it was constructed.

Many people wanted to wait until the public had confirmed exactly what kind of government we should have in the Northwest Territories. Other Members liked the idea of moving the Assembly out of the capital to the regions, from time to time. Inuit were always reluctant, Mr. Speaker, to support the building of a Legislative Assembly because it gave the wrong signal to their people about division and the creation of Nunavut.

The last barrier was removed in 1988, when the Assembly agreed to a plebiscite on division. The results of that plebiscite, Mr. Speaker, clearly were in favour of division and merely confirmed the results of the 1982 plebiscite, which came to the same conclusion. With a firm commitment to the creation of a new territory at some time in the foreseeable future, Inuit were less inclined to oppose construction of a permanent Assembly building.

Uncertainty about political developments in the west, however, still left considerable reluctance to make any permanent arrangement. In 1989, serious discussions began on constructing a building on this capital site. The lease arrangements with the Yellowknife Inn were due to expire on July 31, 1993. Eventually, it was decided to finance the building in an innovative fashion. With a certainty of lease

Page 69

income from the Legislative Assembly, a non-profit society was formed.

It decided to issue bonds to the general public and to secure a conventional mortgage with the Bank of Nova Scotia. The benefits were clear. The general public was offered a very secure northern investment. Instead of paying rent, the Assembly would own its own facility, for the very first time, within a 20 year period. It was expected that public reaction in Yellowknife, to the development of a facility like this on a capital site, would be very favourable. At last, the Assembly would have a permanent home in the capital city of the Northwest Territories.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, two years after the decision to proceed with this building, the Canadian recession deepened. The Government of the Northwest Territories' expected revenues declined and the federal government made cuts in housing. The Government of the Northwest Territories was unsuccessful in collecting revenue from the federal government for health.

Mr. Speaker, the construction of basic infrastructure in the capital city has always been a very controversial issue. When the city hall was built, Mayor Henne and his council took incredible heat. When Mr. Hodgson found a mechanism to build the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, it was referred to as the "bunker" and there was little public support for it. In fact, there were all kinds of jokes about this great cement structure that was being erected on the shores of Frame Lake.

I believe the same sentiment prevailed about this place as well, Mr. Speaker. But, on the basis of previous events in this city, that sentiment will change, much as it has about the city hall and the museum. Projects such as these are one-time costs. The massive problems that lie ahead of us -- and we're all aware of them -- can not be solved by a quick fix or a one-time capital expenditure.

It is projects like this, however, that lead to charges that elected people are out of touch with their constituents. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that all of us have an obligation to explain in detail to our public, to our constituents, how these decisions were made and why. In the case of this building, the economic benefits are clear. More important, however, is the fact that the government owns very little in the city of Yellowknife that it can't easily walk away from. It rents many thousands of square feet from the private sector. It is very, very simple just to cancel leases and to go elsewhere if we so choose.

As we move towards the creation of new constitutional arrangements for the west, some of us have felt very strongly -- including you, Mr. Speaker -- the need to strengthen public government in some way. One of the ways of doing that is to put down firm roots in the capital city, with the full expectation that Yellowknife will remain the capital in any future western territory. I can not see any other possibility.

But that was the way the people of Fort Smith felt many years ago, before the decision was made to name a northern capital. It was already the administrative centre for government in the Western

Arctic. It was the headquarters of the RCMP and also the Catholic Church. In terms of infrastructure, it had the biggest concentration of government-owned buildings, not leased buildings. These were things the government actually owned. Nevertheless, it was not chosen as the capital city and it left a tremendous amount of bitterness which has not been healed even today.

With the creation of some form of public government in the new western territory, we have no wish to reopen the issue of where the capital city for a new western territory should be. I'm very proud, Mr. Speaker, to sit as a Member of this first permanent home of the Legislative Assembly. As most Members know, I have taken a personal interest in the historical evolution of responsible government in the Northwest Territories. I have visited all the sites where previous Assemblies met after 1970. I've been very privileged to sit in the Assembly during these important years when important decisions about our future have been made.

I'm very proud of this place, Mr. Speaker, and all of the people who have made it possible. It's my hope that future generations of northerners, long after we've gone, will enjoy working here on behalf of northern people because northern people are the real owners of this place.

In making my reply to the Commissioner's opening address to this session, Mr. Speaker, I find myself very limited. I just said on Friday that the address of the Commissioner was little more than a brief history of the evolution of government since 1951. Traditionally, the Commissioner's address is a method of informing the public and the Members about government business in the days ahead. Replies to the address allow Members to touch on issues from the address as well as raising matters of interest to each individual Member's constituency.

When the Premier made her Sessional Statement on Friday, she gave us what was, essentially, a speech from the throne. This is not the first time this has happened. Under our rules, Mr. Speaker, we have Ministers' statements and Members' statements, but I find no reference anywhere to sessional statements.

Since the Premier's Sessional Statement has been referred to the committee of the whole, I can not refer to it in my reply to the Commissioner's address in any detail. Even though it was essentially a throne speech that she delivered.

Mr. Speaker, after the first year in office of the current government, I recall asking the Premier what had been accomplished. The question taxed the creative talent of her speech writers since virtually nothing has been accomplished in the first year. The first year was dominated by discussion of the Beatty Report. This was presented as the blueprint of the 12th Assembly. Because of what seemed like public apathy about yet more talks on the constitution, the Bourque report on constitutional development in the west was, in fact, set aside. Perhaps the real reason for this was that the Bourque report could not find public support for Strength At Two Levels, as proposed by Mr. Beatty. Increasingly, aboriginal people wanted regional governments to correspond with a provision of their land claims.

Page 70

Mr. Speaker, the dilemma for all Canadians is the challenge of making do with less government, not more government. The history of the north since the 50's has shown the increasing role of government in people's lives. I've heard the Premier on several occasions mention that is the biggest challenge that we have in front of us. A challenge of making people more self-reliant and less dependent on the government. Government has created an incredible dependency. Even the private sector, directly or indirectly, is closely dependent on government spending. The problem for northerners is the sparseness of this population. It provides a very, very small tax base and we've devised very few methods, Mr. Speaker, of creating wealth. The major source of wealth in the Northwest Territories will continue to be oil and gas and mining. There are few other economic possibilities ahead of us for creating the millions of dollars all governments need for programs and infrastructure. It's my view however, that we have an obsession with this concept of government.

Unfortunately, everywhere in the western world, governments have been slashed in the face of enormous deficits. The priority of any government these days should be the creation of wealth. That means jobs, infrastructure, investment and training. The creation of more government has the opposite effect. It creates more policies, more regulations and more laws, which call for even more investment. More development of more government. I've had considerable experience at this, Mr. Speaker. I was a deputy minister for nine years. In all that time, I never saw a proposal from any of my staff to achieve more with less money. It was always to do more with more money with a demand for more staff and more

programs. Hay plan people, as we well know, Mr. Speaker, are classified on the basis of the size of budget, the number of staff and the complexity of their operations. The system inevitably leads to expansion of government and classification wars between senior staff who want people bumped up to different salary levels. In my opinion, this system should be scrapped completely. In fact, you may come up with some inventive ways, such as paying one person an awful lot of money if that person can do the job with an awful lot less. That sounds like heresy, coming from a capital city, but we are going to have to look at new ways of compensating people in our system. I believe that some money could be saved.

Mr. Speaker, the reshaping northern government committee has identified ways of modernizing and streamlining government for the 1990's. The committee was established as a way of involving MLAs in the work of government. What it did however, was to create an artificial means of adding four ordinary Members to a planning and priority process already agreed on by the Cabinet, or at least part of the Cabinet.

