



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**5th Session**

**Day 8**

**12<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1994**

Pages 155 - 182

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. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Hon. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Hon. Rebecca Mike, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Mr. Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Baffin central, Ms. Mike.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 14-12(5): Long-Term Staff Housing Strategy

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. In March of 1993, this Assembly approved the long-term staff housing strategy.

Contained in the strategy was the decision to dispose of all staff housing in level I communities. Specifically, we agreed to sell all government-owned staff housing units in Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Inuvik. If our staff housing units were leased, we decided we should negotiate with landlords to cancel the leases and allow employee/tenants to become direct tenants with the landlords.

In level II and III communities, employees who were tenants in government-owned staff houses, were given an opportunity to purchase their homes from us. Initially, only employee tenants in single detached units and some of our duplexes were given this opportunity.

Last month, all employee/tenants who were occupying a government-owned staff unit, including multi-family buildings, on December 16, 1993, were given a final opportunity to tell us if they were interested in purchasing their units. If they were interested, they had to advise Personnel before February 11, 1994.

In Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit, employees were given until February 18, 1994 to respond to our offer.

By the end of this week, we will have received all expressions of interest.

The Department of Public Works and Services will arrange for an independent appraiser to prepare property appraisals of each unit where the employee/tenant has indicated an interest to purchase.

Following those appraisals, invitations to purchase will be prepared by Public Works and Services to send to the employees. Sale prices will be based on 90 per cent of the appraised value. Each employee will be given 30 days time to respond with a formal offer.

Cabinet will review all proposed sale prices of multi-family buildings.

Personnel, in conjunction with affected departments, will then assess each community's staff housing needs to determine if there are any units that are surplus to staff needs. During the assessment, we will consider the number of high income employees who live in Housing Corporation units. Sufficient units will be retained to allow these employees to move in if they wish. We will also review the number of staff houses which have been leased to private organizations and non-employees.

When the community assessment is complete, I will meet with individual MLAs and discuss the assessment results, examine each community's needs and review methods of disposal of any surplus units. This consultation process is a critical step in any decision to dispose of units and I am committed to it.

Where the MLA and I agree that there are housing units which are surplus to our staff needs, I will formally advise the Minister of Public Works and Services. His department will remove the units from the staff housing inventory and dispose of them in accordance with the GNWT disposal policy. The disposal policy, which is the responsibility of Public Works and Services, provides for further consultation with MLAs, GNWT agencies and community governments. Under the policy, surplus housing units could be used for public housing, sold to community groups or to the general public.

With regard to future staff housing needs, and in particular, teacher housing needs, the OPPLAN

review has already identified which communities will require additional units because of new positions. This includes the extension of grade levels offered in communities.

In July of last year, in addition to the OPPLAN process, the Financial Management Board approved the acquisition of 16 additional units. The majority of these extra housing units were for teachers.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Personnel's role in staff housing is quite specific. Personnel determines how many units are needed in each community. Personnel allocates units to individual staff members. In doing this, the department relies on established guidelines which identify the level of priority for employees based on their family size. The department has also found that regional housing committees,

Page 156

involving at least the regional director and another senior manager, prevent accusations and suggestions of favouritism.

Personnel advises Public Works and Services if any units are surplus to staff needs. Under the long-term staff housing strategy, our role is also quite clear.

Personnel plays the lead role in dealing with tenants on such things as rent, user-pay and eligibility to purchase.

Personnel does not negotiate purchases with tenants. That is the responsibility of Public Works and Services.

Madam Speaker, I hope this statement helps to clarify Personnel's role in the staff housing area. Thank you.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Communication and Culture, Mr. Nerysoo.

Minister's Statement 15-12(5): Nunavut Education Planning Meeting

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to report on the Nunavut

education planning meeting I attended in Rankin Inlet last week.

This was an inaugural meeting, bringing together various partners in education to consider the matter of education in Nunavut and the development of a Nunavut school system. Planning for this important meeting began almost a year ago, largely at the initiative of Mr. Dennis Lyall, chairperson of Kitikmeot Divisional Board of Education. It was last September when I committed to Mr. Lyall that I would attend this formative meeting.

Twenty-four leaders in education attended, representing the three Nunavut divisional boards of education, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Implementation Commission, the Nunavut Implementation Training Committee, Arctic College and my department.

At the opening session, the board chairpersons described their concerns that the Nunavut final agreement said little about the school system, about the children of Nunavut and the fact that the children are the future of Nunavut.

Delegates looked at what is happening in each of the boards today and noted that much progress had been made in the past 25 years. They described their vision of schooling in Nunavut, with first language instruction in Inuktitut from kindergarten to grade 12, with the Inuit culture as the first culture and with Inuit teachers and administrators throughout the system. They also examined some of the challenges to achieving that vision. They talked about increasing community control of education and how to meet the needs of children in schools. They asked themselves what should a school look like to make it an Inuit school.

They also noted that community-based education is having a tremendously positive economic impact -- divisional boards of education are often the single largest employer in communities.

Madam Speaker, the people of Nunavut have a vision for their children and their children's education. The proposed transfer of education is scheduled for 2006, but the consensus was that education should be among the first responsibilities of the new government in 1999. They want to begin planning now, and begin acting together now, so that the design and delivery of the education system is in place as soon as possible to support the development of Nunavut and the preparation of the Inuit to run the new government.

Madam Speaker, the divisional boards of education want to be recognized as playing a leadership role in preparing their constituents for the new opportunities of Nunavut. They wish to work together with the rest of the Nunavut leadership at the meeting and with the Nunavut Caucus of this Assembly to develop plans and steps for implementation starting now.

I applaud their vision and their leadership, and along with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporation and the Nunavut Implementation Committee, representatives present agreed to support a working committee with all key players to continue the planning process. The committee is planning to meet in March.

Madam Speaker, when I receive the minutes from the meeting, I will circulate them to all Members of this House. I then look forward to the coming months and to participation in this absolutely critical matter of moving the development of the people of Nunavut to the forefront for consideration in discussions on division.

At the appropriate time, I will be tabling the agenda of the particular meeting. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education.

Minister's Statement 16-12(5): National Meeting On Income Security Reform

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Madam Speaker, at the end of January, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, the federal Minister of Human Resource Development, made an announcement on income security reform in the House of Commons. He highlighted the need to restructure the unemployment insurance program and the Canada assistance plan. He also stated the importance of enhancing child care, ensuring basic income security for those in need and improving education and training opportunities for social assistance recipients.

Our government has already begun developing a new approach to income security so that we can use social assistance dollars to invest in people. Many people on social assistance are capable of working and need counselling, upgrading, training and work experience to help them access jobs and become more self-sufficient. We are developing pilot projects with

communities and the federal government which we hope will begin in the next fiscal year.

Page 157

The reform process will take a great deal of commitment if it is to be meaningful. However, the current system was designed in the mid-1940s and is no longer relevant for Canadians. It must be changed, and we will have to devote the needed resources to this project to ensure that the reforms satisfy the unique needs of the Northwest Territories. Following this announcement, a joint meeting of federal/provincial/territorial Labour Market and Social Services Ministers was held in Ottawa, of which I attended, to plan the reform process.

I have just returned from the meeting and was extremely pleased with the outcome. All jurisdictions are committed to the process of national income security reform, and are actively involved in the process of change. Pilot projects have already started in Quebec and New Brunswick to test innovative new approaches to income security and job creation. We have a lot to learn from the work that is going on across the country, but I am confident the approach we have undertaken is consistent with those of other jurisdictions and will allow us to continue existing cost-sharing arrangements with the federal government.

The joint Ministers' meeting resulted in a consensus on the need for reform. An agreement was reached on a cooperative approach to changing the structure of the national safety net. A wide range of activities are planned over the course of the next few months. A steering committee of all federal/provincial/territorial deputy ministers has been established to develop the scope, the principles and the time frame for the reform process. Their work will be done in the next month.

The federal budget scheduled for next week is expected to propose changes to regulations to allow for flexibility in developing and testing innovative cost-shared pilot projects between the different levels of government.

Further, a series of ministerial meetings have been scheduled. The first will be a meeting of education and labour market Ministers held at the end of February to explore the school-to-work transition, to discuss the national apprenticeship program, and to consider additional training initiatives for our workforce.

A second meeting will be held at the end of April to review the work of the deputy ministers' steering committee and to consider recommendations from a task force of eminent Canadians established by Mr. Axworthy. A half-day consultation session has been scheduled to deal specifically with aboriginal issues related to income security. The meeting will result in a plan of action for public input and consultation prior to making legislative and policy changes.

A third meeting will occur in the fall of 1994 and will follow a series of public forums and consultations on a range of potential options. At that point, the federal Minister will involve the provincial/territorial Ministers in making decisions on the development and implementation of new employment and social security legislation to take effect in 1995-96.

Madam Speaker, discussions also have to take place with the federal government over the next few months to work out a suitable process for public participation in all jurisdictions. I am pleased to advise that Mr. Axworthy has agreed to negotiate bilaterally to eliminate overlap and duplication between all levels of government. We will be proposing the idea of co-locating the administrative staff of the federal and territorial governments to more appropriately serve the people of the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, we must be involved in this change and I am confident that we will be able to influence it. My colleague, the Honourable Rebecca Mike, and I will be tabling a discussion paper later this session to outline our approach and the process of income security reform for the Northwest Territories. We would like to again extend the offer to brief the legislative Caucus on the proposed initiative, and we are committed to further involve MLAs and the public in determining the new direction for income support.

Madam Speaker, I intend to continue to participate in the national discussions as they develop, and I will keep the House informed of progress made at the territorial and federal levels. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Minister's Statement 17-12(5): Minister Absent From House

**HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:**

Madam Speaker, this is to advise that the Honourable Don Morin will be absent from the House today. His absence is due to attending the annual general meeting of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association in Cambridge Bay. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Before we go to Item 3, Members' statements, the Speaker would like to recognize the university graduates from the Ontario internship program from the Ontario Legislative Assembly, accompanied by Professor Graham White, who is the director of the internship program. Welcome to our Assembly.

---Applause

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

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Member's Statement On Difficulty Of Deputy Speaker Raising Procedural Issues

**MR. LEWIS:**

Yesterday, in response to Question 83-12(5), Mr. Patterson had asked the Honourable Rebecca Mike about the location of the long-term staff housing policy, where subsequently, Madam Speaker, you recognized the Premier who then proceeded to give a history of the long-term housing strategy of the government from a prepared text, and, in fact, gave us a combination of both the history and the policy of this government as it's been developed over many years, and I rose on a point of order.

I'm new in this job, Madam Speaker. I looked around and saw that many of the Members were quizzical and uncertain as to what was going on, and for that reason I had risen on a point

Page 158

of order. I realized afterwards that I am now one of your officers at this table, three of us, and that I could have been put in the very difficult position, if you had been sick today, of having to rule on my own point of order. So I rise today to inform the House that in future, if I see any procedural problems, I will not stand and raise any procedural issues. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Amittuq, Mr. Allooloo.

Member's Statement On Success Of Yellowknife Inuit Association Celebration

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday evening, the Inuit of Yellowknife assembled in the great hall of this building to celebrate the beginning of the Yellowknife Inuit Association. I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for graciously allowing us the use of this beautiful facility. The event, according to all accounts, was very successful. I am told that 224 people signed up for membership. Including visitors, there were well over 250 people attending the event. We feasted on muktuk, caribou, char, stew and bannock, along with gallons of tea and coffee. The music of Susan Aglukark and Simeonie Keenainak had us enjoying somewhat confused, but very fun-filled square dances. This happened as factions from different regions simultaneously tried to incorporate their local styles into Yellowknife square dance.

---Laughter

We also received some good suggestions for future events and drew up a list of people willing to contribute their time and talent to the organization. A committee of volunteers are at the present time drafting up a process for the election of executive to be held by the end of March 1994.

Madam Speaker, many people contributed a lot of time and effort to last night's event, and I would like to mention the following: Honourable Nellie Cournoyea for her generosity in cooking the caribou roast; Chief Jonas Sangris; Paul Lyall; Nunasi Corporation; Joe Arlooktoo; Becky Mike for soft drinks; Tony Whitford; Gary Perkison; Mikle Langenhan; Dorothy Zoe; Gary Jaeb; and Royal Catering, for contributing to the meal. Pido Productions also contributed the sound system for music. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of the Yellowknife Inuit Association working group that I had the pleasure of working with: Susie Napayok; Victor Tooktoo; Mikle Langenhan. I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. As I was saying, the working group consisted of: Susie Napayok; Victor Tooktoo; Mikle Langenhan; Sarah Leonard is; Norman Keenainak; Rhoda Perkison; Geela Qaqqasiq; Mary Carter; Marius Tungilik; and Goo Arlooktoo. In conclusion, I look forward to participating in the work of the Yellowknife Inuit Association in its future endeavours. I invite this House to join me in congratulating the Yellowknife Inuit

Association for a very successful beginning. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Congratulating Yellowknife Inuit Association

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the Yellowknife MLAs and the people of Yellowknife, I would like to congratulate the Inuit of Yellowknife in forming their association, the Yellowknife Inuit Association. I give special congratulations to Goo Arlooktoo, who I know worked very hard in organizing this group. It is really a sign of the changing face of Yellowknife. Aboriginal people are taking a much more prominent role in Yellowknife. I think it is a lesson to all of us, that people from across the territories of all races, of all cultures can live together and can support each other. So, on behalf of the Yellowknife MLAs and all the people of Yellowknife, we wish the new association the best of luck. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Koe.

