



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

5th Session

Day 4

12th Assembly

HANSARD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1994

Pages 55 - 90

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Hon. Silas Arngna'naaq, Mr. Ballantyne, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Mr. Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Lewis, Hon. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Hon. Rebecca Mike, Hon. Don Morin, Mr. Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Amittuq, Mr. Allooloo.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On The Baffin Leadership Summit

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise today to inform the House and the public about the meeting that recently took place in Iqaluit. During the week of January 9 to 14, I had the honour of chairing the Baffin leadership summit which met to discuss issues of regional concern. Attending were MLAs from the Baffin region, mayors from the 13 communities, as well as representatives from the Baffin Regional Inuit Association, Baffin Divisional Board of Education, Kakivak Association, Quikiqtaluk Corporation, Nunavut Arctic College, Baffin Regional Health Board, Baffin Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

During the intense four-day session, we discussed a wide variety of issues including education, especially getting leaders and the parents more involved in encouraging students to complete their schooling, retaining the name Arctic College for Nunavut campus, the need for family housing units for students, and support for Baffin and Nunavut training strategy and plan.

The second area of concern was economic development, which included a commitment to begin work on a Baffin economic strategy, including

developing terms of reference for a regional economic planner position, support for parks and tourism, and ensuring that as much benefit as possible is retained by local people from sport hunting and other ventures.

The third topic was health. The main topic of discussion was support for design and construction of a the new Baffin Regional Hospital. Renewable Resources was a fourth issue. Topics included support for increases in funding for the Baffin Regional Hunters' and Trappers' Committee and requests that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated ensure that the hunters income support program be put in place as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue with my statement. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

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

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Madam Speaker and colleagues. In the area of housing, there was support for development of a strategy to address the urgent need for staff housing for some communities in the Baffin region. The sixth topic was alcohol and drug workers. Support was given for the effort to come up with more funds to address the lack of housing for staff and to supplement salaries and benefits to alcohol and drug workers. Number seven, Nunavut law school, the summit agreed to support the current initiatives to establish the Nunavut law school. The eighth area of concern was the code of conduct. We also committed to develop and adopt a code of conduct for Baffin leaders.

Madam Speaker, in addition, the Baffin Leadership Working Group was established to look into the possibility of creating an organization of Baffin leaders whose main function would be to enable us to cooperate and work together, a new and improved regional leaders forum, so to speak. Finally, Madam Speaker, we decided that the next Baffin leaders summit will be in Cape Dorset this spring. As you know, Cape Dorset is on the leading edge of the community transfer initiative program, and it will give us a chance, for the first time, to look at their progress.

At the appropriate time, Madam Speaker, I will be tabling copies of the 16 resolutions and related correspondence which provide further details of our discussion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Member's Statement On Cutting Firewood In The NWT

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I recently had a constituent of mine, Mr. Albert Norwegian, attempt to explain to me all the rules and permits necessary to cut firewood for a living in the Northwest Territories. Madam Speaker, in addition to having to comply with a provision of the Motor Vehicles Act, which restricts Mr. Norwegian to only use half the capability of his truck, Mr. Norwegian has to obtain the following permits: the land use permit, timber cutting permit, timber transport permit and a timber road ticket permit. The fees involved are astronomical. Wood cutters pay \$950 up front to cut 150 cords of wood; \$20 for the application fees; \$54 for the stumpage fees; and, \$270 for reforestation fees.

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Madam Speaker, as most Members are aware, wood cutting contributes to the economy as well as to the environment. Firewood is culled from the forest. There is no clear cutting. The only wood that is used is dead wood. In my opinion, Madam Speaker, the wood cutting by its very nature, encourages the environment by allowing new growth to occur. I can see charging logging company stumpage and reforestation fees, but I do not believe that firewood cutting has the impact upon the environment that warrants the charging of these fees if any wood cutting contributes to the government's reforestation program.

Madam Speaker, the government pays people to cut firebreaks and thin trees in some areas. Why then is the government trying to discourage a small environmentally friendly business that will ultimately contribute to the success of their forestry initiative? Madam Speaker, the government has to take a serious look at its policy for firewood cutting. There

has to be a better financial incentive for people to be involved in this industry. The government has over-regulated this industry. I will be pursuing this matter in the weeks to come. Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Lewis.

Member's Statement On White Cane Week

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, Madam Speaker, was the beginning of white cane week. This week is set aside to make the public aware of the challenges of blind people. Lydia Bardak, the executive director of the local branch of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, was here yesterday, and I believe she expected us to mark the beginning of this week. She did so herself yesterday, Madam Speaker, by co-hosting the morning radio show on CBC.

Throughout the country yesterday many people engaged in communications, sports, politics and entertainment to spend some time blindfolded. It gave them a brief experience of what it's like to live without sight.

Those of us who served on the last Assembly had the privilege of working with Charlie Crow, the MLA from Sanikiluaq, who had been blind since childhood and who gave deep insight into the enormous challenges that face blind people.

The CNIB celebrated its 75th anniversary last year, and many of us took advantage of visiting the travelling exhibition. Canada has played a very important role in developing technology to assist blind people. I know Members will join me in offering best wishes to the CNIB for its successful campaign during this white cane week.

Members have in front of them a small package which contains a little document that tells you what you do when you meet a blind person, an example of Braille and a Braille alphabet bookmark. And, of course, everybody will have a white cane to remember that this is the beginning of white cane week. Thank you.

---Applause

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kitikmeot, Mr. Ng.

Member's Statement On CIBC Installation Of Debit Card Terminals

MR. NG:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The GNWT recently announced the awarding of its banking services to CIBC. In the January 18 press release, the Minister of Finance said the decision to remain with the bank was largely based on a combination of the service they will be providing to the government, combined with its branch network in the NWT, plans it has for community banking initiatives and their commitment for hiring more aboriginal staff.

These banking initiatives also confirm an exclusive arrangement CIBC has with the Northwest Company, for the installation of debit card terminals in various Northern Stores. Debit card service will allow card holders to pay directly for merchandise purchases, as well as receive cash from their accounts if they so desire.

Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that this new debit card service that will become available to some communities and to some consumers who have or will be able to obtain debit cards is, in fact, not of great benefit to residents of our communities. The individuals currently owning chequing accounts with banks were able to write cheques for their purchases and, in most cases, receive extra cash if required, so the availability of debit card terminals may add some convenience to the existing system. However, most of our residents will not be able to obtain debit cards or may not necessarily want them.

At this time, I do wish to commend CIBC for their efforts to provide a new service to our communities, in addition to the commercial and residential lending that the bank does in some of our communities.

I, personally, bank with CIBC and in the past have had various corporate accounts with them. From my experience, they have been the most responsive of all banks in addressing banking needs outside of Yellowknife. I look forward to any new initiatives the bank plans on implementing in improving accessibility to banking services in the communities.

Madam Speaker, my main concern with the CIBC banking proposal which has been accepted by the GNWT is the exclusive arrangement the bank has

made with the Northwest Company for the installation of debit terminals in their various stores.

Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue with his Member's statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Continue, Mr. Ng.

MR. NG:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This exclusive arrangement will be detrimental to all other retailers and competitors of Northern Stores. In the majority of our communities, the main competitor is the locally owned and controlled cooperative. These cooperative stores and other

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private operators will lose a significant amount of their business as a result of not having the opportunity to establish debit card terminals in their stores.

Madam Speaker, I hope the GNWT recognizes this important concern and attempts to deal with it in a fair manner. Mahsi.

---Applause

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Whitford.

Member's Statement On White Cane Week

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, too, would like to make a few comments on white cane week and a bit of a background on CNIB.

The first white cane week grew out of the experiences of a small group of blind people who had discovered that the public generally did not understand the meaning of the white cane as a symbol of blindness. In 1946, the Canadian Council of the Blind developed a national education program to tell Canadians that the white cane means the carrier has a serious visual problem. The CCB later invited the Canadian

National Institute for the Blind to get involved, and the two organizations became co-sponsors of white cane week.

Since then, white cane week has become a national network of special events, hands-on demonstrations, open houses, tours, speakers and activities throughout more than 60 CNIB centres and 95 clubs from coast to coast, including the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, I know a good number of the people who are taking care of the information booths that are in many of the communities. My son is included in that, and they are to be saluted. Over the years the program of White Cane Week has involved to reflect the changing situation of blind and visually impaired people. In the early years, the week was used to demonstrate the concerns for rehabilitation, blindness prevention and advocacy. In more recent years, events have begun to emphasize the capabilities of the blind and the visually impaired people, themselves. The aim was to draw blind and sighted people closer together in order that they may be able to support one another. I quote, "In this decade and into the next century, we are going to have to develop a healthy attitude about blindness and visual impairment."

I think that people like myself have to be made comfortable in the recognition that there is nothing wrong with this human condition. It is respectable to be blind. It is okay to have poor or failing vision in our society." This is a quote from Dr. Euclid Herie, who is the CNIB president.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD:

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MADAM SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue with his Member's statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed.

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, colleagues and Madam Speaker. People are our most precious natural resource. It must be understood that all people have the ability and the desire to contribute and be part of society. In the

Northwest Territories, there are at least 150 people who are blind or severally visually impaired. Many more have not made contact with helping agencies. Quietly, they are struggling with their visual loss. We need to work together to have all individuals participate fully in their community. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife North.

Member's Statement Re Impact Of Lowering Tobacco Taxes In NWT

MR. BALLANTYNE:

The decision of the federal government to lower tobacco taxes in order to curb spending in Quebec, to a lesser extent in other provinces, has serious ramifications for the Northwest Territories. These include loss of revenue, a possible influx of cheaper cigarettes from the south and, most importantly, a serious threat to the health of northerners, especially young people.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

The federal solution was to deal with rampant smuggling in Quebec, but it is totally inappropriate for the Northwest Territories. The former Government of the Northwest Territories raised taxes on cigarettes significantly and was strongly criticized by smokers for doing so. However, our fundamental justification, over and above increased revenue, was to provide a deterrent to smoking, especially among young people.

I am a product, myself, of a generation who had cheap cigarettes and no anti-smoking education. I have had mixed success in beating the dreaded habit, and I don't want my children to repeat my experience. I would support the government in raising NWT tax to keep the price of cigarettes constant in the north. I am sure there will be pressure by the federal government to follow their lead.

In the final analysis, all provinces and territories may be forced to react to cross-provincial and territorial smuggling. But for now, I feel strongly that we should stand by the principles that cigarettes are more of a

threat to our young people than are smugglers.
Thank you very much.

---Applause

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

Member's Statement On Rental Adjustments In NWT

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, last week I attended a community consultation meeting on social housing issues conducted by the NWT Housing Corporation at the insistence of the Minister of Housing. The Baffin district manager gave a very thorough, but low-key briefing on a whole range of current housing issues in my constituency.

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Madam Speaker, one issue leapt out at the meeting, like a dark cloud blotting out the sun. It turns out that the Housing Corporation is proposing a major rent review, which I understand translates into lifting the proposed rent ceilings for social housing tenants in Nunavut. We are told this is driven by CMHC cuts to O and M funding to our government's social housing program this coming fiscal year and we are told it is driven by fairness and equity. Madam Speaker, many of my constituents were lured, or even intimidated, into moving from camps onto the land by federal officials, on the promise of free housing, health and education benefits. They are still alive. They still remember the promises made to induce them to leave their camps and the veiled threats they were given.

I will never forget how one elderly constituent, now deceased, explained to me the pain he suffered on being told by an RCMP officer that he must shoot his own dog team before moving into town.

Madam Speaker, the federal government is taking away the support for public housing, we learned, but it is the Government of the Northwest Territories, and its Housing Corporation, who are proposing to raise the rent. If our government has accepted this change demanded by the federal government, who is going to confront the federal government about breaking their promise to my Inuit constituents? Has our government accepted the deletion of O and M funding without a whimper and decided rent increases must go ahead? Or, is this community consultation going

to be a real consultation process where my constituents, and this House, will have a chance to say no to rent increases and no to federal cutbacks?

Madam Speaker, as I understand it...

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

---Laughter

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

May I request unanimous consent to carry on with my statement?

MADAM SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue with his Member's statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I understand it, Madam Speaker, the Housing Corporation also proposed to lift the ceilings now in place for social housing in Iqaluit, on the basis of fairness and equity. However, Madam Speaker, I want to say this about fairness and equity. Social housing tenants, in my constituency, do not have wood to build houses or to fuel their stoves. Social housing tenants, in my constituency, do not have all-weather or even winter roads to reduce the highest cost of living in the country. The rent ceilings were put in place many years ago, to recognize the high cost of living of communities off the road where there are no local fuel supplies. Since the cost of living and supply of local wood has not changed, how can it be fair or equitable to now remove the ceilings on rent?

Madam Speaker, I cannot emphasize enough the sensitivity of this matter in my constituency. I fear that if these arbitrary increases are imposed -- and I understand the deadline may be as soon as July of this coming year, when federal funding is cut off -- many of my constituents, including large families, will have no choice but to move into deplorable shacks and qammaqs before they will pay these sharp increases in rent. A number of them are already living

on the beach in my constituency, as Members of this House know.

My constituents will expect the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Minister of the Housing Corporation to take more forceful action with the federal government in the face of this treacherous action, not to repeat the treachery with my constituents, who have no alternative. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement On Absence From The House

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as a courtesy, through you, I would like to inform the House that I will be absent from February 16 to 19, attending the Kitikmeot Inuit Association conference in Cambridge Bay. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Item 3, Members' statements. Before going to returns to oral questions, the Speaker would like to recognize a former Member of the Assembly, Mr. Abe Okpik.

---Applause

I would also like to recognize Bertha Allen, president of the Native Women's Association.

---Applause

And councillor Steve Brooks from Hay River.

---Applause

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Housing. Madam Speaker, for a number

of months, the Minister responsible for Housing has been updating this House with regard to his many trips to Ottawa and elsewhere to negotiate with the federal government to make up the short fall in funding for social housing. I would like to ask the Minister if he could advise the House of the current status of those negotiations. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr.

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Morin.

Return To Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The current status of the negotiations to reinstate funding for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is we're putting a package together to present to Mr. Paul Martin on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, not only on the housing issues but the health issue and other issues affecting the government. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, the honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we know that the federal Minister of Finance is going to be presenting his budget very shortly in the House of Commons. Is that when we might expect to have an answer on this issue of the restoration of social housing cuts, during the federal budget? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I haven't had an opportunity to look at the federal government's budget, I don't think anybody has. I don't expect to have our housing problems solved by the federal budget. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

MR. PATTERSON:

My final supplementary, Madam Speaker. Then, when does the Minister expect to be able to give this House a final answer on this issue? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 38-12(5): Status Of Negotiations Re Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have made presentations to the federal government on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. We presented the unique case of the people of the Northwest Territories and made it very clear to the federal government that they have a legal responsibility to the aboriginal people of the NWT to supply housing. We've always come from that direction and we will continue to do that.

We've met with them several times to try to get funding for social housing. There is funding for aboriginal housing on reserves in southern Canada. That funding, I understand, will continue. In 1994, there is zero funding for new construction of social housing in the Northwest Territories. Through the Minister of Finance, Mr. Paul Martin, we are attempting to negotiate a package to solve that problem.

Through the CMHC route, the process I was directly involved in, I think we've dried up all avenues to get funding reinstated. There is a slight light at the end of the tunnel. I hope it's not a train, but there is a slight light that with the savings we create within CMHC and the Housing Corporation, we can put that money back

into housing. But, I don't expect to get anything through the CMHC process. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. The Speaker would like to recognize Mrs. Esther Braden in the gallery, the president of the NWT Seniors' Society.

---Applause

In addition, I would welcome the elders that are visiting us today, also.

---Applause

Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Lewis.

