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**The Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Speaker**

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jeannie Marie-Jewell):**

Good afternoon. The Speaker recognizes that there is no quorum. Mr. Clerk, would you record the Members present.

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

Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Ballantyne, Mr. Gargan, Mr. Allooloo, Ms. Mike, Mr. Pollard, Ms. Cournoyea, Mr. Morin, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Lewis and Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

I notice that one Member has arrived since. Please record the rest of the Members, Mr. Clerk.

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

Mr. Zoe, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Arngna'naaq, Mr. Nerysoo and Mr. Whitford.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

I recognize a quorum. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On The Need For A Nunavut Council For Disabled Persons

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last month, a conference was held in Iqaluit, organized by the NWT Council for Disabled Persons. The name of the conference was Taking Back Our Lives and was attended by delegates from many of the communities in Nunavut. One of the things that came out of the

meeting was the need for a Nunavut Council for Disabled Persons.

They have expressed concern about being able to properly fill their mandate. There is also a need for Nunavut disabled persons and care givers to have representation for their concerns closer to home, especially with division on the horizon. There is a movement now to form such an organization, but they require assistance and support to do so.

During this session, I will be pressuring the government to look into the matter and lend the required assistance and support. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Absence Of Ordinary Members

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to inform the House about some of the ordinary Members who are not in the House today. Mr. Fred Koe is in Nova Scotia for a curling championship, accompanying his kids. Mr. Patterson is in Iqaluit, attending a trade show. Mr. Dent is still in Ottawa with his wife, helping out with the new-born baby. Mr. Kelvin Ng is in Cambridge Bay attending the Kitikmeot Youth Conference and Mr. Pudluk is still in Edmonton on medical leave. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Baffin Central, Ms. Mike.

Member's Statement On The Harvesting Of Seals In Pangnirtung

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I want to add to the comments made by the Member for Iqaluit yesterday when we were discussing the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in committee of the whole. In a question to Mr. Todd, the Member stated that there were a sizeable number of seal pelts being harvested in Pangnirtung for sale to Japan.

For the record, Madam Speaker, the primary reason for hunting seals in Pangnirtung and other areas of Nunavut, is for food. It is important to recognize this fact. I wouldn't want to leave the impression in the north or in other areas of the world that the seals are being taken primarily for economic reasons. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Black Forest Caribou

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the last several years, I've taken an interest in renewable resources, especially in northern products and ones you can eat. I recently acquired, through the good offices of Mr. Todd, a

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product called black forest caribou, which is a product of the meat plant in Rankin Inlet. After several tests with visitors, it has been judged to be a superior product. One suggestion from someone who is an expert in the trade is that this particular kind of meat would make excellent pastrami, which is a wonderful, value-added product, which I'm sure will provide some extra source of income for the people involved in renewable resources. Thank you.

---Applause

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral question. Item 5, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 349-12(5): Role Of Tourism Subcommittee Under ED&T

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, during committee of the whole when we were talking about Economic Development and Tourism, we were told that the department has developed subcommittees to deal with different sectors of the industry. I was

particularly asking about the tourism subcommittee that was set up. I understand that in the west, the co-chair is John Sheehan. It is a subcommittee of superintendents, I guess.

I would like to ask the Minister, is this subcommittee another layer of bureaucracy that people in the communities have to go through before they get applications approved for seeking funding for tourism projects? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 349-12(5): Role Of Tourism Subcommittee Under ED&T

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

No, Madam Speaker. The subcommittee is an internal committee made up of superintendents who are -- as I stated earlier in the House -- part of the senior management team, when they are developing government policies as they relate to tourism. It is not a committee that deals with distribution of funds.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 349-12(5): Role Of Tourism Subcommittee Under ED&T

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister. This subcommittee is not another layer of bureaucracy. The Minister just indicated that they don't have any dealings with the funding, but can the Minister explain to the House the role of this subcommittee in terms of a small community wanting to get involved in the tourism industry? How does this subcommittee work with this community to try to achieve the type of tourism development they may be seeking? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 349-12(5): Role Of Tourism Subcommittee Under ED&T

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. When we reorganized the department and we took the steps to decentralize spending and lending authorities, it wasn't just within the Credit Corporation of the EDA, there is also a significant amount of dollars that are spent on tourism marketing and development. Each of these changes that took place and the internal changes, were driven by the superintendents and the senior management team made of the deputy and the assistant deputy minister. It is an internal committee that assists in developing policies that are, hopefully, more reflective of the needs of the regions. In the past, these policies were all developed within the centre with little or no regional input at a bureaucratic level. That is how this works. It is not a committee that deals with the implementation of policy, et cetera. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other day, I made a Member's statement regarding a lack of policy for students who are attending school outside the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask a question to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. As I stated in my Member's statement, there is no policy covering the reimbursement of money to parents who decide to send their children south for high school. Given that these parents contribute to the tax base, can the Minister tell me if he is willing to develop a policy to deal with this important issue? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. At this time, no. I believe that each particular case can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. I would be very careful about suggesting the promotion of a policy that would

somehow challenge the development of a northern secondary school program and policy and put at risk the development of an educational program that would be under-utilized by parents who would be taking the choice of sending their children to southern Canada. I would be very careful with that. I think the honourable Member knows I took the issue he has raised to Cabinet and we dealt with it reasonably and fairly. I would rather deal with it in that context, than have an overall policy that would see our students being sent to southern Canada.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

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Supplementary To Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the Minister is not willing to develop a policy to address those students who are attending school outside the Northwest Territories, is the government's priority to get our kids the best education that they possibly can? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Further Return To Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes. Yes, in the context of building an educational system in the north that meets the qualifications and quality of education that will be acceptable throughout Canada.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So if the kids who are attending school in the Northwest Territories are not able to take courses they are interested in because they are not offered in the Northwest Territories, could the Minister look at possible assistance to parents for those students? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Further Return To Question 350-12(5): Development Of Policy For Students Attending Southern High Schools

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will certainly consider the suggestion that is being made by the honourable Member, but I hope it is within the context of this government and this Assembly supporting the development of a quality program and service in the area of education in the Northwest Territories.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Premier and it is regarding an announcement made today about an agreement signed between the province of New Brunswick, Premier McKenna, and the federal government, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, about an innovative new program to put people to work. I understand that 1,000 people have been put to work in New Brunswick. There is a guaranteed income for those people. In return, they agree to work. Anything extra they make they are allowed to keep. My understanding is there is \$800 million available for these sorts of programs across the country. I know our government is working on some concepts, but I wonder if the Premier can enlighten me as to when we can expect to sign an agreement with the federal government to take advantage of this \$800 million?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Madam Premier.

**HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:**

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is handling this particular area in the government and I would defer the question to the honourable Member.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased that the honourable Member was paying attention to the announcement that was made. We are working out the criteria to which we will access the \$800 million. The program that has been agreed to by the province of New Brunswick is in addition to the \$800 million, and our investing in people will address those same issues that the New Brunswick/Canada agreement is now responding to.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ballantyne.

Supplementary To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is good that I know which Minister to address that to because there was some coordination with the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Education. Up until now, we have heard the very broad, general concept of the sort of approach the government is going to take. I wonder if the Minister could give us a bit more specific detail as to the specific type of projects that you are now discussing with the federal government. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Further Return To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am trying to find the exact details. We are attempting to lay out the criteria by which all jurisdictions will have access to the \$800 million the honourable Member mentioned. What has normally happened, historically, is that each jurisdiction has negotiated on an individual basis with the federal government on federal financial resources. It was our concern across the country, both in terms of the Ministers of Education, Labour Market Ministers and post-secondary Ministers, that we did not want a situation where political favours were being paid to particular provinces. Rather than doing that, we wanted to establish criteria by which all jurisdictions were treated equally and fairly in the distribution of the \$800 million. We will come to a conclusion on that by the third week in April.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ballantyne.

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Supplementary To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. It seems to me that in the Northwest Territories where the traditional life-style, because of the attacks by the anti-fur industry, is not providing enough sustenance to maintain people. It seems to me that there is a tremendous opportunity here in the Northwest Territories to make a case to the federal government that can provide some sort of a combination of the traditional pursuits and the wage economy, I think we could probably provide a very interesting model here. I wonder if the Minister is looking at that sort of an innovative approach to take advantage of our unique situation here in the Northwest Territories.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Further Return To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that is exactly what we're doing. I'm working in conjunction with my colleague, the Honourable Rebecca Mike, and Cabinet has given us approval to discuss those various options. The investing in people does take into consideration that particular situation. We are also considering the proposal to be brought forward to the federal government and, in fact, I've submitted a number of proposals that have been approved by the Edmonton office and have been submitted to the federal Minister for his signature. That is being taken into consideration.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Ballantyne.

Supplementary To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Final supplementary, Madam Speaker. Again, I thank the Minister for that. When can we expect, from the Minister, the actual specific details of some sort of an arrangement that could be worked out with the federal government on this matter?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Further Return To Question 351-12(5): Status Of Federal/Territorial Agreement Re Employment Programs

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Madam Speaker, I was hoping we would have some of the arrangements signed off by the federal Minister by the end of this month. I'm not sure what the reasons are for the federal government not signing off some of those CAP 3 initiatives. On the matter of the criteria for the \$800 million, that will be signed off hopefully by the end of April and we can immediately access the resources.

On the investing in people, we will continue to work on a number of specific agreements that we are now considering and proposing. Hopefully, all those can be signed off no later than at least June 30 of this year, but if anything happens where we can't sign them off, I'll report back to the Assembly as to the reasons why we have not proceeded.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 352-12(5): Status Of Maintenance Contract For Kakisa Falls Facility

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We're going to presumably be concluding our session within the next couple of weeks. Usually around this time, Members go back to their correspondence to make sure that anything that is overdue is responded to before conclusion of the session. I wanted to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd, if he has any plans for the Lady Evelyn Falls. As you know, Madam Speaker, a substantial amount of money has been spent to create a visitors' centre there, and some facilities for sleeping quarters, et cetera. I requested the Minister, last year, if he would consider designating a person to operate that facility to come from Kakisa. The Minister hasn't said one way or the other whether a decision has been made. I have other questions with regard to that, but I want to ask the Minister whether he has considered my request.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 352-12(5): Status Of Maintenance Contract For Kakisa Falls Facility

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, the honourable Member did write to me about the Lady Evelyn Falls Park and the maintenance contract. My understanding -- and again, I stand to be corrected -- is that we were going to negotiate a contract with the Kakisa Lake Dene Band earlier in the year. I would have to check with the deputy minister to see what the status of that is. It certainly was my intention to reach an appropriate arrangement with the Dene

band that is in that area, to maintain this park. However, it may be more appropriate that I get an update from my deputy and report back to the honourable Member in due course. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, primarily in the education area. I was just reading the newspaper and I heard on the radio that the Yellowknife school district is considering reducing its staff in order to try to meet its budget. Part of the problem that has been expressed by the school board is that there have been certain reductions in the per pupil costs to the board, a reduction in the amount of money that they receive from the territorial government. I would like to ask the Minister of Education if he can clarify that statement, and what reductions exactly we are talking about.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Mr. Whitford, in accordance with our rules, it's not allowed for a Member to ask a question of a Minister to confirm or deny comment that is written in the newspaper. I would like to ask if you could rephrase your question, which would be in accordance with our rules. Thank you.

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The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Whitford.

Question 353-12(5): Reductions To Yellowknife Education District Budget

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I apologize for that, I was using the newspaper there as a detraction, I wasn't actually quoting from it. I was trying to formulate a question to the Minister with regard to the concerns that the Yellowknife school district has that the amounts of money they will need to meet their forecasted budget for the next year, are going to be short by around \$1 million. Part of the problem is with reductions that they are experiencing from the territorial government and the federal government. I would like to ask the Minister if he can clarify what

these reductions are for student per capita that the school district is concerned with.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 353-12(5): Reductions To Yellowknife Education District Budget

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just for the information of Members -- and I appreciate the question being asked -- the school funding formulas, as we all know, are used across the Northwest Territories to determine contributions. Using these formulas, the department estimates its contribution to Yellowknife Education District No. 1 will increase from \$8.9 million for 1993-94 to \$9.1 million for 1994-95. This 2.5 per cent projected quote in contributions responds to increased student enrolment. In Yellowknife Education District No. 1 the enrolment increased from 1,715 to 1,790, which is a four per cent increase. There are no other significant factors affecting the proposed contributions for 1994-95.