Member's Statement On Resignation Of Dental Therapists In Beaufort/Delta Region

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My voice is getting better and I can now talk. I rise today to discuss the plight of our NWT dental therapists. It has been brought to my attention that many of the experienced dental therapists in the Delta/Beaufort communities have resigned. There are probably many reasons for their resignations but there is an underlying concern which impacts on all dental therapists in the Northwest Territories. This issue concerns the unresolved pay rate classification of dental therapists. In April 1988, dental therapists, as part of the EG group were transferred from the federal government to this government as part of the health transfer agreement. At that time, the new federal pay rate classification had not been negotiated for that particular group. To date, this government has not ratified the pay rate schedule. Consequently, dental therapists are being paid at a lower rate of pay than what they are entitled to. Madam Speaker, at the time of the transfer, federal dental therapists under the PSAC collective agreement had expired as of December 22, 1987. Subsequently, this government based its pay rate classification for dental therapists on the invalid and expired federal pay rate schedule, therefore, the pay rate classification schedule determined by the Government of the Northwest Territories for dental therapists on the transfer date of April 19, 1988, did not and still does not reflect an accurate pay rate classification level for dental therapists. It was the understanding of transferring dental therapists that once the new federal rate had been negotiated, a further review of the Government of the Northwest Territories pay rate would be conducted to assess further adjustments and retroactive pay for NWT dental therapists. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue.

Page 159

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, honourable colleagues. It is our understanding that only federally-transferred dental therapists received pay rate conversion adjustments but still outstanding is the ratification of the pay rate classification level schedule placement HC/TE, as per the collective agreement. In May 1990, the treasury board of Canada approved a revised pay rate

classification standard and level structure for the EG group which federal dental therapists come under, retroactive to December 22, 1987 when the federal PSAC collective agreement expired.

The Northwest Territories' dental therapists pay schedule should have been adjusted in May 1990 to reflect the new federal increases. Madam Speaker, NWT dental therapists are presently receiving lower starting salaries than their counterparts, the federal dental therapists, and this issue should be resolved as soon as possible. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Smuggling Of Alcohol And Drugs In Iqaluit

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, there have been recent troubling signs that bootlegging is a growing problem in Iqaluit. On a Friday night, a few weeks ago, 36 60-ounce bottles of liquor were seized by the RCMP and a person charged with bootlegging.

I am informed that much of the recent illegal liquor sales and the seizures involve American liquor, which has apparently been smuggled into Canada and from there to Iqaluit perhaps by sealift. The 60-ounce bottles were being sold for up to \$160 and 40-ounce bottles for \$100 or \$125. Often, I am told, unfortunately it is persons on welfare who are making these purchases with social assistance funds.

Iqaluit is the first point of entry in Baffin for smuggled alcohol and illegal drugs, since it has direct connections with Montreal and Ottawa. Now there is a great concern that with drastically lower cigarette prices in Quebec, cigarette smuggling will be added to these other two criminal activities, bootlegging and drug trafficking.

It is also well known in Iqaluit, and has been a practice for years, that Montreal merchants are all too eager to illegally ship alcohol by air freight without import permits and without paying NWT taxes to persons in Iqaluit making food orders. Cigarette cartons may well be next.

There are obvious social policy concerns with the devastating health and social effects of all these forms of contraband. There is also a significant loss of revenue to our government in the form of foregone taxation on alcohol and cigarettes.

In researching this matter, I was quite surprised to learn that despite the well known and growing problem of illegal smuggling of alcohol and drugs through Iqaluit, there are no RCMP members in Iqaluit designated for enforcement of federal customs excise and narcotics laws. As I understand it, these so-called FES, federal enforcement section, members of the RCMP, are funded 100 per cent by Ottawa and they would give the Iqaluit RCMP much-needed ability to closely monitor air and sea traffic to the community to focus on contraband. Iqaluit RCMP area already too hard-pressed dealing with day-to-day emergencies, community relations, crimes and search and rescue to focus on these sometimes sophisticated operations.

Part of the federal government's recent response has been to increase allocations for anti smuggling enforcement in Quebec and Ontario. Later this session, I will be asking the Minister of Justice whether he will consider using his good offices to pitch for more RCMP resources in Iqaluit. Thank you.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

Member's Statement On Availability Of Assistance For Preparation Of Income Tax Returns

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to speak today about income tax return preparation assistance presently available in the communities of my constituency. What I am about to speak of, is likely the case in most smaller communities. Every year, there are problems with the availability of people who can help prepare income tax returns.

Although there are some people in the communities who offer this service, there is some concern regarding the quality and accuracy of returns that are prepared. I have been told that mistakes have been made where people were told by the person who

prepared their returns to expect a refund, only to find out later they are owing taxes instead.

Sometimes this is quite a shock when they find out they owe a large amount of money. This has been an ongoing problem for many years. There is a need for more professional people to provide this service to my constituents.

Madam Speaker, there is also an urgent need for more information to be circulated in the communities regarding the goods and services tax. People need to understand what they should be doing with regard to this tax. If they are running a small business, they should know how much they should expect to get back if they are eligible for a refund.

These are two urgent matters that need to be addressed so people in smaller communities have the assistance and information required to keep their finances in order. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Page 160

Member's Statement On Guidelines For School Closures In The NWT

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. During the cold snap in January, there were school closures all over the southern Northwest Territories. Some had to do with busses not running and some were just out of concern for the well-being of the children. Madam Speaker, Fort Providence was no exception to this. The school was officially closed for three days. My problem with this, Madam Speaker, is after the three continuous days off were given to the kids, it was decided that the closure could not continue indefinitely, especially since it appeared the cold weather had no intention of leaving any time soon.

What they did in Fort Providence was make an announcement that the school would be open for business for any student whose parents felt they should attend. Attendance was not compulsory. It was the parents' choice if their child should attend.

My problem with this arrangement is that it penalizes those students whose parents do not have a vehicle to get them to school. I, personally, would not have



wanted my children to walk to school on some of those days in question.

Madam Speaker, I believe I am under the mistaken impression that we are supposed to have compulsory education in the Northwest Territories. All students under 16 are required to attend school when it is open. Where do we draw the line, Madam Speaker, between children's safety and the requirements that students attend a certain amount of school each year?

In the Northwest Territories, we are occasionally get these extreme cold spells. Perhaps we should look at the school closures while they are happening and add those days to the end of the year. Madam Speaker, the guidelines in the Education Act are perhaps too stringent in what they allow the school boards and the principals to do. This is an area that I encourage all local education authorities, divisional boards and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to develop a set of guidelines covering school closures. We need some concrete plans, not the wishy-washy solution recently implemented in Fort Providence. Thank you.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for High Arctic, Mr. Pudluk.

Member's Statement On Protection From Ultraviolet Rays

**MR. PUDLUK:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the communities I represent, because spring is coming around the corner, people will be travelling out on the land. They will be travelling a great distance. I would like to tell the people who I represent, the people in my constituency, with regard to my response yesterday from the Minister of Health, that they will have to use sun block lotions, and they will have to protect themselves from ultraviolet rays. It is very important that they should use sun block lotion when they are going out on the land. I would like to encourage them, during my statement, that they will have to take this with them when they are going out on the land so they will be healthy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements.

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

(Microphone turned off)

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

The time clock wasn't on, so you were fortunate today.

---Laughter

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Economic Development Benefits In Small Communities

**MR. ANTOINE:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be speaking in my language. I think it was yesterday, the Minister of Finance gave a statement about the budget. He talked about Economic Development and Tourism. As a result of that, now Economic Development will be working differently in the way they come about having their budget. There were some other things he said. Changes will result in smaller communities being able to benefit from them. As a result of that, I think economically they will be gaining. I think if they take that direction it will be beneficial for smaller communities.

In the past, the small communities, when they wanted economic gains and they met with the government they would have to wait a long time before their proposals were considered. Now that they have an area superintendent and they are able to borrow \$250,000, I feel thankful for that. If policies like that are adopted, the small communities will be able to benefit economically. If they are able to borrow money in a hurry then it will be good for them. So I think it will be good. This is all I will be saying. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just like to add to my Member's statement, earlier.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Mr. Pudlat, I've been advised that apparently you did want to ask for an extension at the time for your Member's statement, and to seek unanimous consent to continue with your Member's statement. However, the interpreters did not advise this House. Therefore, I went on to another Member's statement. If you are now seeking consent to continue with your statement, I believe you have to ask for approval from the House.

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Madam Speaker, I'd like to complete by statement.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Mr. Pudlat is seeking unanimous consent to carry on with his original statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Continue, Mr. Pudlat.

Page 161

Member's Statement on Availability Of Assistance For Preparation Of Income Tax Returns

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker and my colleagues. Madam Speaker, I was talking with regard to income tax preparation returns. People who need assistance in preparing their income tax returns in their communities...Madam Speaker, in the Northwest Territories I would like to encourage the Government of the Northwest Territories to make available chartered accountants in the communities so they will be available to assist the people who need assistance in preparing their income tax returns. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Before I proceed with oral questions, I would like to provide the House with my ruling on the point of order raised by the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Lewis, yesterday during question period.

Speaker's Ruling

I think it is important to remind the House of the circumstances that lead up to Mr. Lewis raising his point of order. The Premier was in the process of answering the supplementary question originally

posed to the Minister of Personnel by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson. The supplementary question posed by Mr. Patterson is contained on page 305 of the unedited Hansard. Although the preamble to Mr. Patterson's supplementary was long and his actual question was, and I quote, "For the new long-term staff housing strategy, are there similar guidelines or procedures available for government employees when they are dealing with questions and implementing that strategy?"

The Premier then proceeded to answer the supplementary question and indicated in the first part of her response the following, and I quote again from page 305 of the unedited Hansard, "I have been looking at Hansard and looking at some of the questions. I would like to bring into perspective the process that we started with and why we are here in terms of the long-term staff housing policy, or strategy, so everyone will have the same information. Some of the questions and supplementaries will be incorporated in this explanation." My review of the unedited Hansard indicates that the Premier then proceeded to give an explanation of the process of establishing and implementing the long-term staff housing strategy. My review also indicates that the Premier did not specifically answer Mr. Patterson's question until just before Mr. Lewis raised his point of order and, in fact, the Premier was just beginning to specifically answer Mr. Patterson's question when Mr. Lewis' point of order interrupted the honourable Member for Nunakput.

To the point of order raised by Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis in raising his point of order indicated that, and I quote from page 306 of the unedited Hansard, "This is a long response and it is very unclear to me what the question is that this response is being made to." As I indicated yesterday, there is nothing in our rules that indicates the time frame that should be allotted for reply to oral questions. The chair can get guidance from other authorities and numerous cautions and advice from the chair by our former Speakers in the matter of asking and answering oral questions. I quote from Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms 6th edition, citation 410 (5) "The primary purpose of question period is the seeking of information and call the government to account." I am sure all Members will agree that this is the primary purpose, and to ensure the efficient use of question period there are a number of general principles that should guide us. The point of order raised by Mr. Lewis provides the chair with an opportunity to

provide the House with a number of principles that I hope will guide all Members in posing questions and Ministers in responding. It will also give notice to all honourable Members how I intend to approach the conduct of question period. I would like to offer a couple of citations from Beauchesne's 6th edition:

Citation 408 (1)(e) "Such questions should not be of a nature requiring a lengthy and detailed answer." Of course, written questions are the item on the order paper for these types of questions. In saying this, however, there are times a Member's questions may get a lengthy answer from a Minister when one is not needed.

The following citation I also considered in making my ruling. Citation 409 (11) "A question which seeks an opinion about government policy is probably out of order in that it asks for an opinion and not information. A question asking for a general statement of government policy may be out of order in that it requires a long answer that should be made on motions (now statements by Ministers) or in debate. Other questions inevitably deal with government policy and the general restrictions regarding such questions have never been applied."

These citations assisted me when dealing with asking questions and the type of questions that should be asked. The other side of the question period, of course, is the answers by Ministers. I offer a citation again from Beauchesne's 6th edition.

The chair feels that the following citation is appropriate when dealing with the point of order before us today, and I quote citation 417 "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

I rule that Mr. Lewis does have a point of order as the Premier did indicate in her response that, and I quote, "Some of the questions and supplementaries will be incorporated in this explanation." If the primary purpose of question period is the seeking of information and to ensure that the ordinary Members can get this information, and the Ministers have an opportunity to provide the information, it is important that efficient use of question period is made. I would suggest that the Premier did try to answer questions and supplementaries that had been taken as notice on previous days, as well as earlier yesterday by the Minister of Personnel. There would have been an opportunity for the Minister of Personnel and the Premier to provide a response in the item "returns to oral questions," or by using other avenues available

on the order paper such as tabling of documents. The chair, however, is cognisant of the fact that the Premier was trying to provide information to the House that the House had requested.

In summary, it is not the chair's wish to try in any way to prevent a free-flowing exchange during question period as Members endeavour to carry out their responsibilities, but I will

Page 162

try to keep it as flexible as possible so that question period does not get bogged down with lengthy questions or lengthy answers, so that all Members can participate fully in question period without placing an impediment on their fundamental right of freedom of speech. Thank you.

Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Koe.

#### ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

#### MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Health, who is also the Minister of Finance. In my Member's statement today, I referred to the concerns of dental therapists regarding pay rate classifications. My question to the Minister, is this government reviewing the pay rate classifications of dental therapists in the Northwest Territories?

#### MADAM SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

#### HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, Mr. Ballantyne asked a question about the public health nurses and it concerned the 1988 transfer as well. We are looking at that situation, and I know the other problem occurred at the same time. Yes, we are looking at both of the problems. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### MADAM SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My supplementary question is, is it this government's position that these reviews, if there are adjustments required, would be retroactive to the date of the health transfer, April 19, 1988?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Madam Speaker, as I said yesterday, all the jobs in the Northwest Territories government have been under review for some time. We anticipate in June or July getting that finished. These issues are being dealt with in that package. Although I am taking notice and have agreed to report to the House with regard to Mr. Ballantyne's question as soon as possible. I'm not able to say at this time if there would be any retroactivity if there were any changes made to the pay rates. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

**MR. KOE:**

The Minister has referred to a review of the public health nurses. Would the Minister also confirm that he would investigate the issue regarding dental therapists to us in the time frame that he mentioned, June or July of this year.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 105-12(5): Review Of Pay Classification Of NWT Dental Therapists

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Yes, Madam Speaker, I would. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 106-12(5): Plans To Eradicate Current WCB Backlog

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question I would like to direct to the Minister responsible for WCB. A little while ago I noted with some sadness that Mr. Jim Bourque who was the chairman of the Appeals Tribunal, I believe, and other things with WCB, left his appointment to go to Ottawa to undertake another important undertaking. Madam Speaker, prior to his departure from the WCB and in response to the number of outstanding appeals that were pending, a plan was developed to help eradicate this backlog. Now with the departure of Mr. Bourque, I wonder if that plan is still in place, or is there something new that would achieve the same results as Mr. Bourque had planned?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of WCB, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 106-12(5): Plans To Eradicate Current WCB Backlog

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We all regret the resignation of Mr. Bourque. He was an outstanding chairman with respect to appeals. I did appoint Mr. Don McNenly, who is a 25 or 26 year northern veteran, to replace Mr. Bourque. He has significant employer/employee experience. We are proceeding on schedule as previously committed. That is that we're trying to endeavour to move on these appeals by taking the next six months to fast-track as many of them as we can. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 107-12(5): Date Of Transfer Of Sir John Franklin To YK Education District No. 1

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Nerysoo. I would like to thank the Minister for supporting the transfer of Sir John Franklin High School to school district No. 1 in Yellowknife. The transfer will complete the unification of the Kindergarten to grade 12 system under the control of the elected Yellowknife board. It will certainly

Page 163

provide a stronger base to strengthen the education system in Yellowknife. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister inform this House as to when this transfer will be completed?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 107-12(5): Date Of Transfer Of Sir John Franklin To YK Education District No. 1

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is our intention to, hopefully, have the transfer completed by July 1, 1994.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 108-12(5): Location Of Additional Housing Units

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is directed to the Minister of Personnel. This is regarding the statement made today. Specifically, where will the 16 additional units, approved by the Financial Management Board in July of last year, be located? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Personnel, Ms. Mike.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I cannot recall all of the communities. I will take the question as notice. The department is working on them right now. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Koe.

Question 109-12(5): Status Of Amalgamation Of Science Institute With Arctic College

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for the Science Institute. Several sessions ago, the Premier announced that the Northwest Territories Science Institute headquarters was to be decentralized from Yellowknife to Inuvik and Igloolik. Subsequently, the Minister responsible for the Science Institute, and also responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, announced a review is under way investigating the feasibility of amalgamating the Science Institute with Arctic College. My question to the Minister is what is the status of the review of the amalgamation of the Science Institute with Arctic College?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Science Institute of the NWT, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 109-12(5): Status Of Review Of Amalgamation Of Science Institute With Arctic College

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The process, when I undertook the responsibility as Minister, was to review the decision that had been made, which was the idea of the amalgamation of Arctic College and the Science Institute. That decision has been supported by Cabinet. It will be part of the college system. We will establish a head office for the western institute in Inuvik and an eastern institute office in Iqaluit. There will be no continuation of a board separately, rather it will be part of the Arctic College. The amalgamation is expected to be completed by July 1, 1994.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am quite curious about the process outlined by the Minister of Personnel for the second round of housing sales. As I understand it, Madam Speaker, all employees were given a second chance to purchase, by a recent circular, and they have until this week to express an interest, where upon an invitation to purchase will be sent to the employees by DPW. My question to the Minister of Personnel is, whose statement refers to a detailed community assessment to assess surplus, is the community assessment process going to take place after the process of the current round of purchases, offers and invitations? Or, is it going to take place before those offers and purchases are finalized? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Personnel, Ms. Mike.

Return To Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It will occur after the finalization of offers to the staff. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**MR. PATTERSON:**

With greatest respect to the Minister, Madam Speaker, if the purpose of the community assessment is to determine whether there is a surplus of staff housing in a community -- in other words, whether there are some surplus houses that can be safely disposed of without jeopardizing the government's program delivery capability -- wouldn't a correct time to do a community assessment be before you sell off the houses, rather than after you have already made offers and acceptances? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Personnel, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Where there is the most concern in a shortage of staff housing is in level III communities. We hardly have any staff who are interested in purchasing their units. It is different for level I and level II communities. But in level III communities, we are not showing much interest in purchasing houses. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Page 164

Supplementary To Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Since invitations were made to all employees living in level I, II and III communities as to whether they wished to purchase in the second round of invitations, were there any community assessments done before these two rounds of purchases were conducted? Or, is the one referred to in the Minister's statement going to be the first comprehensive community assessment done? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Personnel, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 110-12(5): Process For Second Phase Of Housing Sales

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The 16 units that have been located in the communities, are the result of the assessment that has been made. That will not change, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 111-12(5): Consultations With Youth Organizations Re Conference

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, yesterday I directed a question to the Minister of Justice with regard to special constables, in his home community, being selected for three weeks of special training. I also have a copy of the RCMP

commissioner's directional statement that was made with regard to this year's aboriginal participation. This report was translated into 40 different languages and 15 aboriginal dialects. But one of the biggest initiatives is with regard to a national aboriginal youth justice conference that will be held this year in Winnipeg. Are youth organizations are being consulted with regard to this conference?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi.

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will take that question as notice. I am not aware of the conference.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 112-12(5): Function Of GNWT Office In Ottawa

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to Mr. Kakfwi, who is responsible for constitutional development and Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Rights. The Ottawa office has existed since the early 1970s, beginning with simply putting someone there who was a senior person and they weren't quite sure what to do with the person. Later on, it devolved in such a way that the person was a well known Liberal who had good Liberal connections and spoke French. After that, there was a change because now we are into constitutional issues. So we had lawyers who were hired to look after our constitutional business. What is the function right now? What is the Ottawa office doing right now, since constitutional development is on hold? Do we still have these lawyers working in that office?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 112-12(5): Function Of GNWT Office In Ottawa

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Madam Speaker, the functions of the staff within the Ottawa office have been reviewed and it is still ongoing. We know that the constitutional focus is now non-existent, but there is still a major commitment by the Liberal government to look at trying to kick-start self-government discussions with aboriginal people across this country, on the assumption they wish to proceed and the assumption that the inherent right exists. It is somewhere in section 35 of the constitution. So we are prepared to and are monitoring the situation to see if, in fact, there may be some major work that is going to be required by our staff who were involved previously in the Charlottetown Accord negotiations.

There are developments with Quebec and Makivik Corporation with regard to negotiations on the offshore islands that Makivik is now laying some claim to include in their land claim, the northern Quebec claim. There is the suggestion that Quebec may be eyeing some of the islands in the James Bay/Hudson's Bay area to make the constitutional/legal/political argument that these should be within their jurisdiction, so we are giving some serious thought to monitoring that as well.

There is the ongoing work in the area of devolution, whether or not there is going to be a major initiative to continue and at least develop an overall framework with which devolution -- things like land, water and other jurisdictions, oil, gas, and minerals -- may be pursued. So there is, in fact, a lot of work that can be done by this office and those are some of the areas that we have identified. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 112-12(5): Function Of GNWT Office In Ottawa

**MR. LEWIS:**

From that response then, even though constitutional stuff is essentially dead, we still have constitutional people dealing with quasi-constitutional issues. I would like to ask the Minister how many people are involved, either through permanent positions or through contracts, in working on these issues which still need to be worked on?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 112-12(5): Function Of GNWT Office In Ottawa

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Madam Speaker, I can provide that in written form. I am not prepared to give numbers at this time. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Whitford.

Page 165

Question 113-12(5): Appointments To Fill WCB Board Vacancies

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through my fault, I had not concluded my question to the Minister responsible for the WCB. Obviously, there are vacancies now through this domino effect that has taken place on the appeals tribunal. Can the Minister advise me what steps are being taken to reappoint people to fill these vacancies on that board?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for WCB, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 113-12(5): Appointments To Fill WCB Board Vacancies

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, with the recent resignation of Mr. Bourque there is one vacancy which I intend to fill, hopefully before the end of this session. We are also looking at some reappointments and some new appointments that are coming forth, so, hopefully later next week, we should be in a position to make an announcement to the House which we hope will get its support. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 114-12(5): Northern Nominees For RCMP Training

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question again to the Minister of Justice with regard to training. I understand that they are currently going to be providing 44 young aboriginal people with this special two year development course to enable them to meet RCMP entrance requirements for basic recruitment training. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not the Minister has identified anybody in the north that might get into this program for training?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi.

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Madam Speaker, I have to take it as notice. I don't know that I have identified anybody in the north, to date, that would qualify for this program. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Koe.

Question 115-12(5): Enhancement Of Roles For Regional Superintendents

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Social Services. In the last three years, there has been much reorganization and restructuring of departments. I understand that the department of Social Services has also done some restructuring of its own, and through this restructuring and reorganization, roles and responsibilities of regional superintendents have changed. Can the Minister confirm whether or not the roles and responsibilities of regional superintendents have been enhanced?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Return To Question 115-12(5): Enhancement Of Roles For Regional Superintendents

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The reorganization of Social Services at headquarters is complete.



Regional reorganizations are expected to be completed by the end of March. I am not aware at this point in time whether the superintendents' roles will be changed. If they are, it is going to be enhanced responsibility to the regions. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 116-12(5): Minister Responsible For Dealing With Federal Infrastructure Program

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier, since the federal infrastructure program was referred to in the Minister of Finance's budget address, which Minister is responsible, within our government, for the relations to do with the federal infrastructure program? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Madam Premier.

Return To Question 116-12(5): Minister Responsible For Dealing With Federal Infrastructure Program

**HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:**

Madam Speaker, the Minister responsible is the Honourable John Pollard.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. PATTERSON:**

You can tell me if this is in order, but I then would like to pose a question to Mr. Pollard about that program.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Since it is to a different Minister and I do not see other Members wanting oral questions, you may proceed with Mr. Pollard.

Question 117-12(5): Access To Federal Infrastructure Program By Northern Communities

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like ask Mr. Pollard, since this is now an enhanced program and is

going to have NWT-wide application, just how would a community in the Northwest Territories go about accessing federal cost-share for a municipal capital work? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for Finance, Health and infrastructure funding, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 117-12(5): Access To Federal Infrastructure Program By Northern Communities

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we have not reached total agreement with the federal government yet on the application process, nor the criteria. That's because their proposal to us was not acceptable. I think

Page 166

I said in the budget speech that Premier Cournoyea wrote to the Prime Minister and we've recently heard in the last ten days that they are willing to make some arrangements with us that would fit the local landscape better and enhance the program with some more dollars. What we are suggesting, Madam Speaker, to the federal government is that it would be done through the offices of Mr. Nerysoo under the same kinds of arrangements as the workers' training program that we had, the \$6 million program that we had there through his department, and that the criteria would change. Whereas the other one was geared towards training people, this would be geared towards a capital project that would improve infrastructure in a community.

If we are successful in convincing the federal government that that is the way to go, and the mechanism in place, there won't be a lot of overhead. The majority of the dollars will get to the communities and to the people out there, and we'll see some infrastructure work done in communities. Not on a grand scale, I realize how expensive it is to do work in these communities, but we will get some things done and some people employed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 117-12(5): Access To Federal Infrastructure Program By Northern Communities

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that information. Madam Speaker, I also understand that the program is still in the developing stages. But I would like to ask the Minister, to the extent he can answer this, as I understand it, the program in southern Canada requires a matching contribution from a municipality or a provincial government. Since many of our municipalities don't have much revenue-raising capacity because of their small size or because of the undeveloped economy, will the Minister be looking at a more flexible approach in the Northwest Territories to allowing communities to participate in this opportunity? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 117-12(5): Access To Federal Infrastructure Program By Northern Communities

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Madam Speaker, we're certainly aware of the fiscal capacities, or incapacity at times, of the smaller communities. They don't have a tax-base and they don't have the ability to raise revenues. So, yes, we will try and put in a program that is flexible and recognizes their problems. Hopefully, we will be able to announce that program, certainly by the end of this session, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 117-12(5): Access To Federal Infrastructure Program By Northern Communities

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I take it, Madam Speaker, that our government's intention, is that these capital works projects with a big labour component could actually get off the ground as early as this coming fiscal year, this coming summer season. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 117-12(5): Access By Northern Communities For Federal Cost Sharing

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has made it very clear that he wants this program to go ahead. He's made it very clear what the guidelines are, that it has to be infrastructure that we're dealing with. So we're not getting any resistance from the federal government with regard to time, other than that we have to come to some arrangement with them on our unique situation in the Northwest Territories.