Question 39-12(5): Federal Government's Legal Responsibility For Social Housing

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Housing. I would like to ask the Minister, since he has been to Ottawa on at least five occasions and for all that tenacity he has come back empty-handed and since there is going to be no money -- as he has admitted -- through CMHC, does this mean that the federal government refuses to accept its legal responsibility for social housing in the Northwest Territories?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 39-12(5): Federal Government's Legal Responsibility For Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just to set the record straight, we managed to return last year with \$10 million above and beyond what we would have been allocated under the CMHC process, in case Mr. Lewis forgot about that. My reading of the issue of the federal government's responsibility to aboriginal people is that the federal government has never, ever lived up to that responsibility since they started building houses in the Northwest Territories and I don't see them accepting that responsibility, to date. They should. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 39-12(5): Federal Government's Legal Responsibility For Social Housing

MR. LEWIS:

To the same Minister, despite the many visits that he has made to Ottawa and due to the obvious unwillingness

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of the federal government to fulfil its legal obligations, what is the position of this government? What is this government going to do with a federal government that refuses to accept its legal responsibility?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 39-12(5): Federal Government's Legal Responsibility For Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have always said that it is the responsibility of the federal government and that they have the legal obligation to supply housing for aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. We continue to tell them that. We have encouraged aboriginal groups to deal directly with the federal government on the housing crisis in the Northwest Territories. We will do everything possible to assist aboriginal groups, to make sure the federal government does live up to its responsibilities. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Question 40-12(5): Minister's Efforts Re Social Housing

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister responsible for Housing, what efforts has the Minister made to meet with the Minister responsible for Indian Affairs and Northern Development to ensure that DIAND picks up where CMHC has left off, in terms of

funding for social housing, particularly to aboriginal and treaty people?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 40-12(5): Minister's Efforts Re Social Housing

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have made it very clear to the federal government that Indian Affairs does fund aboriginal housing in southern Canada, to the tune of \$130 million a year. I have raised the issue, personally, with the Minister responsible for Indian Affairs of the federal government. My colleague, the Honourable John Pollard, has raised the issue. Our Premier has raised the issue with the same Minister, as well as with the Prime Minister. Stephen Kakfwi, the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, has raised the issue when he has met with them. As well, we will be attending a meeting in Edmonton on February 16, with Mr. Irwin and we will raise the issue again. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kitikmeot, Mr. Ng.

Question 41-12(5): Minister's Plans To Address Social Housing Crisis

MR. NG:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. The Minister has repeatedly reassured this House and its committees that he is pursuing the federal government to re-establish the cut funds for social housing. We all acknowledge and commend him on his efforts in that respect. However, there is a possibility that no funds will become available. What does the Minister plan to do to address the crisis in social housing, when no further federal funding is available?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 41-12(5): Minister's Plans To Address Social Housing Crisis

HON. DON MORIN:

Besides praying, if there is no funding from the federal government, we have attempted to address a portion of the needs. We would be dreaming in technicolour if any of us think that with the existing dollars we have, we can solve the social housing problem in the Northwest Territories. This problem is far too big. It's too huge, it's a crisis. If you think that this government, with the funds that it has, can solve it on its own, then we are dreaming in technicolour. We have to find a source of outside funds, or find some other ways to be funded because we just don't have the money. Even with the money we had last year, we're not even meeting ten per cent of the need.

If we had continued to get around \$40 million to \$47 million a year from the federal government, then we could have slowly closed the gap on social housing problems. But as it is now, the gap is getting bigger and it may mean we'll have to make some hard decisions. All 24 of us, not just myself or Cabinet. It's going to mean we'll have to make some hard decisions on how we spend our money. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Ng, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 41-12(5): Minister's Plans To Address Social Housing Crisis

MR. NG:

I think we recognize that the sale of the GNWT's housing in this current year has gone toward providing some of the social housing for this year, and possibly for next year. Does the government or the Minister have any plans to sell off any other assets of this government to meet the social housing needs?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 41-12(5): Minister's Plans To Address Social Housing Crisis

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Right now, the government is doing an inventory of the other assets we own. There are no immediate plans of myself, as Minister, to sell off anything to solve the housing crises. That would have to be a Cabinet decision,

and a decision with recommendations made of this House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Question 42-12(5): Process Used For Allocation Of Housing Units

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is

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to the Minister of Housing with regard to the allocation of public housing. With the shortage in almost every community, everyone is concerned that a fair allocation of public and social housing units should be made. Without getting into the actual allocation of units, can the Minister explain the logic and process used to allocate the available units to NWT communities?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 42-12(5): Process Used For Allocation Of Housing Units

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Two years ago, the NWT Housing Corporation, in partnership with the communities, made a comprehensive needs study in all the communities of the Northwest Territories. Through that needs study, it identifies those people in need of units, what type of units are needed, what type of programs are needed to address their need, that's how the allocation is based.

Right now, your allocation for your communities is meeting, I believe, less than ten per cent of the actual needs. So if you need 100 units, you're going to get approximately ten or less. But the allocation is distributed fairly that way.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 42-12(5): Process Used For Allocation Of Housing Units

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can only speak on my constituency, but one of the things I have noticed this year in my constituency is a substantial reduction of public access to social housing. I believe that allocation far exceeds the needs assessment. In other words, I realize in my constituency perhaps I didn't even get the ten per cent required. I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing in order to address the needs assessment and the allocations required by that needs assessment.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 42-12(5): Process For Allocation Of Housing Units

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I said, the allocation is based on the needs assessment. We are trying to make the best use of the dollars, the best mix of the use of the dollars that we have. When we build public housing stock or rent supp, we can build approximately seven, I think it is, home ownership units compared to the one. We try to use the proper mix. The mix we are using this year is 70 per

cent home ownership and 30 per cent rent supp. Then, we allocated that according to need. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 42-12(5): Process For Allocation Of Housing Units

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before Christmas, I wrote a constituency newsletter with regard to dealing with housing, only. In that newsletter, I did identify a lot of the old northern rental units that have to be replaced. I believe there are 12 of them. There are also about 24 young parents, single parents, who need houses and don't have any. I have also identified bachelors who also have no units. The way I see it is that the allocations that have been made to my constituency only address maybe a couple of families, when you know, in fact, they should be

looking at the other people. What I'm saying to the Minister is that the allocation doesn't meet the needs assessment that was done in my constituency. I'm saying that if the requirement is for 20 units and I only get four, then how is he addressing the other 16 that are required based on that needs assessment?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 42-12(5): Process For Allocation Of Housing Units

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Your constituency, Mr. Gargan, is no different than any other constituency. There are a certain number of people in need who are not going to get help. It's as simple as that. I do not have the money. We can only address those needs that we have the financial resources to address. It's as simple as that. I do not have the money. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Amittuq, Mr. Allooloo.

Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Housing, most of the residents of the Northwest Territories have heard a little bit about the potential rental rate changes for the social housing. The Housing Corporation staff have been in most of the communities in the Northwest Territories, if not all, to discuss this. Could the Minister explain what factors are driving the proposed rent changes, both internal to the NWT and also external? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The policy for the review of the rent scale has not been reviewed since

1983. As you know, it's an outdated policy. Everything that we, as a government, are supposed to be doing is supposed to be done in a fair, equitable manner and that's what we're attempting to do. CMHC has told the territorial government that if you do not increase your rents, because they are lower than other jurisdictions, they will take back operations and maintenance money from us. How much that is, I do not

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know. We are doing this in a slow and precise fashion. What is happening in your communities, and which everyone has been made aware of, all housing authorities have been consulted, there are family income forms being completed right now, so every Member will know how it will affect your riding. That is supposed to be done quickly. Then we have to develop a new rental scale, a proposal, and we have to take that to the Advisory Committee on Housing and Cabinet, to get approval. Then it would be phased in. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hear the Minister saying that in the event of changes, the government is proposing to implement the new rental rates for social housing. How much notice will the current tenants be given, if there are going to be any changes to the rental rates? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hopefully, by March of this year, we will have done community consultations and individual tenant impact briefings. In April 1994, the new rent scale will be drafted to go to Cabinet and the advisory committee. Community meetings to present the new rent scale will happen in May of 1994. In May of 1994, rent notices will go to the

tenants. In August of 1994, any adjustments will be implemented then. For those people who will have a drop in rent, it will be done immediately. For those people who will have increased rents, it will be phased in. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Madam Speaker, when the government increased the staff housing units to their employees, they phased them in. Will the phasing in method that the government used for staff housing be similar to social housing, if there are going to be rate adjustments?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 43-12(5): Internal And External Factors Of Proposed Rental Changes

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The phasing time will be determined through the consultation process. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kitikmeot, Mr. Ng.

Question 44-12(5): Cost Of Living Factor In Rental Adjustments

MR. NG:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Is there going to be a factor for the cost of living in different communities included in the rental adjustments? Is that included in the new rental rates?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 44-12(5): Cost Of Living Factor In Rental Adjustments

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 44-12(5): Cost Of Living Factor In Rental Adjustments

MR. NG:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. On what basis is the cost of living going to be determined for each of these communities?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing.

Further Return To Question 44-12(5): Cost Of Living Factor In Rental Adjustments

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. That work will be done by the Department of Social Services.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Baffin South.

MR. PUDLAT:

(English not provided)

MADAM SPEAKER:

I am sorry, Mr. Pudlat. We don't appear to be getting translation. Could I ask you to start again and see if we can receive some translation. Proceed.

MR. PUDLAT:

(English not provided)

MADAM SPEAKER:

No, we are not receiving translation. I will request a five minute break and see if we can address this issue.

---SHORT RECESS

MADAM SPEAKER:

I will call the House back to order. Order, please. Thank you. Before we proceed, Mr. Pudlat, I would like to recognize Mr. Mike Paulette, the vice-president of the Metis Nation.

---Applause

Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Pudlat, would you like to attempt your question again, please? Thank you.

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Question 45-12(5): Rental Scale For Low Wage Earners Or Unemployed

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can you all hear me now? Thank you. My questions are going to be directed to the Minister of Housing. Coming from Baffin south, many Members have constituents who are unemployed or underemployed, as a result of lack of employment opportunities in the communities or lack of supplies like soapstone. These people are concerned about the impact of the winter. Can the Minister explain why people are left out on the street in the winter because they can't pay high rents? There is a lot of unemployment in our communities. Sometimes it is very difficult for a tenant to pay high rents. It is especially hard for the unemployed people.

Madam Speaker, I would like to stress that with the staff housing strategy, the government is aggressively promoting home ownership. Is this promotion of home ownership access the result of the Minister's wishes to achieve changes to territorial housing rents?

There are people who are unemployed and some people are being evicted from their houses because they can't pay for their rents. If you are going to have such high rates, we would like to see the government reduce the rents that have been increased. We would like to see people living well and not on social assistance.

Today, our lifestyle has changed dramatically. Can the Minister answer my question on what plan the government has regarding the smaller number of access units, to encourage and support those social housing tenants interested in home ownership? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. May I remind Members to attempt to keep your preambles to your questions as precise as possible. Without taking away the fundamental right of freedom of speech for Members, I would also like to request the Ministers to make every attempt to keep your answers as precise and short as possible. Thank you. The honourable Minister for Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 45-12(5): Rental Scale For Low Wages Earners Or Unemployed

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. For those people with lower incomes, the new rental scale review program may even, in some cases, lower their rent. For those people with higher income, it will never exceed 25 to 30 per cent of their gross income, including the cost of living. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, the honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

Supplementary To Question 45-12(5): Rental Scale For Low Wage Earners Or Unemployed

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have unemployed people who are paying a lot of money for rent. Our constituents have to be aware about what is happening with changes to social housing and rental rates. Would it be possible for the Minister to answer this question briefly and precisely? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 45-12(5): Rental Scale For Low Wage Earners Or Unemployed

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Right now, the Housing Corporation is doing a house-to-house survey of the 5,500 housing units we have. Every person in your riding that lives in public housing will be consulted and they will know how the new rental program affects them. They will be consulted with and it will be explained to them in their own language. That is the process we will be using.

For those people who are unemployed, this isn't going to affect them. If you are not capable of paying rent, if you are unemployed, that is what the social housing program is there for, to assist those people. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Whitford.

Question 46-12(5): Housing Policy For Aboriginal People in Yellowknife

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question as well for the Minister responsible for Housing. It deals with the situation that aboriginal people in Yellowknife find themselves in. Recent surveys have indicated that Yellowknife is, by far, the largest aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories and yet we are almost being ignored as far as housing allocation is concerned. At least, this is the information I'm getting from aboriginal people who live in the city. Sometimes the Dene, Metis and Inuit people who live here feel discriminated against.

I would like to ask the Minister what is the policy for the city of Yellowknife, when it comes to dealing with great numbers of aboriginal peoples who choose to, or by circumstance, find themselves living here in Yellowknife? Their need is as great as it is in the communities, at times. What is the policy for Yellowknife?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 46-12(5): Housing Policy For Aboriginal People in Yellowknife

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yellowknife is different than the outlying communities. The need is different, as well. The majority of the need in Yellowknife is an affordability need and the majority of the need in the communities is there is just no housing available. It's as simple as that. Yellowknife has public housing, it has the North Slave social housing and there is also the access program. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Question 47-12(5): Conflict Re Minister Of Housing Corporation's Roles

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Housing. The Advisory Committee on Social Housing was established by this Legislative Assembly. The committee includes ordinary Members, and yourself, Mr. Minister. It is expected that the committee will provide recommendations to the government on social housing issues. Does the Minister see any conflict between his role as a Minister and as the chairman of this committee which will make recommendations to the government?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 47-12(5): Conflict Re Minister Of Housing Corporation's Roles

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. No.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 47-12(5): Conflict Re Minister Of Housing Corporation's Roles

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. After a period of time operating, many committees find their terms of reference need to be slightly revised. Members of the Advisory Committee on Social Housing are concerned that the committee is not as effective as it might be. Does the Minister agree that the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee on Social Housing should be revisited? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 47-12(5): Conflict Re Minister Of Housing Corporation's Roles

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I agree that the terms of reference of the advisory committee have to be revisited. We are still attempting to have a meeting of the advisory committee so that we can go over the terms of reference again and make recommendations to this House on how to change them. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Ballantyne.

Question 48-12(5): Decision On Increase In Territorial Tobacco Tax

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance or, perhaps, the Minister of Health. It would be appropriate for Mr. Pollard wearing either hat. I think Mr. Pollard was quoted in the media, saying that he is considering the possibility of raising our territorial tobacco taxes in order to replace lost revenue. I just wonder, has the Finance Minister made a decision, at this point, on whether or not he will raise territorial tobacco taxes to replace lost revenues? It would probably have a positive effect on the perversity factor and it would protect the health, especially of young people, of the Northwest Territories.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 48-12(5): Decision On Increase In Territorial Tobacco Tax

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we find ourselves, geographically, in a very difficult situation because the extreme eastern part of the Northwest Territories is dependant on supplies from Quebec. The middle portion relies on Manitoba and, of course, we, in the west, either deal with BC in a small way or we deal with Alberta. We are getting trapped in the situation that Ontario finds itself in and that is, there is a jurisdiction, particularly in the east, that has lowered its taxes.

If I could just give you some idea, in Montreal the prices dropped from \$47 a carton down to \$22.73 a carton. Merchants in Iqaluit are already saying to me that I have to follow suit because the effect on them has been \$62 down to \$53.01 a carton in Iqaluit. They are saying that at \$22.73 a carton in Montreal versus \$53.01 a carton in Iqaluit, smuggling is going to be on the increase.

Having set the scene about the difficulty of the geography, certainly the western provinces have agreed, at the Health Ministers conference, that they were not going to follow the federal government's line. They also stated that they were somewhat annoyed at the federal Minister of Health for not fighting stronger to keep these taxes in place because there was going to be an increase in consumption of tobacco. That's been proven in the past.

Tomorrow, I will be talking to the RCMP, Madam Speaker, to discuss the problems of enforcing laws in the Northwest Territories in this regard. I will also be seeking the counsel of other jurisdictions in this area, the Yukon, BC, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan -- I already know where Quebec is at -- to see what they're going to do. From that, I'll be able to advise Cabinet on a decision to make. Personally, I have been lobbied by two Members of this House that we should move into the federal tax room and keep tobacco taxes high in the Northwest Territories and, hopefully, keep consumption of cigarettes down. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Housing and it is with regard to the proposed rental rate increase for public housing, and with regard to some of the answers we've heard in the House today. Presently, what is the rental rate structure? Is there a difference between the east and the west and, if so, what forms are the differences in? Mahsi.