Although, not considered significant, a change in the administration formula did decrease the salaries and increase operating funds. The net effect was a decrease of \$16,000. Increases to transportation and termination benefits resulting from the school finance review recommendations were implemented through a supplementary appropriation, and I'm glad the honourable Members supported them in 1993-94. The school district's press release is correct, that there is a slight decrease on a per student basis. It is also true that not all costs increase every year with the number of students. For example, the district's costs of operating its school buildings will not increase with the number of students in 1994-95. Thus, one could consider that the per student costs in this area will decrease. In other words, Madam Speaker, the school sizes are not increasing, therefore, the school O and M costs should not necessarily be.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation a question. He is aware that a local construction company in Pond Inlet would like to negotiate with the Housing Corporation for rent supplement units in Pond Inlet. I also understand, Madam Speaker, that there have been a large number of requests from other communities to do the same thing. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation what the Government of the Northwest Territories response will be to these requests. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I won't know the Government of the Northwest Territories response until I take it to Cabinet. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. When is the Minister taking the requests to Cabinet? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As soon as the paper is prepared for it. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.



Supplementary To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Madam Speaker, I asked when he will be taking his request to the Cabinet, not when the paper will be ready. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I responded, when the paper is ready, I will take it to Cabinet. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. When is that going to be ready?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

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Further Return To Question 354-12(5): Status Of Response To Pond Inlet Contractor Re Rent Supplement Units

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As soon as the Housing Corporation finishes preparing it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Fortunately, that was your final supplementary, Mr. Allooloo. Item 5, oral question. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

Question 355-12(5): Renovations To Senior Citizens' Home In Fort Providence

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Social Services. Madam Speaker, about a year and a half ago, I invited the Minister to come to Fort Providence. She did and I appreciate that. Oh, that was this fall, I'm sorry. During the visit, we visited the senior citizens' home. There are two units that are combined into clusters. They share a kitchen and the bathroom.

I want to ask the Minister whether or not she's been able to review my request with regard to trying to renovate those two units so they can become detached units. I've asked that question several times, but I haven't really had any response due to the unclear nature of who is responsible.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Return To Question 355-12(5): Renovations To Senior Citizens' Home In Fort Providence

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My understanding is that the seniors' facility in Fort Providence is owned by the Housing Corporation. At the time, I responded to Mr. Gargan, I told him I would be working with my honourable colleague, Donnie Morin to see if we could get those two units that don't have entrances from the outside fixed.

To date, I haven't brought that concern to Mr. Morin's attention. But, definitely, I will set a time to meet with him this week to see what we can do. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Social Services. This has to do with senior facilities as well. I think I've raised this before, but I want to do it again. I have a real concern with the lack of facilities in the community of Fort Liard for the elders there. Many years ago, the band built a log structure which has four units. It is made out of logs and it is right on the ground. Elders are still living in it today after ten years and the logs are all rotting on the bottom. They keep fixing it and they have been requesting that a senior citizens' facility be built in Liard for a number of years now.

I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services, is it the responsibility of her department to work with the people in Liard to see if a seniors' facility could be built there? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Return To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was not aware that we have a seniors' facility operated by Social Services in Liard, but I will look into it and get back to the Member. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the Minister responsible for Social Services misunderstood me. I said there was a log structure built by the band, with band funds, for their elders. There is no facility there that was built by the Government of the Northwest Territories, to date. The band has been using the facility for some of their elders. If you go and see the facility yourself, you wouldn't want any of your elders to be put up in it.

The point here is that the community needs a seniors' facility, and I asked if your department was responsible for working with the community to see if a seniors' facility could be built there by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Member clarifying his question. Yes, it is the responsibility of Social Services for seniors' facilities and to identify which communities do need senior citizen homes. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if she and her department would be willing to work with the community of Liard to see if a seniors' facility could be built there? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

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Further Return To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think, in this House, I have already made indications that the strategic plan for facilities that Social Services is responsible for is in the comprehensive planning phase right now. The plans should be ready by September of this year. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very aware of the capital planning process. My question to the Minister was, is she and her department willing to work with the community of Liard to see if seniors' facilities could be built there within the next couple of years or so? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 356-12(5): Status Of Responsibility For Senior Citizens' Home in Fort Liard

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just like the Member to be aware that we have a plan to set the criteria for the capital projects Social Services is responsible for. Yes, once that criteria is in place, my departmental officials will be working with the community groups and identify where these facilities have to be built. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 357-12(5): Compensation For Accidental Death In Fort Providence

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Madam Speaker, about two and a half years ago, there was an accident in Fort Providence in which there was a death of a young man by the name of Aubrey Denetre. I have been working with his mother to try to resolve the issue. I don't know, Madam Speaker, whether I should be directing the question to him, Mr. Todd, or to, perhaps, the Minister of Justice. This has never been resolved. The last letter I wrote was about six months ago and I haven't had any kind of response as to whether his mother is going to be assisted or if she is going to be compensated somehow for the death of her son. Every six months I have been asking the same question without any result. I would like to ask, if not to the Minister of the Workers' Compensation Board, then maybe I could ask the Government Leader.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 357-12(5): Compensation For Accidental Death In Fort Providence

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not aware of the circumstances surrounding this situation. I'm not sure whether it would be a Workers' Compensation Board client -- perhaps that's the wrong term -- responsibility. I would have to get some more detail from the Member and see if we can define whose responsibility it is. If it is the responsibility of the Workers' Compensation Board -- and I stress "if" -- I want to assure the honourable Member he will get action on it, one way or the other. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 358-12(5): Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I get many letters and phone calls from injured workers in different parts of the country. Although the WCB is an arm's-length agency, this, in fact, occupies a fair amount of my time. I would like to ask the Minister, since he is the Minister through who the WCB reports to the House, whether he also gets lots of letters and phone calls from injured workers outside of the Northwest Territories.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 358-12(5): Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I get my share of letters and phone calls. We're endeavouring to try to respond to them as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**MR. LEWIS:**

I appreciate the Minister's answer, but I would like to ask the Minister, since this is an arm's-length agency, how does he specifically handle letters and phone calls from people who want to know exactly where their particular case lies in the process followed by WCB?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

The responsibility for determining compensation lies solely in the jurisdiction of the board. What I do is pass the information along to the chairperson who then deals with it accordingly. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

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Supplementary To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**MR. LEWIS:**

Judging from the response, Madam Speaker, would the Minister concur, then, that simply writing a letter to an elected person only results in the letter or the phone call being transferred to the place where this matter is going to be dealt with anyway?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Clinically speaking, I suppose that's correct. However, it does raise the issue politically and it does get addressed to myself. I alert the board or provide them with the information that this phone call has made. I would stress that in most cases it's usually in the appeals area and that's one area that I believe lies within the exclusive jurisdiction of the appeals board. That's about all I have to say on the matter at this time.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Final supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**MR. LEWIS:**

I would like to thank the Minister for giving me the opportunity to bring up a person's name, since he has concurred that there is a political dimension to this. I get phone calls, practically every week, and faxes from a gentleman named Ed Melcosky. This man, I am sure, phones other people in the legislature, too. He is sitting in Peachland in BC and he spends a lot of money, which apparently he doesn't have, to phone people long distance. So I would like to ask the Minister, could he publicly say what he knows about this particular case because then, perhaps, this person wouldn't have to be spending all this money phoning me to find out stuff that I just don't have access to?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 358-12(5):  
Communication From Injured Workers Outside NWT

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Oh, dear. I think I must get the same phone calls. Certainly, Mr. Melcosky has been diligent in providing me with his position as it relates to his appeal. Again, that appeal process and the claim process is the exclusive jurisdiction of the WCB. While we, as politicians, can lend a sympathetic ear, the jurisdiction really lies within the WCB board of directors. There is a workers' advisor advocate. That's a position that is now under Safety and Public Services, where workers who are concerned about perhaps not being as well represented as they should as it relates to WCB can

go to seek advice and direction with respect to their particular claim. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 359-12(5): Injured Workers' Access To Courts Following Appeals Process

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you. I also have a question for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. I, too, get numerous phone calls and letters from injured workers. But I think like the other Yellowknife MLAs, we respect the process. There is a process in place and I think it's very important that that process is allowed to be carried out without political interference. The one question I have for the Minister, if somebody does go all the way through the process and their claim is rejected at each stage, then at the final stage it's rejected, do they have access at that point to the courts? I just want to know what I can tell them when they've reached the end of the road.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 359-12(5): Injured Workers' Access To Courts Following Appeals Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

It's my understanding that once they've gone through the appeal process, which is a lengthy and very comprehensive review, if it's rejected I believe the only other alternative -- and I keep qualifying it because I'm not a lawyer -- is they can appeal to the Supreme Court. But I would like to check with Mr. Gilmour, the chairman, to be sure that I'm correct on this issue. But I believe that's the final, ultimate appeal process.

I think it's important to point out, because I know this is an issue that is sensitive right now with a number of claimants. I want to remind everybody again, 3,728 claims went through the WCB last year. At last count there were 42 appeals. Under the previous chairperson, Mr. Bourque, and now Mr. McNenly, we have taken the appropriate action to sit for the next six months to try to bring those appeals to some satisfactory conclusion. But, by going through the

appeal process there should be no assumption that it's going to be successful. That's what it's all about. It is a review appeal process. So, we are trying to take the appropriate action to move forward in clearly making judgements on appeals, but because it's gone forward we should never assume it's going to go one way or the other. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 359-12(5): Injured Workers' Access To Courts Following Appeals Process

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

I appreciate that response from the Minister, but because the Minister didn't take the question as notice, can I ask the Minister if he would make a definitive statement in this House as to what recourse workers have if they have exhausted all their possibilities in the WCB process?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

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Further Return To Question 359-12(5): Injured Workers' Access To Courts Following Appeals Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Yes, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 360-12(5): Information For Communities On WCB Process

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Workers' Compensation Board. Sometimes in the communities, if an accident occurs in any working environment, they find it hard or difficult to talk to different departments. I wonder if the Minister can bring some information item to the

communities whereby, if anybody is in or has an accident, they will be better informed as to how to find out about claim forms and compensation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 360-12(5): Information For Communities On WCB Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think it was clearly recognized at the time when we appointed the new board and, in particular, the new chairman, Mr. Gilmour, that perhaps our public relations, if you want, or our information strategy was somewhat weak, particularly out of the larger centres where you have large mining developments or organized labour developments.

So there is a communications strategy in place right now which Mr. Gilmour and others are working on in terms of newsletters and information out into the regions. We are working with the Department of Safety and Public Services in trying to bring forward our safety education programs. When the safety education program people get into the communities, they also distribute information about how to move forward a claim, a dispute or whatever.

At a practical level, when a worker is injured and he goes to the nursing station, it is automatic, or it is supposed to be automatic, that the nursing station would then fill in a WCB accident report. That then clicks into the system and churns out the appropriate paper necessary for that claimant to be taken care of. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 360-12(5): Information For Communities On WCB Process

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for your answer, Mr. Minister. Supplementary to my question. I am concerned about the smaller communities in general. I understand the nursing

stations might be aware of where to refer the people who are supposed to be claiming for compensation. I wonder if the Minister can provide me with an information item before we finish our meeting during this time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 360-12(5): Information For Communities On WCB Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

I agree with the honourable Member that there has been a lack of information, if you want, as it relates to WCB in the smaller communities and, historically, the focus has been on the larger centres. We are making every effort to improve our communications because we want to ensure that all workers -- organized and unorganized, big companies, small companies, little guys, big guys -- are all covered. So we do have a program in place. I will provide it to the honourable Member. I want to assure him that it is an important issue to myself and to the WCB, and next week we will provide him with the full details of what we are doing. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 361-12(5): Mode Of Transportation For Building Supplies To Nahendeh Communities

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. With regard to this year's building season, there is a situation that I am aware of in my constituency where we have winter roads to Jean Marie River and to Wrigley. However, I would like to know if the supplies for next year's access units were delivered by road or do they have to wait for the NTCL barge to deliver these supplies? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 361-12(5): Mode Of Transportation For Building Supplies To Nahendeh Communities

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have instructed the Housing Corporation, where the Government of the NWT has spent money to put in winter roads, we should deliver by winter road and not wait for barges. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 361-12(5): Mode Of Transportation For Building Supplies To Nahendeh Communities

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you. I have a number of small communities in my constituency that have winter roads, and I would just like to ask the Minister if he is aware if all the building supplies for the access units have been delivered in the communities to date since the weather is warming up and the roads will probably go out pretty soon. I just wanted to know if he knows if all these materials have been delivered. Thank you.