I do anticipate that that will be completed. I know that Mr. Nerysoo's department can process these applications quickly, as long as the criteria is in place. So I believe that there will be some communities in the Northwest Territories this year that will be able to access that program. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 5, oral questions. Item 6, written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions. Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, replies to budget address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):**

Madam Speaker, I wish to report that according to rule 42(1), Petition 3-12(5) addressed to the Premier containing 369 signatures calling for the resignation of the Honourable John Todd from the Workers' Compensation portfolio has been filed by a Member in accordance with the rules.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 19-12(5), agenda, Nunavut educational planning meeting, Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories, February 9 and 10, 1994. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Hay River, Mr. Pollard.

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following documents. Tabled Document 20-12(5), Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories

Page 167

for the Year Ended March 31, 1993, volumes one and two. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Keewatin Central, Mr. Todd.

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following document. Tabled Document 21-12(5), Diamonds in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. I wish to table, Tabled Document 22-12(5), Auditor General's Report on the Audit of the Consolidation and Financial Statement of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the Year Ended March 31, 1993.

Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95; Committee Report 2-12(5), Report of the Review of the 1994-95 Main Estimates; Minister's Statement 5-12(5), Session Business; 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 Commission of the NWT for the Year 1992-93, with Mr. Lewis in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I would like to call the committee to order. We have a number of items in front of us that have been identified by our Speaker, as being in this committee. I would like to ask Members what they would like to deal with first. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the committee would like to deal with Tabled Document 11-12(5), First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT for the Year 1992-93. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the committee's permission to have you invite the Languages Commissioner into committee of the whole to act as a witness, immediately following a short break.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I'm very good at taking a hint, ladies and gentlemen, so we will take a break. First of all, I have to get the agreement of the committee that the Languages Commissioner can appear before us as a witness. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

We will recess for just a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

Tabled Document 11-12(5): First Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner Of The NWT For The Year 1992-93

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I would like to call the committee of the whole to order. Before the break you will recall we had agreed to invite the Languages Commissioner to the witness table. Sergeant-at-Arms, could we have all the witnesses at the table.

I would like to welcome Ms. Betty Harnum, the Languages Commissioner, to committee of the whole. All Members have Tabled Document 11-12(5), which

is the official languages report, "Meeting the Challenge," and they also have an executive summary of this document. Members will also note that this report, which was tabled in the House, is available in all the official languages of the Northwest Territories, in summary form, and can be obtained from the Commissioner's office. With that, I would like to ask the Commissioner, since there are no other witnesses, other than herself, if she would address the committee.

**MS. HARNUM:**

Is my voice loud enough? I have a cold, so I hope my voice will hold up. To begin with, I would like to express my appreciation to the Legislative Assembly, for appointing me as the first Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories under the Official Languages Act. Thanks also to the former Speaker, the honourable Michael Ballantyne, for his patience and guidance, as we all embark on this new adventure. I look forward now to working with the new Speaker, the Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell. We have already had a chance to discuss some of the issues which confront us.

I would also like to thank my staff for all their dedication and hard work. In the first year, the office had only two positions, myself and a secretary/administrative assistant, as well as some contract and casual help. Since April 1993, we have had a full-time researcher/writer position, which has proven to be essential. I want to say a big thank you to both Benoit Boutin and Gwen Ohokak for all of their work. All of the administration complaints, inquiries, research and the writing of the annual report, which took 11 months, have been handled by these few individuals. I sincerely appreciate their efforts. Thank you too, to the staff of the Legislative Assembly for their assistance in our administration.

I also want to say thank you to all of the staff of the GNWT, the Legislative Assembly and all of their institutions, who work very hard to implement a very novel piece of legislation. We are breaking new ground in the Northwest Territories. We have eight official languages and aboriginal languages have official status. There are many challenges and we all have to work hard to make it a success. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by the people I have encountered.

My experience as Languages Commissioner, to date, has been very challenging, exciting and demanding. Many questions have arisen that need to be

addressed and I am grateful for this opportunity of discussing some of these matters today before the Assembly. I know that the groups and individuals, the constituents of all the MLAs' ridings, who have confided in me in the past two years, are also looking forward to these discussions.

Page 168

The annual report, which is before the Assembly today, covers the fiscal year 1992-93. We are already beginning to write our second report. The report we are dealing with today raises many issues which came to our attention in only one year. Some of the problems have been satisfactorily resolved, some are ongoing and many issues remain to be discovered.

When I accepted this job, I took it very seriously. I felt perhaps as the European explorers felt when they set out for this new world. I embarked on the "ombuds-ship" to explore unfamiliar territory. I was asked to return from this voyage to report on my discoveries. Well, the first thing I found out was that I was a stranger. Nobody had encountered an ombudsman in the NWT and they did not understand the mission. When I arrived in this new place, I found as many explorers before me, people who had ideas, hopes, expectations and cultures that were different from my own. I had to try to come to an understanding with these people about who I am, what I was asked to do, what powers I have to accomplish my goals, what approaches should be used and what priorities they have. My voyage has lasted almost two years now and I am here to report to you on my findings.

One of the major questions that continues to be perplexing is the role and authority of the Languages Commissioner. Since this position is new, no clear guidelines yet exist for a reporting relationship. Who should the Languages Commissioner report to, other than to the Assembly through an annual report? That is required in the act. Who provides direction to the Languages Commissioner on a daily basis? Who assesses the performance of the Languages Commissioner to determine whether or not it is satisfactory? What powers does the Languages Commissioner have, especially with regard to investigations? Since the Official Languages Act is silent in these matters, there is a lot of room for interpretation.

I have had to confront all of these questions and develop solutions that I felt were appropriate. I see my role in very broad terms. The NWT Interpretation Act, section 10, states that, "Every enactment shall be

construed as being remedial, and shall be given such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as best ensures the attainment of its objectives." I have, therefore, taken a very broad and liberal interpretation of my mandate, so as not to impose limitations on myself or on those who will follow me. I want to ensure that the Languages Commissioner, now and always, will have at his or her disposal all possible means for resolving problems quickly, effectively and fairly. The effectiveness of the Languages Commissioner can only be ensured by the exercise of sufficient authority.

I mentioned that the Official Languages Act is silent with regard to specific powers of the Languages Commissioner. Section 20(1) directs the Languages Commissioner to "take all actions and measures within her authority, with a view of ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of this act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions, including any of their activities relating to the advancement of the aboriginal languages in the territories." But what "actions and measures" are within this authority? Other ombudsman legislation in Canada and other jurisdictions usually spells out these powers very clearly, the power to hold public hearings, demand documents, subpoena witnesses, or it specifically incorporates provisions from another act, such as the Public Inquiries Act. Since our Official Languages Act does not provide this clear direction, many questions have arisen about the Languages Commissioner's authority. It is up to this legislature to clarify these powers.

Another major issue is accountability. I know that it is important to the Members and to the public that the Languages Commissioner be accountable. But it is also very important to me that I do not compromise the independence of this position. Without accountability, the Languages Commissioner risks losing the trust of the Members for whom she or he works, and the confidence of the public, whose concerns she or he is responsible for representing. But, as Daniel Jacoby, citizens' protector for the province of Quebec, stated at the national ombudsmans' conference, which I attended in Toronto in November, "Without independence, the ombudsman does not exist." I am conscious of the need for both accountability and independence, and you will see that my first recommendation asks this Assembly to establish a standing committee on official languages, to which I may report as required.

Just one more comment about these two aspects of my job. If the Members limit too much the powers of the ombudsman, they risk losing the confidence of their constituents, who expect that this position was established to cut through the everyday red tape that all citizens encounter in trying to resolve problems with their government. And we must all admit that there are always some problems to be resolved. People are happy that this legislature saw fit to establish such a position, and are now relying on all Members of this Assembly to reconfirm their commitment. But people also want to see a process for accountability, and therein lies the delicate balance.

People have commented that they are pleased that the Legislative Assembly has begun discussing official languages more often. The comments I have received from the Members' constituents have indicated that they feel it is time to talk, time to address their concerns about official languages, to try to find effective solutions and to implement changes as quickly as possible. My annual report clearly shows that despite all of our efforts, all minority languages in the NWT, all aboriginal languages and French, are under stress, and in almost every case, declining.

I am directed by the Official Languages Act to make recommendations to the Assembly. I have made 30 recommendations in my first annual report.

I have made these recommendations based on the issues NWT residents have brought to my attention. In presenting them, I have tried to fulfil my mandate as I see it: to promote all the official languages; to encourage linguistic groups to work together; to create, among NWT residents and all other

Page 169

individuals, groups and institutions that deal with our residents, a greater understanding of and appreciation for official language groups and their needs and aspirations; to contribute to the preservation, development and enhancement of all our official languages; and, to assist people in resolving their problems as quickly as possible, so that everyone clearly understands that the implementation of official languages is not a waste of time or money, but a right by which each individual may express himself or herself through his or her own culturally appropriate medium.

I would now be happy to discuss the report with you and to determine how the recommendations can be addressed. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you. I believe that this is one of the forms of accountability. Since you recall, two years ago, I believe all Members were involved in the process of determining how we would establish this office and how we would choose the Commissioner. I would like to encourage all Members of the committee to ask any questions they would like to address to the Languages Commissioner. Mr. Pudlat.

General Comments

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Languages Commissioner, for reporting to the committee. In the report it states that you have travelled to some areas to deal with languages. When you were travelling in the 1993-94 year, in one area it said you have travelled to the south nine times. I would just like to find out why you had to travel out of the NWT that many times, as a Commissioner of Official Languages. I would just like to get a response to that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thanks very much, Mr. Pudlat. I would like to ask Members that when they address a question, they address it through the chair so that we don't have it to and fro between the witness and the Members. So could you respond to that question, please?

**MS. HARNUM:**

I would just like to ask the Member if he is referring to a specific document so I can address the specific trips that he's talking about.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Mr. Pudlat, the issue is do you have any specific travel in mind that you would like the Commissioner to respond to? Mr. Pudlat.

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the report it states that the Commissioner had to do a lot of travelling to do with languages. My question is, when the Commissioner travels outside of the NWT it states

you travelled outside the Northwest Territories nine times. When you have to travel out of the NWT, I would just like to find out why you have to travel out of the NWT for what reasons? Is my question clear? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

(Translation) I will be speaking in Inuktitut. I understand your question but I would just like to get a clarification as to where it states or in which report it is written about the nine times I travelled outside of the NWT. But to answer your question, for example, I went to the Yukon and I also went to Ottawa. I travelled to Ottawa three times. I had to meet with the Commissioner for Languages in Canada and his officials. I met with them to work with them and find out what I can do in our area and I just met with them to deal with the different languages. We were dealing with the acts because some of the acts that we deal with here are used in Canada, and the different provinces. Those are some of the reasons I had to travel to Ottawa. I went over to Ottawa and met with the Secretary of State and the Treasury Board because I was trying to find out how the agreement is dealt with. I met with the Treasury Board with the federal government. I went over to make a presentation about the official languages in the NWT and discussed the acts. This was before the regulations came out.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Do you have any further questions, Mr. Pudlat? All right, Mr. Zoe.

**MR. ZOE:**

Mr. Chairman, in general comments, I have a number of comments I would like to make. This is to follow up on what my colleague from Baffin South has indicated in terms of her travel. I am quite interested in that area, but I want to ask the Commissioner about the work that she does. Mr. Chairman, the Commissioner, in her report, indicates that she has taken a broad interpretation of her role. I wonder, Mr. Chairman, does she see her role as assisting all territorial residents who have difficulties with our Official Languages Act? Is that the way she sees her role?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

Yes, I think one of my roles is to do promotion about official languages. By that, I understand that to mean to help people understand why language is important to people, what sort of problems people might encounter if they don't happen to speak the major language of communication, English or French or whichever community they happen to be in. Part of my role is to help people understand the difficulties that people can run into, any sort of language problems that they might encounter. Particularly, if they are NWT residents. One of the things that we should be aware of in the Territories is that, because we do have an Official Languages Act, with eight official languages, and we are the only place in North America that has official aboriginal languages, many people invite us... I have been invited to Germany. I was supposed to

Page 170

go to Phoenix last week. I have been invited to a number of places to speak. I didn't go to those places, but I am invited on a regular basis to go to speak about our Official Languages Act, to explain how we can manage to implement all of those official languages and why it is important to do that. I see that as part of my role, not just to help people in the NWT understand, but to help other people outside, in other parts of Canada or the world, understand the importance of language and why it is important to have official status for these languages and what it means.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Does that help explain what is meant by a broad interpretation, Mr. Zoe?

**MR. ZOE:**

Mr. Chairman, in her report, there is one quote that, in particular, sticks out. It is obvious that the Languages Commissioner has adopted this interpretation of trying to do everything. I am wondering, in terms of focus of this particular office, or it appears that the office of the Languages Commissioner has suffered, in my view, slightly because of your broad interpretation during the first year of operation. I say that because I don't think we have developed a clear direction or focus, and I am talking particularly about being focused, because the report basically touches on almost

everything. That is why I said she has interpreted her role as ombudsman for almost everything and she left her office too broadly, doing too much. There wasn't any clear, direct focus. That is the way I read this report of the Languages Commissioner.