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MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Back in 1983, when this policy was developed, home ownership communities and non-home ownership communities was how it was based. There were some communities in the Northwest Territories that were eligible for home ownership, so they had the cap removed from the rental structure. Whereas, there were other communities, at that time, that were not eligible for home ownership. In 1993, all our communities are eligible for home ownership. So that's the biggest difference.

For an example, I'll use Tuktoyaktuk. If you make \$75,000 a year, I think you pay approximately \$1,600 a month rent, and the cost of living is the same as in Pangnirtung. However, if you live in Pangnirtung and you make \$75,000 a year, your rent will be \$275. That's the difference, so we're going to try to make that more fair and equal it out. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. From what I gather from what the Minister of Housing is saying, the idea is to equalize it by raising the rent and take the cap off in the east. Is that what the Minister is intending to do? Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The purpose of this is to make things fair throughout the Northwest Territories. For those people who can afford the rents, they should be paying rent. It will be proposed to the Advisory Committee on Housing, as well as to this House, before it's finalized.

We have some cases where, for example, in Iqaluit we have two members in one family who both work and make from \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year, for about \$160,000 gross. They pay about \$225 a month in rent. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister of Housing also indicated that if we don't do this, increase the rent and stabilize and equalize the rent, then the federal government will take back the O and M money. What does the Minister mean by taking back the O and M money? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 49-12(5): Status Of Rental Rate Structure

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess the way the agreement is with CMHC is that we collect rent and then we use that to fund our O and M. They are funding us right now for a certain portion of O and M money. If we do not increase the rents, we are currently getting \$45 million a year from the federal government for O and M, they would take that money back from us and it can amount into the millions and millions of dollars a year. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

Question 50-12(5): Effect Of Rental Increases On Home Ownership Program

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. Another question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Will the people who are under home ownership, who are in the process of owning their own home, be

affected by the increase? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 50-12(5): Effect Of Rental Increases On Home Ownership Program

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. No, it will not effect those people who are in the home ownership program. The pay-back will still be the same as it is, and it will encourage people who are living in public housing to move into home ownership housing. Then it would free up public housing for those lower income people who need it. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Question 51-12(5): Conflict Of Minister Serving As Chairman Of Advisory Committee

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, to the Minister of Housing. When I asked the Minister about whether he might see a conflict by serving on the Advisory Committee on Social Housing and himself serving as the Minister, he said no. I understand that where there is a conflict is where you make, perhaps, financial gains. I would like to ask the Minister whether there is a conflict here when you make political gains.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. I would like to ask you to rephrase your question. A question should be asked to Ministers with respect to their particular responsibility, determining whether it's their responsibility. Political gains, as you phrased, seems to be somewhat unclear to the chair. Therefore, I would like to ask you to attempt to rephrase your question. Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The point I was

trying to make is that we have a situation in which the Minister is serving on a committee that is supposed to make recommendations to his department. I'm just wondering whether, by virtue of him serving on this committee, he is using the committee to make gains for his department, and whether that would constitute conflict.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Mr. Gargan, with all due respect, the chair is of the opinion the question you are asking is not within the responsibility of the Minister of Housing. I believe you are asking an opinion of a Minister with regard to his responsibilities and I am somewhat concerned about the question you're posing. I would like to ask your indulgence, and respectfully ask you to somehow rephrase your question. Thank you.

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of Housing. Has the Minister of Housing requested a legal opinion on whether or not serving on the advisory committee is in conflict with his department?

---Ruled Out Of Order

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. I recognize your question is somewhat appropriate, but I believe it has been posed to the wrong Minister. Your question should be directed to the Minister of Justice. Ministers should not be asked questions of legal opinions. Therefore, I would like to ask you if you would be willing to pose the question to the Minister of Justice, with his particular responsibilities respecting the Minister of Housing. Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

Question 52-12(5): Legal Opinion Re Conflict Of Minister Serving As Chairman of Advisory Committee

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Justice with regard to a situation in which a Minister is serving on a board that perhaps might influence the direction his department would take. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice whether or not, by virtue of the Minister serving on the committee, he is in

conflict, or whether the Minister can obtain an opinion on whether there is a conflict?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. The honourable Member for Sahtu, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 52-12(5): Legal Opinion Re Conflict Of Minister Serving As Chairman of Advisory Committee

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Madam Speaker, we will review the question. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark.

Question 53-12(5): Rental Rates Based On Percentage Of Household Income

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the honourable Minister of Housing. Earlier, the honourable Minister indicated that the ceiling will be 25 per cent of the household income. Is it household income or is it the income of the head of the house? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Housing, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 53-12(5): Rental Rates Based On Percentage Of Household Income

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Right now, what is proposed is a household income. That all has to be worked out with the advisory committee and this House for finalization. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 53-12(5): Rental Rates Based On Percentage Of Household Income

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Minister indicated it would be 25 per cent of the household income. I believe that 25 per cent of the household income is already in effect. Is that correct, Mr. Minister? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister for Housing, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 53-12(5): Rental Rates Based On Percentage Of Household Income

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Item 6, written questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 4-12(5): Commuting Allowances for Government Employees

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Personnel. Would the Minister please advise this House of the following. Given that there are some government employees who live in Hay River and Apex who have to commute to their place of employment in Enterprise or Iqaluit, or vice versa, does the Government of the Northwest Territories have any programs in place to compensate employees who must drive from their home community to their place of employment?

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions. Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 12, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to table the following, Tabled Document 15-12(5), a letter from a

constituent, Mr. Kenn Harper, dated February 10, 1994, to the Honourable John Pollard concerning cigarette taxes. Thank you.

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MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 12, tabling of documents. The Minister of Social Services.

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 16-12(5), my letter to Mr. Gargan, dated December 17, 1993, responding to an oral question asked by the Member during the fourth session, concerning eligibility for the senior citizens' fuel subsidy and the NWT birth rate for 1992.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 12, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Amittuq, Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 17-12(5), resolutions passed at the Baffin leadership summit in January, 1994 in Iqaluit, along with related correspondence. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 12, tabling of documents. Item 13, notices of motion. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 15, motions. Item 16, first reading of bills. Item 17, second reading of bills. Item 18, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-12(5), Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence in the NWT; Tabled Document 5-12(5), Declaration on Family Violence; Tabled Document 6-12(5), Department of Justice Response to The Justice House: Report on the Special Advisor on Gender Equality; Tabled Document 1-12(5), Towards An NWT Mineral Strategy; Tabled Document 2-12(5), Building and Learning Strategy; Tabled Document 3-12(5), Towards a Strategy to 2010: A Discussion Paper; and, Tabled Document 11-12(5), First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT for the Year 1992-93, with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

I apologize. In addition to tabled documents, Mr. Ningark, there is also the appearance of witnesses on family violence in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The committee will now come to order. I will call the committee to order and would like to indicate that the order for committee of the whole today was determined by Motion 6-12(5) of the current session. The appearance of witnesses at this session was also approved by the House by Motion 7-12(4). The discussion today is on family violence in the Northwest Territories to assist us with the discussion we have in a number of documents, previously tabled, by the Minister of Justice. These documents have been circulated to Members and they are: Tabled Document 4-12(5), Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence in the NWT; Tabled Document 5-12(5), Declaration on Family Violence; and, Tabled Document 6-12(5), Department of Justice Response to The Justice House - Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality. At this time, I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to the table.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Tabled Document 4-12(5): Building A Strategy For Dealing With Violence In The NWT

Tabled Document 5-12(5): Declaration On Family Violence

Tabled Document 6-12(5): Department Of Justice Response To The Justice House - Report Of The Special Advisor On Gender Equality

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to welcome and introduce to the Legislative Assembly the following individuals at the witness table. To the right, is Ms. Lynn Brooks, NWT Status of Women Council. Welcome.

---Applause

Ms. Sandy Christophers, NWT Council for Disabled Persons.

---Applause

We also have Bertha Allen, Native Women's Association and we have Mr. Abe Okpik, National Advisory Council on Aging. Welcome.

---Applause

There was another witness scheduled to appear, Ms. Martha Flaherty, representing Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, who could not be with us today, unfortunately. At this appropriate time. I will read into the record a statement from Ms. Flaherty.

The procedure to be followed today has been circulated to all Members of the committee. I will now call upon the Minister of Justice for his opening remarks, which will be followed by the Premier, in her capacity as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Mr. Minister.

Presentation By Minister Of Justice

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have three tabled documents that address, in different ways, the problem of violence in our society. Today, we are fortunate to have a number of representatives who are joining us as witnesses to help us in our discussions. The first tabled document is called Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence in the Northwest Territories. The second, is a proposed draft of a declaration for consideration by the Members of this House on family violence. The third is the response of the Department of Justice to The Justice House report, or the gender equality review.

The common element in these three documents is a recognition that violence is a very significant problem that deserves our serious attention. When we talk about violence in this context, we are not talking about random acts of violence, such as snipers shooting at strangers on freeways. For the most part, we are talking about violence that takes place in the home and of cases where victims and abusers not only know each other, but are in an intimate family relationship.

A study released recently by Statistics Canada provides us with hard figures to confirm what women's groups and others have been telling us for years, that violence against women and

children is wide-spread across Canada, that women face the greatest risk of violence from men they know and that incidents of wife abuse, in many cases, are repetitive.

Family violence is a national disgrace. While Statistics Canada did not survey the Northwest Territories, we know what they would have found. Because incidence of reported violence is six times the national average, we have more than a disgrace in the Northwest Territories, we have a continuing tragedy.

People who have respect for themselves and each other, do not beat each other up. Violence is a sure sign of ill-health for individuals, families and communities. Abusers are unable to contribute to their full potential to society. Children who are raised with family violence cannot reasonably be expected to be healthy. At the same time, violence breeds more violence.

The Stats Canada study showed that children who witness violence against their mothers, are three times more likely to abuse their spouses themselves. Family violence destroys the foundation of the family and the community. It undermines any forward movement we make in other areas. All the land claims settlements and all the cultural, social and economic programs in the world will not guarantee a healthy society, as long as the violence continues. While there is a linkage between family violence, social decay and difficult economic times, it is not as simple as it might appear.

For example, the Stats Canada survey found that the incidence of wife abuse in Newfoundland was lower than anywhere else in Canada. The front line workers' survey, released by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services, shows that our community workers consider family violence and sexual abuse, along with substance abuse and unemployment, the biggest problems faced by communities.

The violence documents are a starting point for our discussions. It brings together elements of a strategy for dealing with violence, identifies actions being taken at present and areas where work could be done.

Elements of a strategy will include such things as the provision of services like shelters and counselling for victims and effective treatment programs for offenders, public education about violence,

particularly targeting youth and children, as well as improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in dealing with family violence.

Some of the criminal justice elements are examined in greater detail in the Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality and the response of that report. The violence document also talks about the need to introduce greater efficiency and effectiveness into service delivery, through a greater degree of interagency cooperation.

Beyond that, the document looks at the pervasive attitude of tolerance for violence. There is a key element of the problem in the most significant area of the strategy. Over the last few years, there has been a gradual, but positive, change in attitudes towards violence. Family violence, once a forbidden subject, is starting to be admitted and talked about.

However, the denial continues. Denial about the existence of violence and about its seriousness. The excuses continue. Abusers make excuses for their actions. It is always someone else's fault. But there are no excuses for beating up on family members. The rest of us make up excuses for looking the other way while the abuse goes on, but there are no excuses for putting up with abuse. We all owe it to our loved ones, to our constituents, and to ourselves, to face up to this concern.

The elimination of family violence requires a wide range of actions but at the end of the day, any family violence requires changing our attitudes which allow it to continue. We must challenge our old attitudes, values and behaviours, today.

Violence exists because we allow it to happen. To stop violence, we have to acknowledge that it is happening and not tolerate it continuing.

Denial and tolerance are not the kind of problems that can be solved merely by throwing a lot of money at them, even if we had money to throw. We are talking about a special transformation that cannot be bought.

We are proposing action on this specific element of the strategy. We are proposing a demonstration of leadership and commitment in the form of a declaration of zero tolerance.

Embracing zero tolerance of violence toward women and children is the necessary starting point of any meaningful strategy. If this Legislature adopts the

proposed declaration on family violence, we are committing ourselves to this principle.

Adopting a position of zero tolerance toward violence, although only a symbolic step at one level, is nevertheless a significant step because it will be a demonstration of our commitment as political leaders that things have to change. It is the first step in generating the same commitment by the rest of society, our constituents and our families. Part of the proposed declaration calls on all the leaders of northern society to make a similar declaration.

Northern leaders and the public must be invited and challenged to identify other actions to address the problem of family violence.

If elected representatives in the north want to make a concrete indication of the seriousness of their commitment, perhaps they will consider making the necessary changes to make it mandatory that anyone who is convicted of family violence while holding public office will be required to resign his or her seat.

The Assembly can provide leadership in these matters. Women's groups have been pressing for some time that we take a stand and adopt zero tolerance. Ultimately, however, the real difference will have to be made at the community level. Community leadership can make a big difference by making it clear that they will not tolerate violence in their communities, making it clear that no one has a right to abuse their family members.

I hope we all welcome this opportunity to get specific suggestions and comments from Members and encourage everyone to participate and make a contribution to the development of a strategy to deal with violence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will now recognize the Premier, who is also the Minister of the Status of Women. Madam Premier.

Presentation By Premier

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to lend support and congratulate the women's groups who have come to have this very serious area of our life-style addressed.

Violence against women, children, the elderly and disabled, is a serious problem, not just in the Northwest Territories but throughout the country. During the past ten years, a number of documents have been produced by the Government of the Northwest Territories and women's groups, contributing to our greater awareness of the problem.

In 1984, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women approved the establishment of the task force on spousal assault, which resulted in the production of a document entitled "Choices - A Three Year Action Plan to Address Spousal Assault."

In 1989, the Native Women's Association published "Communities Voice on Child Sexual Abuse."

In 1991, Pauktuutit published "No More Secrets: Acknowledging the Problem of Child Sexual Abuse in Inuit Communities."

Also in 1991, the special advisor on gender equality submitted a report to the Minister of Justice regarding treatment of women by the justice system. In May 1993, the Native Women's Association released the paper "Community Self-Evaluation for Family Violence Initiatives" which examines the effectiveness of the Government of the Northwest Territories programs to address family violence in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to these documents, there have been numerous conferences and workshops dealing directly and indirectly with family violence issues.

The awareness of family violence and its consequences has been steadily growing at the community level, and in many ways, provides the momentum for the discussion we're having here, today. Right now in the Northwest Territories, there are eight safe shelters funded jointly by the territorial and federal governments. These shelters provide a safe environment for battered women and children, a facility for counselling and a resource centre for women's groups. Child sexual abuse counsellors have been placed in most regions in the Northwest Territories, and these services are helping children deal with the trauma of their experiences.

But there is still much to be done, and we acknowledge that. The north has the highest violent crime rate in the country, and this rate is increasing faster than the national rate. An effective strategy to eliminate violence in the Northwest Territories is required. Hopefully, the discussion of family violence

issues in this Legislative Assembly will motivate leaders throughout the Northwest Territories to take a stand against family violence. Only by making violent behaviour socially and culturally unacceptable can we expect to improve difficult situations we face.

Residents of the Northwest Territories don't have to look very far to see how painfully acute this problem is, not only here but in the national media, particularly in the face of the multitude of dollars that we use to try to run away from our particular situation. As an example, I would cite Mr. Michael Jackson.

If a society firmly and consistently does not tolerate family violence, then there's hope that one day we'll be able to answer the desperate pleas for help among all of us.

I urge all Members of the Legislative Assembly, and I thank the delegation here today, that we can openly discuss this issue and perhaps come to some solutions that we can help each other solve some of the many problems. Thank you.

Presentation By Pauktuutit

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Madam Premier. As I indicated earlier, that Madam Flaherty will not be able to be here today, but I would like to read into the record a statement we received today.

The letter is addressed to Mr. Hamilton, who is the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The letter is dated February 10, 1994.

Dear Mr. Hamilton: Pauktuutit would like to take this opportunity extend our greetings and our appreciation for the opportunity to speak to the Legislative Assembly Members about our concern about violence in our communities, and Vision for Change to address this violence.