With virtually nothing achieved in the first year of the Assembly, the government introduced a major initiative which was never part of the Strength at Two Levels report. I'm referring to decentralization. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Beatty report recommended against decentralization. It insisted there be two levels of government and that strength be at both of those two levels. This new initiative, after a year of stagnation, was clearly designed to get support for a stagnating government.

What really occurred was not real decentralization, it was recentralization. What was centralized in one place, you just centralized it somewhere else and those places were usually of interest to Members of the Cabinet. There's been virtually no contact between the reshaping committee and ordinary Members. It's become part, in my opinion, of an extended Cabinet and I've got nothing against that, as long as we recognize what we're doing and what we're doing to struggle in the development of our system of government.

The overwhelming support for decentralization, Mr. Speaker, from ordinary Members, was not easy to counter by Yellowknife MLAs who have been accused, by many of our Members, of being very quiet and docile. In fact, one day I was even called a wimp because of my inability to stop this process of asking people to relocate to places that they didn't

want to go particularly. Although close to 100 positions were to be relocated, the natural growth of staff in Yellowknife has in fact replaced those people who have been asked to leave. This, of course, didn't help those people who were asked to relocate and Yellowknife MLAs have had to deal with their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the decision to get out of staff housing has caused problems in the regions. Other MLAs have now been faced with the same problem that Yellowknife MLAs faced four years ago when it was introduced and we took a tremendous amount of heat over that, as you will recall. However, Mr. Speaker, the decision is a right one. The challenge now is to secure investment in northern housing. I support, although it's full of dangers and uncertainties, Mr. Todd's initiative in trying to establish some kind of mortgage investment corporation. Our Special Committee on the Northern Economy recognized the lack of banks and other financial services as an impediment to our economy four years ago. That gap still remains an investment, there's still a major problem.

I believe the new capital planning process is an improvement in helping local contractors prepare for construction. The use of negotiated contracts, however, can clearly result in abuses which the normal tendering process seeks to avoid. When dollars are short and the need for housing and other infrastructure remains a top priority, special value-for-money orders should be automatically made for all negotiated contracts. Not the usual orders that public accounts are familiar with, but value-for-money orders to see if in fact this system is working.

I'm pleased to see the progress in transferring programs to communities. This government began its work 25 years ago by making local government a top priority. It should, in my opinion, remain a priority. In my view, the powers of what ever regional bodies emerge will depend on what further powers the federal government is prepared to place in the hands of northerners. Mr. Chretien indicated in his address last week, he's prepared to devolve further powers after continuing the process of devolution he began as a Minister of DIAND 25 years ago. What must clearly be avoided in any further constitution, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very serious about this, is weakness at three levels. That would be the worst of all possible worlds and it's a danger that could very easily emerge, if we are not very careful.

Governments can perform three major functions, in my view, in our economy. It deals with investment, with training and with the development of infrastructure. I've said previously in this Assembly, but it bears repeating, governments don't really manage economies. They can only create favourable

Page 71

conditions under which economic growth can occur. Occasionally, they can invest to give it a kick start when things are sluggish, and investment will continue to be a major challenge. Every year the government pumps more than \$1 billion into the service of northern people but even this isn't enough. Private money is badly needed. Unfortunately, private money seems to be flowing elsewhere, not within our own jurisdiction. More ideas, like the mortgage investment corporation are needed. And as I said, it's full of risks, full of dangers, it may not happen, but it's worthwhile looking at because it would find a way of bringing money in, instead of seeing money go out all the time.

A major challenge for this Government, Mr. Speaker, is the development of our human resources through training. Our decision to combine education with employment reflects exactly what has happened in the federal government and many governments have moved in that direction as they realize that that's the major challenge that we face in this world, if we are to remain competitive. Our people need to learn the modern skills of survival, as well as the old skills, which we hope they will retain.

Governments have always played a major role in building infrastructure. In fact, as you recall, Mr. Speaker, because you've been around a long time, the first 25 years of this government was dominated by the pressure to build infrastructure. That was the achievement. There wasn't much politics, not much sensitivity perhaps, but the accomplishment was to build infrastructure which we can see around us today.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why Nunavut wasn't created 25 years ago was the weakness in these three areas of investment, training and infrastructure. We just weren't ready. Now things have changed. These challenges still remain however, Mr. Speaker, for both the eastern and western parts of the Northwest Territories. The biggest challenge, though, is in the development of our people, since attractive investment and the

building of infrastructure are by comparison technical issues and much more easily achieved.

I know most people still see me as a school teacher. However, Mr. Speaker, the last time I taught in a school was in 1967, in Igloodik. That was more than 25 years ago. I've seen enormous changes since those days and they've not all been improvements. Attendance at those times were close to 100 per cent. Dropouts were unheard of, except for children returning to camp with their parents. Children and adults wanted to learn and they were incredibly self-disciplined and hard working.

I suppose, Mr. Speaker, I'm in the winter of my career. Work has always been very important to me. It's been my observation over a lifetime that disciplined, hard working people are happy people.

The report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services outlines what occurs in a society which lacks all these basic requirements of discipline and a work place which offers them an opportunity for employment. This is the root, in my opinion, of many of our problems.

I don't know who invented the myth, Mr. Speaker, that laying in the sun all day with nothing to do is the true definition of happiness. The same could be said about wandering around aimlessly in a settlement with no where to go and nothing to do. People only have to look at themselves in a full-length mirror and they can see they were designed to work. That's what makes us different. We're designed to work, to do things and to make things.

School, in my view, should be a work place where children not only play but also learn how to work. It's where all the skills you need to survive in this world are taught. Unfortunately, because of changing fashions, we've gone through several phases over the last generation that stresses freedom, liberation, creativity and all those wonderful things. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, however, that you don't need schools to achieve that. Let everyone stay at home and wonder around, you'd save millions of dollars and people would really be free and liberated, but my guess is that they would be very unhappy and very unfulfilled.

The development of our people is still our major challenge, everybody recognizes it all across the western world. To be competitive you have to have skilled people, disciplined people and hard working people. If they don't improve themselves they fall

further and further behind as the rest of the world jumps ahead and brings in rapid, technological change. If we don't improve our system, we continue to fill northern jobs with southern people who are well-trained, motivated and hungry for work, because there's not much in many parts of this great country of ours.

I've heard several schemes to push our young people harder. I met last summer with the Commissioner and a group of people who want to promote what's called Outward Bound. This is a kind of army boot camp operation which makes young people meet many challenges on the land. I worked with Outward Bound more than 35 years ago, as an instructor, Mr. Speaker, and it works. You can see the changes in people after they've done things they never ever thought they could.

We made a proposal in our SCONE report a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, and there have been many other suggestions which have a similar goal. Our leadership school concept was another approach we tried, modeled on the residential program at Grandin College. Others have suggested we send 100 of our best and brightest students to colleges around the world and hope that something would come of it.

One of the unfortunate things about politics, Mr. Speaker, is that we work within short time frames from election to election, and can't take the long view. In politics, the long view will kill you. Although, as I stated at the outset, we must find ways of making people independent of government and find alternatives to government employment, we should start working where we can achieve results. That is within our own public service.

There is a need within the next five years to develop aboriginal and other northern people to assume jobs at the highest level of government. One of the most successful ways of achieving these goals in our system, in my opinion, would be through a system of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship works. This was done with a good effect by the federal government in its northern careers program. I could envisage a system of apprenticeship sustained by wage levels and percentages of

Page 72

the target positions. The advantages of this system are that the total government work place would be the training ground, and the current senior staff could play an important role in passing on their knowledge of

skills learned in this system, in this environment. Our own Arctic College could help develop the program with the assistance of senior government staff and, in my opinion, it should start right away. I don't think we can afford to wait very much longer.