I think, Mr. Chairman, the office of the Languages Commissioner, has to determine... Maybe I can ask a question. Does she think they have done too much, too soon, because of that broad interpretation of her role that she says in her report? I don't see a clear direction, Mr. Chairman, so I guess my first question is, does she feel that they have taken on too much during the first year? I couldn't really see a clear direction that your office is going in after we established it, because it seems you are jumping all over the map.

I have a lot of concerns pertaining to that because I would have figured, once we established this Languages Commission, the Commissioner's role when we established that act, the individual would have a priority and have clear focus as to what direction she was going in. It doesn't appear from the report that she's given us that there is a focused approach. There is no clear focus, lack of focus, in other words, in my view, from just reading this report. I wonder if the Commissioner could comment on what I have just said.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I wonder if the Commissioner could respond to the charge that there is a lack of focus and you are trying to be all things to all people.

**MS. HARNUM:**

Yes, one of the things that we did say in the report is that during the first year we were trying to figure out what our role was, too, and I think everybody was. We still are. I mean, it's still not perfectly crystal clear, and part of that is because of the legislation which leaves so many grey areas that it's difficult to know where my authority leads me, but I did say in the report that we had dealt with a lot of things that were probably not within our jurisdiction. During the first year, we did that to encourage people to start contacting the office but then we started to refer them to departments. If the department was responsible, we would say we won't handle this. You go to the department. If you can't resolve it, then you can come back to us, and more and more we are doing that now, telling people you go to the department to resolve it.

In that first year that this report covers, we opened 187 files. Those were people that were calling every day for information or with complaints and it does lead us all over the map. We had to examine every single one of those complaints or enquiries to decide whether or not: number one, it was within my jurisdiction; number two, whether it did relate to the status and use of official languages; number three, whether or not there was any violation of the Official Languages Act or any other act or regulation relating to the status and use of official languages, because I have jurisdiction over those, too. That one led us into the Education Act, the Jury Act, the Mental Health Act, the Summary Conviction Procedures Act, and many other acts that relate to the status and use of official languages. That is my mandate. It is in the act, and it has been a Pandora's box, to say, for interpretation purposes, it has led us into a huge mess, a huge area where even in my first year, it wasn't clear. We had to spend a lot of time defining exactly what our jurisdiction was in the office.

It is true. I think in the first year we were not focused. We were trying to find out all the programs and services that are out there, are the problems and what groups exist and what they are doing. It was an information year for us. You have to realize when I walked into this position, I didn't even have a pencil. We had to establish the whole office with furniture and computers, hiring and job descriptions, budget planning and all those kinds of things, as well as handle all of these complaints and enquiries on a daily basis. So, in the first year, it was a big process of discovery, and we wanted to encourage people to contact the office and they did. Without a major publicity campaign in the first year, we opened 187 files.

When people call, we have to take every enquiry or complaint seriously and really look into it. There were a number of them that on the surface I thought, this is nothing, it's not within my jurisdiction or it doesn't really relate to the Official Languages Act, and when we researched it further we found out that it did or that it related to one of these other acts or regulations regarding the status and use of official languages. So, perhaps in the first year that is why we didn't seem to be too focused. Maybe that explains part of it.

I think another part of it, too, is that I was on my own. I didn't have directions, so it really was a year of trying it out for myself and in that first year I didn't meet with any of the MLAs other than a few of them. I sent letters to everybody and asked for input. I met with a

few. I didn't have a committee to ask direction from, so I think if there is some lack of direction, part of it, too, is that it's not really clear to me through the act exactly what is expected of the position. That is how I would explain it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you very much. So all that time, it was sorting out the mess, I suppose.

**MS. HARNUM:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Okay. Mr. Zoe.

Page 171

**MR. ZOE:**

Mr. Chairman, I think that the problem started, when the Commissioner undertook this broad interpretation of her jurisdiction. Now, I think that the approach that has been taken has not let the Commissioner review exactly what is really needed, because of the approach that she adopted. It could have been more productive or a more concentrated effort on a few areas rather than...If you would have concentrated on a few areas, maybe we would have been more productive rather than a superficial approach to the many areas that are reflected in her report. Now, I know that when we created the act, the intention in creating this position was to ensure that our Official Languages Act is being fairly implemented in the NWT and also for providing the NWT residents with a place to air their complaints. Just from reading the report, they created a language research unit that does all your research for you and so forth. It appears to me that you are creating more work for yourself because of that broad interpretation. It appears to me that we have no clear direction, no focus. In other words, lack of focus, that I noticed while I was reading through this report. I think, perhaps, it should have been done in another manner. Perhaps, we could have been more successful. I have other comments, but, perhaps I will wait until we get into the details of the report, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I don't think there was a new question there, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Gargan.



**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to tell the Languages Commissioner that I am glad that she has gone through that whole review with regard to conflict of interest, in regard to relationship to a Member. If I did cause any embarrassment, I am sorry, but this is an area which is touchy. Like you said, we don't know where to draw the line when it comes to conflict, too. I will try to balance my question with regard to your independence and your accountability too. A newspaper article has come up and it is a French newspaper. It has been translated. I won't go into the details of the circumstances of the article itself, but I would like to ask why you chose to go to Saskatchewan as opposed to NWT, hosted by the French community. Whether or not you find that you do have jurisdictions for Saskatchewan with regard to performing your duty, is that one of your broad interpretations?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

First, I would like to say to the Member that I was not upset by the conflict of interest inquiry that was conducted last year. I think it is one of the things that has to have been addressed with this position. It is a new position. There has never been one like this before, and the reporting relationship, even at this point, is still not clear. It was something that had to be addressed. I didn't see it as a personal affront.

With regard to the particular incident that Mr. Gargan is making reference to, the French newspaper carried an article that said that I had cancelled their engagement here in Yellowknife and that I decided to go to Saskatchewan instead. I cannot say the report was inaccurate. It was incomplete. It didn't have all of the details that I think would have helped people understand what was behind the decision. My engagement in Yellowknife was to read a speech in French for about ten minutes to open the youth Parliament. It had nothing to do with official languages. I wasn't asked to speak about official languages. I didn't write the speech. It was simply to read a speech to open their Parliament. I didn't consider that that was as important as dealing with an issue involving... This is difficult for me to discuss because it verges on breaching confidentiality about an issue that I am dealing with. It was a problem that was brought to my attention when I was in Ottawa.

So, I decided to go to that engagement. Unfortunately, it was cancelled the day after the French Youth Parliament, so I never went to Saskatoon either, but I do have a letter of invitation to come back again to discuss it because the problem still exists. I do see that as part of my mandate. If there are NWT students whose education is paid for by this government and they have to go to other institutions in the south, if they are having problems because of language difficulties and if I can be of some assistance in resolving those problems, I do see that as part of my mandate. That is why I made that decision to be involved in that particular issue.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Under the NWT Act, sections 22 and 23 refer to that in which you could let go the issue itself for whatever circumstance or else you also could refer it to the department that might be able to handle the situation. I don't know where you draw the line with regard to your jurisdiction. Another thing that you did say is that, under the languages, too...The letter you wrote to me back in March of 1992, states that the native people just asked if the Federation of Franco-Tenoise are responsible for their own languages, just as the Dene Cultural Institute and the Inuit Cultural Institute has this mandate. Where do you draw the line, then, with regard to those interest groups that have the responsibility of their own languages and your responsibility?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

It is your jurisdiction, really. The question of how broadly you have interpreted your mandate, this seems to be the issue.

**MS. HARNUM:**

When I was appointed, it was suggested that I could establish an advisory council. I have taken certain steps in the last two years to address that and it is in my report. It is one of the things that I need some guidance on again, at this point, to see what exactly the Assembly had in mind when they suggested an advisory council. We wrote 115 letters, for example, to try and get input from all of the native organizations, hamlets, divisional boards, and all sorts of different groups, boards, agencies and MLAs. In the absence of having that advisory council, right

now, I make it a point of meeting with major groups that represent official languages, such as Dene Cultural Institute, Inuit Cultural Institute and the French Federation. I try and meet with all other groups that invite me to come, if I can, or at least to be in touch with them so that I know what their priorities and concerns are. My mandate, as I see it, in relation to those groups, is that I consult with them as I am required to do under the act, to

Page 172

consult with representatives. I do that on a regular basis. I see them as providing me with the information I need from the language communities, so I can address those and bring them to the Assembly's attention. That is how I see my relationship to them. They provide a great deal of feedback on how they feel about the government's implementation of official languages. In each community, they are feeling the effect of it. So they can bring that information back to me and I can pass it on to the Assembly or to the government department responsible.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you for the answer. It seems to me that the Languages Commissioner is quite interested in meeting with groups that represent certain linguistic groupings. I find this case, with regard to the Saskatchewan situation, yet you choose not to meet with these groups. You are talking about the Saskatchewan situation as an individual issue or a group issue, but why did you think, in this case, that it was more important to meet in Saskatchewan as opposed to a group of Francophone people who requested your presence?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you. Ms. Harnum, you were presumably invited to address one group because you were the Languages Commissioner and because of your great interest in various language groups, but you had a conflict because you had another group in the south who you chose to spend your time with. How did you decide that this was a greater priority?

**MS. HARNUM:**

As I mentioned before, at the French Youth Parliament, I was going to be speaking in another

official Language, in French. That was the limit of the involvement of that particular engagement with official languages. I wasn't asked to speak about official languages. I wouldn't have even mentioned that there was an Official Languages Act in the Northwest Territories with eight official languages. I wasn't asked to discuss, mention, comment on or participate in any discussions about official languages. To me, that was not as important as dealing with a problem where students were having language problems that I felt maybe I would be able to help resolve. It was as a result of the presentation that I made in Ottawa and the content of that presentation that I was invited to Saskatchewan. They said this is information that we think would really help our faculty to understand what is going on. I felt that was more important.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have you met with the group in Saskatchewan?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

No, I haven't yet. They have extended an invitation to me. The meeting was postponed. I was invited to be there on the 14 and 15 of November. They cancelled it at the last minute and told me they would re-book it. I am expecting to either go there or maybe I will take Mr. Gargan's suggestion and suggest that someone from the department go there. It was particularly as a result of the presentation I made in Ottawa. That was why they had invited me to go there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

I might be confused now, Mr. Chairman. The urgency was to address a situation in Saskatchewan. Is the urgency still there? Does it still exist? Couldn't you have addressed this group in the Northwest Territories prior to dealing with the issue at that time? If you are going to reschedule it, I don't know what the urgency was at that time. Has it been resolved since?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I just received a letter from them saying that the situation does still exist. They still would like me to come and discuss the problem. The other thing I should point out is I do have many invitations. During that particular month, I had a number of other meetings with Francophone organizations. I don't make it a habit of doing this. This was one particular invitation that I cancelled, which was not a high priority for me because I was not being asked to talk about official languages. That was not a very important one for me as far as what my mandate is. You will see, from the list of duty travel invitations and speaking engagements that I tabled in December, that during the month of November I had a number of other meetings with Francophone organizations. If I wasn't able to attend, I made sure that someone else from my office was there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I don't want to interject myself too much in the discussions, but the issue that has been raised is when you undertake to do something, inside another jurisdiction...You have taken a broad interpretation of your mandate as the Official Languages Commissioner, who works under an act, which applies to this jurisdiction. So the Member is wondering how you make a priority of something over which you cannot have control through the act? In our own system, we have a government that can control things on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. If you go to Alberta or Saskatchewan and become involved in language issues over which our act, and the powers we have as a Legislature, have no control, why is it that you consider this to be part of our jurisdiction? That is what I interpret to be the issue that has been raised by Members.

**MS. HARNUM:**

As I mentioned, the NWT Official Languages Act has clause 21(1) that says, "The Languages Commissioner shall investigate any reasonable complaint made to the Languages Commissioner..." and it goes on, "...if any of those complaints that deal with the status of an official language was not or is not being recognized, any provision of any act or regulation relating to the status and use of official languages was not or is not being complied with, or

the spirit and intent of this act was not or is not being complied with." When I look at that, there are language provisions even in the Education Act and the administration of the affairs of the Department of Education, as it says in another section, deals with students going from here to other institutions. I guess I do take a very broad interpretation of that. If NWT students are funded by this government to go to another institution and they are having trouble there, if I can help them in some way, then I will, to promote an understanding by those other organizations. I approached it as an education issue and it was a language issue arising out of education. These were students funded by the Department of Education. That is why I felt if I could help

Page 173

resolve a situation and have students avoid some sort of failure, that would be something I should try to accomplish if I could.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

We are discussing Tabled Document 11-12(5). We have spent a long time discussing a broad interpretation of the role of the Commissioner. This is what we are still talking about, which is what the Commissioner opened with. Is there anything else that Members would like to raise? We are still dealing with this one issue of how broad this job should be interpreted. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Mr. Chairman, the article from November 11 is with regard to Francophone Parliament that involves a large number of groups from western Canada. The invitation to her, I would believe, is out of respect for the office of the Languages Commissioner. I would be privileged if I was in that position to meet with such a group.