Regrettably, I will not be able to appear as a witness before the committee of the whole to discuss family violence in the NWT, due to prior commitments I have made regarding Pauktuutit's annual general meeting.

As I indicated to you in our phone conversation, Pauktuutit will be holding its 10th annual general meeting in Iqaluit. The preparations for this very important meeting and the election to follow, have made it very difficult for me to come to Yellowknife, at this time. I would appreciate the opportunity to address the Assembly following our AGM, on a

strategy to address violence and the role we and other organizations like ours can play to support this goal.

At our annual general meeting, we will encourage discussion about the strategy the Minister has introduced. After we have had an opportunity to consult with our members, we would welcome the possibility of sharing these views and suggestions with the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

We strongly endorse the efforts of the Minister of Justice's call for zero tolerance against violence. We all must be very clear about what we mean by zero tolerance against violence. Pauktuutit has adopted the philosophy presented in our Canadian panel on violence against women. At this time, it is important to have a clear and unequivocal statement from the Assembly regarding zero tolerance.

In particular, does the Assembly concur that no amount of violence is acceptable and that adequate resources must be

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made available to eliminate violence to achieve equality for women? To this end, an accountability framework for the strategy must be an integral part of the strategy and specific aspects of the strategy, such as community-based justice and service to victims.

In closing, I'm very sorry that I will not be able to attend the committee of the whole. We will provide a written submission for the committee, following our annual general meeting, on our views and we welcome the opportunity to meet with the Assembly, in the near future, to respond to the submission and to continue this meaningful discussion.

That was a letter signed by Martha Flaherty, the president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association. I will now recognize each of the witnesses in turn, who will be permitted up to 15 minutes to make a statement. First of all, I would like to recognize Lynn Brooks, representing the NWT Status of Women Council. Lynn Brooks.

Presentation By NWT Status Of Women Council

MS. BROOKS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon Premier, Ministers and honourable Members. Rita Arey, our president, sends her apologies. She is recovering from surgery and therefore, I'm here to represent the

Status of Women Council, an organization which you created by an act of legislation in 1989. Because we take our creation and our mandate to represent all the women of the NWT very seriously, we value this opportunity to address this Assembly greatly. We want to thank our Minister, the Honourable Nellie Cournoyea and the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi and other Members of the Assembly who are dealing with the issue of family violence in the NWT.

Mr. Carpenter said, "Where have the women been while we've been negotiating land claims and trying to secure a place for aboriginal people in the constitution and the whole scheme of things?"

We said we've been sitting around tables for 20 years talking about violence against women and children. When the first man showed up at a meeting about two years ago, we didn't say, where have you been all this time? We said, welcome, we are so glad you're here.

Certainly, the Health and Social Services review report substantiates this. So, what is family violence? It is a nice clean term for what goes on in one out of three homes in the NWT on a regular basis. I'll tell you about "Annie" who came in with her five children to Yellowknife from a remote Inuit community because the shelter in Iqaluit was full. She left her sixth child behind, not by choice, but because her mother-in-law demanded it. She had been beaten many times before but this time she had the skin of her knees filed down to the bone with a hacksaw to teach her to kneel before her husband on command.

I'll tell you about "Maryann" who comes from Fort Simpson. Her grandfather sexually abused her and her mother before. Her grandmother and mother were battered women. I'll tell you about "Albert." And, "Albert", I think, is probably the saddest story of all. He beat his wife to death in Dettah and now has convinced himself that a demon did it. He's a drug and alcohol worker now, counselling in Yellowknife.

We have to get past the denial and we have to look for solutions that work. Community justice is a great idea, but who decides who will be on justice committees? Who represents the community? Ask the elders and the women. The young men of Lac La Martre were surprised to learn that women elders were once considered the vehicles for justice. Men in power positions, it was thought, were not able to render unbiased decisions.

As we have consulted across the north, our community worker finds that women have the

answers but no one wants to listen. Why? Is it because we enjoy such prosperity under the status quo? Not if you believe Statistics Canada when they tell us our economy isn't growing. Why then?

I know that self-disclosure is discouraged, but I have my president's permission to tell you my own story. I am a Metis woman who has had a life of violence. I have been asked to prove I am a Metis, but I will say this. When my great grandfather came here during the potato famine in Ireland, the only women who would marry a poor Irish immigrant were French women and Indians, that was the term of the day. My great grandfather married a French woman and my grandfather married an Indian. It was not by choice, it was simply to get a woman to help on the farm and to bear the children.

My grandmother died of poisoning from a piece of chaff which stuck under her fingernail because the white doctor in Wallaceburg, Ontario refused to treat Indians. I was beaten and sexually and mentally abused all my life until I left home and then I became a battered wife. My children also suffered. The brutality continues, we try to band aid it and the church has sanctioned it. Who do we blame for these injustices? The time for blame is over. We need action.

But, having said that, this Assembly needs to confront the church and demand they fully participate in the healing. In

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Chesterfield Inlet, the church said, "Don't expect us to sell a building like we had to do for Baker Lake." Well, we say that if they have to sell every building they have, too bad.

The zero tolerance declaration proposed by Stephen Kakfwi is the most important proposition you will ever consider because it says, "We are the role models. We will pledge from this day forward to accept no violence in our lives. If we do succumb, we will resign." If the people have no role models in this chamber, where do they seek them?

During our constitution talks and during our Nunavut review, women said the same thing, over and over. They said, it won't matter what kind of government we have if we don't heal the people. We're so busy killing each other off, no one has to do it for us. I have to talk about Rebecca Kudloo, our eastern Arctic vice-president, who worked so hard at our last board

meeting in Yellowknife to have Paul Quassa come and talk to us about women's role in Nunavut. Where is Mr. Quassa now? I have to talk about Grace Blake, who spoke so eloquently at our constitutional talks in Inuvik. She said, "I would not build one more school, arena, dock or road until our people are healed. But where is our leadership?"

We agree that offenders need treatment. Where is the money to come from? Victims need help. Communities need to heal. The only answer we can come up with is a change, a radical change in our priorities.

If this Assembly would commit to healthy citizens as its priority, what then? The dollars, limited as they are, would go first to healing; everything else would have to wait in line. Do you have the courage to do that? That's the answer. The power to act lies with you.

Take a small percentage from each ministerial budget. You had no trouble assessing a one per cent payroll tax, so this suggestion shouldn't upset you. Then, commit to zero tolerance, personally. Become a role model and condemn violence in your constituency with vigour. This problem needs a holistic approach. It is not the mandate of Justice or Health or Social Services. It is everyone's mandate. Are you satisfied with a mandate to prolong the status quo? Are you satisfied with a murder rate 5.6 times the national average? If not, what are you prepared to do? Are you prepared to implement the recommendations of the Justice House report? Are you prepared to overhaul our outdated and ineffectual drug and alcohol program? Are you prepared to implement the recommendations of the health and social services review and the family law review?

We are very pleased with the government's response to the Justice House report but we are concerned about the lack of available dollars to put in place the resources we need to deal with the issues at the community level. We believe that community justice is indeed one of the long-term solutions and well worth pursuing, but we must assure that healthy people are on justice committees and that they are representative of and made up of community people including men, women, elders and youth. Training is an important issue in this area, and so funding, once again, becomes a problem.

The issue of treatment of violent offenders is a major concern. We are aware that the GNWT does not have the resources, at present, to properly treat

offenders, and we do want to comment on what we see as a potentially dangerous trend to see perpetrators as victims. People have to take responsibility for their actions and we will never overcome our violence if people don't do that.

One possible solution to some funding and resource problems could be more partnership initiatives between government and non-government organizations. The Department of Health has had some very successful partnerships, resulting in initiatives and resources which probably could not have been afforded by government alone. Non-government organizations can apply to sources of funding unavailable to government and the partnership facilitates grassroots involvements and community acceptance.

I want to thank you for your attention and allow me to make one final plea to you to act quickly upon the zero tolerance declaration. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Lynn Brooks. I have Sandy Christophers, NWT Council for Disabled Persons. Sandy.

Presentation By NWT Council For Disabled Persons

MS. CHRISTOPHERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon to Madam Premier, the Ministers and the honourable Members.

There has been very little research carried out in the area of violence against persons with disabilities. The NWT Council for Disabled Persons is hosting two conferences during the month of February, where we will address some of these issues for the first time. One conference will take place in Iqaluit, and one will take place in Fort Smith. We hope to gain some valuable insight about the extent of violence in the lives of northerners with disabilities, from these meetings.

Although we do not have statistical information about the extent of family violence on persons with disabilities, we have heard the personal testimony of many of our clients. For many people, violence is so much a part of their lives that they know no other way to live. Factors, such as alcohol and drug abuse, economic reliance on the abuser and lack of services, such as counselling, make it virtually impossible for a

person with a disability to escape an abusive situation.

Tabled document "Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence in the NWT" describes the nature of violence in the territories and outlines some of the elements for building a strategy. Some of these strategies must be adapted slightly to better suit

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the needs of northerners with disabilities, and there are some additional factors which contribute to family violence for persons with disabilities.

Nature Of Violence

The building a strategy document states that native people suffer all the symptoms of poverty, in addition to cultural dislocation. People with disabilities often suffer even more intensely from poverty because of low skill levels, discrimination by potential employers, limited number of jobs in the community and difficulty travelling to and from the work place, particularly in bad weather. People with disabilities often survive solely on a small allowance from an agency, such as Social Services. Thus, feelings of isolation, frustration and powerlessness are often even more acute for an individual with a disability.

The building a strategy document also states that people sometimes turn to alcohol and drugs as a way of covering up their sense of powerlessness. Disabled persons often feel even more powerless than the people around them. Thus, it can be even more tempting for a person with a disability to abuse alcohol or drugs.

In the past, people who became disabled, or children born with disabilities in the north were almost always sent to facilities in the south. However, as times change, more and more people with disabilities are staying in their communities, or even being repatriated from southern institutions. Therefore, many communities are now dealing with disability issues, such as accessibility, they have never had to address before. This can be a drain on the already limited resources of the community. It can also create a dependency and vulnerability to community members for the individuals with the disability. They become anxious to fit in with the rest of the community and reluctant to make waves.

One of the biggest barriers to eliminating family violence is denial. A code of silence is maintained to

prevent violence from coming to light. It can be especially difficult for a person with a disability to admit that he or she is being abused. For example, there are often communication difficulties, such as there being no one present who can understand sign language. Individuals may have some type of speech impairment or be very limited in mobility. Many people must rely on the person who is abusing them to get around. If you are rarely away from your aggressor, the chances of you admitting the abuse to anyone are awfully slim.

In the past the criminal justice system has been very ineffective for persons with disabilities. There has been limited use of alternative forms of communications, such as Braille or sign language. The language used is often technical and details can be difficult for the victim to understand. Court houses and RCMP stations are often physically inaccessible.

Through programs such as Yellowknife Victims Services, there has been some movement in the north to become more sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Although this is a very positive step, these programs are still very limited. Many RCMP officers, lawyers, judges and social workers could still benefit from disability awareness training.

Elements Of A Strategy

The building a strategy document offers a variety of suggestions for reducing family violence. Some of these can be adapted slightly to better suit the needs of northerners with disabilities.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and the people of the north have made eliminating substance abuse a priority. Drug and alcohol counsellors are already overworked in many communities. However, for a variety of reasons, few clients with disabilities are currently receiving treatment. Many treatment centres are not physically accessible, information is not available in alternative format. In addition, sometimes people with mental disabilities, as well as mental illness, are perceived as untreatable. We must try to make drug and alcohol counsellors...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. For the interpreters and translators, could you slow a little bit, please. This is a very important issue and we would like to have a clear translation for the benefit of some of the Members here. Thank you. Proceed please.

MS. CHRISTOPHERS:

We have tried to make drug and alcohol counsellors aware of the needs of persons with disabilities and be aware of issues like accessibility when we run our programs.

People with disabilities, particularly women, are often perceived as either happy, humble and accepting of all that happens to them, or embittered, blaming everyone else for their situation and lashing out indiscriminately. We must continue to raise respect for persons with disabilities in our society, through public education awareness programs, so that we can change public attitudes about violence and abuse and make it completely unacceptable.

It is important that reform and improvement of the educational system continue to be a priority of the government. However, it is equally important that the needs of students with disabilities, particularly those with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, are also addressed. Funding for equipment, special needs assistants, and programs must not be eliminated if we are to effectively educate all students and significantly decrease the drop-out rates.

People with disabilities are often physically as well as economically dependant on their aggressor. Therefore, they may be extremely reluctant to testify against their abuser. As stated previously, court support services, such as community-based victims assistance groups have helped reduce some of the fear, confusion and isolation of some victims. We must continue to encourage the development of programs such as these and volunteers should always be made aware of the special needs of persons with disabilities.

There is a variety of information available which reinforces to victims that they do not have to live in violent situations. Through mediums such as pamphlets and posters, people are told where to access services and what they can do to help stop the cycle of violence. But very often, victims with disabilities do not receive this information. We would strongly encourage the use of braille, sign language and audio-visual

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formats of such material to help make it accessible to everyone.

Many victims of abuse are unable to speak for themselves. We should encourage professionals, such as special needs assistants, police officers and social workers, to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse in a person with a disability so that it does not go undetected.

It can be physically exhausting and emotionally draining for a care giver to meet the needs of a person with a disability. Most communities have very limited respite care services. Care givers must often go months and months without any kind of break. Thus, care givers become tired and frustrated and have very little energy left for other family members. This can sometimes lead to abusive situations. The respite care policy being developed by the departments of Health and Social Services can help eliminate this kind of scenario.

Finally, in the NWT, there are a limited number of employment programs which are specially designed for person with disabilities. For example, the NWT Council for Disabled Persons administers a very successful employment program. This is an essential service as other employment services are not able to meet the needs of clients with disabilities as effectively. Funding for these programs must not be eliminated.

The needs of persons with disabilities were not specifically identified in the Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence in the NWT document. However, the NWT Council for Disabled Persons was very pleased to be invited to make this presentation. Although we have a long way to go, awareness of disability issues in the north continues to increase. The council hopes that as some of the strategies for eliminating family violence in the north are implemented, these issues are always taken into consideration. We are available for disability awareness training and to answer any questions or concerns at any time.

Lastly, I would invite all the Members to visit some of the facilities for people with disabilities in the north and listen to some of the stories of violence or abuse of the residents who live in these places. We have people in group homes in Yellowknife and every single one of them has been abused. Every single one. I would also invite you to visit the schools in every single community in the north and realize the numbers of children with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects and think about what kind of future lies ahead for them if we don't do something to

increase programs and services available to people with disabilities. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Ms. Sandy Christophers. Next is the Native Women's Association and Ms. Bertha Allen.

Presentation By Native Women's Association

MS. ALLEN:

I would like to thank the Premier, the Honourable Nellie Cournoyea, the Minister of Justice, Stephen Kakfwi, and all the Members of this Legislative Assembly. I know that if you weren't interested in family violence, you would not have invited this group to speak to you on how we can attempt to address the end of violence in our communities.

The Native Women's Association is very concerned about the high stats of crime rates. But, we say that there is enough

research on the issue of family violence. The time is ripe, the time is now, to strike up a working committee, made up of women's groups, men's support groups, elders, the disabled and Members of this House to start addressing the issue of family violence. Otherwise, I predict a continuation of community violence, a justice system that is expensive to maintain, a judicial system that has a backlog of cases.

We don't want you to think that family violence is only a women's issue. Family violence affects the whole community. A holistic approach is very essential. We can no longer work in our own little corners, in isolation, and hope that we can outdo the other initiative in family violence. For every young person in our court system, we must address that person holistically. What do I mean by holistically? I mean we look at that person physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

We also must look at financial contributions the holistic way. To me, that is to financially support the interagency. We can no longer say that it is the responsibility of the justice system when a young person comes into the court system. We have to start talking to the Department of Education, Social Services and all other departments that have an interest in making the community a safer place to stay.

We need to pool all our resources together and we need you, as legislators, and your departments to work with us. We may help you. We may suggest where there is need for changes in your policies. The Status of Women's Association has already told you where you can make cuts. We are good at that, if you give us that opportunity. Together, we can start to address problems and search for solutions.