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**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 361-12(5): Mode Of Transportation For Building Supplies To Nahendeh Communities

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know that the tenders closed last month on winter road delivery and all the tenders have been awarded, so, hopefully, they are in your communities before the roads go out.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. A couple of weeks ago, there was a funeral service in Fort Providence. Some of the problems that the community experienced were with regard to the inconsistencies in who pays for funeral services and how that is determined. In the situation two weeks ago, I think the relatives of the deceased covered practically all the costs. I don't know who is eligible. When they have a deceased person, who covers the costs? I would like to ask the Minister whether there is a policy in place right now with regard to when you have a funeral service, who covers the costs for the casket, the transportation and that sort of thing?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Return To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It really depends on individual cases. I am not familiar with the details of Mr. Gargan's question, but with Social Services it is usually that if the patient dies out of territories and the family cannot afford to pay for the transportation and for the casket, Social Services pays for the costs. One of the criteria that we use is if that person or the family is receiving social assistance. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So the costs are only absorbed by the department if the individual is on social assistance.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Or in a case where the family has no income and cannot pay for the costs.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**MR. GARGAN:**

So how do you determine income in this case then? Does this mean that if you're on a fixed income, or if you are earning a living?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I said, it is handled case by case. For example, if my son -- who is out of the territories now -- happens to pass away, I would not be eligible. I would have to absorb the costs. I'm earning a wage. I don't know if that answers the Member's question or not.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Final supplementary, Mr. Gargan.

Supplementary To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**MR. GARGAN:**

When I refer to fixed income, I'm referring to a pension, or if you are on social assistance. I'm wondering if those are also considered as the basis for your ineligibility.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Social Services, Ms. Mike.

Further Return To Question 362-12(5): Policy On Payment For Funeral Costs

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't think social assistance is considered to be an income. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 363-12(5): Inclusion Of Companies Other Than NTCL For Barging Services

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Earlier in my questioning, I mentioned NTCL Barging. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, who is responsible for tendering transportation for the government, a question. In other sessions, I've raised the matter of NTCL having an exclusive guaranteed arrangement with the government to provide barging for government supplies. There are other barging companies in the north. For example, in my constituency, we have Cooper Barging and I understand in the Delta they have other companies there that could provide this service.

I would like to ask the Minister if his department has been able to come to any conclusions on how they're going to allow other companies to get involved in the bidding for providing

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transportation for government supplies down the Mackenzie Valley. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 363-12(5): Inclusion Of Companies Other Than NTCL For Barging Services

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Earlier, I mentioned that I had instructed the Housing Corporation as well as the Department of Public Works to move everything in, if at all possible, on winter roads. There was an agreement that NTCL was to be the first choice carrier. That agreement was put in place quite some time ago and it is time to take another look at it. During the latter part of last week, I signed off a



decision paper to Cabinet recommending the removal of the carrier of first choice of NTCL. This will allow for open marketing and competitive bargaining for moving materials up and down the Mackenzie Valley.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 363-12(5): Inclusion Of Companies Other Than NTCL For Barging Services

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister for some clarification. He indicated to us just now that he signed off this letter. Does this mean, for example, that Cooper Barging could bid for contracts to barge supplies down the Mackenzie Valley for this government right now? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Minster of Public Services and Government Services, Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 363-12(5): Inclusion Of Companies Other Than NTCL For Barging Services

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I signed off that decision paper, and once we get approval from Cabinet there will be an open tendering process. Cooper Barging would be allowed to compete, just like NTCL would. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 364-12(5): Restrictions On Contractors' Licences Not Complying To Safety Practices

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for safety. During the past four years, there have been a couple of incidents where contractors who are contracted to do rock blasting in Yellowknife have put the public in some danger -- in my opinion, at least -- by allowing blasts to be too large or by not following the safety requirements that are laid out.

In an incident in Kam Lake, when I was the Member responsible for that area, a big rock went through a garage roof last October. The same company, by the way, put a rock through a house trailer in a residential area where there was a kid sleeping in a bedroom. I would like to know whether the department has provisions for restricting licenses of contractors who do not follow safety practices and blast in a safe manner.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 364-12(5): Restrictions On Contractors' Licences Not Complying To Safety Practices

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe there are some restrictions. I will provide the information through written communication to the honourable Member, detailing the specific issue so he is aware of those facts.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 364-12(5): Restrictions On Contractors Licences' Not Complying To Safety Practices

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are fast approaching the summer construction season when this is again going to be a problem. If there are any kind of safety requirements for the people of Yellowknife South, I would want to be on top of this. I would like to know whether the Minister would do this as quickly as possible, so we have a chance to press for restrictions, should there be a requirement for it. Can this be done expediently?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 364-12(5): Restrictions On Contractors' Licences Not Complying To Safety Practices

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly, if the safety of the residents of any community are under seige, I think the matter should be dealt with seriously. It will be dealt with seriously. We will apply the rules and ensure permits aren't issued without compliance to rules and laws.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

Question 365-12(5): Resolution Of Constituent's Financial Difficulties

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minster of Economic Development and Tourism. Before Christmas and after Christmas, I brought a situation to the attention of the Minister with regard to an individual who was having problems with the banks. In the middle of winter, there are hardly any jobs, but the government did assist this individual with a loan and also a loan from the bank. I guess he was having problems with the bank, and I don't wish to name the individual, but I'm sure the Minister is aware of the problems.

I understand the department talked to the banks, but I wonder if this has been resolved so the individual is being helped while he is out of a job, so that he can keep his business and his equipment, too.

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**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 365-12(5): Resolution Of Constituent's Financial Difficulties

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Madam Speaker, I believe that issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the individual, but I'm not sure it was resolved with relation to the banks. It was certainly resolved as it relates to the support we're providing him. I will provide the Member with an update early next week. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The time frame for oral questions has lapsed. Do you have a supplementary, Mr. Gargan?

**MR. GARGAN:**

No.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 6, written questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

**ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Written Question 22-12(5): Subcommittees Of Economic Development And Tourism

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you. I have a written question for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and it is with regard to the subcommittees of Economic Development and Tourism.

For what sectors have subcommittees been formed for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism?

Who are the members of each subcommittee?

Who are the co-chairpersons of each subcommittee?

What are the terms of reference for these subcommittees?

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 6, written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions. Item 8, replies to opening address. Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Madam Speaker, I think we'll just pass on this. I think it's for the committee of the whole. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 12, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Morin.

**ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following document. Tabled Document 49-12(5), Annual Report of the NWT Housing Corporation for the Year Ended March 31, 1992.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 12, tabling of documents. Item 13, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 13: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 24-12(5): Special Order Of Reference To Standing Committee On Agencies, Boards And Commissions Of The First Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner Of The Northwest Territories

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 25, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, by special order of reference, that Tabled Document 11-12(5), the First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for the Year 1992-93 be referred to the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions;

And further, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions be empowered to review and report back to the Legislative Assembly on the recommendations contained in Tabled Document 11-12(5);

And further, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions consider the matter and make recommendations on a mechanism to establish reporting relationships and accountability of the Languages Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion today. Mahsi cho.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Honourable Member for Deh Cho, in the motion I have in front of me, 24-12(5), I believe you omitted the last paragraph, if you would like to read it into the record. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. For the record.

And furthermore, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions provide a final report to the Legislative Assembly prior to the prorogation of the Sixth Session of the 12th Legislative Assembly.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Item 13, notices of motion. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River, Mr. Pollard.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR THE FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 20: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, No. 2

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good afternoon. Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 25, 1994, I shall move that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 14, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 15, motions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

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ITEM 15: MOTIONS

**MR. GARGAN:**

Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with Motion 24-12(5). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed.

Motion 24-12(5): Special Order Of Reference To Standing Committee On Agencies, Boards And Commissions Of The First Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner Of The Northwest Territories, Carried

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and honourable Members.

WHEREAS, the Official Languages Act was amended in 1990 to create the position of Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS, the first appointment to the position of Languages Commissioner was made in December 1991;

AND WHEREAS, the First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for the Year 1992-93 was tabled on December 14, 1993;

AND WHEREAS, the annual report contains 30 recommendations for consideration by the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS, the Languages Commissioner should be accountable for her actions, including budgeting and the expenditures of public funds;

AND WHEREAS, there is no formal mechanism in place to review the annual report of the Languages Commissioner or to hold the office accountable;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, by special order of reference, that Tabled Document 11-12(5), the First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for the Year 1992-93 be referred to the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions be empowered to review and report back to the Legislative Assembly on the recommendations contained in Tabled Document 11-12(5);

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions consider the matter and make recommendations on a mechanism to establish reporting relationships and accountability of the Languages Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions provide a final report to the Legislative Assembly prior to the prorogation of the Sixth Session of the 12th Legislative Assembly.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Your motion is in order. Unfortunately, we recognize a lack of a quorum in the House. If you would ring the bells, Mr. Clerk. Thank you. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

Item 15, motions. Item 16, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 16: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 16: An Act To Amend The Arctic College Act

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Arctic College Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Your motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 16, first reading of bills. Item 17, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta.

ITEM 17: SECOND READING OF BILLS

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to seek consent to give second reading to Bill 16 so it can be referred to the appropriate standing committee for review.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with Bill 16. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Nerysoo.

Bill 16: An Act To Amend The Arctic College Act

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, colleagues, for your support. Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Arctic College Act, be read for the second time. Madam Speaker, this bill amends the Arctic College Act to remove reference to Arctic College and to allow the creation of more than one college. The amendment also repeals the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories Act and gives the college the power to delegate the functions previously held by the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories. The bill also removes references to the vice-president and to specific student associations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Ballantyne.

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thought I should put on the record one concern I have about this particular motion. If we make a commitment to divide the

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college now, we could be letting the federal government off the hook, as far as making that part of the implementation costs of division. I just want to put that on the public record, and I will discuss it at more length at a more appropriate time. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. To the principle of the bill.

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

Bill 16 has had second reading and, accordingly, it stands referred to committee. Item 17, second reading of bills. Item 18, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95; Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Safety Act; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 17, Loan Authorization Act, 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; and, Tabled Document, 34-12(5), Tradition and Change, A Strategy for Renewable Resource Development in the NWT, February 1994, with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The committee will now come to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Antoine.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

We would like to deal with Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95 and Committee Report 2-12(5), Review of the 1994-95 Main Estimates, and subsequently get into the Department of Personnel. Following that, we would like to go into the Department of Social Services.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Okay, Mr. Antoine, you said Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95 and Committee Report 2-12(5), Report of the Review of the 1994-95 Main Estimates and from there, that we consider Personnel and Social Services. Do we have the agreement of the committee that we deal with those in committee of the whole?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 1: Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95

Committee Report 2-12(5): Review Of The 1994-95 Main Estimates

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. We will take a 15 minute break before we get into this. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Department Of Personnel

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

I will call the committee to order. We are dealing with Bill 1 and Committee Report 2-12(5) with the Department of Personnel. Ms. Mike, do you have opening remarks on behalf of your department? We are on page 06-8, Personnel. Ms. Mike.

Introductory Remarks

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Qujannamiik, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 1994-95 budget for the Department of Personnel.