Of course, this wouldn't solve the huge, long-range problems of developing our people, but it would be a place to start. I should point out that not everyone wants to be a bureaucrat, and excellent academic ability is no guarantee of success. If carefully planned, a large number of high level northern jobs could be filled by northerners. I can't stress enough that we should plan the program so we get the results we want. Too often we have developed problems, but then we don't produce the results we expect. We produce results -- and I've referred in the past to, for example, Grandin College, it had wonderful results, but the original idea behind it was to create priests. It changed over the years but that's what the plan was, to make sure you get enough input into the priesthood.

It's the same with the teacher training program. You set it up and then many people decide to do something else. It's good, it produces something, but it doesn't achieve the results that you set it up to achieve. I think that what we do should be oriented and focused toward getting people into the system and helping them to be successful in it.

As our work place becomes more sophisticated and diversified, labour issues will dominate, Mr. Speaker. Already we have seen our government attempting to fit northern workers into boxes that don't fit. The best example is the use of the Workers' Compensation Board to compensate self-employed hunters and trappers. This was never the intention of the WCB, and I don't have to explain exactly what the WCB was created to solve.

I agree that the proposed listening panel with the work place commission is probably the best approach to be used. A political approach would, in my opinion, be the very worst system you could use. The major lesson to be learned over the next decade is the full significance of employer/employee relationships and how the interests of both are protected. The other issue is the support you need for self-employed people in all areas of the economy. The secret agenda of the government will likely include some form of legislation, and the choices are obvious: either some limited anti-replacement worker legislation with very severe limits on it so companies can still operate but can't hire the full complement of

people it would need; or, alternatively, depending upon the political ideology of the government, some form of right-to-work legislation which makes it clear that individuals do have the right to work in our work place.

One feature of the government agenda which has been very carefully stated is the one about privatization of the Power Corporation. Although the Premier has talked about next steps in turning the Power Corporation into a user-friendly utility, it is clear the government intends to privatize or nearly complete privatization by 1995. I should tell the Premier I do not intend, at the moment, to support this initiative. I've already supported, at great political cost, a tax measure introduced by this government which targeted many of my constituents. They didn't appreciate it, and there's a strong feeling that on major issues like this one MLAs should use whatever means necessary to gauge public opinion before voting.

Initial reaction in my constituency this summer, Mr. Speaker, towards privatization was not very favourable at all. My major concern goes beyond responding to the concerns of dozens of people in my riding. We have already set up a committee to examine the division of assets between east and west, pending the division of the Northwest Territories. If we privatize the corporation we will be taking away a major instrument of social policy for Nunavut. Privatizing power in Nunavut, in my opinion, would be almost like privatizing wildlife. I can't see how Nunavut could possibly be a viable political entity if power is in private hands, it relies entirely upon imported diesel and there are no proven energy alternatives for Nunavut settlements. The control of power would be essential for social and public policy in any future Nunavut government. In the opinion of many, the Power Corporation is undervalued. If it is privatized, Nunavut will be faced with the high financial burden of purchasing it once again from private owners at a price that perhaps they won't be prepared to afford. The people should know that this will be the effect of this privatization initiative. In my opinion, it is an unfriendly act towards the creation of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I've stopped publishing my newspaper, The Blade. Some of my constituents found it too frivolous and said I should get down to more serious business than publishing things that go on in this House that may be of a more light-hearted nature. I found over the last year, Mr. Speaker, that local constituency meetings don't attract a lot of attention.

That's understandable because in this city, politicians are very easily accessible.

However, I will continue my practice of doing telephone polls in my constituency on all controversial issues, especially after my experience with the payroll tax. Of course, I do a lot of walking, as many of you know, on the Yellowknife streets and we often exchange information. I keep in contact with the people I represent in that fashion.

This was going to be much longer, Mr. Speaker, but I decided in the interest of your patience and of keeping your good will, that I will stop right here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, replies to budget address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 3-12(4): Review Of The 1994-95 Capital Estimates

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with its terms and reference, the Standing Committee on Finance is pleased to report on the review of the 1994-95 Capital Estimates of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Committee consists of myself as chairman, Mrs. Marie-Jewell as deputy chairperson and, Members are:

Page 73

Mr. James Arvaluk; Mr. Charles Dent; Mr. Dennis Patterson; Mr. Henry Zoe; the Management and Services Board assignment, Mr. Kelvin Ng; and alternate Member, Silas Arngna'naaq.

Introduction

Mr. Speaker, the "accumulated surplus" position of the Government of the Northwest Territories has declined in recent years. If the current level of operations and capital spending continues, the government will soon find itself in a situation of accumulated deficit. Borrowing money to finance a deficit is an option that is simply not available to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The current

level of revenues raised through taxes and otherwise, adds up to a small fraction of the funding required to meet the real needs of our citizens.

Members of the Standing Committee on Finance strongly believe that this government must pursue the objective of maintaining an accumulated surplus position. The review of capital forecasts impressed upon committee Members the growing difficulty the government faces in attempting to respond, in a fiscally responsible way, to the fundamental needs of all our citizens.

We must all work towards solutions but, clearly, the Minister of Finance and Cabinet must provide the leadership to achieve a consensus on the strategies that are required to limit spending and maintain a strong financial position.

Capital Planning Process

Capital Planning Strategy

In its report on the 1993-94 capital estimates, the committee made the following recommendation: The committee recommends that Cabinet develop, and report in the 1994-95 capital estimates, a strategic approach to the capital program identifying, among other things: i) the purpose and goals; ii) rationale for the allocation of budget resources between capital and operations; iii) rationale for the allocation of budget resources between programs and communities; iv) rationale for the specification, construction, acquisition and disposal of capital assets; v) and information requirements of departments and agencies to ensure that the capital program is being allocated fairly and equitably, and is being currently operated with due regard to efficiency, economy and effectiveness.

The Financial Management Board responded to this recommendation in its presentation to the standing committee. The government's capital planning strategy was presented under the following headings: capital planning objectives; allocation of capital to meet capital needs assessment; additional factors in determining capital requirements; balancing needs within the funds allocated; meeting government's priorities through allocations; multi-year planning targets; and capital planning consultation process.

With respect to addressing the information requirements, the Financial Management Board noted that the development of a comprehensive government wide "informatics strategy" has been initiated.

Capital Spending Priorities

The chairman of the Financial Management Board, in his opening remarks to the committee, identified the following capital spending priorities: 1) housing programs; 2) education programs; 3) health, social and cultural programs; 4) municipal and recreational programs; 5) transportation and tourism programs; and 6) other government programs.

He noted that these capital priorities have been established based on Legislative Assembly and community consultation. Generally, the committee is supportive of the government's focus, however some qualifying comments are in order.

Committee Members feel that the number one priority assigned to capital spending on housing is due more to the withdrawal of federal funding than a balanced assessment of real need. The federal government should live up to its fiduciary responsibility to provide housing to aboriginal people. The Government of the Northwest Territories could, then, shift its priorities for capital spending. The standing committee feels that, if housing programs were supported by the federal government, education programs could and should become the number one priority for capital expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The committee recognizes that the funding cuts to social housing programs are an immediate crisis. However, Members believe that education should be established as the number one priority over the long term. The committee's rationale for this suggestion is based on a number of considerations.

The committee believes that it is through an investment in education that we may become more independent of the federal government. By educating young people, we will be able to build a stronger economic base. With an educated population, there should be less reliance on other programs such as housing and social services.

Further, the committee feels that the allocation of capital resources for 1994-95 and the plans for future years do not reflect the priorities established by the government. For example, while social programs are ranked as number three priority, the capital budget for the Department of Social Services is \$4.6 million out of a total capital budget of approximately \$180 million.