What I have spoken about cannot happen in isolation. We have concerns about the communities. What our communities have said to us is healing must take place first. What do we mean by healing? Healing is a long painful process. I am sure if any of you are invited to family violence workshops, you will feel the pain. You will feel the pain of our care givers. Because the care givers are the ones who are directly involved with helping those people who have lived in violent situations. The healing process is allowing someone to talk, allowing someone to grieve. That is not an easy job. We get very emotional. In order to be of any help to that person, we have to feel their pain with them. This is what the communities have said. They need to go through that healing process.

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There is another way to heal that some of our contemporary aboriginal people are going through. That is going back to our spirituality and that is helping many of our old people in the regions to heal. I am not going to give you an experience of what it is to see a grieving person. When I talk about the hurt of our women out in the communities, I get very emotional, but I am not going to cry because I don't know how you would take me crying up here.

We all know that violence is usually based on power and control. It is a result of this power and control. The vulnerable members of our society are the weaker members of our society, they are the women and our children, they are the elders of our community and they are the disabled. There are many dysfunctional families in our society. If we don't do anything now, as a group, and working in partnership, we can expect the women, children, elders and disabled to continue to experience neglect. They will continue to be the prisoners of an alcoholic culture and society.

Now I will throw out some questions. What can the Government of the NWT do? We are really thankful that you have lead in the declaration of zero tolerance to family violence. Now what does that really mean? What does that mean to each one of you when you

took that declaration seriously? I hope you took it seriously. Does that mean that you will start coming out to public meetings when the care givers call for meetings? Or, are you going to continue...Gee, I am talking to the wrong people, I should be talking to the community leadership, but I will talk to you, anyway.

Our care givers in the communities are experiencing problems. It is said yes, you are doing a terrific job, I will go to your meetings to listen to you. But many times, these care givers talk to the converted, their co-workers. That is the end of the meeting. It is very frustrating for our care givers in the community. No wonder they are burning out. But now that you have made a declaration, will you publicly voice your concerns about family violence? Will you go on TV and talk to your peers, saying we want to live in a non-violent society? I hope you will. And tell the leaders, both at the local level and at the level of this House, until they start taking a public stand on family violence, I really cannot see any great improvement. But, because you have taken the initiative to invite us here, I am going to be trustful. I am going to trust you. You are the law-makers. You have the authority to make the changes. I'm going to trust that something is going to happen. The beginning is now. We are willing. Are you willing to work in partnership in developing a strategy to address community violence? If so, there is an implementation process. Like I said, to be an effective strategy, we need equal partnership in dealing with strategy and implementation. We realize that, as our Government of the Northwest Territories, you cannot do it on your own. We realize and have known for a long time, we as care givers, we as women's groups, cannot do it on our own. But, together we can accomplish much to restore our human values and to restore our dignity. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Bertha Allen. After Mr. Okpik's presentation I will call for a short break. It's not the tradition of the House, but I will invite the witnesses to our Members' lounge for coffee during the break. I have Mr. Abe Okpik, National Advisory Council on Aging. Mr. Okpik.

Presentation By National Advisory Council On Aging

MR. OKPIK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier, the Speaker, the Minister of Justice and the ordinary MLAs who are representing the Dene people, the Inuit and the other people. I greatly appreciate being here to give a presentation. When I was asked, I wanted to come here to give a presentation on behalf of the elders.

I first became involved with the National Advisory Council on Aging two years ago. I go to meetings three times a year to discuss topics. I'm sure you were given our papers. It covers just about everything and we're trying to have a better understanding. The population of the elders is increasing in Canada. We meet with people from coast to coast so the elders can be recognized. I am not really aware of all the details, but I have been a social worker and I have observed our children going to school. There are different kinds of councils and the Assembly, and I hear them through the radio. We will be achieving Nunavut.

What I want to say, back in 1980, the council started because they were concerned about the aging. They were encouraged by the Minister of Health to have such a council for the aging. One of the reasons they requested that, was that MACA was concerned about the elders in the whole country of Canada. It doesn't matter where you're from, you're bound to get older. Because our federal government was concerned that we were being left nowhere. You will get older. They decided to come up with that council and they also invite Inuit leaders, to see what they are doing today. They produce documents about what they are doing. I have some of the material that is in Inuktitut, English and French.

When I was asked to give a presentation here...We all hear about family violence, even to our spouses and children. We hear from different people. It's about time we voice our concerns on family violence and try to fully understand why we're doing that. This was not a very open subject to talk about a while back, but it's coming out in the open and everybody is starting to work harder at it. The three women who gave presentations before me, the presentations they mentioned are very true because they have felt it as well as we and our children.

In the north, we hear about family violence, whether its through the radio or news. We sometimes hear that it happens even to the elders by their grandchildren, that the elders...For Inuit, we have a tradition ourselves and the Dene have their own

tradition, as do non-aboriginal people. Even though we all

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have different cultures, this is very painful for us to experience.

We try to teach our children. We know even if the person has a very high education...For example, if you have a dog team, sometimes one of the dogs bugs the other dogs and it is not very good for the whole team. It is always going to be like that in a society where there will be that person. It gets very stressful. One of the reasons might be a shortage of housing, even though we want our grandchildren to be with us. The grandparents want to look after their grandchildren because there are no jobs, or because of alcohol and drugs. Those are not the only reasons. A lot of it is gambling, playing cards or bingo. These things don't improve the home situations either. If we just sit back and try to wait for someone to do something, it will never happen. We have to sit down and start working hard and try to improve these situations.

Looking at it from the elders' side, they might be pushed around or assaulted, because they don't provide the food the family wants. Even if they want to go to the hospital, they are scared to go by themselves. This is very emotional. They are not only physically abused, but they are mentally abused, also. They want to be involved with their children. Myself, when I was asked to come here to give a presentation because of this problem, we have to deal with it this way. We cannot just forget about it and not solve it. It is not just us, there are other groups and organizations in the north.

I would like to mention something about once the elders are at a certain age, they get a pension. It is not just in the north, but also down south. There are so many frauds in the NWT and we have to tell our children that they have to trust their parents. Once you get older, we are all going to go through the same thing. One of the witnesses said that the victims are going through very difficult times, which is very true, because of a shortage of housing. Sometimes, if we go to the social workers, they are not qualified. Those are just examples.

Someone mentioned that the women don't understand. If you go to Iqaluit, there is the Royal Canadian Legion. One of the women asked if she could be involved. There are also winter tents built

into the communities because there are no trees. It was designed according to the wishes of the women. I wish to thank the Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi. What you have said is very true. If we try to work together to have zero tolerance with family violence, this report that was produced by the Legislative Assembly asks about being a social worker or nurse and how that can be accomplished. The elders were consulted and they want full recognition because we have the wisdom to pass on to the younger generation. We can give advice to the younger generation.

The non-aboriginal people in Yellowknife also work hard in having opportunities to meet. There was also a meeting in the spring, trying to get more information on how the elders used to live. I would like to thank Dusty Miller and Mr. Braden.

The woman in the middle mentioned a presentation on the disabled. I appreciate the comments she made, even though this was a very closed subject before. Now, we hear it through media, TV and radio. I cannot run because I have a certain disability. I have been like this since I was 13 years old. At the time, I wasn't even answered when I asked about this.

I would just like to say to the Members now, that many people have to go to court and it is not very pleasant. It is not just me who knows about this. You, as leaders, have to put things in the best interest of the people that you serve.

You are here to make policies and laws. I would like to thank the three women who are here with me who are representing women and are working very hard on the subject of family abuse.

When we first got radio reception a long time ago, it was over thirty years ago, we heard on the radio then that a person beat his wife and sent her to the hospital. The elders were sitting around and talking about it. What was he thinking? That man came out of a woman and yet he is beating the woman he was living with. That was one of the questions that was raised. One of the hardest things is giving birth to a baby and it should be recognized it could be that painful if they are beaten. I would like to very much thank you for being invited to come here. We will not forget the people who have to go through family violence. Don't just give them something. Give them advice for what they should be doing. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give a presentation.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Abe Okpik. I let the presenters go past 15 minutes even though it was a rule, but knowing they don't have many opportunities throughout the year to make presentations, I was able to let you go beyond 15 minutes. Now, we will take a short ten minute break. After the break, I will entertain questions from the House to the Ministers, the Premier and witnesses. Witnesses, there is coffee back there. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call the committee to order. We've heard presentations from the Minister of Justice, the Premier and the witnesses. Now the floor is open for general comments. Mr. Dent.

General Comments

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to have this opportunity today to discuss the epidemic of violence in the north. I would like to congratulate the Minister in taking the lead in getting this item on the floor of the House. I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing before us today and leading our discussion with their thoughtful comments.

It is an important, yet small step on the road to dealing with the problem, discussing it. We somehow have to get past the talking stage and get into some concrete action.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. DENT:

During the hearings for the Special Committee on Health and Social Services in the past year and a half, we have heard a lot about violence from people in communities all across the north. We heard about violence against women, children and the elderly. Much of what we heard could be dealt with if the recommendations found in Justice House: The

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Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality were accepted by this government and dealt with.

People in the communities feel very strongly that right now, someone who commits violence against another person is often treated better than the victim and that there is tacit acceptance still, in many of our communities, that violence is acceptable. We have to get past that. We have to make sure we get past the denial that is rampant and start to come up with concrete action to deal with the problem.

In the final report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services, we made a number of concrete recommendations which would help deal with some of the problems. For instance, we heard in many communities about women and children being further victimized by having to be relocated from the family home after an episode of violence, and really being victimized when they had to relocate out of the community. There is, among our communities, significant support for making sure it is the offender who is most inconvenienced by episodes of violence.

We have to make sure we take the concrete actions necessary to deal with that. We have to make sure we require two signatures on our leases so that we can make sure the rights of both partners are protected. We have to make sure there is a clause in the lease that says that the offender is the one who has to leave the home in the case of family violence. We have to make sure there's not the sort of delay in justice that takes place right now that leads the offender to believe they can get away with violence and leads the victim to believe that justice is not going to serve them.

I'm pleased to see that the government, in their response to the recommendations from the Justice House report, is considering methods of speeding up the process, for instance, in accordance with recommendation 57, which says that occasionally there should be consideration given to proceeding with charges by way of summary conviction. We have to be careful we are not diminishing the penalties for violence, but in some cases this might be one way to make sure that charges are dealt with quickly, recognizing always that justice delayed is often seen as justice denied.

We have to make sure that there is appropriate counselling for both offenders and victims. I haven't seen too much of a response yet from this government, in that field. It is one of the strongest recommendations the special committee made. We also heard a lot in the communities about the concern for child sexual abuse. We have to make sure we are dealing with that problem. There is a concern, not

only with the treatment of offenders and those who have suffered from abuse, but we have to also find some way to ensure that our judicial system is dealing with offenders.

Right now, in many communities, there is a feeling that juries, for instance, are often being too lenient. If that is a prominent feeling that perhaps indicates a belief that the problem is not being seen in the community as seriously as it should be. This government has to take steps to make sure that people in communities are recognizing just how serious problems like that are.

We have also heard many times about the problem of elder abuse, physical, emotional and financial. We heard that one way this government could deal with it would be to ensure there is an adult protection clause in the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act. We've got to get that sort of legislation in place, quickly. That's a concrete action we can take.

We have to make sure that elders are aware of how to get help when they are being abused. Again, that is an action this government could take. We have strong support for this government designating one position as being a contact for elders so they could get information about programs and services which might be available to them, including how they can deal with situations of abuse. We heard strong support for this government providing support to assist self-help groups, regionally and locally, get underway so that they can provide counselling and assistance to elders who need to find out how they can deal with situations of abuse.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is very important that we talk about the issue of violence. It is a very important first step because it has been swept under the carpet for far too long. But, we've also got to make sure that we've got some teeth. There has to be some enforcement. There is no point in having a declaration on violence or a policy on violence or a code, if there are no teeth, if there is no enforcement.

The Minister has proposed that this Legislature deal with the declaration on family violence. I agree. It is a demonstration of leadership and commitment. But, further on in his opening remarks today, the Minister suggested that perhaps Members in this House might want to indicate the seriousness of our commitment by considering making changes so that it would be mandatory that anybody who is convicted of family violence, while holding public office, would be required to resign his or her seat. Mr. Chairman, I

know that I, for one, would very strongly support that kind of initiative, and I would hope that the Minister would consider bringing forward legislative amendments to bring these changes about.

---Applause

That's the sort of thing we need to see. We have to see some teeth. Mr. Chairman, the government's response to The Justice House, the report of the special advisor on gender equality, is good, but it doesn't go far enough. Too many of the issues are referred to other agencies like the Crown, to Justice Canada, the judicial council. What we need is a commitment from this government to follow up on the recommendations and apply pressure to those agencies. Not just refer, but apply pressure to those agencies to react to those recommendations.

Similarly, the Minister's paper on "Building a Strategy for Dealing with Violence" is good because it lists all the things we need to consider while we're dealing with developing a strategy. It lists the issues for which we need to see the clear leadership on how we're going to achieve those goals. In fact, without a system set up to monitor, and a system set up to ensure accountability, there is bound to be justified public cynicism about whether anything will happen.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that one thing I would very strongly urge this government to consider is following one of the recommendations, in particular, from the final report of the

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Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, and set up a zero tolerance accountability board. Such a board would monitor progress in the campaign to end violence, and could report publicly on progress and on problem areas. It could help to ensure that the public does see that we are taking some concrete steps to deal with the problems we face in the north. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. General comments. Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have many comments to make. Anything I have to say will be in

relation to the proposed declaration on family violence.

I think all Members would agree that when you seek and hold public office, your commitment is to make sure that within your society, the weakest people are not going to be abused by the most powerful. That's the definition of an uncivilized society, when you get chaos and violence where the most vulnerable people become victims. For that reason, I think, today we have people who have talked to us about the most vulnerable people in our society: children, the elderly and disabled people.

My question, Mr. Chairman, is to the Minister. Since the basic principle here is that within families there are vulnerable people...Although we recognize that the abuse essentially takes place when men exert power over the most vulnerable, we seem to exclude in the declaration any reference whatsoever to disabled people and to the elderly. I think a small correction could be made so the other vulnerable groups are also included in this, without reducing the main focus which is the major one I think we want to outline, which is that family violence consists predominantly of violence by men against women and children. I think we can leave that there, if that's the sort of main thrust of what we want to do.

It seems to me that if we're talking about the family and we're talking about our society, the reason we've invited the four people here today is to hear the complete story. I think we would be doing a disservice if we don't recognize that the main function of a legislature is to make sure we are fair to all our people, and we pay specific attention to the most vulnerable people in our society so they are not exploited.

So I would propose that, at the appropriate time and place, we include reference to the other vulnerable groups. For example, maybe in the first portion here, where we talk about violence, we could say violence against women, children, the disabled and the elderly, then violence within the family in particular, then carry on with the sentence. You would still have your second sentence which deals with the main issue, the fact that men are the greatest perpetrators of this violence against the more vulnerable people.

I think we could do the same thing at the end when the declaration is made, that we will include the other groups as well. I'm very much in support of what you have done to take this as an initiative, to bring it to the House. I certainly was impressed by the four

witnesses, particularly Mrs. Allen. I was impressed with everybody but I was very moved by what she had to say, and I certainly would support adopting such a declaration.

I also believe that the point that Mr. Dent has made is probably even more crucial. Because the major criticism of any group of people who adopt a declaration...It sounds great, wonderful words and so on, but unless you can find some way in which you can identify what zero tolerance is...How do you identify it? How do you show it? How do you demonstrate it? It's not going to be effective unless there are some things that you can measure whether what you've agreed to do is achieving the effect that you want. That would be something we would have to look at after adopting this declaration, to give it some teeth by looking at what things we have in our statutes that would give us the teeth we would need so that the public would be convinced that we are not just uttering fine words in this House. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. For the information of the witnesses, Mr. Charles Dent was the chairman of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. I believe the honourable Member is seeking some response from the Minister of Justice. Minister of Justice.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The point the Member is making is well taken. It is understood that we had intended to encompass those people all within this issue. That's the reason we have invited everybody to sit together today.

There is a draft motion being circulated to Members to consider. It will probably be by way of a formal motion, either later today if we get that organized, if not, then perhaps tomorrow in the course of the business of this House.