You also referred to section 20, but if you also refer to section 22, you do have several options and the Commissioner may refuse to investigate. Section 23 says that "Any matter should be referred to the government institute concerned for consideration, if necessary action." So you had other options. I don't know why you didn't exercise those other options to meet with a group that represents all of western Canada to deal with one particular issue. That's my question. I still don't know how far you indicate your jurisdiction, but you did use your broad interpretation. But you also had other options.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I don't know what else I can say. I just felt it was important for me to try to deal with the problem situation involving language. That was more important than trying to deal with something where I was not even asked to mention the word official languages. Yes, I was invited as Languages Commissioner because I speak French. But I was not asked to deal with official languages in any way. Other than the fact that I was going to speak French there, it really wasn't promotion or increasing anybody's awareness or anything else.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

(Microphone turned off)...answer the question now to the best of your ability in several different ways. Have you finished, Mr. Gargan? Okay, is there anybody else who would like to pose some questions on the basis of this report, or any other tabled documents for the official languages? Mr. Patterson.

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to discuss this important area. Mr. Chairman, I sense, reading the report, quite a degree of frustration -- there is moderate language here but I think I can read between the lines -- with government departments. Just a few quick examples. Page 66, despite the Languages Commissioner encouraging the GNWT to do a press release to inform the public and its employees about section 14(2) on services to the public being proclaimed, the GNWT decided not to announce the coming into force of this section. This is not an encouraging sign, the report said.

Later the report says, the Languages Commissioner has also pressed the GNWT to come up with some working definitions for significant demand and other phrases and service levels within the act. No success. There's been a suggestion referred to on page 68 that, official languages should be used on signs in Yellowknife. It has not been accepted. There have been a number of meetings to get the GNWT to draft regulations, and the report notes a reluctance to make those changes. And there are other invitations. With that background in mind, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Languages Commissioner to describe, just generally, how are her relations with government

departments? Are they as strained as I seem to detect even from the moderate tone of the report?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

That's an invitation to explain several of your frustrations. Go ahead.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I appreciate the Member bringing this particular matter up because it is a frustration that I have experienced since I started in the job. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the authority of the Languages Commissioner is totally open for interpretation. I happen to think that unless the Languages Commissioner has authority to get information to require certain actions, that sort of thing, then it's useless. I'm just like another bureaucrat. Why do we have a Languages Commissioner?

However, I must say that the things that Mr. Patterson has raised are some of the areas where we did not make progress. There are some successes that we have seen in the last year and a half, almost two years now.

In the next annual report I plan to list them more clearly, what are our successes and what are our failures. What matters have we managed to resolve and which ones haven't we?

My relationship with some of the departments is very good. I want to commend, for example, the Department of Personnel. Every single issue we have brought to their attention they have resolved, without saying, no, that's not your authority, without saying we don't think you should be dealing with that matter, or that's an employee matter or anything else. They said, thank you for bringing it to our attention, and they corrected it.

I think there's only one other big issue and it's not just a Department of Personnel issue that needs to be dealt with, although it affects all of the personnel, and that's language of work. But that's a major policy decision, and major interpretation of the act that needs to be done.

My relations with GNWT, I should maybe explain how they've developed. When I was first appointed, I understood that I had powers to conduct investigations. To me, that meant when somebody complained about something, I should talk to the person who complained, I should talk to the other

parties involved and get the information first-hand, so that I don't get second-hand stories. I started to do that. It was only a few months after starting to do that, that people noticed there was a Languages Commissioner, and GNWT decided that they wouldn't let their employees talk to the Languages Commissioner and a directive went out to that effect. At that point, I agreed with the official languages unit we establish a protocol that all of my correspondence about complaints or enquiries -- more complaints and enquiries are often just answered over the phone, very quickly. But for complaints, they would all be addressed to the deputy minister of the

Page 174

department and then a copy to the official languages unit, then the deputy minister would see that the investigation was done basically in their department and that I would be provided with a response.

I didn't really want to do that because I didn't feel then that I was conducting the investigation. I think the GNWT is conducting the investigation, and I'm likely to get only one side of the story. I can understand their concern that they don't want me to just talk to any government employee and get all sorts of information that may be inaccurate, or that may not represent the whole story for the department or whatever. But I need to get all of the information, both from the employees and from the overall policy makers, directors or whatever in order to put all the pieces together in order to effectively deal with problems.

I agreed to the protocol because there were two of us in the office, myself and a secretary. As I said, we opened 187 files in the first year. We're now heading up to 400. I can't possibly deal with every single one of those things myself. So I agreed to the protocol and it works quite well. I have to say that, for many things, we manage to resolve them that way. When I find that a department is not responding quickly, I bring it to our monthly meetings with the official languages unit and they go after the department and encourage them to hurry up and respond. We do have that good working relationship. However, in some cases, the departments are taking six or eight months to reply. I don't think that is reasonable. That is another layer of bureaucracy. I should be able to get on the phone and phone the people or write a letter directly to them, get the information, or meet with them, and get the information directly from them and resolve things more quickly. I think, being really efficient in our office and doing things quickly is what

it should be for. Otherwise, we have people waiting a long time and still being very frustrated and, in many cases, very angry with government about a situation that could be just a total misunderstanding.

I must explain that, some of the things that we have resolved have been in GNWT's favour. We have done good public relations for GNWT, where we explain to people that, yes, the department is right. You don't have a right to that, or they don't have to provide that. You can try to persuade them, but they don't really have an obligation, because people have unrealistic expectations sometimes about the Official Languages Act. In some cases, we have resolved things and said to the person who was complaining that their complaint is unfounded. That is part of our job, too.

I feel some frustration about trying to deal with some of the complaints and some of the inquiries that I try to make about interdepartments. We have been told, in some cases, the Languages Commissioner cannot have that information because it is confidential or it is not public. I am not sure that we are the public. Perhaps an access to information law will help clarify this. I met with the Department of Justice when they were considering drafting the access to information legislation and said, it would be very helpful to people in positions like myself, commissioners or if the legislature is thinking of establishing an ombudsman position or access to information, it would be very useful within that access to information legislation to clearly state special powers of access to information for people who are granted the power or the authority or the duty to conduct investigations. Otherwise, I really think that the public will start to perceive this particular position as ineffective if we can't get the information that we need to be able to resolve complaints. Then, we are not any better than another citizen knocking on the door. I hope that this office will not come to that.

As I said, I have to say that some of the departments have been extremely cooperative and they are very happy when we bring things to their attention, but there are other matters with which I am really frustrated. The one that you mentioned about the press release. I was frustrated about that last year. Again, I asked them this year, the last two sections of the act just came into effect December 31. I asked again, "Are you going to do a press release, not only to inform the public, but to inform the employees that they have a new obligation?" They said no. So, I did it. I don't think that is really encouraging. The public has said to me and so have government employees,

we don't have enough information about official languages. We don't know what is in the act. We don't know how it affects us as employees. What do we have to make available? The guidelines and directives are not there for the departments. I understand that there is a document that will be tabled pulling together some of these directives. I think that is a very positive step. We pushed hard for that. We have asked for regulations. That is very far off in the distance now, I can see. All I can do is recommend. That is the extent of my power in those matters. There is some frustration. I think that we have to also say that we have achieved a number of things that we tried to do and have to give credit to those departments that have cooperated.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you, Ms. Harnum. That is a broad question. You have quite a few examples of difficulties. Mr. Patterson, do you have any further questions?

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Yes, I will try to be brief, Mr. Chairman. I think the Languages Commissioner has answered my question when she said she was really frustrated, at least with some departments. I take it, then, that even though the protocol has been agreed to somewhat reluctantly about working through the official languages unit and the deputy ministers receiving complaints, recommendation 5 in the report is really asking the legislature to overrule that protocol and reconsider that practice. That is how I understand recommendation 5. It says, "consider the current GNWT practice," but if the Languages Commissioner was satisfied with the current GNWT practice, then she wouldn't have recommended that it be reviewed. If I understand it correctly, there is a frustration there with that. This protocol was worked out through the official languages unit, which reports to the Premier. Has she not thought of sitting down with the Premier, who is responsible for this area, seeking a meeting and just saying, I am having certain frustrations with certain departments. Others are all right. Can you fix it up? We are a small jurisdiction. Would that not be a way to tackle some of these day to day frustrations that I am sensing in the report and in the response to my questions? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I did have two meetings with the Government Leader. At both of those meetings, she referred me to the assistant deputy minister responsible for official languages and

Page 175

said that she was responsible for meeting with me on a regular basis and that is where our concerns would be addressed. I meet with them, now, once a month and we do address all of these things. A couple of months ago, I asked for this protocol to be reviewed and we decided to postpone it. They asked that we postpone it. We discussed it very briefly at the last meeting, but they said, because I was coming to the Assembly that, perhaps, many of these things would be discussed here and so, perhaps, it would be better to wait until after this discussion, so I agreed to that.

I will explain in a letter to them all of the reasons I have reservations about the existing protocol. We do meet on a regular basis and try to address these things. Sometimes they are addressed more quickly and resolved. Others seem to be taking a long time. This particular one about my being able to talk directly to government staff rather than going through deputy ministers, and that process, I know that the government has asked the deputy ministers to comment on that existing protocol, because we have been using it for a while now. They have asked them to comment so, with their comments and mine, we can look at it and come up with something more workable. I am afraid that I have to be true to the legislation. It says that the Languages Commissioner will conduct the investigation. Given the resources that we have, myself and now two other staff, we still have to be very much involved in those investigations and not just send off a letter and expect somebody else to do the work for us and then send it back to us. I have been dissatisfied with that method of investigation. I don't feel that I get all of the information that I need. Sometimes, I will get a letter back and it raises more questions and I have to write another letter and wait another few months. It is a very long, drawn out process.

I think GNWT is willing to sit down and review this protocol. They had agreed to review it after six months, but it is over a year now that we have been using that protocol. It is on our agenda for the next meeting. Hopefully, as a result of these discussions in the Assembly, there will be some better direction. Part of it revolves around what authorities the Languages Commissioner has to conduct investigations. There are no specific provisions in the

act and that is part of where the problem arises. We may have two very different interpretations of what those powers and authorities are. If I think that I have the authority to contact government employees and the government doesn't so they tell their employees not to talk to me, how do we resolve that on an everyday basis? Without any clear direction or any clear definition of powers in the act, it could go either way. I suppose the only other way, if it is not clear in the act, is to go to court to ask for an interpretation of what the authority is if we can't come to an agreement.

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you. I will try to keep my question short because I am sure other Members want to say things. I guess what I am getting out of this discussion is the Languages Commissioner is talking about power and authority, and that without authority the position is useless. I see in this week's paper an ad for an invitation for proposals for legal counsel services for the commission which talks about legal action against the Government of the Northwest Territories. I would just like to say that it seems like we are headed for sort of a confrontational approach. It is honey and vinegar, I guess. I am not sure that those of us who worked on this provision had in mind using public money to sue our own government. I want to say that I would hope that the persuasive approach would be sought in every case and that confrontation and litigation should be avoided at all possible costs. I know it says in the report that it is a last resort but I am gathering from the answers here that there is a high frustration level and that this present protocol is not satisfactory. This has been an outstanding issue for a long time and now a lawyer is going to be hired. Being a lawyer, I want to warn you that is dangerous because they love to litigate but maybe it will be only the lawyers that will profit if we have litigation on this new legislation. I would just like to urge the Languages Commissioner -- and she can comment if she wishes -- to work more, even though it may be frustrating, on developing a cooperative relationship with the government rather than forcing a cooperative relationship with legal arguments. I like to think our government is small enough that we should be able to do that and I guess I am a little bit alarmed that we seem to be gearing up for a fight here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

There is no question there, but if the Commissioner would like to comment on the statement from Mr. Patterson, then go ahead.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I should point out that right from the very first couple of months, our office has always had legal counsel. This is not a new development. As I said, when I get a complaint I review it very carefully to see if there is a violation of the Official Languages Act or any other act. Let me make it clear that the fact that we are advertising for legal counsel contract does not mean that we are planning legal action against the government. It simply means that we are renewing legal counsel contract, which we have always had, for the third year because I need opinions on the act all the time.

As I said, I think there are a lot of departments that have been extremely cooperative. There are only some that are not really willing to accept some of the initiatives that we suggest. If I feel that the department is reluctant, or if they are not willing to try to implement suggestions that we make, or deal with problems that arise, and if the only person I can talk to is the deputy minister, that makes it really difficult for me to get everybody's side of the story and see if there is somebody who is not supportive or whatever, to try and find out who that person is or if they are working under a misunderstanding or whatever. In a couple of instances, the deputy minister has said to me, go ahead and talk to the people in my department about this particular issue. When they said that, we resolved it immediately and they said thank you.

I must say, if you look at the section on complaints and enquiries in chapter five you will see that we dealt with a lot of issues. Many of them were resolved. We do sit down and talk about things a lot and we do resolve a lot of things.

I think one of the things we need to do in our next report, as I mentioned, is to list all of the things we have accomplished and all of the things the GNWT has agreed, yes, this is a good idea, we'll implement it, because we have had those successes. But on some of the major issues that go on and on and on, those are the ones where I feel more frustration. I don't look at court action as a solution at all. I don't want it to come to that. I don't anticipate that it will ever have to, but it is one of the things that legal counsel has to be aware of if they are going

Page 176

to work for our office, that the possibility is there. Even for the federal languages commission, they've existed for 25 years, they've only been to court I

believe six times or something, not very many times. It is only when an institution absolutely refuses after all sorts of negotiations and there are violations of the act, that they would ever go that route. We have been able, I think, just in the short time that we have had the office, to negotiate a number of settlements for complainants and issues that have to be resolved. So we do use that approach as much as possible, but there are still a lot of outstanding issues.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I believe, Ms. Harnum, that the Member has raised the issue of hiring legal help because of a statement that you made that through this protocol. We are, in a sense, in violation of our own act which gives you power to conduct investigations. You, yourself, made a comment that we are in fact in violation of our own legislation. Is that correct?