In May 1993, Cabinet approved a reorganization of the department. Many of the department's programs were transferred to the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Personnel retained staffing, work-force adjustment and staff housing.

Personnel's responsibilities for staff housing will be transferred to the NWT Housing Corporation as part of the government's plan to have all housing programs administered by a single organization.

The department recruits for all public service positions except those in the NWT Housing Corporation, Workers' Compensation Board, health boards and teaching positions in school boards. For these organizations, our role is to develop procedures, provide guidance and advice and conduct operational reviews of staffing operations.

Within the staffing program, Personnel ensures the consistent application of the affirmative action policy.

Personnel's role in staffing is complex and crucial. They have to make sure all members of selection committees understand and follow the rules. Personnel officers encourage departments to involve community and regional groups in the selection process. This is especially important when the candidate will be required to work closely with these organizations.

Personnel officers do not make staffing decisions on their own. While they chair the selection committee, decisions are made by consensus. These decisions can be appealed.

During 1993, 1,449 job offers were made; there were 78 appeals. Only 16 resulted in job offers being withdrawn.

The department is also responsible for administering the work-force adjustment program. This program provides benefits for those employees affected by government initiatives such as decentralization, privatization, consolidation and community transfers. Those employees who lose their jobs because of these initiatives can choose from several benefit options which include staffing priority, extra severance pay, retraining programs and educational leave opportunities.

During 1993, 58 employees were affected by work-force adjustment: 27 of them found other GNWT positions; one employee is on educational leave; 24 took severance payments; and, six have not chosen a benefit at this time.

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With the exception of educational assistance which is paid by Personnel, funding for these benefits is the responsibility of individual departments.

Under the staff housing program, the department allocates units to staff who require accommodation. In addition, Personnel continues to assist in the implementation of the long-term staff housing strategy. Last year, a new rental scale was implemented and employees were given an opportunity to purchase staff housing.

At the end of January 1994, we had sold 106 houses. These sales produced over \$9 million of additional revenue.

User-pay electricity was also introduced last August with the result that employees now have an incentive to reduce their power costs.

Rents will continue to be based on the Yellowknife or local market rates, which have not changed since last year.

Some employees will pay more. Effective August 1, 1994, employees who are paying less than market rent will see their rents increase by either 15 per cent or to the market rate, whichever is less. This

approach is being taken in accordance with the Assembly's request for significant increases to be phased in over three years.

Explanations of these changes will be communicated to employees next month, well ahead of the implementation plan.

In January, employees living in government-owned staff housing in level II and III communities were given another opportunity to purchase their units. Where the unit is a row house or other multi-family building, all of the tenants in the building will be allowed to purchase it as a group. Previously, only single detached and duplex units were offered for sale. I expect that this latest offer to sell more units will be well received by our staff.

The situation is slightly different in Inuvik. When Inuvik was declared a level I community for housing purposes, all government-owned detached housing units were offered to employee tenants. Those that did not sell are being sold to the public through the local real estate agency. Blocks of row housing are being sold by public tender.

After we have heard from the employees, the department will review the staff housing inventory in each community to determine if any units can be declared surplus to our staff needs. Wherever there are surplus units, and before any decision is made to dispose of them, the MLA for the community will be consulted.

Mr. Chairman, I believe in leading by example.

Affirmative action statistics for the Department of Personnel show that:

- 50 per cent of our employees are aboriginal;
- An additional 14 per cent are indigenous northerners;
- 50 per cent of our managers are aboriginal; and,
- 50 per cent of our managers are female.

With statistics like these, I believe we are demonstrating that affirmative action and giving preference to northern candidates is working. However, there is always room for improvement.

Personnel is not a large department. It is small and very busy. The budget is \$4.5 million with 40 PYs. However, it plays a very crucial role in helping the

government achieve its goal to recruit a home-grown public service.

I look forward to hearing general comments from Members and will try to answer any questions about my department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Do we have any comments from the Standing Committee on Finance? Mr. Ballantyne.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you. I have the report from the Standing Committee on Finance on the Department of Personnel.

The Impact Of Reorganization

Personnel has essentially been stripped. Three functions remain. These functions are recruitment, work-force adjustment and staff housing. There are plans to downsize the department even further by transferring the staff housing function to the Housing Corporation by April 1, 1994.

Committee Members are very disappointed that the Minister of Personnel does not seem to have a specific direction or set of goals in mind for the department. During her appearance before the standing committee, the Minister deferred discussion of the department's future to the Government Leader. If the Minister finds it necessary to defer such discussion, then perhaps we no longer require a separate Minister of Personnel. In any case, committee Members feel that the issue of the department's future should be resolved quickly.

Staff Housing Strategy

During its review of the 1993-94 Main Estimates, the committee recommended that the Department of Personnel monitor the impact of the staff housing strategy, especially on the affirmative action program. The department responded by

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saying that it has not undertaken this impact analysis. The committee is concerned that the department was unable to respond positively to this recommendation,

particularly in light of the controversy surrounding the implementation of this strategy.

Committee Members are concerned about the selling off of staff housing in communities where housing options are limited. There are four primary reasons for this concern. First, the result in some communities could be that the government would not be able to recruit new staff due to the lack of housing. Second, it could create the situation in some communities where the government sells staff houses at a lower than replacement cost and then is forced to turn around and build additional housing at premium prices to meet the demand for staff and social housing. Third, government-owned houses could be purchased at a minimum price and then leased back to the government at maximum rates for staff and social housing. Finally, in some communities, particularly level III communities where public housing does not exist, staff houses may represent the only housing that is available in the community. Committee Members feel that the government should not be selling staff housing in communities where this is the case.

These consequences may not have been anticipated in the development of the staff housing strategy, but must be considered at this time in order to ensure equal access to housing across the territories. Committee Members feel that this policy was not well thought out initially and therefore, the government is encountering a great deal of difficulty in undertaking its implementation.

Given the need for social housing throughout the NWT, and the concern that the federal cutbacks to social housing may force the GNWT into providing social housing, there is some concern we may be selling off government-owned houses only to have to build new social housing at a much higher cost.

#### Recommendation 28

The committee recommends that no further public sale of government-owned housing take place in level II and III communities until the government has provided a report on the need for social housing in the communities, and a strategy for dealing with that shortfall.

Committee Members feel that the staff housing strategy is not at all clear. Guidelines and rules are difficult to determine. The committee recommends that the Minister of Personnel present a clear written explanation of the strategy and the implementation of

the associated rules and guidelines when the department's budget is being considered in committee of the whole.

#### Recruitment

The committee is pleased to note that the department is doing more recruitment in the north. As well, the committee was impressed with the recent direction the department has taken in order to reduce southern advertising costs. Committee Members encourage the department to continue with these efforts.

#### Committee Motion 35-12(5): To Adopt Recommendation 28, Carried

I move that the committee recommends that no further public sale of government-owned housing take place in level II and III communities until the government has provided a report on the need for social housing in the communities, and a strategy for dealing with that shortfall.

#### **CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

#### **AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

#### **CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

---Carried

Mr. Ballantyne, does that conclude the report of the Standing Committee on Finance? Mr. Ballantyne, do you have a further report?

#### **MR. BALLANTYNE:**

No.

#### **CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Before I call for general comments, perhaps the Minister will want to bring in her witnesses because we are dealing with some very important issues here. The department is responsible for the affirmative action policy, the staffing function and hiring authority. Madam Minister, would you like to bring in the witnesses?



**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses, please. Thank you. For the record, Madam Minister, would you introduce the witnesses to the committee?

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Darryl Bohnet, acting deputy minister of Personnel, and on my left is Mike Cluderay, who is responsible for operations.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Welcome to the committee. General comments from the floor. Mr. Gargan.

General Comments

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, by the year 1999 we will have dealt with the issue of division. I presume that with division will come transfer or attrition, one or the other. Has your department come up with a strategic plan with regard to that movement? I assume, if you have 8,000 public servants, they are not going to be all here in Yellowknife. Nor do I see that you need that many people for 28,000 in the western Arctic. How are you addressing this issue?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my understanding, that is one of the things we deal with in the strategic plans we make at the end of each Assembly. I will get my DM to elaborate on your question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Mr. Deputy Minister.

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**MR. BOHNET:**

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Personnel is involved in the division review committee, which is an internal committee of deputy ministers who are looking at coordinating activities and plans for review. The Department of Personnel is also on the human resource planning subcommittee, which is chaired by the deputy minister of Education. The other member is the secretary to the Financial Management Board. The three of us are involved in human resource strategic planning development at this stage.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Department of Personnel, general comments. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if you have any restraint measures right now. Right across the country, from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, BC, there are governments implementing measures where they have made a freeze, made a reduction, or come up with different strategies for benefits. I'm wondering how much of an effort your department has made with regard to this whole issue? I disagree that we should allow nothing to happen up here while the rest of the country is making their share of restraint measures.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have measures that the department takes. One of them being, wherever possible, instead of bringing the people in for interviews, interviews are carried out by telephone because that reduces costs. Also, because of the restraint measures that the department has taken, we'll be 15 per cent under budget.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. GARGAN:**

In your definitive objectives, you did say you had the work-force adjustment program. Is that where you are doing it?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

The honourable Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Mr. Chairman, can the Member clarify his question? I didn't understand it. Or, rephrase his question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

The honourable Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. GARGAN:**

It's on page 06-5.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. I believe the honourable Member is referring to the activity of staffing. To provide guidance and support of departments affected by the work-force adjustment program. I believe he is referring to that. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the work-force adjustment program is in our definitive objectives.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Honourable Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Does this also include the ratios? In other words, public servant population ratio, or student/teacher ratio. Maybe the ratio in the western Arctic is substantially higher than in the east, so you might want to come up with some kind of a balance with regard to the ratios. Right now, the way I see it is that you're reducing...During the last few days, I've listened to Members expressing a concern with regard to teacher reduction based on ratio. I'm just wondering whether you would be looking at...if you're going to reduce the ratios, that you do it at the headquarters level as opposed to the community level.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe what Sam is talking about is the mandate of the divisional boards of education. We only assist in hiring. In my opening

remarks, I mentioned that we are responsible for administering the work-force adjustment program. This program provides benefits for these employees affected by government initiatives, such as decentralization, privatization, consolidation and community transfers.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As far back as perhaps 1986, I've come up with a listing based on public service population ratio. At that time, if my memory serves me correct, I think in the Northwest Territories it was 186 per 1,000 ratio. In the Yukon I think it was 134. The lowest being the federal government which was 25 per 1,000 ratio. Those are the kind of stats I was referring to. I suppose there is a movement to look at cost-saving measures. I thought you would look at that ratio, too. I even made a motion, Mr. Chairman, in 1989 I think it was, to reduce the public service by 2.5 in the first year and another 2.5 in the second year. Whether it's percentage wise, but I did make a motion at that time to look at a reduction because our ratio was so high with regard to the amount of people we hired per 1,000. I'm not referring to the divisional boards. At that time, I believe that 186 was based on the public service population ratio without including the teaching staff.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department provides services to the departments in the government in recruitment for public service positions. We don't have control over other departments in terms of positions required.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Maybe you could enlighten me as to what exactly this work-force adjustment program is.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like I said earlier, the work-force adjustment program is for employees

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who either lost their position because of decentralization, privatization or consolidation of departments. We try to find them work, or get them training or upgrade their skills if they want to remain in the government work-force, or in finding another job within the government in a different department.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

So, then, this work-force adjustment program is only for the Department of Personnel.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Madam Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it's not.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Then you move in that direction for all the government.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

The honourable Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

I didn't understand his question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

I believe Madam Minister wants you to repeat the question.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Okay, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated that this work-force adjustment is not only for Personnel, so that means it is for all government departments. What I'm saying is that based on your response with regard to decentralization, privatization and termination, then you're moving in the direction of reducing the ratio, I would think.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Minister of Personnel.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

General comments. Mr. Gargan, are you still on?

**MR. GARGAN:**

No, I am finished.