We should know that since we started this debate and tabled the papers...For instance, for me, it's tremendously significant when the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated took a position and set up a committee to do some action-oriented work just a day ago. This is the kind of development that I think all of us were hoping for. We premise this initiative on the fact that unless the leadership makes strong commitments, and unless we push other leaders in other corridors in the communities and in the regions, all the money and

the political talk will mean very little. The programs and the initiatives that we support as a result of this commitment mean there has to be a great element of sincerity in the initiatives that we put forward. That we're not doing it simply for political convenience, hoping it will appease those people who are crying out for help, that it will go beyond that. All of us want to do something. The comments and suggestions that were made today, particularly by Mr. Dent, are the kinds of things we want to hear. We need to lock ourselves in a process where we are going to do something and not do something in isolation but in concert with those groups that are advocates of the people we are trying to address.

I think it should be said that certainly, I don't want to take the high road on this issue. I feel strongly about it, as many Members do. I, too, live in a glass house and am in no position to be throwing rocks at anybody. But, we have to start sometime and the suggestion is, with the declaration, we can start today. We can say that from this day forward, we will try to honour the position and the responsibility that people who

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elect us put us in. We are obliged to create some order out of chaos, some security out of fears and the many things that plague our people. That is our job. I think we do good things but, as Mr. Dent recognizes, we have to commit ourselves to a process where someone will watch us and make sure we are doing things, that we are doing it right and we are doing it with good people.

I should tell you, on a personal note -- since I haven't said anything personal -- that when I got married in 1981, upon moving to Good Hope from Quebec, my wife was approached by my nieces, who were then about ten years of age. They asked her if I beat her. It was a matter-of-fact question, "Does he beat you?" She was very taken aback by that. She said, "No, of course he doesn't." The youngest said, "Well, he will, sometime." That was something I have never forgotten. I didn't really know what it meant at the time. We talk about it sometimes because that is the reality for many people who are close to me, in my own family. That is the reality they still see today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank everybody who has appeared before us today. Your words were very important and very timely. I think MLAs were listening very carefully to what you all had to say. Progress in the area of family violence is painfully slow, as the representatives from the Status of Women Council, Pauktuutit, the Council for the Disabled, the Native Women's Association and the Senior Association have pointed out. I think you know all too well.

I remember Norma Wickler, who many of you may know, who is and was a pioneer in the field of gender equality in the American justice system. She likened progress to water wearing down a stone. Whenever she was discouraged, she could always give herself energy to fight again by realizing that as long as you are making progress, even if it is slow, it is really worth pursuing. Progress is also very controversial and I really commend Minister Kakfwi for a consistent approach in this area. I think his words and deeds have been consistent. It is not an easy area and it's not an area where you're going to win a lot of political points. It is a very difficult area.

Anyone who has worked in any of the initiatives over the last number of years, whether it is the Family Law Review, or the lead up to the report of the special advisor on gender equality, or even changing the system so that we had a victim surcharge. That was really difficult to get through the system. The problem is, there are so many different perceptions about what is right and what is wrong, what is real and what isn't real. Women and men often have different perceptions. Aboriginal men and aboriginal women have different perceptions. The people involved in the justice system, themselves, have their own view of the world. So, when you're trying to bring about change, you can be assured it will be difficult and controversial.

I think the most important thing is to put all the issues out on the table and work your way through them. There are no heroes in this. Everybody has to try their very best and expect that it is going to be a very difficult and, at times, a very frustrating process.

I'm happy to see that the Minister of Justice has treated the Justice House report seriously. I have a couple of comments about the whole justice field. I think it is key, and I've always thought this, that if we are going to have a holistic approach, in the justice system, to the problems, then our government has to

take over the responsibility for prosecutions. We almost did it and then, for a number of unclear reasons, Kim Campbell decided that she wanted to keep it. That is what happened. I would strongly recommend that the Minister pursue that. I think it's very difficult to have a total approach to the legal system without having control over prosecution.

I think the area of victims' rights is an area in which we have made a start, but there is a long way to go. A legitimate concern, especially of many women's organizations, is that when we talk about rehabilitation and trying to help the perpetrator, that the focus on the victim will lessen. I think we have to understand that, ultimately, the victim is the innocent one in this kind of confrontation. Whatever we do, and everybody recognizes that we have to do a lot more than we've done as far as rehabilitating the perpetrators, let's never take away from the primary focus of support to the victim. I think that's very important to remember. Again, it is another example of how difficult this whole area can be.

At times in the past, we've kicked around the idea of a unified court here in the Northwest Territories. There are some positive aspects of efficiency and cost-savings. In a small jurisdiction, it is difficult to have a full court, but maybe a judge who specializes in the whole area of family law could be established. I think that is, again, something we should probably continue to pursue.

I've always felt very strongly that child sexual abuse is the single most difficult issue facing the people of the Northwest Territories. I think it is the most dangerous cancer eating away at the fabric of the Northwest Territories. With generation after generation of child sexual abuse, it multiplies at an alarming rate and destabilizes families and total communities. Sometimes, I think we talk about constitutional development and we talk about how we want to have control of our own land, if we don't deal with this part of the equation, what we'll have control of will be a total disaster. I think we have to always keep that balance.

Essentially, a society that can't protect its children is really a doomed society. It's a society that has no vitality and is heading for self-destruction, ultimately.

Over the years, we've heard demands by a lot of people, especially women in the community who have been abused and who have suffered rapes and sexual assaults, for stronger sentences. Everyone recognizes that the jails and the correctional institutes

are not the total answer. There is no doubt in my mind that, especially for repeated violent sexual offenders against women and children, stronger sentences are a must. I believe that. I don't think you can get away from the responsibility of a society to say that under no circumstances will we condone violent sexual offences against women and children.

I am pleased with the strong stand taken by the Minister of Justice. I hope this Legislative Assembly will support the Minister in his approach. I think, as other people, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Dent have said, that when we talk about family

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violence we can't forget the seniors and the disabled. The seniors here in Yellowknife, in October, had a very productive workshop done by One Voice, the National Seniors' Network. The results of that workshop are available to Members, and I would urge Members to read that to get an idea of the problems facing seniors, not just here in the north but across the country.

I personally support the principle of zero tolerance. I support it very strongly. I think Mr. Kakfwi and Mr. Dent and his committee ought to be commended for bringing it forward. They've both said, and everyone who's talked about this, including the women's organizations, said it's a beginning. I think Lynn Brooks said today it's a very important beginning. I really have no problem, myself, with putting my money where my mouth is and saying we should put some legislation in, so that if a Member is convicted of family violence, they should lose their seat. I have no problem, whatsoever, doing that. I think, if we are to support a policy of zero tolerance, I think that would be an important part of it if we, as leaders, are to set an example.

I would like to finish by saying -- just to reiterate what Mr. Lewis said -- that a society that allows its weak and vulnerable people to be preyed upon is really not a society at all. I think if we are to have pride in our society, if we are to develop every aspect of our society, we have to make every effort possible to protect the vulnerable in our society. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. I have Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members of the community, who have come forward to speak to us today, and bring forward some of the background and some of the suggestions you've made to this House on this vitally important subject. I want to say that I was encouraged by the presentations and the moves that are being made, not only by the interest groups that are working with victims of violence in our society, but also the moves that are being made, to some degree, by this Legislature in taking the stand that we are. At least this is the beginning phase of a serious step towards zero tolerance. There are commitments that will be made by individuals, as time goes by, toward the acceptance and application of zero tolerance to violence. I know, for one, that I not only support the concept of it, but will practise what I preach.

I think one of the problems that have plagued us for so long is exactly that. There are people who say things, senior people and leaders, who say to their people that you can't do such and such, you can't abuse alcohol, yet they continue themselves. They say it's unhealthy to smoke, yet they smoke. It's unhealthy to let yourselves be run down and yet they let themselves be run down. So not only do we have to say these things but we also have to practise these things.

I know this is not the time to go into examples like that, but I was encouraged by listening to things that were said, certainly what Bertha had to say. We have talked about it for a long time. We've studied it and the studies still go on. But maybe it's time now, that we start making some concrete steps, start doing some things, start showing that it's time to get on with it and do something.

But what exactly can we do? This is where I have a problem. I've looked for solutions to the problems that society has for dealing with violence. We have laws. We have laws that say you can't do certain things, you can't be violent to other people, you can't steal and harm other people. We have many enforcement people. We have many enforcement officers who are there to look after the law. There are already all kinds of social workers. We have shelters, but the problem still persists. It's still there. There is public condemnation of violence in our society, but the problem still persists. I've looked for solutions for this and I've looked for reasons, and I fear myself that the cycle of violence will continue. Why? I think we have to look at the things that people are facing today. Society is changing and changing rapidly. Here, in the north, when I was a kid we didn't have very much,

but what we had we shared with everybody else. We did things for ourselves. We built our own houses. We worked hard to put food on the table and to put clothes and shoes on. All those things kept us busy. Today, we don't do that as much. We don't build our own houses for one thing and we don't help as much. Why? It's because I think society has encouraged people not to do those kinds of things. We're influenced not by what happens here and what may have happened in the past, so much as we're influenced by what we're being told. A lot of our kids are confused now as to what their role is. They are being told to be independent. They're being told they don't have to do certain things. They don't have to dress. I guess it would be considered to be proper to go to school dressed in anything you want. You can cut your hair any way you want. You can do anything you want. You are an independent individual. I think kids are confused as a result of this and that leads to adult confusion as well, because adults, in some cases, don't know what their role is any more. A teacher doesn't know what their role is in the school because they can't tell their students what to do. Parents even have lost control over certain responsibilities of their own children. That loss of control comes from society in general, because other people think the ways we did things in the past aren't good ways. It leads to confusion. It certainly leads to frustration and frustration leads to the consequences of violence.

If something does happen, the law is such that I'm not sure who gets the most protection any more, whether it is the victim or the perpetrator. I was on a committee this summer that went around to the different communities to talk about health and social services issues. In one of the communities, someone said that out of five sexual assault trials held in that community that had a jury, there was not one single conviction. The message is out in that community that if you do anything wrong, elect for trial by jury and your chances are 90 per cent of getting off. That is not a very reassuring condition for the victims.

I worked in social work for awhile and one of the things that used to happen was that social workers got called out to deal with an altercation in the family. The social workers would move in to assist the individual and a couple of days later, before the charges were laid, or even when charges were laid, nothing came of it because the victim was encouraged by the community to drop the charge. They were encouraged, through one means or another, to drop the charge, by the perpetrator, with

all kinds of promises. It was really frustrating for social workers when this would happen.

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I think we've made some degree of progress in that area by having the RCMP step in and lay charges. But, in another community we visited, we were told that maybe social workers are part of the problem. That if we left them alone, let people look after their own affairs and let the family get back together, there wouldn't be a problem. I started off saying that we are faced with a lot of things outside of this circle of violence that influences us and adds to the problem.

I know we have a long way to go and, as I said earlier on, I'm encouraged by the steps we've already taken in that direction. I commit myself to working with groups that want to and can put forward some suggestions that this Legislature can implement to alleviate the problem. One of the things I would like to close with is that sincerity is subject to proof. If we, as legislators, are sincere about this, then we should - as some other Members put it -- put our money where our mouth is and set an example. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a very important debate. I was thinking today about the debate on the task force on spousal assault when it was presented to the 10th Assembly in Fort Smith. I think some of us were there at that time. I think it was a very important moment for the Legislature and the people of the Northwest Territories because it brought that issue out, maybe for the first time, in a very visible way.

There were moving presentations, including some by Members, who publicly acknowledged their own failings. I think we should, although there is an enormous amount to do, note we have come some distance, even if it is just water wearing down the stone. We have made some progress. We are, again, confronting this issue openly and with candour and passion. That is very important. I would like to thank the presenters. I want to say that I liked the challenge from Bertha Allen and Lynn Brooks on behalf of the Status of Women to us: will we publicly voice our concerns, will we say we want to live in a

non-violent society, will we confront leaders, political peers, who are not role models?

There have been remarks made at public meetings over the years -- I've attended a number -- sometimes by elders, which have been very contrary to what we're talking about today. We hear people blame shelters for marriage breakdown and the like. I think the days are over when those kinds of comments are going to be tolerated. I was pleased that, at a recent Nunavut leadership meeting, that issue was confronted and an apology was given about a statement that was not acceptable that was made about shelters. I think this consciousness is being raised and this debate today will do its part.

I want to try to get concrete here because we've got to make this real. As an Assembly, I think we should adopt the declaration that has been tabled by Mr. Kakfwi, and I commend him for that. There is a formal motion being circulated to Members, which takes into account Mr. Lewis's comments and I think we should take that action and we should do it in formal session. Perhaps, since we've focused on this issue this afternoon, we should introduce that motion tomorrow, in formal session. I hope all Members will support it.

But, we've all said this is only a step. I think what is even more important will be to take the next step and respond to Mr. Kakfwi's suggestion -- and I've heard several other Members endorse it -- that we have the courage to make legislative changes to revoke the privilege of holding public office, including those appointed to boards and agencies under the auspices of the Government of the Northwest Territories, including those elected to municipal office in the Northwest Territories, who are convicted of crimes of family violence. I think this would be an enormous statement to our people that we are serious about this.

I know, right now, of a Baffin Island community that has several members sitting on the community education council who have been convicted of sexual assault against children. What does this say to the people in that community? What does it say to the children, to the youth of that community? We're still a small enough society that everybody knows what's going on and what's been done.

So I would like to -- once the Assembly adopts the declaration -- encourage the Minister of Justice to put flesh to this declaration, and to bring forward a legislative action paper which would propose these

concrete legislative changes. I feel that if our government is paying honoraria and expenses for people who are holding these positions of public trust, we have a right to demand certain standards. We already have legislation that disqualifies people from any of our boards and agencies if they are in conflict of interest, if they use the position to their personal, pecuniary advantage -- I think is the legal jargon that's used in our Conflict of Interest Act. So let's do the same thing for people who abuse the public trust by committing crimes of violence against family.

I'd like to here, publicly encourage the Minister of Justice to respond to his own challenge and present a legislative action paper. I suspect it will be unprecedented in the country. It may raise the spectre of the charter. I don't care. I think we should look at it and examine it seriously, and put -- as some Members have said -- our money where our mouth is. I think that would help make this important discussion real.

The third issue I think we have to address -- and I don't have an answer today to propose. We've had several of the excellent presenters, including Martha Flaherty, in her letter, say there has to be an accountability framework. Mrs. Allen suggested a process, a committee involving groups like hers to tackle the ongoing strategy of eliminating violence. I know the NWT Seniors' Society in the person of its president, Ms. Braden, who is here in the gallery, has plans to pursue the results of their workshop on elder abuse with a network which would respond and lead to action. I think everybody is agreeing that there needs to be a method of making this strategy real in all the activities of our government. That is something that undoubtedly the Premier, in her capacity as Minister for Status of Women, and the Minister of Justice could also pursue and report back to this Assembly on an action plan.

I know the spousal assault task force, which was only a beginning, lead to an action plan which then lead to real things happening, including the establishment of shelters. I think that's what we need on the family violence strategy, is once we do a declaration in formal session, which I hope we can all

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agree now should be done, then we should look at legislative change to revoke the privileges of holding public office as an example to the people of the Northwest Territories, for those convicted of offences of family violence and, thirdly, come forward with a

long-term strategy to achieve the objectives of zero tolerance and give it recognition and reality in all the activities of our government.

I hope that this debate will be the beginning of those very important changes. I certainly will want to be a strong supporter of that action being taken as a priority by this Assembly. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. I have on my list Mr. Ningark as the next speaker. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to welcome the witnesses, again, to this committee of the whole. When I was very young, before I could remember anything, my mother died and it was up to my sister to look after me until the time I was old enough to look after myself. She was about four years older than I was, only about ten years old. Still, she looked after me as though she was a grown up woman. When I cried, sometimes she would cry with me. When someone was being mean to me, although she was not able to defend me, she used to try. Especially against the boys, I still have that memory very clearly in my head.