Consultation Process

The committee notes that there have been improvements to the capital planning process over the last few years. A consultation process has been initiated. The government consults with communities through their local governments and Members of the Legislative Assembly. These enhancements are designed to ensure that this government's capital budget is reflective of the real capital needs of the citizens and their communities.

There is still room for improvement in the consultation process. The committee noted, during its review, several examples where there were problems with the community input in the capital planning process. In some instances, capital projects were not scheduled in accordance with community priorities. In other cases, consultations with communities did not result in

Page 74

changes to the capital plans to reflect identified community needs.

Five Year Capital Plans

In its report on the 1992-93 capital estimates, the Standing Committee on Finance recommended that the government present the 1993-94 capital estimates to the Legislative Assembly in the form of a five year capital plan. The government provided the 1993-94 capital forecast to the Standing Committee on Finance in the form of a five year plan. However, the five year plan format was not carried forward to the capital estimates document provided to the Legislative Assembly.

The 1994-95 capital forecast documents provide a second opportunity for the committee to review the capital estimates in the context of a five year plan. As a result, the committee was able, this year, to compare current year plans with those put forward for the fiscal year 1994-95.

Committee Review Process

The primary focus of the committee's review of the 1994-95 capital forecast was projects planned for that fiscal year. However, consideration was also given to the following: prior and current year expenditures, particularly where these departed significantly from what was reported in the 1993-94 capital forecast; major new projects planned for the five year period following 1994-95 and beyond; and any significant

changes to departments' and communities' capital plans.

A comprehensive review was conducted by using the committee's guiding principles while, at the same time, focusing on maintaining a balanced budget.

Capital Overview

Capital Spending By Constituency

Committee Members are guided by the principle that their job is to ensure equity, fairness and universality of benefit to all residents of the Northwest Territories. In assessing adherence to that principle, the committee reviewed planned capital spending in each constituency in the Northwest Territories for 1993-94 and 1994-95. This information is displayed in Appendix B of this document. Expenditures by constituency have been adjusted from those reported in the capital forecasts. Expenditures reported by region and headquarters have been divided among the communities in all constituencies.

Implications Of The Capital Forecast For Operations And Maintenance Spending

The Financial Management Board provided the standing committee with two tables regarding the O and M implications of the 1994-95 capital projects. These tables are attached to this report as Appendix C. One table presents a summary of the direct O and M implications, while the second table shows a summary of indirect O and M incremental costs for maintenance and utilities.

Reporting Changes In Capital Plans And Expenditures

Committee Members raised concerns about the presentation and accuracy of the information provided in the Five Year Capital Forecast 1994-95 - 1998-99 document. In particular, the committee noted that, in many instances the reporting of prior and current year capital expenditures vary considerably over those reported a year earlier; and the "total" amount reported does not appear to represent the total expenditures for a particular project.

Further, the committee noted that the documents do not distinguish between situations where previous years' funds have lapsed, been transferred between capital projects, or carried forward to the following year. Therefore, the committee recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Financial Management Board clarify and ensure consistency in the reporting of prior year, current year and "total" expenditures in the five year capital forecast documents. The committee further recommends that the modifications, which address the difficulties identified, be contained in the five year capital forecast 1995-96 to 1999-2000 document.

While recognizing that capital forecasts are a planning tool and, by definition, subject to change, the committee was concerned by the many projects where there was a significant change in proposed expenditures from fiscal year to fiscal year. These changes were not always accompanied by an explanation. Substantiation is provided only for projects incurring costs in the target fiscal year, which in this case is 1994-95. Therefore, the committee recommends the following:

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Financial Management Board provide substantiation for any changes over \$100,000 in planned expenditures. The committee further recommends that these substantiations be contained in the five year capital forecast 1995-96 to 1999-2000 document.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Finance on its review of the 1994-95 capital estimates.

Motion That Committee Report 3-12(4) Be Received And Moved To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

Therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the report of the Standing Committee on

Page 75

Finance on its Review of the 1994-95 Capital Estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

---Applause

Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive rule 93(4) to permit the report of the Standing Committee of Finance on its Review of the 1994-95 Capital Estimates to be moved into committee of the whole today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 3-12(4), Standing Committee on Finance report on the Review of the 1994-95 Capital Estimates will be placed in committee of the whole today. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: Tabled Document 4-12(4), Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories for the year 1992; and, Tabled Document 5-12(4), the corporate plan for 1994-96 of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Pollard.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Charter Communities Act

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24, 1993 I shall move that Bill 2, an Act to Amend the Charter Communities Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Pollard.

Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Cities, Towns And Villages Act

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24, 1993 I shall move that Bill 3, an Act to Amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Pollard.

Bill 4: An Act To Amend The Hamlets Act

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, November 24, 1993 I shall move that Bill 4, an Act to Amend the Hamlets Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions, Motion 1-12(4), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker. This motion will be stood down until tomorrow. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Sessional Statement by Premier; Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1994-95; and, Committee Report 3-12(4), Report of the Standing Committee on Finance Review of the 1994-95 Capital Estimates, with Mr. Pudluk in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

The committee will now come to order. What does this committee wish to do this afternoon? Member for Thebacha.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman the committee wishes to start addressing the Sessional

Statement by the Premier for some time this afternoon, and then we would like to go into the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you, Member for Thebacha. I believe this is Bill 1. We'll start with the Sessional Statement made by the Premier, if this committee agrees we start with that first.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. General comments, Member for Thebacha.

General Comments

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I initially moved for the Sessional Statement to be brought into committee of the whole so we can further discuss it in some detail, or to ask questions on it as opposed to spending a lot of our time in question period addressing many of the issues, particularly when a lot of the answers, I would anticipate, would not be readily available. Mr. Chairman, when we decided to address this, there were basically some general comments that I would like to make as a Member.

First of all, I appreciate the government giving us information and giving us an update as to where they are at with the process of decentralization. I've indicated in the House for the record that I've always supported decentralization and it's appreciated to know where this government is at with it.

Page 76

However, I am concerned with respect to the way implementation of the staff housing strategy, to get the government out of housing, is addressed. I know part of the strategy involves selling of government owned housing and I have to say that I'm really disappointed as to how the strategy has been implemented. I initially supported this strategy, I fully supported the concept of government getting out of

housing but the way they disposed of the houses is not the way I had anticipated it would happen.

Mr. Chairman, quite some time ago I asked in this House, to the Minister of Personnel, how these houses were going to be disposed of and I was given assurance that these houses would be disposed of through the private market, through a real estate agency. In my discussions with the real estate agency in my riding, in the year 1992 when there was no government housing for sale on the private market, there were 21 sales in Fort Smith alone. But in 1993, up to September of 1993, there were only three sales of housing because of the fact that the government decided to take it upon themselves to sell their surplus units. Not only did it destroy the housing market but I believe it practically destroyed a business in Fort Smith. I know it wasn't the intention of the government. In fact, I think they wanted to create an economy, create a housing market, but certainly the way the strategy has been implemented, did not achieve these results.

I've recognized on the top of page two on the ministerial Sessional Statement, it says that 89 units of staff housing have been sold throughout the territories and another 91 sales are pending. I certainly hope that out of these 91 sales, they are not sold through the government.

Another comment that I want to make is, I am aware that the appraisal method used for these houses is not on the appraisals that you do. It's apparently on the assessed value of the land and of the houses which is totally different from an appraised method of the unit. You get a totally different figure. I know of one civil servant in Fort Smith who has purchased a house -- apparently from the government surplus -- for \$85,000, decided to move out of the community into another position in the government and turned around and was able to sell his unit for \$135,000. Now, this was not the intention of the government when they disposed of these units but this is the way that the housing strategy has been allowed to be disposed of in a method which is not, I believe, acceptable for the government and not acceptable for the community.