**MS. HARNUM:**

Yes, the way I understand it, the way that the legislation is written, it says the Languages Commissioner should conduct investigations. Now, for the reasons I explained that there are only two people in our office and we could not possibly do all the investigations, I agreed to the original protocol. In some cases that works well so I don't have a problem with it. It is in the cases where it doesn't work, and I can't go any farther, that I have a problem with it because then I can't resolve it. Hopefully this legislature can provide some direction on what authority they mean for the Languages Commissioner. When they said conduct investigations, what did they mean? I don't think it should be simply up to GNWT, to the Executive, to decide what those powers should be. I think it should be up to the whole Legislature to decide what those powers should be. So I was not indicating that I am heading towards court to try to sort that out. It has been done in other jurisdictions where they have had disputes about it, but I hope I won't have to go that route.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

I did not mean to interrupt the Member but, Mr. Patterson, do you have any further comments? Okay, anybody else then on the issue of the official languages report, "Meeting the Challenge" and other tabled documents related to official languages? Mr. Antoine.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The office of the Languages Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly is an important one. Just going through the documents of the previous years, the first annual report of the Languages Commissioner, the executive summary hits on some key areas. There are a number of recommendations that were made there by the Languages Commissioner. Some of these recommendations are quite substantial and they are important for the development of the official languages in the Northwest Territories.

In other workings of the Legislative Assembly, we have standing committees that look at certain problems and develop recommendations on these problems, how to solve them and what the government should do about it. These recommendations are introduced in this Legislative Assembly in forms of motions. Therefore it gives direction to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories to do work on these recommendations. However, in the Languages Commissioner's case there were a number of recommendations made last year which do not have a standing committee to report to or a body to report to so these recommendations could be put into the House and, therefore, we've given direction to the Legislative Assembly to deal with these important recommendations. There is something missing there, as far as I'm concerned, that the Languages Commissioner does not have a body or a structure to deal with.

We noticed that when we were dealing with it in the Legislative Assembly in the Standing Committee on Finance where the budget of the Languages Commissioner is attached to the Legislative Assembly. However, the Languages Commissioner is not required to be there to defend her budget, therefore we were not able to question her on how she could expend the funds that are going to be requested in the Assembly. So there is something there in the mechanism of the Legislative Assembly when it comes down to the Languages Commissioner.

In the Languages Commissioner's opening remarks, she also made mention of the fact that she makes recommendation to establish a standing committee on official languages, which the Languages Commissioner may report to as required. So there is a recommendation by the Languages Commissioner to form a standing committee on official languages. In her first annual report, she made mention of that as well. In there it was not specifically a standing



committee on official languages, she also indicated that the Legislative Assembly establish a standing committee on official languages or assign this responsibility to an existing committee, and that the Languages Commissioner and official language unit report regularly to this committee, and that the annual report of the Languages Commissioner to be referred to this committee for review. This is one of the recommendations that was made last year. In her opening remarks she also makes reference to that. I think I would agree with that. I'm not too certain whether it be a standing committee on official languages. It should be an existing body, perhaps, that she could report to. That way her recommendations could be introduced into the House, made into a motion, and then the Legislative Assembly could take action on it, giving direction to the government to take on the direction that the Commissioner sees to be important.

I'm just making comments on what I think should happen, Mr. Chairman, in this area. If the Languages Commissioner would like to elaborate on those points that I'm making, I certainly will be interested to hear what the Languages Commissioner has to say about this. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

No real question as such, but the whole issue of the independence of the commissioner and the need to have some relationship to some body. Maybe you would like to comment on that.

**MS. HARNUM:**

The reason that I had put that particular recommendation as my first recommendation is that it's the most important one to me. I know that the whole process of accountability of this office has been an issue. I know the whole issue of independence of this office has been an issue. I don't know if all of those things can be resolved in full session like this, I think it would take a long time. It would be a long discussion. There are 30 recommendations, that's only the first

Page 177

one. I think there are many things in here that are not made up from my head, these are recommendations that people from the communities have given to me to bring to the Assembly. I think the public wants to see some sort of accountability, too.

But the other thing too, is that they want to see that the Assembly deals with official languages more often. By having a standing committee that would deal with them more often, I think the public would feel more confident that it really was a priority. Some of the comments that I get from the public are that the Assembly doesn't discuss official languages very often. They were happy when the report was tabled because then it was discussed.

There was the special committee in 1990 and other reports, but it's not discussed very often and they would prefer to see it addressed on a more regular basis. For myself, I want the input from the Members, other than in this type of setting. I want input from the Members about what they expect from our office. It was established to serve the Legislative Assembly. Occasionally, I will meet with Members or discuss matters with them individually, but not as a group. So I'm getting each Member's direction or suggestion, but not really the direction of the Assembly and the direction that they want me to take collectively. So I would very much appreciate having that sort of committee to discuss a lot of issues.

Also, if I do find myself in a position where I'm frustrated with that we think there's something the GNWT should be doing and they're not, they don't want to or whatever, then the Members can also bring that to their attention as well, instead of me just doing it by myself. I think that's very important, that they don't think it's all just coming from me. I just happen to be the spokesperson, but these are not just my own initiatives that I just drummed up myself. So I need that kind of support too when I'm trying to accomplish things on behalf of the public who are bringing them to my attention.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thanks, very much, Ms. Harnum. Any other issues, Mr. Antoine, since you were the last speaker?

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other recommendations that was made last year, the last one, number 30, deals with the GNWT to assist non-governmental organizations and groups with developing and delivering services and programs to the public in official languages, both by assisting them with planning, interpreting, translating and such services, ensuring that all available funding is allocated for such community projects. The point I would like to emphasize is "all available funding."

This one here is quite important to me because I speak my own language and I associate with other groups other than the Legislative Assembly in meetings in the Deh Cho Tribal Council meetings. Any time there is a gathering of aboriginal groups, we have elders who don't speak English very well, and they have to be full participants in all discussions. Therefore, there is a need for interpreting and translating. Many times, the meetings are regarded as very important, so these meetings are done in spite of the costs. In many cases, there are cost overruns in dealing with interpretation and translation. I know this is a fact.

When the Languages Commissioner reports that there are large sums of funds unexpended and have been returned to the federal government by the government, I know that organizations such as the Dene Nation have requested the government for funding to help them in their meetings and assemblies. Much of it, in cases of interpretation and translation, is refused. Then, we are told that the government has turned back huge sums of money, although the native groups are told that there is no money. That causes me much concern, whether this government is really committed as much as they say they are to helping aboriginal languages.

When this Language Act was first passed, it was a major support to aboriginal people in the north. Everyone who I am familiar with was very pleased with the fact that this government has recognized aboriginal languages as official languages. I think it is a great thing we have done to preserve our language. However, when funds are requested...For instance, I know that the Dene Cultural Institute is requesting funding to help further develop the Dene languages. They are still struggling and still looking for funds to help them do that. I know the government is spending much money with their own language bureau in translating policies and regulations. At the same time, the Dene language is a thorough language. Our language has helped our elders. Every year, our elders are passing on and we are losing it. Almost every day, we are losing this. At the same time, funds are turned back to the federal government. The majority of the money is focused on the application of the act in terms of interpreting policies and regulations. The focus is not on preserving the language. The focus seems to be on abiding by the act according to the regulations by interpreting the policies and regulations. The focus is not on capturing the oral history that we are losing every day. I would like to ask you a question about

that recommendation, and about my comments are with regard to government assisting non-government organizations and groups. What is the intent of that in your recommendation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):**

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Ms. Harnum.

**MS. HARNUM:**

That particular recommendation was made to me by many non-government organizations. There is a perception by the public that the government monopolizes language services. They feel that the Official Languages Act is perceived to be a very good piece of legislation. People appreciate what it was meant to do. What has happened now is that so many human resources and dollars are used by government departments in trying to deliver services. For example, all of the written translation that is done for Dene languages, and nobody can read it, that those people who want to speak their language in the communities have no resources. The government has monopolized so much of that money. I am not saying that from my own point of view. This is what the public has told me to say. Those organizations are extremely frustrated. They feel that there are many things the GNWT is doing with official languages money that is not meeting a need. Some needs are being met and that is great. But we really have to look at how we are allocating the resources. I think that is what this whole issue is about. We have so many dollars and so many people. That is all. Are we really meeting the need?

Mr. Zoe asked me, we didn't seem to have a focus, he said, in the report in the first year. One of our major focuses was research. We wanted to find out what research had been done

Page 178

in all the languages and bringing it together. That is what chapter one is. That was about a year and a half worth of research. We didn't want to just say that languages are dying. We wanted to know what all the studies are that have been done. What information do we have? Since people have now seen this report, many other people have come forward to us and said, we did a study in our own community on fluency and literacy, or in our own region, would you like that information, too? It is more detailed. We did it just with our own people and we know who speaks and to what level. That sort of thing. Now, we know

of more research. But, all of the information in chapter one says the languages are declining. We have all of these dollars, all of these human resources, we have an Official Languages Act and we are sliding backwards. That is what the native organizations have said to me. We have all of this money going into all of these official languages, but where are we heading? We are still losing it. That is why their concern is that the government really look closely at how they are using the resources and decide whether or not they are meeting the needs.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Commissioner. General comments, Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the situation with the trip to Saskatoon, I am not too clear whether the trip was necessary or justifiable until I am able to determine what the trip was for. Under the Official Languages Act, there is a section with regard to the kind of information you could devolve. I would have to look at the broad way of asking you this. Was your trip necessary because a student had a complaint against a certain government department, or was it by virtue of this student being funded by this government that you had to make a trip? I am wondering if those are some of the reasons you decided to go to Saskatchewan, rather than attend this gathering of Francophone Parliament, and I guess why you accepted their invitation in the first place.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Madam Commissioner.

**MS. HARNUM:**

I should make it clear that I didn't travel to Saskatoon. I never did make it to Saskatoon, but I didn't travel down to Edmonton on my way to Saskatoon just for that particular issue. I was on my way back from Ottawa and Toronto, from the linguistics rights conference and the ombudsmen's conference, which I had attended. I was on my way back and I stopped in Edmonton, instead of coming back to Yellowknife for this other ten minute reading. If I had done that, I would have had to buy another ticket to go down to Saskatoon and back, which I didn't think was really worth it. But if I could do it while I was down there, I felt it would be better. I would have saved having to buy another ticket from here to Saskatoon and back.

So that was part of my decision, looking at whether I should buy another ticket to go there to discuss this problem. So I didn't make a special trip just for that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Commissioner. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

I am not questioning the trip itself, I'm just trying to find the justification for making that special effort to get there. In order to determine whether tax dollars are being spent appropriately, we should be able to at least get some kind of picture on this trip. I'm just asking whether it was because a student had a complaint against certain government departments up here, or because students were funded by this government.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Madam Commissioner.

**MS. HARNUM:**

It wasn't the student who complained. I have a problem at this point now. I cannot talk about this in any more detail in the Assembly. We're getting into details of a complaint or an inquiry that I'm dealing with, or a problem, and I can't reveal individual identities of people. I have a problem in discussing this in much more detail at this point. All I can say is, no, the student didn't complain or the students didn't complain. It was a request from the university to speak. It was a speaking engagement. The other one was not. This one was to address a problem, the other one was not.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Commissioner. Since the Commissioner's intentions are to maintain client confidentiality, that's what I sort of hear from here, so until I know further I would have to respect that request. I just wondered if you could approach it from a different angle, if you wanted to ask any other questions. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you. I thought it was a specific concern you were referring to, but I guess it isn't. The Languages Commissioner did say it was a speaking engagement. I put the question to the Languages Commissioner, you had two speaking engagements, and because of

your broad definition of your mandate you chose to go to Saskatoon as opposed to addressing the Francophone Parliament.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. General comments. I recognize Mr. Lewis. I would like to allow each Member who hasn't had a chance to have some input. Mr. Lewis.

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Commissioner on having spoken Inuktitut fluently, and impressed the interpreters by going at a speed that they could handle very well. But on the other hand, I should also tell her -- and she picked it up very quickly -- that when you use unusual expressions like Pandora's box you have to very quickly correct yourself because that's not something that's very easy to translate or interpret.

My comments are about the problem of independence and accountability. The boss for the Languages Commissioner is the act. That is the authority, the act. For us as legislators, if there are problems with the act, then we have to fix it. If the act isn't clear enough, then that's our job to make sure it is clear enough so it isn't open to so many interpretations that it poses difficulty for the person who has to uphold it.

But I can see the problem, also, of an individual...Really, it's a lonely kind of life. You're on your own and you don't know where you belong. Everybody likes the idea of being sovereign and independent until they taste it. You realize then that you don't have that many points of reference. But what you bring to us is what you have had given to you, Mr.

Page 179

Chairman, as a Commissioner, from the public, and the biggest problem is the disposition of that. When you have all this stuff, all these issues that have to be resolved, what happens to it? It seems to me -- and I agree that in this kind of forum it's very, very difficult to sort through all the details so that you can give clear direction for the Assembly and for the government as to how we should proceed with a lot of these items and issues.