Now I'm married. I have a wife and two girls. I'm very close to my girls because they remind me of my sister when I was growing up. At least my girls have both parents. My wife is out of town and when I go back to my apartment there is something missing there. I enjoy going home when she is around. I can smell the food cooking or, likewise, I can at least cook for someone I'm very close to. I miss someone in the apartment when I have problems. When things are not going good for me in the House, I go home and we talk about it. When she is not around, I'm not able to do that. I have friends in Yellowknife. My colleagues are very close to me, but I'm not as open to them as I am to my wife, my partner.

Mother, to me, is first of all a release from all this strange environment, especially outside your home. Mother has very comforting arms, a very kind heart, we know that, very gentle hands, a doctor, someone who looked after you when you were growing up. When you get sick, she's always there. When things are going bad, she always knows what's happening. When you have problems, you didn't even have to say anything, she knows that. Each and everyone of us,

all the politicians here, were one time in the womb of a mother. Mother, at times, was not feeling good because she had an extra heartbeat to look after, extra weight to carry. Perhaps when our mothers were carrying us in her body, perhaps she was abused, very likely.

We are now in the position to help women. It would be against nature, against the person who looked after us until we were able to go on our own, not to recognize the cry from women. We are now in the position to help them. I say to all my colleagues and people of the territories, let's do something concrete. Let's stop the violence against women. Nobody in this jurisdiction has more power than us sitting here, and I think it's about time we do something about it. I salute Mr. Stephen Kakfwi, the Minister of Justice, for his initiative. Now it's up to us to help the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I have next on my list Mr. Antoine, Member for Nahendeh.

Motion To Extend Sitting Hours, Carried

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to move to extend sitting hours to conclude this item.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

The motion is in order. We just need a couple more people for a quorum for a vote. I'll ring the bells. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if there are sufficient numbers? There is a motion on the floor to extend sitting hours to conclude this matter. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

We will extend sitting hours until this matter is concluded. Mr. Antoine, you have the floor.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to commend and thank the Minister, Stephen Kakfwi, for bringing this into the House, and for the documents he provided to us. I would also like to thank Nellie Cournoyea for her comments. I would like to thank

our delegates, Ms. Brooks, Ms. Christophers, Mr. Okpik and Ms. Allen.

I am quite familiar with this subject because I guess I was one of the children who witnessed violence against their mothers. I saw that when I was very young. There's a history of this violence that goes back many, many years. It's not something that has just happened. I'm glad, it's about time it's come to a forum like this where we can try to discuss it and try to do something about it, as a body. I know there have been a lot of meetings and recommendations made in the past, right from the community level to the regional level to the national level. Now, we're in the Legislative Assembly. I think this is a good forum to discuss it and try to make some laws here, to try to do something about it.

In the presentations that we've had from our delegation, there are a number of suggestions and directions in the problems that are laid out which are familiar to myself. I'm aware of these problems. One of the areas of violence that I've witnessed in the past is brought on by alcohol. When people are intoxicated and drinking, that's when this problem usually comes about. Statistics are around, now, that most of our jails are full. And, that of people who commit crimes, the majority involve violence. It seems to be suggested that that's the only solution we have.

But there was another solution that was suggested here that deals with community healing, which I totally agree with, a holistic approach. A community in BC which is probably known by everybody here, is Alkali Lake, where they have done community healing. I don't recall at all in any of their healing processes where they sent anybody to jail. They seem to have done it within the community. At this point in time, it seems that the only solution we have here is that if somebody does a violent crime, you send them to jail. I know that in the

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capital plans of the future, we're going to have two more new jails, one in Inuvik and one in the Baffin. Is it to meet these increased convictions and violence? Is that why we're building new jails? I'm wondering that. I hope not. I hope there are ways of trying to find out how to deal with this problem. We have to deal with it, with a holistic approach.

I know some people who are serving time in jail now, and I'm told that in Yellowknife all they do is sleep,

watch TV and eat. That's all they do for months. This one fellow I know, for 22 months that's all he's going to be doing. A jail situation, where it's a tougher more violent environment, is not a place for healing. When you're healing, you're dealing with the emotions and you're dealing with the problems you had in the past and so forth. When you're in jail, that's not the place to do this kind of healing.

The only way we can stop this whole topic of family violence is when people come forward, lay charges, then people go to court and you send them to jail. They do their time in that kind of environment. Once they're done, they come back into the same environment, so it becomes a vicious circle. What can we do about it? Take some suggestions, what we heard here, I think it was Bertha Allen who suggested we take a holistic approach, a community healing approach.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible -- I don't know who it would be, the Department of Justice or the Department of Social Services -- all these different departments have to work together to try to come out with such a plan and try to deal with it. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if any approach like this has been considered on community healing, rather than shipping the offenders off to jail then coming back to the same environment. It's a question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi, if you wish to respond.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you. I think it's realized by communities and social agencies, alike, that if you want to get into human development, community development healing, you can't do it in isolation. You can't just get a group of people to sit around and talk about it, then go home and expect change. It inevitably has to be tied to some activity. It's part of an activity, it's part of a life, it's part of a process. The community justice initiative is oriented that way.

We feel large institutions won't have the capability of addressing some of the root causes of crime and violence. It's the families and the people in the communities who have to take responsibility for their own people. The healing and the work to identify and address the root causes of these problems has to be done at the community level. It's our hope that,

through the community justice initiative, some of this work can take place.

We recognize in the community transfer initiative, which is under the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, that whereas in the beginning as a government it was envisaged that it would be a very mechanical, technical piece of work to transfer responsibilities to communities in many areas, that in fact most of the communities we talked to, the Inuvialuit communities, the Gwich'in communities and communities in the eastern Arctic have told us there has been extensive damage done to people and to communities. It's not a simple matter of just transferring money and making agreements and giving people something to do. There's a lot of pain and anger and suffering that's been inflicted on people, a lot of denial. This has to be addressed, this healing element, community development element, to addressing the ills and the needs of communities that is now recognized by the community transfer initiative as an essential element. We accept that we have to address that as part of working towards greater independence of communities for greater self-reliance. There's a whole human element to the work we've undertaken that needs to be addressed.

I think that, as a government, there is a recognition of what is being said. I know that on a larger scale, when we get into constitutional development, all Members will accept that when we get into self-government and constitutional talks, we have to convince our own people that whatever changes we suggest are going to be good for them are better. That, whoever is going to govern and whoever is going to take the initiative to make changes is going to deliver a good product for everybody. So, that at the end of the day, the women and the children and the elderly have to be convinced that it is going to be good for them.

We have to be convinced that if we are going to set up aboriginal forms of government, these forms of government are going to be good for people. If there are some things that have to be addressed in that process then, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we have to be there for them. For example, for the communities, the chiefs and councils, the Inuvialuit communities, and the general public. If there are areas that need to be addressed and supported in order to get these rights recognized, then we have to be there.

Certainly, in my view, those questions have to be answered. Just because we have a right to govern

ourselves doesn't mean our people are going to let us run with it and set up whatever we want and assume those responsibilities. We all have an obligation to set up a process that is going to respect and give comfort to our people. I hope that answers the concerns of the Member. I think we recognize that it is something that has to be done and it is going to be done at the community level. We're waiting for some work to be done at the community level so the offenders who we are responsible for now are treated by the people who know them the best and who care for them the most. We want them to be treated and cared for as close to home as possible. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The chair recognizes Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

I just wanted to determine the possibility of the holistic approach that was suggested here by one of the presenters being implemented. Is this government going to be supporting communities that want to take that route? Is there going to be something similar to the community healing approach to deal with all the problems within the community, rather than sending people away for treatment and then bringing them back? If that is the direction that we're going, that's great. We should work in that direction.

The other thing I would like to mention is about elders. We

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have problems in my constituency, especially in the community of Simpson where elders have been abused. It is the younger people who seem to be the problem. In talking to the elders, they are saying the younger people aren't listening to the elders any more. After they have been sent away to school, they don't know the language and don't know how to be Dene, for example. They don't listen to their elders any more. That seems to be a problem. There is a loss of a cultural connection. Respecting elders is a key cultural thing. A lot of us are teaching that to the younger people who are around us but some of them don't get taught that and, as a result, there are problems.

I'm trying to say that the breakdown of the cultural connection is a key problem. It's a difficult situation. We have to give more authority to people at the

community level to deal with it on their own. Whenever someone is abused, you have to depend on the RCMP to do the enforcement. Why can't community people do it themselves? When they try to do that, they are offending the RCMP and the RCMP don't want you to do any enforcement on your own. The Dene cultural society is breaking down further and you can't protect your elders, women and children any more. You have to depend on the RCMP to do it. It is getting more and more difficult in this area.

I just wanted to make the comment that we have to protect our elders. That is something we should do in the Legislative Assembly immediately. I would support something that would do that, as soon as we can. People are saying we should put our money where our mouth is. As an MLA and as a former chief, I've always maintained that the people elect us because of who we are and not who we pretend to be. I think that goes in here.

One of the conditions in this declaration which is pretty strong is that if we get convicted, we should resign. That's a pretty powerful statement to make. I think it will show people in the north and in the communities that we are very sincere about the issue of violence in the north, if we take this position. I have no problem with it. I've always lived by that principle in the past. It is nothing new to me. I would support something like that. Mahsi. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I have on my list Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Pudlat and Mr. Ningark. Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Mr. Kakfwi for his initiative in this area, to bring to our attention that this problem has to stop. I would like to encourage him to keep going and I will give him all the support he needs. Moral support and any other suggestions he may seek from us. I would also like to acknowledge Nellie's work in this area. She has done quite a bit to make us aware that this is an unacceptable practice.

And, also, I would like to commend the NWT Status of Women Council for their work which they have done for a long time. As well, I would like to thank the Native Women's Association, the Council for Disabled Persons, Bertha Allen for the community work she does in her region and Abe Okpik. I would like to

thank them all for being with us and making us aware of the intensity of this problem.

Mr. Chairman, I consider myself very lucky. I was born in a small camp. I have a small family and I have never seen somebody beating up anyone. I recall, very vividly, the very first time one of our community members hit his wife. Everyone felt the hurt. In the Inuit way, if anything like that happens, the community gets together and deals with that person. My father was a leader of the camp and he got all of the people together to deal with that person.

I remember hunting and trapping was an everyday event. Because of that event, no one went out. It was such a big issue that everyone stopped. Now that we are living in the communities, the leaders have changed. We are in a changing time. The old leaders are not leaders any more. The leaders in the camps were not elected. They were leaders and they controlled the community and made sure everyone was fair to everyone else.

When the government structure came in to our communities, back in the 1960s, we were told to move into a community. It was a big thing for our family.

I have seen a statement, at some time, that says abusing is not a native way. I think that is true. I think, Mr. Chairman, in your earlier statement, you hit the nail on the head saying it is because we are in changing times, the people are frustrated about jobs, et cetera. They become abusers. I think it is not our way to abuse other people. It is the conditions in which we live and also a lack of education. The breakdown of our human values are causing us to be abusers.

I would encourage the government and also the native organizations, women's organizations or any other organizations that have concern in this area to work together. Like Bertha Allen said, the government cannot do it alone, the communities cannot do it alone and organizations cannot do it alone. Why don't we jointly approach this problem?

Mr. Patterson's statement that convicted people, if they hold a position, should resign. Convicted people should not be running for office. I agree with that. But it is difficult to convict people who are abusers. For instance, I went home for Christmas and one of my constituents was beaten very badly by her husband. I knew that husband had beaten her before. So I went to see that person at the hospital.

She had broken ribs and wasn't feeling well. I said, are you going to charge your husband? She said, no. She said, he is really sorry. I said, that doesn't matter. There might not be a next time. Why don't you do something about it? She didn't want to. I called a lawyer in Iqaluit to see if anything could be done. I asked if the wife, who has been beaten up and is physically broken, doesn't want to charge her husband, could anything else be done? The lawyer told me if she doesn't want to do that, then the law cannot do anything. I think we have to encourage the federal government to change that law. So that people like nurses, doctors, teachers or RCMP can charge those people. Then it would be automatic. I think we have to do that.

I was listening to Abe Okpik. He made a statement to the effect that the abusers, before they abuse their wives or kids, should always remember where they come from, where they were born. I think we have to start saying that to the public. Like Mr. Antoine, I would agree, if I was prone to be abusive, then I should not be here. I think that goes for everyone, not

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just to legislators, but to mayors and regional boards, which are funded by this government. Thank you very much.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Alloo. Before I go to the next speaker, I wonder if the witnesses have anything they would like to add at this time? Are there any comments you would like to make on some of the presentations that have been made by the Members? Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN:

I am emotionally moved by the support that is extended to this serious problem. I encourage all Members to help stop violence in our communities. When you are voting on this, think about your grandchildren and think about your own children. All of you are at an age where you will be grandparents, if not already. We are living in a very violent society. If you don't take the action now, who will? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Ms. Allen. Anyone else? The chair will recognize Mr. Pudlat.

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be making a short comment. Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the Minister of Justice for his initiative regarding zero tolerance to violence on women. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Government Leader, who was behind this all the way. I would also like to thank the witnesses who have come here today to speak out against violence towards women. I support all the comments you have made.

Going back to my childhood, I would like to tell a short story. I grew up not knowing my father. I don't even remember what he looked like because he died when I was very young. However, when I was growing up, as a young boy, my mother used to be beaten up by my stepfather. It was very hard for me emotionally and I couldn't do anything to physically stop that violence. I still remember vividly what my mother went through. She went through agony. It hurts me to think I couldn't do anything in her defence. I would just like to say that we should do something about this now instead of talking about it, like we have done in the past. We will be supporting this initiative with every power we have within in us, as Members of this Legislative Assembly. I feel very deeply about this issue. I have indicated to my constituents that I will be supporting this all the way.

We all know that we are in a very serious situation today. I respect the people who have come here in support of zero tolerance. A lot of people still need some healing in the communities. It has to come from the families. We have to support the children who have been physically and emotionally abused. There needs to be a lot of healing done in this area. We have to start today to begin to heal ourselves and our children so we can look to our future and the young generation can have a brighter future.

When we lived in camps, our parents took very good care of us and our grandparents took good care of us. They didn't show any anger or violence towards their children because they lived in a carefree world at the time. However, we are living in a very difficult world and everything we do depends on what kind of background we've come from. There are a lot of different problems that have to be dealt with. I think we have to be utterly open now, to begin to be able to heal and to be able to support other people who need the support and the strength.

We all know we have to work together to make a better life for our children and our families. We have

to begin to heal within ourselves and try to keep going. I would just like to say again that I appreciate the witnesses' comments. We will support you with all our strength and power in this Legislature. We will help you with any initiatives you have in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Next on my list is Mr. Gargan and then Mr. Ningark.

MR. GARGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this zero tolerance declaration is an area in which I support the intent and the principle. But, if we target certain groups only then we are not, as politicians, being fair to other groups. In this case, we look at violence against women and children. Men and elders are not included in the declaration.

One of the other things that came up was the whole issue about Members' conduct. We have a code of ethics passed during the last Assembly. But, how far can we go? Major McLean is one individual in the Nova Scotia Assembly who got booted out. They tried to pass a membership act relating to that. Due to section one and three of the constitution, it wasn't allowed, I believe. And section 33, clauses 2, 7 and 15 of the charter certainly don't allow it. I wish the government all the luck in coming out with something that would actually expel or prevent someone from running for office.

This government hasn't done much with regard to zero tolerance in the first place. By declaring something like this, do you think that all of a sudden it will make the world turn out right? What is happening with regard to legal aid right now and restraining orders? What is the policy on that? Are we allowing legal aid to assist women who wish to have restraining orders placed on their husbands? In the case of the husband beating the wife, the husband should be the one who gets booted out, not the other way around. I've already written to the Minister of Social Services about establishing a shelter in Fort Providence so we can address the zero tolerance issue. Those are all areas in which we can implement zero tolerance but we are not doing much in those areas.

I've got a young boy who is ten years old who is influenced a lot by TV. I'm sure a lot of young people are also influenced a lot. He will imitate Bruce Lee, or

even a horse if we're watching the Black Stallion. A lot of influence comes from TV, too. But what are we doing in that area? We don't even make public statements that prevent people from watching TV. What are we doing with regard to prohibition? If alcohol seems to be the problem, what are we doing in that area as politicians? Should it only be the government that is sending out messages, or all the organizations? All the hamlets,

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everybody?