Line By Line

Staffing

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

General comments. We are on page 06-8 of the 1994-95 main estimates for the Department of Personnel. Are there any more general comments? We will go by activity. Page 06-8, staffing, total O and M, \$4.464 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Qujannamiik. We go one page back, 06-7, program summary, total O and M, \$4.464 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Does the committee agree that this particular department, Personnel, is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. On behalf of the committee of the whole...Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

I have just one question, and that is with regard to payroll tax. Is this an area in which we could address that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we have nothing to do with the payroll tax.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. I believe that was the Department of Finance. Program summary, total O and M, \$4.464 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. So are we agreed that the Department of Personnel 1994-95 main estimates is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Minister and her witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you.

The next on the list is the Department of Social Services. I believe Ms. Mike wears that hat. Do you

have any opening remarks on behalf of your department, Social Services?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Agreed. Proceed. Do we agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Agreement. Ms. Mike.

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Department Of Social Services

Introductory Remarks

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Qujannamiik, Mr. Chairman. I have opening remarks on the 1994-95 budget of the Department of Social Services. The proposed budget does not contain any enhancements or changes in direct response to the report of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services as the report was received after the 1994-95 budgets were finalized.

However, I was very impressed with the work of the committee. With regard to the family law review, I circulated a discussion paper earlier in this session, and plans call for new legislation in the winter session of 1995.

However, as announced earlier in this session, I have taken steps to provide a wage increase to the staff of alcohol and drug treatment centres. These increased salaries and settlement allowances should bring a measure of stability to the centres. Mr. Chairman, when the Baffin regional treatment centre is added to the other three centres in the territories, we will have enough treatment beds that there should be no need to refer residents to the south for treatment.

As you know, a new deputy minister has been appointed. His first task was to reorganize the department to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

As a result, the department eliminated one assistant deputy minister position and reduced the number of directors from five to four.

Four of the five members of the assessment and treatment team in Yellowknife were decentralized to regional offices to develop strong community mental health teams in each location.

In addition, to deal with the need for enhanced staff training and career development opportunities for Social Services staff, I have established five new staff training positions in regional offices.

I am pleased with the progress made in 1993-94, and I would like to highlight some of the achievements during the year.

The department employs among the highest proportion of aboriginal people in the government, with approximately 88 or 42.7 per cent of the total departmental work-force. In addition, a high proportion of the 305 community-based projects' employees funded by the department through our \$18 million contribution fund are also aboriginal.

An adolescent solvent abuse pilot program is under way in cooperation with the federal government and Northern Addiction Services in Dettah, with clients from the NWT, the Yukon and northern Quebec.

Thirty additional treatment beds were added through the opening of a new alcohol and drug treatment centre on the Hay River Reserve. The Iqaluit centre will come on stream early in the next fiscal year, adding a further 18 beds. The three treatment centres currently in operation employ a total of 49 staff.

Fourteen additional beds were added for elders and handicapped through the opening of new personal care facilities in Iqaluit and Deline. The personal care facilities employ a total of 86 residents.

Seven additional beds will be added for children with the opening of the Baker Lake group home in March of 1994.

Forty-two community alcohol and drug projects employed a total of 99 employees.

Nine family violence shelters were funded during the year, providing jobs for 39 residents.

Nine group homes provided a further 32 jobs.

The budget of \$79.956 million for 1994-95 has increased by three per cent from the 1993-94 level of \$77.453 million. The budget also includes a total of 204 person years and projected revenues of \$27.771 million. The major changes to the department's budget for 1994-95 are:

- cost increases of \$421,000 for various multi-year contracts for care of children and the aged and handicapped adults;

- operating costs of \$355,000 for a new child welfare group home in Baker Lake;

- operating costs of \$862,000 for a new alcohol treatment centre in Iqaluit;

- operating costs of \$195,000 for two new group homes for disabled adults in Rankin Inlet and Inuvik;

- an increase of \$1.6 million to cover greater demand for social assistance;

- \$1.6 million for improved food allowances;

- \$291,000 for operation of the social assistance information system;

- savings of \$500,000 from the recovery of social assistance overpayments; and,

- \$33,000 to participate in the environmental assessment of the Great Whale hydro project.

Mr. Chairman, I took the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Finance related to the department's 1993-94 budget very seriously.

As a result, my priority for the coming year as the Minister of Social Services is to develop a comprehensive strategic plan which will build on the recommendations of the Special Committee on Health and Social Services and the family law review.

There are a tremendous number of priorities these days, and it will be crucial for the department to have a comprehensive plan to address them. The long-term strategy for Social Services will be complete by September 1994 and will include:

-A capital planning framework to assist communities and the department to deal with requests from a wide variety of facilities;

-A framework for the community transfer of social programs, where it is requested;

-A response to the family law review, as it applies to the Department of Social Services;

-Income security restructuring to provide support to employable social assistance recipients and to provide secure income for those who cannot be self-reliant;

-An alcohol and drug and community mental health strategy;

-A comprehensive human resource plan, including strategies for increasing the representation of aboriginal people at management levels in the department; and,

-An evaluation strategy.

Mr. Chairman, I am confident that our plan will allow us to provide better levels of service to clients and allow for more rational use of resources. That concludes my opening comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Do we have a report from the Standing Committee on Finance? Mr. Antoine.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although committee Members noted some improvement in this department's budget presentation to the committee, serious concerns remain. Committee Members feel that the department's budget does not respond adequately to the needs of its clients. The department is, so far, apart from increases to treatment centre employees, unresponsive to direction from the Assembly and its committees. Furthermore, the committee believes that the department's management philosophy is characterized by reacting to circumstances, rather than providing leadership.

The committee has doubts about the ability of the department to take the lead in comprehensive new

initiatives such as income security reform. We feel strongly that the Minister must assume responsibility for determining and prioritizing the main initiatives of the department, and for developing a budget and a strategy which will allow those initiatives to be met.

**Departmental Budgeting**

A specific example of the committee's concerns was raised by the budget presented for the 1994-95 year by the Minister. The committee feels it is obvious that a department's budget should reflect the department's best estimate of funds that will be expended in the coming fiscal year. However, committee Members noted various examples throughout the budget where estimates for 1994-95 bear no obvious relation to actual figures for previous fiscal years.

In fact, the Minister informed the committee that they had provided increases of nearly \$3 million, half for inflation and half for increased volume. However, the committee notes that this increase of \$3 million didn't even bring the total up to what this year's actual figures will be. The department is not keeping up with demand and inflation. We do not understand how those assigned to deliver the programs of the department can adequately provide those services if the amounts budgeted continue to be unrealistic and unrelated to demand.

The committee appreciates that the department has a new deputy minister, and that the FMB is encouraging the department to provide better budgeting information. However, we would like to emphasize that we consider this a critical issue, particularly in view of the department's critical role in the future well-being of the citizens of the NWT, and it must be dealt with very quickly.

**Recommendation 32**

The committee recommends that the Financial Management Board Secretariat and the Department of Social Services develop a plan to improve the department's budgeting process, and respond to the committee with that plan by August 1, 1994.

**Zero Tolerance For Violence**

Committee Members noted that there has been no increase to grants and contributions in family violence prevention services, child sexual abuse programs and family counselling. These are areas where we expected to see funding increased in order to support the zero tolerance for violence position adopted in this

Assembly. This should be a major priority of this government. These programs require funding support. If these programs are not tackled now, we are going to have extreme social problems in our communities in the next generation.

Family violence affects not only the victim, but also the offender and the families of each party. The impact is felt by the community as well. In addition to providing funds for community groups to address the problem of family violence, we need to provide appropriate training so that people can deal with these problems at the community level. The Department of Social Services must identify the training needs and ensure that an appropriate curriculum is developed to respond. Members expressed some concern that the current program at Arctic College may be more focused on processing and administration than on teaching people how to deal with human problems.

Committee Members feel that the government, in consultation with social agencies and special interest groups, must develop a range of options to address these major social problems. Different solutions are required for different situations. The old solutions are not working. We have to devise new and innovative community-based approaches.

#### Recommendation 33

The committee recommends that the Department of Social Services work with the Department of Justice to develop and implement an action plan which supports the declaration

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against family violence. The committee further recommends that the Department of Social Services, in consultation with social agencies and special interest groups, develop a range of program options and training plans for family violence prevention services, child sexual abuse programs and family counselling. A preliminary report on the overall status of this initiative should be made available to the committee at least one week prior to its review of the 1995-96 capital budget.

#### Income Security Reform

As discussed under the Executive, the committee is impressed with the proposed income security reform package. However, we are concerned that the Department of Social Services may have difficulty

playing the lead role in this initiative. In order for the income security reform programs to be at all effective, the leadership of the department must improve.

On the other hand, committee Members do not want to see the department wait for income security reform to happen before addressing other important issues. Income security reform should not be seen as a cure-all for the many social problems facing northerners today. Rather, the department must address the important issues now, as best it can, while it attempts to change and improve.

#### Partners In Youth

The partners in youth project being piloted in Edmonton was discussed under Education. We strongly recommend that the Department of Social Services participate with the departments of Education and Justice in implementing such a proposal in selected northern schools on a pilot basis. So many of the social problems in the north affect school age children; either directly, or indirectly through their situations at home. If these children have a single, central place they can go for help, their school, they are much more likely to ask for and receive the help they and their families might need.

Committee Motion 36-12(5): To Adopt Recommendation 32, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I have a motion. I move that the committee recommends that the Financial Management Board Secretariat and the Department of Social Services develop a plan to improve the department's budgeting process, and respond to the committee with that plan by August 1, 1994. Thank you.

#### **CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

#### **AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

#### **CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

---Carried

Mr. Antoine.

Committee Motion 37-12(5): To Adopt  
Recommendation 33, Carried

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you. There is a final motion, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee recommends that the Department of Social Services work with the Department of Justice to develop and implement an action plan which supports the declaration against family violence. The committee further recommends that the Department of Social Services, in consultation with social agencies and special interest groups, develop a range of program options and training plans for family violence prevention services, child sexual abuse programs and family counselling. A preliminary report on the overall status of this initiative should be made available to the committee at least one week prior to its review of the 1995-96 capital budget. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

---Carried

We are now into the general comments. Could I please have order? If you want to talk about something, there is a Members' lounge back there. Please do that. Madam Minister, would you like to bring in the witnesses before we allow the Members to ask questions and come up with some general comments?

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Do we have the concurrence of the committee that the honourable Minister will bring in the witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. We are on page 15-10 of the main estimate activity summary. Social Services. For the record, Madam Minister, would you introduce the witnesses to the committee?

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is Ken Lovely, deputy minister of Social Services. On my right is John Doyle, director of finance.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

I would like to remind Members that I will allow each Member to speak no more than ten minutes, which is a rule of the committee of the whole. I will try and recognize a Member who has not spoken. I will stop Members from speaking, if there are other Members who want to speak. This is a very important program. I think each Member is very anxious about getting to the discussion of this particular department. I hope we all try and comply with the ten minute time limit for each Member to say opening comments in the area of general comments. Mr. Ballantyne.

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General Comments

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will definitely try to keep our comments within the ten minute limit. I think we all recognize that this department has a very difficult task. The social problems in the Northwest Territories are immense. The number of responsibilities that the department has are very widespread. I think everyone has to recognize the challenge that the department faces in trying to carry out its duties. Since the last time the Legislative Assembly met, there have been improvements. I think the Minister and the deputy minister are making efforts to bring together the various elements of the department. I like the concept about the income support initiatives. We had a very good briefing by the deputy minister. I think the cooperation between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Social Services will be key to that. I made some comments today about some of the opportunities that are out there. I can only encourage the department to ensure that coordination with other departments is there, and that



the department moves very aggressively in coming up with some new and innovative programs.