One of the attractive features, of course, of our kind of parliamentary system is that we do have committees. These committees perform the function of being a

kind of sounding board or a screen, if you like, in order to guide what we do. You're not going to just simply take a report and say, okay, we're going to do all this. There has to be some process for sorting it out, setting priorities and so on. There are several committees that we have, so I really don't feel too happy about creating one more standing committee.

Lonely though the Commissioner may be, we don't have to create more interested people in the work that the Commissioner is doing, Mr. Chairman. I would hope we would find some method by which this report -- which has a lot of very important information in it -- can be referred to a committee that has a mandate to look at these kinds of issues, and to refine it so that the government has a sense of priority and a sense of urgency about some issues, because you can't be everything to all people. You have to decide where you're going to put your efforts so that you handle the vast majority of things within a reasonable time frame and at a reasonable cost.

I do take seriously, though, the main observation that other Members have made about a broad interpretation of...Maybe there is no other approach to take at the beginning. You could have taken a narrow one, I suppose, Mr. Chairman, as a Commissioner and just say I'm going to begin small and gradually do more things. But then, of course, when you do that, immediately you are open to the criticism, you are ignoring this, you are ignoring that, so you can't win in a sense. By taking the position that you have a broad mandate under this act, and doing the best you can with the resources that you have, then perhaps as a result of meetings like this and maybe with refinements to the act or with work from our standing committees, then we would be able to refine, focus and get the office doing the work in as efficient a manner as possible dealing with the issues that are uppermost and that need most urgently to be dealt with.

I have been interested in languages nearly all my life. I fully understand the very difficult job that the Languages Commissioner has to do. It is a complex issue and is not very easy to satisfy everyone even though you try. Now that we have had a sense from this Assembly that, perhaps, we are being too broad, then obviously the Languages Commissioner has some kind of direction, even at this stage, because this is an accountability session too. Perhaps it is time to narrow it in a little bit and see what things are reasonable to accomplish within the mandate of that office.

The first year or two, obviously, you are going to find that many issues are raised. As the Languages Commissioner said, Mr. Chairman, it is a question of sorting through the mess, understanding the job and getting the public to understand what the Languages Commissioner's job is. I expect it to be confusing. Anything you take on that is new in the jurisdiction like ours with this many official languages is a huge job. It is a mighty challenge. So, I think we should have some patience that you are not going to be able to get it all right, right away. There will be a process by which we can improve. My guess is that process will belong with one of our standing committees and then the Languages Commissioner won't be so lonely, Mr. Chairman. The person will have a chance to spend more time with people who will spend the time needed to look at her work, her report and her problems. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

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

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is just a short comment. First, I will start off with the comments from my colleague for Deh Cho, with regard to her travel. I am not going to get into specifics, just generality, Mr. Chairman, I understand the confidentiality of clients and so forth. My understanding is that, when the Languages Commissioner went on this trip, or on her way back from a trip, she had an appointment with this Francophone Parliament, here in Yellowknife, and they were disappointed for her cancelling that engagement. On the other hand, she had an issue that she wanted to deal with in Saskatoon. It appears that this issue was of great significance to her, that she decided to cancel this other one. Unfortunately, the Languages Commissioner didn't go to that either. Why didn't she attend to that issue that she identified in Saskatoon? My understanding is that she never did make it there. She admitted that she didn't go to Saskatoon. I am wondering why. If it was of great significance to her that she decided to cancel this other engagement that she previously had to attend this important issue in Saskatoon, then why didn't she go? My understanding from her comments is that she didn't make it there either. Why? Was there an urgent matter that took precedence over her schedule?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. I believe the Languages Commissioner did mention earlier that the meeting in Saskatoon was cancelled. However, I will let her confirm that.

**MS. HARNUM:**

That is correct. The meeting in Saskatoon was cancelled. It was scheduled to be for the Monday, and it was cancelled on the Friday. My engagement to be in Yellowknife to read a speech that had nothing to do with official languages was on the Thursday. It was on a holiday and I was going to be coming back to speak for ten minutes on my holiday. Part of the problem is I have many speaking engagements. There are times when I am asked to do two or three things at the same time. I have to make a choice. This is not the first time that I have said that I will do something, and then something else has come up and I couldn't go.

For example, last December I was supposed to meet with the Dene Cultural Institute and I had to cancel because the Assembly called me. There are times when other things arise and I go because I think it is more important, or because I know it is more important. I don't make a habit of it. As I said, if you look at the document that I tabled in December, you will see that I did attend many other speaking engagements. This particular one is not a big concern to the Federation Francophone Tenoise either. I don't know if you even asked anybody who was involved, but it is not a concern to them.

Page 180

They understand perfectly well what happened. Once I explained to them what it was all about, they said that is fine. It is not even an issue for them. I don't know why the Members are worried about it, other than perhaps wondering why I might have to travel specifically for that issue. I decided that I would not come back to Yellowknife and read the speech for ten minutes because then I would have had to travel specifically back to Saskatoon to deal with that one problem. I didn't think that I should do that. Once it was cancelled, they said they would get back to me, as soon as they could, to rearrange the meeting. I have, since then, talked to them a number of times on the phone.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Commissioner. I am reminding Members that we are dealing with the first annual report of the Languages Commissioner. Mr. Zoe.

**MR. ZOE:**

I thought that was the report we were discussing at hand. Her travel is included as part of her work. Mr. Chairman, after reading the report under consideration, it is not stated specifically, but there is an underlying message that I get from this report in terms of needed resources. Through the report, that is the way I read it. You identify a number of things and the underlying message of her report is that more resources should be put forward towards language issues in the NWT. I think, for committee, we have to consider this in the context of your job as the Languages Commissioner to promote language issues. I agree with you there, but one has to consider the work of the office of the Languages Commissioner. It is an important function. We know that, but it is one of many priorities of our government. We have limited resources which are available to support the work of her office. In keeping with the current fiscal climate, I think that the Languages Commissioner has to review the scope of her office so that she can realistically undertake those initiatives within the budget available for her.

I realize that it is her job to promote language issues, and I realize that she is the one who comes up with her budget and the Assembly approves it but the report that she produced suggests that more resources are needed. In reality, because of our fiscal situation, it is difficult and that is why I think that the Commissioner has to definitely review the scope of work that she does within her office and focus more -- as I indicated earlier in my comments -- about what she should be doing and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, while I am on this issue of more resources needed, I am not too sure if the Commissioner is aware of the standing committee's report. There is a section pertaining to the Commissioner's office. One of the standing committee's recommendations, which still has to be debated, suggests that the Commissioner defend her own budget and make her accountable to the Standing Committee on Finance for the resources that are allotted to her. I wonder if the Commissioner could comment on the aspects of her defending her budget in front of the Finance committee. I realize that this particular motion that is going to be proposed by the Standing Committee on Finance has not been debated, but if you look at the report that was given

by our chairman, Mr. Antoine, there is a suggestion in there that it may be better for the Commissioner to appear before a committee and explain the rationale for the resources required for operation of her office. I wonder if the Commissioner can comment a little bit on that, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. I understand the Commissioner has to attend to an important call so we will take a five minute break, precisely, and then when we return the Commissioner can return to the answer. Five minutes precisely.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

When we took the short break, there was a request of the Languages Commissioner to comment on a report that is before the House, but it is not the report that we are dealing with. I think it would be inappropriate, at this time, if the Languages Commissioner were to comment on something that is not in her jurisdiction. Mr. Zoe.

**MR. ZOE:**

If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, let me rephrase on the other question that I have made in my comment pertaining to the scope of work. I think the Languages Commissioner should, and has to review the scope of work of her office so that she can realistically undertake all of those functions that she is responsible for within the budget availability that she has. Would she not agree with the comments that I have made with regard to the scope of work in relation to our fiscal climate that we are in? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Madam Commissioner.

**MS. HARNUM:**

In response to that, I would say that one of the things that I wanted to do was to discuss with the Assembly the scope that they envisioned for my office. That is one of the things that I want to discuss. That is why I am saying, if there was a committee that I could discuss those things with on a regular basis, I think that would be beneficial to my office and also to the Members of the Assembly.

This is almost the end of my second year now in this position. The first year, as I said, was very exploratory. We were trying to figure out exactly what was intended. The act is silent in many areas, and so we didn't know what our scope of jurisdiction was. We started investigating many different areas. We have started to narrow down much more. I would appreciate any further input from the MLAs. I would especially appreciate being able to discuss those on a regular basis as they arise with a committee if I could have that sort of rapport. Otherwise, I simply approach individual MLAs or the Speaker, to get an individual's opinion of what they expect from the position, but I think it should be more general direction from the Assembly. I would appreciate more assistance in that area.

The other question that Mr. Zoe asked just before the break was whether I was asking for more resources for official languages. I wanted to reply to that. I am not sure whether Mr. Zoe means that I am asking for more resources for my own office or for official languages to be implemented. Both? All right. We asked for an additional \$30,000 in our budget for legal fees because we do many legal consultations in looking at every single complaint that comes in, because we have to be very careful not to say there is no problem here and then discover later on that there is. We have to do very thorough

Page 181

research. We also discovered this clause in the Official Languages Act that says that I have jurisdiction over any other act or regulation relating to the status and use of official languages. That has led us into the interpretation of many other acts and regulations. That is why we require more legal counsel. Other than that, we don't require any other resources for our own office. I think our budget is fairly reasonable. I can't remember exactly how much it is, but it is in the neighbourhood of \$350,000 a year. That is for three staff, contracts, travel and supplies. I think, at this point, it is sufficient for our office. We work hard. We do a great deal of work in one year. Even the report we produced, in many cases by a consultant might have cost \$300,000.

For the GNWT, I am not saying that they need more resources for the implementation of official languages. There are two things that I should mention. They didn't use the resources they had at their disposal from Secretary of State. If they had used that, then there could have been other implementation that would have been very valuable. The other thing is

that there are certain resources that are being allocated for certain activities that groups and individuals have told me in the community are not their priority. They are not meeting their needs. They have other needs that are not being met and they feel that some of those resources could be used in a different way to meet those needs. I am not saying that we need any more money put into official languages, but rather that the money that we do have needs to be allocated in some different ways. One of the examples I mentioned was the amount of translation that is done for Dene languages. People in the communities have said to me, we don't want that. Why are they tying people up in offices translating stuff when we don't want it?

Another one of my recommendations is about the interpretation provided in the Assembly. The Assembly uses much resources, both financial and human, for the provision of services here. For example, if no one is listening to an interpreter and no one is speaking one of those languages on the floor and it is not being broadcast, then who are they interpreting for? To whom are they providing a service?

The Legislative Assembly understood that when the Official Languages Act was implemented. It provides that any person can speak any official language in this House. That meant you had to have an interpreter there at every moment interpreting all the time just in case somebody wanted to use one of those languages. Or if someone from the public came in and they wanted to listen, that they would always be available. Unfortunately, what that has meant is that many people are sitting in booths right now interpreting for nobody. It is not being broadcast, not every day, not every language, not the whole session. There are certain portions of it -- and those portions I am not saying to do away with, but there is 80 per cent of the interpreting that goes on in the Assembly that nobody is listening to. That is a touchy point, I realize that. We are all very proud of the fact that we have full simultaneous interpreting in the Legislative Assembly in all of these languages, but the public is telling me that that is not their priority. There is much that is happening that nobody is listening to. Perhaps, a schedule can be worked out where the language that will be broadcast, the interpreters will be there interpreting. The others can be asked for on demand. You are

still meeting the obligation under the act to provide the service if you make it available on demand.

Just because every department has to communicate with the public in every single official language, certain languages in certain regions, doesn't mean they have to translate every single document they produce and every single letter that they write. But one of my recommendations says that they should have a policy of active offer. That means you let people know that if they ask for it they can have it. Otherwise, we end up putting a lot of resources into things that are not really benefitting the public. They are saying, these are the complaints that I bring to you from the public. They say nobody is listening, why are we...

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Madam Commissioner, I hoped that you would have concluded, but the chair recognizes the clock, that being 6:00. I regret cutting you off but it is 6:00 and we cannot extend hours. (Microphone turned off)...Thank you. I would like to now rise and report progress to the Speaker. Madam Languages Commissioner, on behalf of the Members of the committee, I would like to thank you for your participation and I believe you are excused from further witnessing for today. I shall rise and report to the Speaker. Sergeant-at-Arms.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 11-12(5) and would like to report progress. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Is there a seconder for the motion? Seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

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

**ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):**

Madam Speaker, meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 am of the Standing Committee on Legislation, at 10:30 am of the Ordinary Members' Caucus and at 12:00 noon of the Nunavut Caucus. Orders of the day for Thursday, February 17, 1994.

1. Prayer
  2. Ministers' Statements
  3. Members' Statements
  4. Returns to Oral Questions
  5. Oral Questions
- Page 182
6. Written Questions
  7. Returns to Written Questions
  8. Replies to Opening Address
  9. Replies to Budget Address
  10. Petitions
  11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
  12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
  13. Tabling of Documents
  14. Notices of Motion
  15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
  16. Motions
  17. First Reading of Bills
  18. Second Reading of Bills
  19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
    - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95
    - Committee Report 2-12(5), Review of the 1994/95 Main Estimates



- Minister's Statement 5-12(5), Session  
Business

- 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

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

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned  
until Thursday, February 17, at 1:30 pm.

---ADJOURNMENT