I don't believe it was the intention of the government to get into the real estate market but without recognizing it, they did and it's unfortunate, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, also in this Sessional Statement there were comments such as, the community transfer

initiative -- and it's somewhat of concern to Members of this House -- when we have the government wanting to give more responsibility to communities when they have closed down one of the larger communities in the territories. We still have not yet heard why. Maybe the Member for that particular community knows the details but other Members don't. It leaves us in a position where it's somewhat difficult, on one hand, to understand why government is trying to create community transfer initiatives and on the other hand, closing down a community.

Mr. Chairman, my constituents were very grateful for the \$6 million workers' training fund this past summer. Many people in the north were grateful for such a fund being available and I certainly would like to commend the government for taking such an initiative. I believe it created much needed jobs in many of the communities that had a lack of employment available.

Continuing on through the Sessional Statement, I believe one of the major concerns of many Members, Mr. Chairman, is the government's plan to turn the NWT Power Corporation into a user-owned utility, by giving northern residents and organizations a chance to invest in their future, by the purchasing of shares. I believe it is a concern to many people in the north that the government is planning to privatize the Power Corporation. It is not as much of a concern when you look at privatizing the liquor outlets, POL or other opportunities the government may consider privatizing. But, when you start privatizing a utility corporation which provides some of the basic needs in today's society, it is a concern. How is this going to be privatized? Where is it at? What method is going to be used? Who is going to be given the opportunity? There are many questions with respect to the privatization of the Power Corporation. I am sure Members will press this issue further in the House as our session goes along.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to education, we all recognize that more people are requesting an education. We know that the capital and O and M budget is probably being pressed for education. We also know that because of a decline in the economy, people feel they need an education in order to be competitive for whatever jobs are available. I believe training is a key component.

I was pleased to note that our MP is working closely with the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy. I would encourage this government to take advantage of CEIC or other federal agencies. We should make the

most of any type of training opportunities for the territories.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the topic of work place commission, again, there are many questions on the commission. I know it was the intention of the Government Leader to give us a briefing in the caucus, but our caucus agenda just didn't allow the time. We did have the opening and other events happening. It is unfortunate that we didn't have the time because this announcement was made through the House by the Sessional Statement.

There are many questions with respect to this commission. There are many questions about the purpose, the framework, the mandate, the cost and of the final report to be published in the fall of 1995. Taking into account that 1995 is the election year, and this report is going to be published in the fall, who is to say that the next government will take this report and implement every recommendation? We are somewhat sceptical of the government asking for in excess of \$1 million to look at such a commission, when we don't clearly understand what it is for and what it intends to do.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure Members are very pleased with the fact that the Access to Information and Privacy Act will be introduced in the next session. I agree, as many Members will, that there are many complex and outstanding issues such as

Page 77

claims, developing a new constitution for the western territory, and arranging for ongoing work toward the creation of the Nunavut government. There are many outstanding items that have to be addressed. However, we must not forget -- even though these political and constitutional developments have to be addressed -- that we have many social, housing and health problems to address. They are very important needs of the people of the Northwest Territories.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to give another colleague of mine the opportunity to make general comments, with regard to this Sessional Statement. I would like to thank the Cabinet and the Government Leader for bringing us up to date. I know that was probably their intention in putting forward this Sessional Statement, into the House. I believe it is appreciated but there are many questions about issues that we did not know about. I believe that the Committee of the whole is a better forum for

addressing this than question period. With that, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

There are a number of comments. I wonder if the Premier would like to make a remark? Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I would hope that we could look at the general comments. Then I will make comments about some areas and the Ministers responsible will take note of the general comments and will respond after the general comments are made, if that's acceptable.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Is this committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Okay, general comments and questions. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am perhaps biased, having been involved with the public hearings and the preparation of the report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. I know that some of these problems -- family violence, alcohol and drug abuse, child care -- are areas in which it sometimes seems one could spend great amounts of money and still feel that they have not come close to dealing with the serious issues we all know we're facing in our communities.

I want to say that, knowing the special committee report was coming forward at this session -- and I do appreciate the positive comments of the Premier today about what we hoped would be the constructive nature of that report -- I find myself searching for some acknowledgement of these pressing social issues in the Sessional Statement.

Mr. Chairman, apart from references to the plan to present papers on custom adoption, income support and training, family violence, and a response to the

gender equality report, I don't see that there's any emphasis on the social issues that are crippling our communities.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that these social issues, unless they're resolved, are going to provide barriers to economic, and even constitutional development and community transfer in our communities. So, my general comment is that I was looking for some indication that the government believes these social issues are a priority that have to be dealt with. Issues like the wages of alcohol and drug workers, the deficiencies of the food allowance rates for those who must depend on social assistance, and the adequacy of social services benefits seem to have been ignored in the Sessional Statement.

We know the government is hard pressed financially, but I would have thought, Mr. Chairman, that if money was to be squeezed from our tight, tight budget that the priority that would emerge would be something wonderful such as finally dealing with the need to bring alcohol and drug workers' wages to a scale where decent people can be attracted to these jobs. In my constituency you can make more being a water truck driver's helper than you can working as an alcohol and drug counsellor, in a community that is ripe with these kinds of problems.

Instead, what do we see, Mr. Chairman? We see that the government has devoted almost \$1 million to a burning issue of the day, the northern work place. I haven't heard Members of this Assembly stand up and demand that the northern work place be studied. I haven't heard committees of this Legislature say that the northern work place is an issue the government must tackle, address and consult our constituents on. Frankly, I've listened carefully and I know there's going to be briefings provided to caucus. The reason cited in the Government Leader's Sessional Statement that we have to prepare for division, the settlement of claims and the negotiation for self-government, to me aboriginal organizations are preparing to settle claims and negotiate self-government. I'm sure that if the character of the work place is going to change because of aboriginal claims negotiations or because organizations such as the Gwich'in are going to negotiate self-government, the Gwich'in would be very happy to decide for themselves how the work place and the labour implications of those changes should be dealt with.

With division we have a federally funded and supported implementation commission which I would think is going to examine issues related to planning

the new Nunavut government including, if it's a burning issue, the work place in Nunavut. If the work place is a problem with community transfer, I would think that municipal governments would be anxious and willing to grapple with these issues and deal with them as they take on responsibilities and integrate these former GNWT responsibilities with their own municipal work forces.

Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I'm surprised that this has been identified as a priority issue for new money, although I'm not saying it's unimportant. When you place it alongside the food allowances for social assistance, the wages for alcohol and drug workers, the need for mental health workers in the community, the need for child care as an aid to improving education and improving employment for single parents and the need to take measures to address family violence, I think all those issues are more important than examining the northern work place.

So, Mr. Chairman, rather than saying the statement has flaws. I would say, from my point of view, one of the biggest questions is why the government's Sessional Statement does

Page 78

not really have anything to deal with these very pressing social issues that we will be debating during this session, as a result of the work of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. When are we going to tackle the major social issues on which I hope the special committee -- Members will agree -- have made constructive, thoughtful and cost-effective recommendations? Why are we spending money on an area that no one has identified as important, when we are now considering a report that was considered so important that this Assembly created a special committee, consulted widely in the Northwest Territories and has brought forward recommendations that we hope will be taken seriously and will become a priority of the government on which to respond? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Are there any further general comments? Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have devised this method of responding to the Commissioner by moving the Sessional Statement into committee of the whole so we can deal with it in some detail. I think the

expectation is when you make a statement like this, which proposed to talk not only about this session but for the next two years, then you would expect it would reflect what is left in our mandate as we have developed as we have gone along over the last two years.