The area that I have the most concern within the department's approach and the government's approach is the area that was covered in the Standing Committee on Finance's report. It was on how we are actually, as a government and as a department, dealing with the social problems that face us. The one thing that we have tried to say as a Standing Committee on Finance is that we want to see, from the government, some basic philosophies put forward and government policies and decisions which are based on those philosophies. We have heard the Minister of Economic Development talk about where we can get a return on our dollar, and what businesses and industries to support so there is a good return on our dollar. It has always been my premise that you can look at the whole area of Social Services the same way. When we had the Department of Justice in front of us, I made the point to the Minister that, in a time of limited and diminishing resources, as a government and as departments, we have to prioritize. That means some very tough decisions have to be made. To me, if we have a situation where we have to make those tough decisions, which we do, it is going to get worse. I don't think people of the Northwest Territories should delude themselves. There is not going to be more money forthcoming in the future. I am convinced we are going to have to do more with less. Then it comes down to a matter of choices.

I think, along the line, we, as politicians, have to have the courage to decide that we have to make choices, that we decide that youth is our priority. That is where our efforts should be. Any new dollars that are freed up, that is where it should go. That is where, I think, you can get your best return on your dollar. I am convinced that if you spend a couple of thousand dollars, \$5,000 or \$10,000 on counselling for a ten year old, you are going to save yourself \$100,000 in corrections, court costs or whatever in the future. At some time, I would like to hear from the government and from the department that they are going to prioritize and emphasize youth, that any extra money we have we are going to put into youth. That will mean that as far as adults -- and there is no doubt adults need lots of help and there are many people with drinking problems -- we are probably not going to have as much for the older generation to spend as we did. We probably won't be able to do as much for them as we have in the past. I think we have a responsibility to put our dollars where they are going

to have the most impact. I am convinced they are going to have the most impact if you put those dollars with youth. Anything you could do in that area, I know I, for one, will support it.

The Standing Committee on Finance made the point that if the government -- and the government has -- comes forward with a policy about zero tolerance for violence, it raises expectations. Very shortly, if not already, the government is going to be asked to demonstrate what, in concrete terms, that means. It is nice to have flowery phrases that we all agree with, but when we read some of the statistics that are coming out, some of the most recent reports where the violence, sexual crimes and sexual violent crimes in the Northwest Territories are up to ten or 15 times more prevalent than they are in other jurisdictions, people are going to ask, what are you actually doing?

When we look at your budget this year, what I don't see is extra resources for sexually abused children, family violence or family counselling, for instance. What is always going to happen is that this department, as all departments when they are competing for scarce resources, is going to have to make some hard choices. They are going to have to make the point. I think it is an obvious point that if you don't deal, for instance, with the whole issue of child sexual abuse, -- where, I believe, we have just seen the tip of the iceberg now and if you don't deal with that very aggressively, it is a compounding problem, generation to generation. The statistics are horrendous about the number of children who are abused who become abusers, and about the number of people in the community who are affected when a child is abused. The fact is that you have multiple victims of abusers.

I have seen some very positive trends in the last five years where we have made it easier and we are more supportive of the reporting of these types of crimes. But what that means, though, at the same time as we have become more aware of it, we have a responsibility to put more resources to deal with the problem. I would hope that between now and the next year, in the fall supplementary estimates, we will see some significant increases in funding in the areas of family violence and child sexual abuse. I think it can be justified. I think the government now has even a greater responsibility to do that since they have come out very strongly in support of zero tolerance against violence.

So I want to conclude my remarks. The chairman is looking at me. I can see that my time is coming to an

end. But I want to leave you with what is, for me, a very strong message, and that is that I very strongly believe that, as a government, we have to deal with these areas, we have to deal with them very aggressively. It's going to take more money and I, for one, am going to be looking very closely at this department in the fall session and I hope to see some supplementary estimates coming forward so the department can deal with these very serious issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. Your timing was perfect. Madam Minister, do you wish to comment on those remarks?

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**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ballantyne's comments are very appreciated by me and by my deputy, and I am aware of the stats that we have with violence in the NWT and the child sexual abuse.

The awareness was made public back in the middle of the 1980s. It is quite acceptable now to openly talk about sexual abuse. So there has been a snowballing effect as a result of public awareness that it is not acceptable to sexually abuse a child or, for that matter, sexually abuse an adult.

I don't have the numbers to back me up but, hopefully -- I am being optimistic about this -- in the years to come, as a result of public awareness on family violence, which includes sexual abuse, we are going to start to see some changes in behaviour within our population in our communities. Up until such time as the behaviour changes, I think we will continue to have problems on our hands.

Mr. Ballantyne encouraged the department and I to work closely with the Minister of Justice, and we have begun our talks on how to grapple with the violence that a lot of people face in our northern communities. So, something is being done.

Also, I am being optimistic about this because of the reorganization of the department and better utilizing our resources within the communities and providing more support and training to the community mental health workers and counsellors. I think that slowly we will be able to deal with a lot of the problems that we face today. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. General comments. Does the committee agree that we go item by item?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

Line By Line

Directorate

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

The committee agrees. The directorate, total O and M, \$11.646 million. Mr. Antoine, Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Yes, in the directorate, and this has to do with the regional superintendents and their support staff and the social workers located in communities. I just wanted to say that my experience with the social workers in my constituency is very good. They are good front line people, but they always seem to be complaining about being overworked and underpaid.

It seems that there are some unfunded positions, and they need to have some more permanent positions there. I say this because as of June 1994 the highway to Wrigley will be open. The community of Wrigley has talked to me a number of times and said that they have a concern that once you open a road into a remote community like that, there is easy access for all kinds of goods and services as well as problems.

So they are anticipating that they are going to be getting into some problems and they would like to be ready for any anticipated problems as a result of the opening of the road. They foresee social problems accelerating or increasing as a result of more contact with the outside world with the road being readily available.

So they want to sit down with the department and try to come to some understanding on how to best deal with their upcoming connection to the outside world. So this is one area where they have requested that they have an additional social worker in that community to try to deal with the upcoming social problems.

I just wanted to make these comments so that the Minister and the senior staff will know that I am aware of the situation in my constituency. I always do my homework, I talk to everybody, so I am aware of the situation. I am not trying to be negative about this and I know that they are trying to do their job, but there are a lot of problems coming up more and more, and they seem to be understaffed.

At the same time there is no real permanent position there. They seem to be functioning on a borrowed type of positions, and if some of these unfunded positions become permanent it will at least provide some security there.

As for the position in Liard, there is one position you have in that community of 300 or 400, and there, again, are accelerating social problems.

You have good staff in the region, in the communities, but I am afraid with the sustained level of work that they are doing, at this rate, you are going to have some burn-outs. The department should look at that possibility. It is coming too close to that. The signals are there, and I just wanted to emphasize to the department that they have to look at that situation as well in the communities.

This type of social work is very demanding and very stressful. When you have educated people in the field providing the service, the department has to take a look at it and see where they can help in all ways. That's just a comment, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate a response from the Minister to my comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we could look into the community that the Member for Nahendeh is talking about. I realize that our workers, especially social workers, do enormous work. They deal with the most unpleasant situations in the communities. When it comes to apprehending children, that alone is stressful. They also deal with child sexual abuse. So, I understand that the work-load of our workers is really heavy in some cases and that they do need help.

Like I said earlier, new additional staff will be put in the regions, and will be available to train community-based mental health and counselling workers. I think

most of the problems at the community level, at the grassroots level, will be able to be

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handled quite well by each community that is willing to take on that kind of task. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In our SCOF report, we mentioned the Arctic College social services program. During the SCOF review, we asked about the training that is taking place in Arctic College. It started 13 years ago and we asked the Minister and her staff about the curriculum of that program, and whether the curriculum had changed. I know this is an Education-type of question, but my concern here is that the Department of Social Services hire a lot of people who graduate from the social services program from Arctic College. We have people in our communities with two years training from Arctic College.

I asked the Minister and her staff whether the curriculum has changed within the last 13 years. The reply we received was they did not know whether the curriculum had changed, or whether they are still teaching the same curriculum they started off with 13 years ago. Nowadays there are new and innovative ways for dealing with human social problems. I wanted to know if Arctic College is providing the latest training for people taking courses there, so that when they go into the communities and start facing these social problems they know how to deal with them in a very humane way?

We did not get a very satisfactory reply at that time. We have dedicated people in the communities who have taken these programs. It took them two years to take it and now they are in the community, dealing with day-to-day social problems. I'm wondering if the type of training they are receiving in Arctic College is adequate enough for them to deal with the problems.

Furthermore, I would like to ask the Minister whether the people who are presently working for the Department of Social Services -- after completing this two year training course at Arctic College and after being in the field for a number of years -- can go back and get further training, with the experience they have and with the desire to continue in that field? Is that opportunity available to them? If it is, where is this

opportunity? And if it is not there, will the department look into this area to see if they can work with the Department of Education to develop further training for the social workers who are out in the communities who desire to go back for more training? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Madam Minister, there are at least four questions in that statement for you.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's concerns that he is bringing to our attention. Social Services has a seat on the advisory committee of Arctic College for this program. There is a bit of room to do some assessment. I feel that the two year training program in Arctic College is adequate. But if the social worker would like to get further training in specialized areas, I think the department can provide them with time off, whenever there is a request for improving skills. I will get my deputy minister to respond to some of the concerns you raised, Mr. Antoine.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The development of our staff is really important to us because we know that we have a lot of workers who haven't been able to go beyond the diploma program at the college. One of the things that will be a priority for us over the coming year in the development of our human resource plan, is to assess the social services worker program at the college to see whether there does have to be changes made to it.

There have been changes made over the years to keep up with the professional needs of social workers, but the program provides our workers with a base to start at the community level. What we want to do is work with the college to bring in some field-based courses for the people who only have a diploma and who want to go on and get their undergraduate degrees or specialized training that can be provided by the college in some of the regional centres, rather than having to send people to universities in southern Canada.

It's especially difficult for workers who have large families and who can't really leave either their region or their home communities. We're looking at ways and means to bring those courses closer to home so there can be some ongoing professional development of the workers, rather than simply dead-ending them at the diploma level. We have a variety of ways of doing that. One is we can send people out on the education leave program, but we haven't made good use of that over the years. There are many flexibilities in the collective agreement that allow us to give people leave with pay for shorter periods of time, up to six months. It should give them the opportunity to complete courses or parts of a program that would improve their academic standing. That is on the books for the coming year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to hear that there is an opportunity for people in the social work field who have been out in the communities for a number of years. The program started 13 years ago, so I am assuming that, after two years, there are some people out there who have been working for about ten or 11 years with a two year diploma program from Fort Smith, Arctic College, that there are people in the communities with that type of experience. If they have an opportunity to go back with experience under their belts and with a desire to continue in the social services field, the department will support them to go back to school if they desire to further their training and education in that field. That is what I am hearing. I think that is the direction to go because we have many people who are dedicated in this field. After a number of years, there is a desire for them to take further education. That opportunity should be available for them to do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can provide that support. Also, I have directed my deputy minister some time ago that, when we recruit superintendents,

we will provide them with the appropriate orientation starting at the headquarters so they know the operations of the headquarters, and also to try and visit each community on a regular basis so they can work more closely with the workers and identify areas where the communities' needs are along with our employees.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Ningark.

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. About a year and a half or two years ago, this legislature mandated the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. I was a Member of that special committee. We visited the chosen communities from respective regions and we met with just about any achievable group in each community, mainly the elders' group, youth, women's groups, parents, the front line workers, and so on. Many good ideas came out of that consultation visit that we did, Mr. Chairman. As a mandate from the legislature, we made a number of very good recommendations to the House. We did this report in the form of a committee report. I am wondering if the honourable Minister has acted on any of the recommendations that were made by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services up to this point in time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Did you say Health? Mr. Ningark.

**MR. NINGARK:**

I am referring to the report by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. I wonder if the Minister has taken any action on the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services because there were many good recommendations coming from the local communities, the people who live in the communities, not from the government. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In response to Mr. Ningark's question on the recommendations of the

Special Committee on Health and Social Services, our response to some of those recommendations will be tabled by our Premier and it will also include family law review and the income security reform is another. They are being translated right now.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. The honourable Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark.

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for taking some action on some of the recommendations. Hopefully, when we do get all of the information compiled, translated and ready for the House, we will see some positive results from the Department of Social Services. I am not able to comment further because I am not sure what the responses are from the Minister. But when I do see the answers, I will probably be able to speak to the matter in the House.