The police already have a policy on violence. Although most of the time, it is men who create violence, their policy right now is that anybody who causes violence against women is arrested and put in jail, sometimes until he goes to court. But, there are cases where even when the men didn't create violence, they are kept in jail, by virtue of this policy, until trial time. These cases are dismissed when it comes to trial. We have created a situation where we treat men as the only ones who create violence and we punish them.

In Manitoba, they have accepted zero tolerance. Right now, they go through 1,000 cases a month, I think it is. They are backlogged 3,000 cases. How many of them are actual and how many of them are bogus? We don't know. Perhaps a woman could phone the RCMP and say my husband assaulted me and he is in the bar right now. The RCMP don't have any choice but to arrest that individual, by virtue of that policy. Manitoba is the only one. I was trying to get some statistics in order to find out whether or not, based on all those cases...About 80 per cent of the cases in Manitoba, the men are found guilty. But now, with this zero tolerance, how much of a success rate are we having now? We don't know. It could be 50/50, it could be less.

I think it was a group of men that started because of a white women's campaign, based on the Montreal massacre, that are now expressing concern over the zero tolerance. A lot of it is just frivolous. There is no basis for it, but it is happening.

Mr. Chairman, many sexual assaults came out as a result of a documentary that was done on St. Vincent's, I believe. With regard to my own family, I wasn't brought up in a violent environment. My dad is deceased. But he wasn't a violent man and he has always provided for us. In 1958, after alcohol became legal for aboriginal people or status people, it didn't

have any effect on aboriginal people. Aboriginal people weren't around to drink themselves to death. My parents never caused violence or even parents of this generation. But a lot of violence has been created by my own generation. It is a target group of people who are doing it. But it wasn't because of the aboriginal influence that this has happened. It is a white influence that has created the problems that now exist. It is our own doing that this situation exists.

I just thought I would mention that. If we are going to be equal in any way, then we shouldn't have any biases. Gender equality points in a certain direction in which we would like to see women paid the same for the same service. But, at the same time, let's not isolate the men. A week ago, I received a phone call from a woman who said she broke her husband's nose. What did the husband do? She said he didn't do anything.

If you refer to sexual assault, it could mean any kind of touching without intent, indirectly and directly. I am always in the shadow of what I was charged with. It was many years ago, ten years ago, when I was a Member. But maybe it was an indirect assault. I never attempted to beat up my wife. But we were living in an environment which didn't allow for much movement in the tent. For me to get out, I had to push her out of the way. I was charged. At the same time, if I kiss her, without her consent, I could be charged again. So, I have been dealing with that situation ever since it happened. I am not trying to redeem myself, by any means. As far as I am concerned, and as far as my wife is concerned, there was never guilt established. But by virtue of the interpretation of the law, you are guilty. I have accepted that broad definition. I didn't go through an expensive process of proving my innocence. I pleaded guilty because, as far as I was concerned, I did touch her. Therefore, I was guilty because she didn't consent. A lot of the aboriginal people who go into court, when it is interpreted like this, how can you be dishonest? I have never seen cases, in the western Arctic, people going to trial in order to get leniency from the jury. Every Thursday in Fort Providence I see cases coming up, and a lot of it is minor, but guilt is established right off the bat. They don't deny it. You have to give credit to the aboriginal people for their honesty. At the same time, we are victims of a criminal system that puts aboriginal people into a position that they cannot deny it.

So, Mr. Chairman, those are my difficulties. I cannot support or not support a declaration that specifically

addresses only women and children. I think if there were some changes to it to include zero tolerance of violence against all people, I would agree with it. Then everyone is involved. I have no difficulty with that. But if we are only going to be looking at certain groups and we adopt policies in order to make it difficult for men, then I cannot accept something like this. You have to be a saint and a model citizen, but how about the other people? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. I have three other people on my list. Because this is such an important subject and we would like to hear from everyone on it, I would like to give those people who have not had a chance to make a presentation. Therefore, I will move to recognize Mr. Arngna'naaq.

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a few points I had in mind, using myself as an example. First of all, I would like to say that I've always had difficulty in understanding social problems. Because I have a difficulty understanding problems like these, I shy away from it. I think it's natural for people to shy away from something that they don't understand.

I would like to say that I thank the witnesses for coming in and speaking to us, because I think it gives me a better understanding of what it is that the organizations who are here with us today are trying to do. I would also like to pass on that there are leaders in the communities who don't understand and when you try to pressure them they'll shy away. It's probably just because they don't understand, just like I didn't understand. I still don't understand to a large degree, many of the social problems that we have today, I will most likely refer people to proper social workers or people who deal with problems like that.

I would say, with that, that we have to make people understand that we want cooperation with the community leaders. Without cooperation with community leaders, or leaders such as this forum then we're not going to get anywhere. I realize this is a major problem, but it is still something that I don't understand because I grew up with a family where there was no violence.

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I think the declaration that is being made by this Assembly -- and I hope that everybody approves of

the declaration -- is a small step forward, but I think we'll be able to work together to try to solve some of the violent problems we have in the communities.

From the comments that have been made by Members here today, I also begin to see that we do have a long way to go, because it's people like myself who are leading people, but shying away from problems such as social problems. To say you recognize that you have this deficiency as a leader is very difficult to do. I think that is something that has to be recognized by care givers. That if you're going to approach a leader, you have to approach the leader with care...not with care but with the understanding that they may shy away because they don't understand the problem.

Some of the other issues that were raised by some of the Members where society says we need stronger sentences, or something that will make people change, I think by being forceful in many cases we make the mistake of giving longer sentences to offenders, where actually that individual probably needs counselling more than anything else.

I think a number of Members, such as Mr. Antoine, who touched on traditional counselling or a healing process or systematic counselling which could be given by governments or organizations such as our witnesses, is what is needed rather than longer sentences or sending people straight to jail. It's counselling that people need. I've seen situations in my constituency where offenders are sentenced to go to jail, but never given any kind of counselling. They come back and repeat the same offence they made. So I hope that we, as leaders, and the care givers will be able to work together towards a direction that we will lead our people through a healing process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Arngna'naaq. The chair will now recognize Mr. Zoe, for the first time, to speak.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the issue at hand that we're debating, I too, would like to commend the Minister on the initiative that he's undertaken. It's a tall order. It's an issue that's not going to go away. It's an issue that's not going to be resolved overnight.

The document that the Minister has produced with regard to violence, building a strategy, the elements of that strategy I totally agree with. But one must not forget that our government is very limited, particularly with resources. We have our government priorities. As you are well-aware, Mr. Chairman, education and housing are the top two priorities of our government. But because a lot of factors are attributed to violence, it's very hard to pinpoint what we can do or how you're going to get it done. But the initiative that the government has undertaken, I agree with. Now that the issue is at hand, I think it has to be promoted in a certain way, particularly where we don't require resources. With a lot of the violence, not only family violence but violence in general, alcohol is a major factor. Only dealing with alcoholism is a big problem in the territories. We know that's not going to go away. We know that's a tough problem to get over, and it's a long-term issue.

We've been trying by implementing a number of measures, we're building more treatment centres, we're putting up more resources through programs at the community level and so forth. But in terms of violence, it affects everyone, the whole society, men, women, elders, disabled people, everybody, violence in general. It's a big issue, an issue that's not going to go away overnight.

But the elements that have been identified in the strategy put together by the Minister of Justice, I think are going in the right direction. If we do support those particular elements we must try to readjust our finances to help, particularly for the justice system. I think that is where more emphasis should be placed, in the justice system at the community level. Let the community get involved more. Get the elders involved more.

I've heard comments around this room that various organizations have to get involved. I totally agree. A strong message has to get out there. An institution like ours and other groups we fund, like the Status of Women and the Native Women's Association, should get involved. I think that municipalities and all of society has to get involved in order to combat this whole issue of violence. I think we're going in the right direction with the strategy that the Minister developed. It is going to be a slow process.

If you look at the big picture, we're strapped because of finances. Finances are going to be very hard to deal with. Dealing with only one element, alcohol, has been costing us a lot of money. We should be spending more money in that area but we don't have

enough. All the other things that are identified within the strategy to deal with violence in the territories, like healing, treatment of offenders, services to victims, community-based justice, facilitating inter-agency cooperation, the justice system, youth, violence and so on, is going to require resources. In particular, a lot of human resources and money. That is going to be the toughest to get, the money, because of the financial situation we are in today.

But I commend the Minister for raising this issue and bringing it to light. I think it has been neglected for a number of years even though a number of groups have been pushing that it be dealt with. I'm proud to say that the 12th Assembly is dealing with this issue, but, it's not going to be an easy task. It is a long-term goal to have zero tolerance for violence. Let me just say that I'm in support of the strategy that the Minister has indicated. But I think the government, particularly the Minister of Justice, has to convince not only his own colleagues but also the federal government to get additional resources to combat this whole issue.

He has to get support from the communities and organizations and we have to join hands in order to seek all this funding to combat all the elements identified in the strategy the Minister developed. I just wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, that violence touches a lot of people in the territories and the factors that cause violence are very great. You can't just say that violence is because of one particular element. It is caused by everything. It could be due to lack of a job, or people abusing alcohol, or people being depressed, or poor housing. It could be almost anything that contributes to violence.

I think it's a big issue and the issue at hand is going to be a

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long-term affair. We can't do it overnight. We can't solve the whole issue of violence overnight. I totally agree with the conclusion of the strategy when it says there are no quick fixes or easy answers. But I think we have to start somewhere and by bringing the issue up front and making people more aware and promoting zero tolerance, I think we're moving in the right direction.

I'm in support of the declaration on family violence. But, as my colleague has indicated, I think that I support a declaration on violence in general. If it is geared to a particular group in society, I would say I have some reservations if that is going to be the case.

Disabled people and elderly people are not involved in the zero tolerance declaration the Minister has produced. I understand that my colleague will be moving a motion, either today or tomorrow, which will include elders, disabled, men, women and children. If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, I will fully endorse this declaration on family violence. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. The next person who has not yet had a chance to speak is Ms. Mike. The Chair recognizes Ms. Mike.

HON. REBECCA MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to commend my colleague, Mr. Kakfwi, for bringing this forward for discussion and for inviting the witnesses to talk to us about violence. One thing I would like to stress is that the title says family violence. When we talk about a family, we are not looking at a target group. Violence against women predominates. Since we have opened safe shelters we have been able to collect data on violence against women. But, I wish I could say the same for men because there are men who are abused. The only time we can do something about children is when they begin to start to show signs that they are neglected or abused. That is when Social Services intervenes.

Because we don't have any stats for violence against men, we really have nothing on record. Men also don't talk. I can understand where Members are coming from when they say that we are just targeting men. But this is a family issue, it is not just a women's issue. It involves the family. Like Mr. Kakfwi said, for the most part, we are talking about violence that takes place in the home and cases where victims and abusers not only know each other, but are in an intimate family relationship. I would endorse and give my full support to Mr. Kakfwi in this context when the motion is put forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. The chair will now recognize Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, earlier I put a scenario before the committee about my apartment being empty, but I may have given the wrong impression to the Members here and to the witnesses. I am temporarily separated from my wife

because I'm here for the session. She has other things to do at home, so there's a happy ending to this.

What is zero tolerance? To me it means that no one has the right to abuse, physically or sexually, a weaker member of the family. I am very lucky to be able to defend myself against my daughters and my wife. Therefore I've never been abused at home because I have that physical ability to fight back. On the other hand, my daughters and my wife are not able to defend themselves against me if I should become violent, but I never have. I hope I never will. Some Members stated it is not enough to try and eradicate the problem. Of course, Mr. Chairman, if the journey started with one first step I think we are moving in the right direction. It may be a first step in a place that is long overdue.

We've talked about this every year that I've been a Member of the House. We've talked about it at home, in our community, we hear about it on the radio, television and read about it in the papers. We haven't done enough to try to solve the problem. We are not going to solve the problem tonight or tomorrow, but it's a first step that the honourable Minister and the Premier are taking so I feel like the other Members, and I commend you, Mr. Minister, and the Premier.

Every one of us is a winner, each and every one of the Members of this Legislature. A real winner is someone who shares his or her winnings with those who are especially on the losing side: elders, disabled, women and children. It is our mandate, according to my understanding -- of course everyone should understand this -- as a Legislature to make life better for all people that we represent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I would like to call upon Mr. Kakfwi now to conclude this very interesting and informative debate. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you. Just a few brief comments before we conclude the day. One of the Members had suggested earlier that we look at taking over prosecution from the federal government. There is a context that's very well articulated by Members to argue for that. As the Minister of Justice I think we'll be reviewing that particular item and how it fits into this overall strategy of zero tolerance, and why we

need to have some capability and influence in that area in order to make it round out our approach. If it's going to be holistic in that regard, then we definitely need to be able to have prosecutions as part of the responsibilities of this government.

There is a comment I want to make. I appreciate Mr. Gargan's comments about how we might require good luck to try to enforce some of the legislation we make and propose in the future. It's my view that aboriginal people, for instance, in northern societies have, for a long time, exercised non-legislative laws. They have made decrees about the things that are acceptable and not acceptable in families and in the communities. I think that's an area where we're going to lend a lot of credence to. I know communities and people have decided certain things are acceptable and not acceptable. They work very well and those are self-enforcing. The move that we're making today, I hope, will slowly let us see less need for police, courts, lawyers, jails and perhaps even a decrease in the need for treatment programs, and that these will lend themselves to other areas that need more resources.

First and foremost, from here we need -- and I've already made a commitment publicly that once these commitments are made by this Legislature and Members of this House, that we're going to have a basis of understanding -- to commit to developing a process, cooperatively with the groups, like the

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group we have in front of us today. I think the Minister of Social Services, and other Ministers, will be joining me in trying to find ways in which we can try to develop a strategy on how we're going to go about doing our work. They're involved in it, they define where they think the priorities should be, the way we should target the work and how it should be resourced so we're not targeting things that are not priorities of these groups. We give them a voice and we commit to hearing them, and to letting them -- as a group that's been ignored too long -- have a say at the highest political level, from the beginning of this process, that being today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Minister Kakfwi. The matter we have been discussing has certainly been interesting and thought-provoking. On behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly who participated and who are here, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the

witnesses for their presentations earlier in the day, and for their patience in hearing the debate. I know that the words that were spoken here are taken seriously and they will be taken back to the respective groups and action taken on them.

We have covered an awful lot of ground in the few short hours we've been meeting. It's obvious there is a big job ahead of us and I believe the comments made by the Members and presenters were sincere and often came from deep within the heart. That is the type of cement that is going to be needed to bind the words to actions that we're going to be undertaking. As Mr. Ningark said in his concluding remarks, the longest journey starts with a few small steps and I believe we have taken those first few steps towards these objectives today.

With that, I would thank the witnesses and Members once again.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you very much witnesses and Members.

---Applause

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you assist the witnesses to their respective door? Does this committee agree that we have concluded Tabled Documents 4-12(5), 5-12(5) and 6-12(5)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

There is a motion on the floor that is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I shall rise and report to the Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER:

I will call the House back to order. Item 19, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering the appearance of witnesses on family violence in the Northwest Territories and Tabled Documents 4-12(5), 5-12(5) and 6-12(5) and would like to report progress. And that the appearance of witnesses on family violence in the NWT, Tabled Documents 4-12(5), 5-12(5) and 6-12(5) are concluded. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for that motion? Seconded by Mr. Todd. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 19, third reading of bills. Item 20, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 20: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Madam Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Caucus immediately after adjournment this evening. At 9:00 am tomorrow morning of the Ordinary Members' Caucus. Orders of the day for Friday, February 11, 1994.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Oral Questions
6. Written Questions
7. Returns to Written Questions

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

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18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 1-12(4), Towards an NWT Mineral Strategy

- Tabled Document 2-12(5), Building and Learning Strategy

- Tabled Document 3-12(4), Towards a Strategy to 2010: A Discussion Paper

- Tabled Document 11-12(5), First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT for the Year 1992-93

19. Report of Committee of the Whole
20. Third Reading of Bills
21. Orders of the Day

MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 11 at 10:00 am.

---ADJOURNMENT