I feel one of the big problems we always have is we set up a committee and the committee outlines what is the huge priority of the day. In the 10th Assembly, it was housing. The housing committee went all over the place and came up with lots of great ideas to solve the housing crisis. In 11th Assembly we set up one on the economy, and now we are into social and health issues. We never deal with any of it, we just keep on piling one on the other.

It seems to me, if you are going to make a sessional statement which has to do with what we are going to achieve within the next two years of our mandate, then you would hope it would reflect these big issues we have been talking about for so long and some kind of solution to deal with them. I found that the statement, although I was happy with many things in it, I feel there were so many things that were just left unsaid. It was not what was in it that I am concerned about, but what wasn't in it. We have so many issues we have left dangling in the air and we haven't tried to meet them head on.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Chairman. There are so many things that were left out, but I have no real contention with some of the things in the statement, apart from the one issue of the Power Corporation but I have already referred to it in my reply to the Commissioner. That is the major issue in my area, in addition to the concerns about this building and the payroll tax. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Are there any further general comments? If not, I wonder if someone would like to make a response to the comments made by other Members? Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I will just do an overall reply and the respective Ministers will do likewise, for their own responsibilities. Mr. Lewis, in his reply today, suggested that we have done nothing in the first year and barely nothing in the second year, but there are a few important things to consider. One is the ongoing responsibility of government and keeping it going.

We all know the social problems in the Northwest Territories are ongoing and as we plan our budget, we attempt to try to resolve those. I believe no matter how hard we try we will never overcome all of them, but certainly we are trying to change the expenditure pattern to fit in some of the concerns that have been raised and the Minister can respond to that.

We realize the Special Committee on Health and Social Services was going to present a report. It has been a good report and I believe many of the recommendations are dovetailing to the general direction this government is going.

In terms of the Power Corporation, we did announce privatization and we are proceeding with that. However, I can assure the Members what information we have will be brought to you by the people who are commissioned to do the work for us in detail and without any bias or against the corporation. As we all know, this issue is certainly one of the major issues of the unions that have committed themselves to do everything they can to make sure this does not get privatized because they feel it is not in the best interest of the employees. We accept it is the right of the union to represent themselves in that manner. However, it is this Legislative Assembly that will decide on the merits of the privatization and how it will be privatized. We expect it to go through the normal process and in the end it will be the Legislative Assembly who will be making the final decision.

In the area of people, their well-being and the responsibility of communities, we have a fundamental concern in all communities that we are still too centralized. There isn't an acceptance that all the jobs should be held in Yellowknife and that decentralization is not a good thing. Decentralization has been well-received from the different regions that have received employment opportunities for people to work who would not otherwise have had that opportunity. We have attempted to put training programs where we felt there was some shortfall.

It is unfortunate that much of our economy comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories to smaller communities and community support services. It would be very nice if some of the communities had another option of where they could get jobs, but they don't.

As well, we are accused that we don't intend to take any more and put it out to where the services are being offered. Even the clerical component of the department is well-received in a community because

people actually get employed. It may not be important to the overall design. We aren't pretending we are a government that is representing a large cosmopolitan area. We are only 60,000 people. We are not Toronto. Most people in the communities feel we are over-bureaucratized, that many things can be done if you give people an opportunity to take up a role in the privatization, such as housing. We still haven't completed our work. I realize and I accept the criticism because it is valid. But any time there is a change, no matter how small, people are not ready. So a small change is a big change in the Northwest Territories because everyone knows what everyone else is doing.

I felt in looking at how we are going to deal with the broader issue of providing services to people, it would be better to try

Page 79

to get as much as possible to the community and we are moving toward that with the community transfers. It was slow in the beginning because people didn't buy into it and they didn't believe us. They didn't believe that we were seriously going to conclude community transfers. There is still a bit of disbelief that we are 100 per cent behind this.

In terms of the regional aspect of where we are going, I think strong communities will make strong regional representation. If people are developing at the community level, regions have a better base of dealing socially, economically and politically on behalf of their regional representation.

In terms of the work place commission, and what I proposed to call it at the beginning was a "working group," but the word "commission" seemed more appropriate. I thought it needed that extra word that would give it more weight. Every time we talk about a community transfer, one of the problems is how do we handle our employees. In terms of the land claimant groups, there is a difference between how they handle our employees and how they handle their employees. If we are going to take over public government responsibilities, there has to be some coordination there.

In terms of the issue of industrial development around oil and gas, pipelines and mining activity, people are wanting to know what we are willing to do to look after the work place. If anyone here says that has not been a difficult issue, it has been and it is going to be. Addressing the issue is important before it becomes

chaotic. Even regarding decentralization, this government was accused that we were creating instability of the work place. How are you going to handle your people? Do they have to move? Are you going to look after them if they cannot? What are the rights of an employee? We didn't go to the federal government at the beginning because we wanted to get on with this job and it is a job that has to be done. It was not appropriate at the time to go to the federal government because they were going into an election. This does not preclude that we shouldn't go to the federal government now. They should pay for some of this exercise.

Mr. Chairman, I guess I am not the kind of person to come up here and blow my own horn and say we are doing all of these great things. I have never been that type of person. I believe a lot of things that have been done here have not only been done by Cabinet, but have been done by ordinary MLAs. We have tried very hard to give total respect to standing committees and the involvement of ordinary MLAs. I hope we have reflected that. From time to time we have strayed or neglected something, I hope it is just because we were too caught up in too many things at once. But I believe we have to keep working together. Just because there is a Cabinet, that doesn't mean ordinary Members have lesser input. But, in respecting that, sometimes it takes a little longer to do things. It takes that effort by Members of caucus or Members of standing committees to take on maybe a little bit more of a role. The other area...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Pardon me, Madam Premier. Your time had expired and I was just allowing a little bit of latitude for you to conclude. But, it looks like you're going to go on. What's the committee's wish?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Proceed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Yes, carry on, Madam Premier.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

I don't have much more to say. But I think the comment has been made -- I believe it was by Mr. Lewis -- about other opportunities for revenue. At this point in time, yes, we don't have many opportunities or options to put more revenue into the coffers of the Northwest Territories.

If we encourage development, we're penalized. I believe this is one of the areas we have to address as quickly as possible, even if we can find some kind of interim arrangement with the federal government. We have great opportunities in the development of the mining industry but it has got to be on our terms. It has to be on the basis of what we get out of it. We've tried to work with them in a cooperative manner, but I don't think that we, as a Cabinet, -- or us, as a Legislative Assembly -- can sit back and not make sure those benefits accrue to Northwest Territories residents.

I realize that in the Izok Lake area land claims have a priority in certain areas. But, overall, I believe that if they are taking our resources, we've got to get something out of it. I've worked a great deal with the mining industry but they'll only act in a way that legislation tells them to. So, we'll stick to the areas where they feel they can best move in. However, I would like to say that they have changed in attitude somewhat. But, I don't think we're in the driver's seat at this time.

In other areas like the defence policy, I believe there has to be enough concern raised that we have to find a way of dealing with this issue as well. Overall, Mr. Chairman, I believe that what I try not to do, as your Government Leader, is think that things can just be done by Cabinet. We've integrated many things and changed many things because the Members of the Legislative Assembly and its committees feel that there is a different way to do it.

I hope we continue to work on that relationship because I don't believe that 24 of us, with all the time we can put into it, will accomplish all the things we want to accomplish. But, we should give it a very good try. We, as Cabinet, can't do it alone. We have tried to change, as people feel there are important areas we have to address.

In terms of land claims, it is just not land claims. People can have a land claim -- I have more experience than anyone in telling you that anyone can sign a document -- but it is how you implement it that counts. You can't do that yourself. Claimant groups can't do that themselves, they need cooperative support to implement their claim.