When I travel I like to always go back to the time when I travelled through all my communities in my area, to Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak, Holman Island, Spence Bay and Pelly Bay, my home community. People who are solely dependent upon social assistance sometimes talk to me about their concerns. One of the concerns is that those who are able to do other things in order to earn a little bit of money, when they do earn money, the next social assistance payment is reduced. It seems to discourage people who are living on social welfare payments from looking for other means of earning income for their family. For instance, if a person who is a recipient of social assistance earns a little bit of money by carving, trapping or getting a casual part-time job in the community and then he goes to Social Services to collect his social assistance payment, he is asked if he has earned money. Native people, being very honest about it, usually say what they earn. They will get a receipt from someone in the community. Before long, that person stops looking for other ways of earning income for the family. I think this is not fair. If the recipient is allowed to earn money to a degree, perhaps six months, that person may get to like the job. He/she may be able to earn money by other means. Given time, that person is going to stop relying on Social Services. There should be a time frame whereby a social assistant will say, all right, you can earn income other than social assistance for a period of time, perhaps half a year or

three months. That person will begin to like what he or she does by earning other than social assistance.

The way it is now, the system we have in place now discourages a social assistance recipient from trying to earn extra money, because every time a little bit of money is earned -- maybe through bingo and other ways of earning money -- right away, the social assistance on the next pay day is reduced. It doesn't seem to be very fair.

If you start doing something, before long, you are going to get to like it. If not, you are going to say, well, this is not for me. But in most cases, when a person is able to earn money, sooner or later he is going to say, this is the kind of job I like to do, something I can do given the opportunity and given the qualifications that person has. So give them a little time to get used to it, Mr. Chairman.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, social assistance payment rates were increased in other communities across the board in the territories in our jurisdiction except for Pelly Bay, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak and Holman Island. Of all the regions in the system, I thought that the cost of living would be one of the highest in the Kitikmeot region.

I feel that the assessment that was done by the Department of Social Services was unfair. I am not really able to speculate on it, but I feel that it was a little bit unfair. It may not have been unfair but, according to my opinion, that is as I see it.

So I wonder if the Minister for Social Services would revisit the assessment that was done by her department -- or was it done by other agencies, I don't know -- because the cost of living, especially in Pelly Bay, is very high. The only way that people are able to afford to buy the basic stuff from the co-op store is through the subsidy that we get from the system, from the government.

I know the cost of living in Taloyoak is quite high compared to other communities in other regions. I know the cost of living in Gjoa Haven is quite high compared to other communities in other regions. I am not sure about Holman Island. I am sure

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that the cost of living is high, as well, in that particular community.

What I am trying to say here is that we need fair assessment. Perhaps her staff in those communities

could go down to the store, the co-op store, the Hudson's Bay Company or Northern, and just take some information, just walk around the store and find out how much a litre of milk is, how much a ten-pound bag of flour is, or what have you. That concludes my remarks for the time being.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the concerns that Mr. Ningark brought on the rates that are deducted from social assistance recipients whenever they earn a little bit of money, we are planning to increase the allowable rates for earnings for recipients and, hopefully, by the summer, we will be able to implement them. The present rate for a single person is \$50.00, and we are planning to increase that to \$95.00. For the family, today's rate is \$100.00, and we are proposing \$190.00. I do realize that, in some cases, this can be a disincentive to some individuals to look for employment. I believe that is one area that we are planning to tackle with the income support program for those who want to be productive in the community. They will receive income for work performed.

On your second concern on the rates for the four communities in your region that I reinstated, after reductions were made, I think I have made a commitment that our department will do a detailed survey on each community. Our increases were based on the survey done by the Statistics Bureau, so the rates we used were not carried out by our department. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. Next on my list is Mr. Pudlat.

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think some of my questions have been partially answered by the Minister of Social Services.

I have a question. I am sure it is answered in your recommendations. When I first became a Member of the Legislative Assembly, we tackled the issue of welfare recipients, and in the years 1992, 1993 and 1994, we tried to rectify some of the problems we had with welfare recipients, although I am not against

welfare recipients. I know that some people will be happy about the increase in the amount. Since 1992, we have said that welfare recipients should be given the incentive to work.

For example, I am not against young people receiving welfare cheques, because there are no job opportunities in the north, therefore they have to be on welfare. So, Mr. Chairman, the people who are capable of working are receiving welfare cheques. We started to consider the fact that we can give the welfare recipients some incentive to work -- especially the young people who are at the age of the work field -- as they receive welfare cheques due to a lack of employment. Mr. Chairman, I am sure that this is one of the recommendations, that we should have more work incentive for the younger welfare recipients.

The number of welfare recipients can be reduced if we can give them more work initiatives. Then, perhaps, they can stop being the recipients of welfare, if we can give them some kind of a work program or some kind of incentive. That way there would be fewer welfare recipients. I would like you to be able to understand my question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have stated earlier, this is going to be in the income support program. I know that this will deal with the younger people who are capable of working. For those who need to further their education, the income reform program, which I talked about, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Services have started this program. Do you understand what I'm saying?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Madam Minister. The honourable Member for Baffin South, Mr. Pudlat.

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary question. With regard to John Ningark's question, I don't know if I'm allowed to ask the question again. I have a concern about welfare recipients who make a bit of money, especially those who are incapable of working, including the elders. They often have many children and many dependents in their houses who

have to be fed and clothed. If they make a little bit of money it is deducted off their welfare cheques. I know we are running into some problem with this, due to cutbacks. However, I have a concern that the welfare cheques of welfare recipients, who come from very large families and who make a little bit of money, are deducted.

Is this issue dealt with in your guidelines or policies? Perhaps it is within your policy to deduct the amount of money they have earned from their welfare cheques, when they are incapable of working. After they use up their welfare money and make a bit of their own money, Social Services deducts it, although the recipients require the funds. Is this due to finance policy or the department's guidelines? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

(Translation) To answer the Member for Baffin South, it is in our guidelines and policies. I want you to be aware that anybody who receives welfare has to be eligible. It states this in the policy. We don't let them sell property such as their hunting equipment, so aboriginal people can hunt for their subsistence. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Qujannamiik. Thank you. I believe we're on section 15-10, directorate. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Mr. Chairman, there's a trend in Canada right now with regard to social reform. A lot of it has to do with changing the system in order to have some kind of balance, if you want to call it that. The federal budget is making sure that there is no longer what you call family allowance, we don't have the universal program any more. We might eventually have the same sort of situation with health. The way the

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programs are designed right now, give social assistance recipients something to look forward to when it comes to child tax benefits for example.

But, I'm afraid what is happening right now -- and I can only refer to the aboriginal family -- is we tend to

leave a family in a position where they are cared for to a point where they are surviving, but there is nothing there for self-determination. We have a program that is designed in a way to keep people down. It is degrading and humiliating that we have to put people in a situation which really doesn't give them any kind of hope.

In the report of the department, I don't see stats which really give you a feel of where it thinks we are at in the different regions. In Fort Providence, I have to thank this government for the amount of work that is going on in that area. But if we weren't on the highway system, we would have the kind of situation where welfare and unemployment would be high. Since the government has been established up here, there must be trends in the north that indicate what areas we need to concentrate on. There are perhaps more suicides, more solvent abuse, or violence.

I don't know how you are addressing those issues. When we address violence, for example, we don't concentrate on it from a regional point of view or even from the community point of view. But, you must have some answers by now, after thirty years of government here, where this government can point to areas that need help. I will use my region as an example. There is high unemployment because most of the work that is created is not based on what is happening from the economic point of view, but because of government initiatives. Maybe that also means that in a community with greater employment, there is also more solvent abuse. Maybe, I don't know. There have to be some trends that this government is studying in order to address problem areas.

For unemployment insurance, there is an increase in the number of hours you have to work in order to qualify. How is this government addressing that? In the Northwest Territories we have short building seasons and long winters. Certainly, an announcement made by Paul Martin or the Executive must have an impact, where you, as Ministers, should be saying that down south, it sounds pretty reasonable, but it is not reasonable up here. Those are some of the concerns.

Again, pension is another area in which I believe the federal government is going to have an impact on the north, too. But, what are we doing as a government? I am expressing those concerns, Mr. Chairman. Even though much of it doesn't have to do with this government itself, the kinds of decisions that are made in Ottawa are going to impact on the average

person in the Northwest Territories with regard to family allowance, social assistance, pensions, unemployment, shelters for women, suicide prevention, alcohol and drug treatment programs, everything. Everything that is going to happen is going to have a major impact on people up here. The government is saying we need to reduce those programs by a reduction in the allocation of dollars going to the Northwest Territories. How is the Minister addressing all of those major national issues that are going to be impacting the north? I wanted to touch a bit on custom adoption after the Minister responds.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Member for his comments and his concerns with the way in which the social assistance is applied. I do agree. I know most of the recipients don't feel good about just having it handed to them. At least that is one of the things I do know. I think that is why the reform has to take place. The income support program is a partial solution to some of the problems that we face in the north. One of them is that, like I said earlier to Mr. Ningark, if the community member wants to be a productive member of the community, then the income support program will play a large role in that. It will lift the self-esteem of many individuals into a better situation.

With the UIC and pension, I do realize what the Member's concerns are. We have been fortunate that we have not been adversely affected within Social Services. Our programs have not been affected by, at least, this year's federal government's budget. I don't know if it will continue like that. I do agree the trends are there that the dollars are getting harder to come by.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the last comment that the Minister made, we do need to have shelters because of the higher rate of violence. You didn't have to tell me that. I knew that. The only thing is, why? The "why" is what I would like to have



answered. Why is it happening? Is it because of unemployment, low self-esteem or a combination of other factors? What is causing the high rate of violence? We seem to be doing everything to address the situation by providing all of these facilities in order to address the immediate concern, but we are not sitting back and saying, why is it happening? Why do we need to spend so many capital dollars to address a situation which should have been addressed a long time ago, perhaps? I don't understand.

I don't know what the reasons are or the answers on how to address it, but I think there is certainly something most definitely wrong out there. I think much of it has to do with lack of employment. Low self-esteem is something I have always had a concern about. One of the reasons for that is that we have taken much away from the communities. We have taken much away with regard to responsibility for their own direction and destination. Perhaps we or the department know that is one of the major factors of why those trends are happening the way they are. I am not hearing it. We seem to be hiding things so we don't address it. We just look at piecemeal solutions, shelters, alcohol and drug treatment centres, training in suicide prevention and that sort of thing. They all address the immediate solution, but we are not looking at the "why." I wanted to touch on a different subject. I don't expect the Minister to respond, but I wouldn't have minded her giving me that kind of answer. Then, we would know, as legislators, where the problems are. We might be able to deal with it. We certainly could support the Minister in that direction,

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if she was to say publicly that those are some of the main factors.

Touching on custom adoption, Mr. Chairman, I believe many years ago, around 1983 or 1984, we were going to come up with a new legislation called the human rights code. I think it was called that at that time. Mr. Nerysoo took the initiative of taking the lead role in that direction. One of the main reasons why this code didn't go through was because of the collective rights of aboriginal people. One of the things that is coming up every year is that you are looking at a collective right and devolving it into an individual right, by virtue of tinkering with it. I don't know why you feel that we should have an act with regard to custom adoption. It says here in your definitive plan that, "in conjunction with the

Department of Justice, legislative amendments are being proposed to simplify the process of native custom adoption. This will help to simplify the process and clear the backlog of applications to be registered through the courts."

I've looked at this and I've looked at other examples where this government has taken a lead role in fitting aboriginal customs into the existing system. In a lot of cases, I have to tell you, it's not working. If customs are recognized already, and they have been recognized in the Constitution, why should we be tinkering with it? Is there a legal requirement by this government to draft legislation with regard to aboriginal customs? Is it their responsibility to do that, or has that been recognized already under the Canadian Constitution? And, if it is, why are we looking at doing things in this area?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Perhaps what the honourable Mr. Gargan is referring to is more appropriately addressed under family and children's services. Before I ask the honourable Minister to respond to Mr. Gargan, I will ask Members of the committee to approve the directorate. Then perhaps the Minister could better address the issue under family and children's services. Directorate, total O and M, \$11.646 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

Family And Children's Services

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Family and Children's Services. Now the honourable Minister can respond to Mr. Gargan. Honourable Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Mr. Gargan's comment on the amount of violence there is in the NWT, I can only speculate because I don't believe there has been any kind of scientific study carried out on this specifically, in the NWT. I really don't have any basis to make a comment on why violence is so high here, other than the fact that within the last ten to 25 years, the aboriginal people in the NWT have undergone tremendous change which, I think, has resulted in the social problems we have today.

I can understand and appreciate Mr. Gargan's concerns on custom adoption. If he feels we shouldn't be tinkering with custom adoption, I'm afraid I'm going to have to disagree. I have a very strong traditional background, having been brought up in an Inuit family who believes in open adoptions, what we call custom adoptions. One of the beauties of our custom in adopting a child is that all it requires is the consent of two parents. Most of the time, not all the time, the father doesn't really have any say.

This legislation is just going to deal with the process, and I'm quite comfortable with it, as the Minister responsible for adoptions. We're in a situation where a grandparent has to lose a case over trying to adopt her grandchild. The way our situation is set up, with courts, even the custom adopted children, if they wish when they grow up, can't go back and try to look into their files if they don't happen to know who their real parents are because their files are sealed. Custom adoption would allow for open adoption, and I think it would be more relevant to our aboriginal population that the present practice is not lost.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Mr. Chairman, the only reason custom adoption is recognized right now is because it has been kept away from the white law books. That's what makes a custom. Once you put it into the white system of law, it is no longer custom adoption. It becomes part of the white judicial system. I don't know why it is so difficult to recognize that. I'm saying it is recognized now, under section 35 of the Constitution. I think the case you have referred to has already been overturned. The grandparents of this custom adoption child who died because of an accident, have been awarded the insurance. The decision was only based on section 35 of the Constitution, I believe.

All I'm saying is why put something that is already recognized and is still an aboriginal custom, into law? I think that doing what you're doing might result in something like section 25 of the Education Act with regard to ethnic culture. I think it's section 25, but if it isn't, it's a section of the Education Act which says that we should start delivering aboriginal cultural programs in all the schools.

So it becomes, again, law, white law, in which my responsibility as an aboriginal person is given to the

white system of law to be delivered. It is something that I have been fighting with for I don't know how many years.

But, again, like I said, Madam Minister, when you take away part of the culture and you adopt it into a different system, it really takes away something, a piece of yourself, I would think, and we still think that we don't have any...We know what the problems are.

Again, you did talk about violence, and, yes, violence is five times the national average, just as suicide is. Also, the prisons are five times the national average, too. But we knew that ten years ago and we still don't have an answer for it. I think it's a damned shame that, after all these years, we haven't identified anything that suggests what really is wrong. It really embarrasses me, Mr. Chairman, when we hear the media saying that these are the stats up here.

Mr. Chairman, just one more question and one other thing I wanted to ask the Minister about is with regard to a psychologist in Fort McPherson. Do you actually have a psychologist there right now?

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**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):** Thank you. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the psychologist, we do fund the community to hire their own, but that person is not an employee of Social Services.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

(Microphone turned off)

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it was about a year ago that the chief came and requested some funds to try and address some of the problems of attempted suicides and suicides in that community, and I agreed to provide some funding for that community. The contract, I believe, is with the band council.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. On family and children's services. Mr. Gargan, to the issue.

**MR. GARGAN:**

It's probably going to be on the next page that I will have another question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Section 15, page 11, family and children's services, total O and M, \$12.052 million. I have Mr. Ballantyne.

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Where are we at, family and children's services?

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

(Microphone turned off)

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

I thought you said \$52,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in my opening comments, I talked about where I think there should be either new resources or where there should be reallocation of present resources, and this is the activity that I am talking about. I really believe that an extra \$1 million spent on this activity is, five years down the line, going to save you many millions in the next two activities -- in the alcohol and drugs/community mental health area or in the whole area of people being on social services.

So this is the area that I am going to be looking at, hopefully, in a supp, if not new money. If you can't wrest new money from the Minister of Finance, then seriously consider some reallocation of funds.

My second point is in response to something that the Minister said about child sexual abuse which I want to emphasize. I think it's the most serious social problem facing us in the territories. I agree with the Minister that, over the last five years, it is now easier for people to talk about it. It is something that is now being discussed at a community level and people are starting to report what's going on. That is a very positive sign, but that in itself is not going to solve the problem.

For me, it is a multi-faceted approach to the problem. I, for one -- and other MLAs in the Legislative

Assembly may disagree with me, but I have been quite consistent over the years -- have very little sympathy for child sexual abusers, and I am happy to see that the trend across the country is that the sentences for convicted child sexual abusers are getting longer. Society is taking it more seriously and I, for one, am happy to see that.

Though I agree that we need more rehabilitation, the reality is that child sexual abuse is a very difficult area for rehabilitation.

I take it one step further, I agree with the stiff sentences for sexual abusers. For repeat offenders, as far I am concerned, you should throw away the damned key -- sorry, Mr. Chairman -- because I have absolutely no sympathy whatsoever for repeat offenders.

I think, when we talk about the social and personal problems that lead somebody to abuse a child, we have to keep in mind the child itself. The child, he or she, is very vulnerable and very, very innocent. I think if ever it comes to a choice between an offender, for whatever horrible things might have happened to them over their life -- and I agree that a lot of them have had horrible experiences -- our ultimate and first line of defence has to be for those innocent children. Any society that can't defend their children, I think, loses all credibility as being a society. In the history of the world, every healthy culture and every healthy civilization has always had an extremely severe taboo against child sexual abuse.

So I think that community leaders and community groups have to be continually encouraged to speak out against child sexual abuse. It has to be very clear to everybody that nobody in our society condones it, whatsoever. I believe it's very important that we get that point across in any way possible.

What I hope to see from the department over the next year is some really strong leadership in this area. I think there has been a good base that's been built. I think the department has done a lot of good work to get us to where we are, but I think it's time to go to the next step. I think there is always some hesitance because the reality is that the problem is so profound, potentially so severe, it is almost overwhelming to try to deal with. I think, though, if we don't deal with it now the problem is going to compound many times for the next generation.

So I don't have a question for the Minister, but I just want the Minister and the deputy to clearly know

where I am coming from and the sort of leadership that I'll be looking at when we come back here in the fall session. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. I know this issue of Social Services, family and children's services, is a very emotional issue, but I would remind the Members to watch the language we use in this House. No matter what kind of language we use, it is not going to change the situation unless we work diplomatically together in the system. All right? Family and children's services, total O & M, \$12.052 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

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Alcohol And Drugs And Community Mental Health

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Page 15-12, alcohol, drugs and community mental health, total O & M, \$12.682 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

Community And Family Support Services

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Community and family support services, total O & M, \$43.576 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Details of grants and contributions. Grants, \$290,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Contributions on page 15-15 information item. Details of grants and contributions on page 15-16. Contributions, \$17.35 million. Mr. Antoine.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the services to the aged and handicapped, part of this one deals with funding for non-profit organizations to operate senior citizen/personal care facilities. I know that Social Services contracts different organizations to run senior citizens' facilities. The actual proposed budget is lower than the 1992-93 actuals and lower than the revised forecast for 1993-94. I know that in Fort Simpson they have a facility that is run by the band from Social Services. The people who work in there are telling me that they need more funding. The funding seems to be frozen. I know the Minister is looking at these types of facilities and the salaries of front line workers in the communities along with the alcohol and drug workers. If she is looking into increasing funding for these facilities, when would we expect to see something here, as an MLA, to tell the people in the communities that this department is looking at increasing the amount of funding that is going to them to take care of their senior citizens' homes? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. The honourable Minister for Social Services.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the 1995-96 budget, you might expect to see some changes. Definitely, there are going to be some changes, the way our budget has been set. With the consolidation of Health and Social Services and the elimination of duplication of some of the programs in these departments, we should be realizing some savings where some extra funds can be identified. We will take it from there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Details of grants and contributions. Contributions, \$17.35 million. Mr. Whitford.

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In community and family support services, town of Iqaluit, now that the town of Iqaluit is having some problems, and I am sure that my colleague, Mr. Patterson, would be asking a question on it if he were here. To deliver social services programs in the community, there were some problems with the delivery of that service when the town was at full strength, and the department was all too familiar with some of the issues. Who is delivering the program for the town of Iqaluit now that the town is no longer a town?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. The honourable Minister of Social Services.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The town is and the staff is still intact despite the counsellors not being renewed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Mr. Whitford.

**MR. WHITFORD:**

The service is still being delivered by the same people who were delivering the service prior to the dissolution of the town council. Is that correct?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

That is correct.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Mr. Whitford.

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were several problems that were being faced by the town as they delivered that program. Much of it dealt with the dollars. There was a dispute over the amount of money that was being paid to the town to deliver that program. It was often threatened by the then mayor to hand the program back to the department, and the town would not be responsible for them unless some compromise had been arrived at. Previous Ministers had to deal with that, with visits to the town to help

resolve that on behalf of the department. Have those problems been resolved? Is there a fairly smooth delivery of the service now on behalf of the government by the town of Iqaluit?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. When I first got the portfolio, the problem still existed, which was resolved between the mayor and myself. Since 1991-92, the town was short of dollars because of the increase of the case loads in Iqaluit, which was resolved at our first meeting with the mayor of Iqaluit then. We haven't had too many problems with it since. One of the problems was that the town had a different year end than the territorial government. Funding requirements from the GNWT ended in a different year end than the town of Iqaluit. That was resolved in 1992. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Details of grants and contributions, contributions, \$7.35 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed

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---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Grants and contributions. Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask a question about the community mental health workers. There is one position in Fort Good Hope. I would like to ask in what other communities you have such a position.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are only two communities that have community mental health workers.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. On page 15-16, I said \$7 million earlier. I will say it correctly this time. It is \$17.35 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

Fort Good Hope and where?

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

(Microphone turned off)

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Mr. Gargan.

**MR. GARGAN:**

The position in Fort McPherson, is that a community mental health worker or is that a psychologist?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Madam Minister, I don't think your first answer was recorded. For the record, maybe you can perhaps say it one more time. The microphone was not on at the witness table. Madam Minister.

**HON. REBECCA MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a community mental health worker and that person who has that position is a psychologist.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. Grants and contributions, \$17.640 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Mahsi. Details of work performed on behalf of third parties. Total department, \$466,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Qujannamiik. Now, we go back to program summary on page nine of this section. Program summary, total O and M, \$79.956 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Does the committee agree that this particular department is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the honourable Minister and the witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you.

I will wait until the witnesses leave the witness table. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Antoine.

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. I believe we do not have a quorum here. I'm going to ring the bell.

Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. I will call the House back to order. Item 19, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1 and Committee Report 2-12(5), and would like to report progress with three motions being adopted. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Is there a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Whitford. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

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

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ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Madam Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Special Joint Committee on Division at 6:00 pm this evening. There are meetings tomorrow morning at 9:00 am of the Standing Committee on Finance and also at 9:00 am of the Standing Committee on Legislation, at 10:30 am of the Ordinary Members' Caucus and at 12:00 pm of the Chairs' Liaison Committee. Orders of the day for Thursday, March 24, 1994.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Oral Questions
6. Written Questions
7. Returns to Written Questions
8. Replies to Opening Address
9. Petitions
10. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
11. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
12. Tabling of Documents
13. Notices of Motion
14. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
15. Motions
16. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 18, Write-Off Of Debts Act, 1993-94
  - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act
17. Second Reading of Bills
18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1994-95
  - Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

- Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Safety Act
- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act
- Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 17, Loan Authorization Act, 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, 34-12(5), Tradition and Change, A Strategy for Renewable Resource Development in the NWT, February 1994

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:**

Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 24, 1994, at 1:30 pm.

---ADJOURNMENT