Mr. Chairman, I allowed some of the Ministers to make the responses for some of the areas that are particular to their portfolios, if you don't mind. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Madam Premier. Any further comments on the Minister's statement? Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the sale of staff housing, the Department of Government Services and DPW is in charge of the sale of staff housing. Also, Personnel is involved. The direction is to offer the sale of the staff house to the tenant who is living in the unit, to encourage tenants to get into home ownership. So far, in all the communities as of

Page 80

October 28, 85 housing units have been sold under the sale of staff housing program. A total of 64 were sold directly to the tenants. As government employees, they took the offer to buy those.

A total of 21 units were sold to the public through realtors. Further, 92 sales are in the process of making arrangements for financing, where they obtain land leases and arrange for surveys. Most of these sales should be complete by year end. The Member from Fort Smith raised a concern. Ten units have been sold to employees and another eight units are pending sale. One unit was sold by public tender. It was damaged by fire and sold as surplus. All sales were based on appraised value and as a short-term strategy, tenants were offered units at 100 per cent of their appraised value.

Tenants can submit a counter offer of not less than 90 per cent of the appraised value. Two sales occurred on this basis, one in August 1992 and one in April 1993. In phase I of the strategy, tenants could submit counter offers only if they were supported by another appraisal which differed by no more than ten per cent of the GNWT appraisal. Five sales occurred under this program, the last in December 1992.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Any further comments by Ministers on their particular areas of responsibility? Ms. Mike.

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the wage parity of alcohol and drug workers, it is not only the alcohol and drug workers who have a shortfall in wages. There are the workers in the elders' facilities and in

group homes as well. The government is now trying to now find an overall solution on the issue of wage parity.

I'm sure that good resolutions were put forth by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. I can not add much more to what I've already said, other than to say that I would like the department push more to get the communities involved in resolving some of the social problems we have. I do realize some of the workers are over-worked but there is a lot of room for volunteer work in the communities.

I say this because it wasn't so long ago, just 30 years ago, that people in my community were self-sufficient. They looked after their problems and we didn't have any social programs. To some extent, the government programs have taken some of that responsibility from the communities to the extent where the communities are lost. Some re-education will be required in that area. For those of you who never grew up in a small community like I did, you probably have no idea what I'm talking about. But I do. There has to be some balance. I can say Mr. Lewis has been here long enough that he has seen a lot of changes and I think he would agree with me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Further comments by Ministers responsible for their area. Any further comments on the Minister's statement. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Chairman, I believe it was the intention of the Members to attempt to go into Transportation. I do have further questions with regard to the comments on how housing was disposed of, but I won't get into the details. I would suggest that the Minister ensure these units were disposed of on appraised value, and not assessed value. But we can get that clarified in our other discussions.

Committee Motion To Defer Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Carried

Mr. Chairman, with that, I'd like to move that we defer Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Sessional Statement to a later date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Is it the wish of the committee that Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Sessional Statement, be deferred? The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

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

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

This item will be deferred but will remain on the order paper. What is the committee's wish to go on? Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Chairman, I suggest we deal with Bill 1 and start with the Department of Transportation, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Mr. Pollard, are you prepared to go ahead with this item?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

I'm advised that the Minister of Transportation has his opening comments and is ready to go, Mr. Chairman, yes.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Do we have any general comments on Bill 1, Appropriation Act No. 1, 1994-95? We have a request for a short recess. We will take a five minute recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

The committee will come back to order. Mr. Antoine, are you ready to make your comments as the Standing Committee on Finance chairman?

Page 81

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

MR. ANTOINE:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Finance made a report to the House under item 11, reports of standing and special committees. I would like to enter that into part of the general comments for this budget. I would also like to mention that the committee worked hard. We spent three gruelling weeks reviewing the budget and we have done an intensive review of the whole budget. With the help of our able Legislative Assembly staff, Mr. Doug Schauerte, Ms. Joan Irwin and Mr. George Bell, we went through the review and were able to come out with this report. With that, I have two motions I would like to do at this time, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Please put forward your motions. We will need a quorum before a vote can be taken on it. Mr. Antoine, go ahead.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Financial Management Board clarify and ensure consistency in the reporting of prior year, current year and "total" expenditures in the five year capital forecast documents. The committee further recommends that the modifications, which address the difficulties identified, be contained in a five year capital forecast 1995-96 to 1999-2000 document. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. That motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Question has been called. We don't have a quorum. Please sound the bells. The chair recognizes a

quorum. We have a motion on the floor. Shall we read that motion again?

Committee Motion 1-12(4): To Adopt Recommendation 1, Carried

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Financial Management Board clarify and ensure consistency in the reporting of prior year, current year and "total" expenditures in the five year capital forecast documents. The committee further recommends that the modifications, which address the difficulties identified, be contained in a five year capital forecast 1995-96 to 1999-2000 document. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

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

---Carried

Mr. Antoine.

Committee Motion 2-12(4): To Adopt Recommendation 2, Carried

MR. ANTOINE:

I have one more motion, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee recommends that the Financial Management Board provide substantiation for any changes over \$100,000 in planned expenditures. The committee further recommends that these substantiations be contained in the five year capital forecast 1995-96 to 1999-2000 document.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

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

---Carried

Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

That concludes my general comments, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Are there any further general comments? Does the committee wish to go into the department in detail? Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Chairman, can we go into detail of Bill 1?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

The committee agrees. The first item is Transportation. Is that agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Is the Minister prepared to proceed with his opening remarks? Mr. Todd.

Department Of Transportation, Introductory Remarks

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes. Do you want me to do them? Okay. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the committee with the Department of Transportation's proposed capital budget for 1994-95. Let me say at the outset that I

believe transportation is a major factor in the economic well-being of all our citizens.

The high cost of transportation, especially in off-highway communities, makes a significant contribution to high living costs and the high costs of delivering a whole range of government programs and services. Transportation cost is also a major factor in frustrating a variety of potential economic developments.

Page 82

Most of our communities do not have access to the highway network and this will not change in the foreseeable future. Many do not have adequate airports. Most do not have access to marine facilities needed to support resource harvesting and resupply. Others require local roads to access nearby resources and recreation and tourism attractions.

We also have an obligation to improve the safety of our airports, roads and harbours as well as the skills and awareness of those using them.

We have tried to address these issues in developing our capital plan. However, the list of needs for improving and expanding our transportation facilities is virtually endless. We would like to invest more but, as you know, there are other priorities and our fiscal capacity is limited. We simply can not do it all.

On the positive side, we have had some success in seeking additional resources through program transfers and cost-sharing agreements with Canada. We will be pursuing more of these to help address the shortfall in addressing needs.

This year, we have undertaken an update of the transportation strategy, first released in 1990. This document will be available in the near future. I have also identified, from the strategy update, the major priorities which I, as Minister, intend to pursue over the next few months and, hopefully, two years. I intend to table this transportation agenda before the end of this session. It will identify those priorities which are not being addressed within our current plans and outline plans for finding the resources necessary to do them.

The priorities we intend to pursue are as follows: to find the resources necessary to accelerate our highway upgrading program.

---Applause

Thank you. To negotiate with the federal government to continue the Mackenzie Highway extension.

---Applause

To coordinate federal, territorial and private sector investment in constructing a transportation corridor to the Arctic Coast. Do I hear you Kelvin? To increase funding for community local access roads.

---Applause

God, I can't take it.

---Laughter

To negotiate with the federal government for funding to build and upgrade airports to meet community needs. The hour is late. To improve the safety and reliability of air navigation systems; to increase spending on local marine facilities; to improve marine resupply systems and reduce costs; to increase efforts in transportation safety and, more importantly, to increase the local employment and business benefits resulting from transportation expenditures.

In setting priorities and developing the plan before you, we have listened to the advice of MLAs and community leaders. Within our funding ability, we will attempt to fulfil our obligations and satisfy the highest priorities.

With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to a few general points concerning this plan. First, the capital base of the Department of Transportation is largely built on a succession of program transfers from Canada. There have been three capital base transfers related to the highway system, totalling about \$24 million in today's dollars. A \$3 million base transfer was also made in conjunction with the airports transfer.

Secondly, this government has a major investment in highway facilities in the west. This investment will continue to place considerable demands on our resources for maintenance, as well as capital rehabilitation and upgrading. Highways are, therefore, the largest component of our capital program.

However, because our off-highway communities will continue to rely on marine and air transportation, we must accord a higher priority to providing these communities with adequate airports and marine facilities.

For this reason, two recent capital cost-sharing agreements with Transport Canada have specifically targeted air and marine facilities for off highway communities. The first agreement runs from 1990 to 1995 and is providing a total of \$8 million additional federal dollars for airport upgrading. The second runs from 1993 to 1997 and is providing \$10 million new federal dollars for airport and marine facility upgrading.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, there have been numerous requests for local community access roads and marine facilities. These facilities are required to support resource harvesting, tourism, recreation and cultural pursuits. I am attempting to respond to this need by quadrupling the annual capital allocated to local community access roads from \$250,000 in 1993-94, to \$650,000 in 1994-95, and to \$1 million by 1996-97.

I also plan to double the annual budget for community wharves, from about \$1 million in 1993 to \$1.5 million in 1994 and \$2 million per year commencing in 1995. This is in addition to the federal cost-sharing agreement I mentioned earlier.

I believe this proposed capital plan represents a good balance in responding to the needs within the resources available. I hope you all will find it worthy of your support. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Is the representative of SCOF prepared to make comments? Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the review of the 1994 capital forecasts, the Department of Transportation provided the committee with a full briefing on the highway program. The briefing covered the maintenance, reconstruction and paving of highways in the western Arctic and included an inventory of highways in the territories, maps showing type and conditions of highways, highway usage

Page 83

statistics, historic expenditure on highways, highway safety standards, highway program priorities and the overall capital program.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the progress achieved by the department. For example, today 55 per cent of NWT highways meet design standards that include: acceptable road widths; surface conditions; curbs; passing opportunities; and sight distances. The comparable condition for 1988 is 40 per cent. In 1988, 72 per cent of territorial highways were untreated gravel. Today, 22 per cent of the highway system is paved and 47 per cent is dusted, treated gravel.

The short-term priorities of the department are: reconstruction and paving of highway 3; Fort Providence junction to Yellowknife;...

---Applause

...reconstruction of highway 8; local access roads; Rae Edzo. In broad terms, the committee agrees with the department's rationale for road construction and paving and understands that cost considerations may dictate the scheduling and proportions of the programs. However, Members are concerned that the sheer scale of the undertaking on highway 3 may in fact be removing dollars from other important projects, in particular, reconstruction of the Dempster Highway.

This factor may also be creating a ten to 15 year deferral of work on less-travelled portions of the highway system.

Committee Motion 3-12(4): To Adopt Recommendation 3

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Transportation reassess its short-term priorities. The objective of the reassessment is to ensure that the maximum number of residents of the Northwest Territories benefit from the expenditure of capital dollars on the highway program.

The committee further recommends that the four highways listed below be reconsidered in conjunction with this objective. Reconsideration should involve the movement of capital funds in the 1994-95 fiscal year for the reconstruction and/or paving of the following highways: highway 5, Fort Smith; highway 8, Dempster; highway 6, Fort Resolution; and highway 1, Fort Simpson.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN:

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the motion. I was just wondering whether the committee has based its recommendation on any kind of statistics? My concern is that I don't know what the motion was based on. I could see myself supporting something like this is, if it is justified. In Fort Providence, every year during the summer months there are about 6,400 vehicles that cross in a three month span. Once the winter crossing is open, the amount of traffic is also great. I would like to know what the statistics are for the Liard crossing and the Arctic Red crossing that would justify this motion. And, of course, Mr. Chairman, the other thing is whether the committee looked at the age of the highways.

The first highway ever built was from the border to Hay River; two, between Enterprise and Yellowknife; three, was to Fort Smith; fourth, was to Simpson; five, the Dempster; and, the very last one is the one to Fort Wrigley. We should be able to use that as a basis. The priorities that we set have to be based on the volume of traffic, the age of the roads and the safety factors. I don't mind supporting a motion like this if the whole purpose is they are undergraded roads and the safety conditions are important. At the same time, I don't think we should be taking away from other projects that have already started during the 11th Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Member for Thebacha.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Chairman, the intent of this motion was to ensure that all highways are being addressed. As Mr. Gargan said, the second highway built was from Hay River to Yellowknife. The first highway being from the border to Hay River and then to Fort Smith. The committee was concerned that funding is being spent not only for initial paving, but for repaving when there are many highways in the Northwest Territories that haven't even received initial paving.

We recognize that our job is to be guided by the principle, to ensure equity, fairness and universality of benefits to all residents in the territories. I certainly was concerned, as a Member, that there was no equity and fairness and universality of benefits. In this particular budget, there wasn't any money whatsoever for addressing highway 5, for example. In order to ensure that all highways are looked at in a

fair manner, committee Members felt the need to look at moving some capital dollars in the 1994-95 budget to address highways which some Minister had started way back in 1986 and left. Such highways were never dealt with on a continual basis.

We are asking Members to support the motion to ensure that funding allocated through the Department of Transportation is done so in a fair manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting this motion on the basis that this committee reviewed highway safety and the overall capital plan usage. I'm very concerned about the amount of money that has been allocated for the Dempster Highway, highway 8. Based on the information that was provided to Members during the briefing on the highway system, highway 8, in terms of statistics and standards that are required for highways -- and I'm talking about the width -- is considerably undersized in that regard. Also, there's the amount of dust on the Dempster, the grade and number of turns. There's also concern about the conditions of the various culverts that are in the Dempster Highway. I get concerned when money, at one time allocated for highways such as highway 8, are now not recorded in the budget book. There's \$1 million for reconstruction this year and there's no money in this document for future years. I get concerned when I see information that is maybe, missing. I will be supporting this motion and hope that the department sees it in their wisdom to allocate appropriate funds to do a good job. Especially in an area that has very little economic base, and is in need of jobs. Highway construction provides a lot of jobs. Thank you.

Page 84

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you. I think it's important to clarify that Mr. Koe is well aware that there's \$13.4 million over the next five years for investment in the Dempster Highway. So, let's get that clear because he implied that there wasn't. He's fully aware, being at the Standing

Committee on Finance meetings that there's \$13.4 million in the budget, for the record, over the next five years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you, to the motion. To the motion, Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

(Microphone turned off)...look on page 9-20 for highway 8 reconstruction. There's \$1 million for this year and there's been nothing identified for future years. I know what the Minister told the Standing Committee on Finance, but all I'm referring to is the document in front of us.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Thank you. The hour is 6:00 and we will report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Chairman.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pudluk):

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 3-12(4) and Bill 1 and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Chairman, is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Dent. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there's a meeting of the Chairs' Liaison Committee after adjournment this evening. Tomorrow

morning, at 9:00 am, a meeting of the full caucus and at 10:30 am of the Ordinary Members' Caucus. Orders of the day for Tuesday, November 23, 1993.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Oral Questions
6. Written Questions
7. Returns to Written Questions
8. Replies to Opening Address
9. Replies to Budget Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 1-12(4), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 3-12(4), Sessional Statement
 - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1994-95
 - Committee Report 1-12(4), Talking and Working Together
 - Committee Report 3-12(4), Review of 1994-95 Capital Estimates

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm, Tuesday,
November 23, 1993.

--ADJOURNMENT