



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

7th Session

Day 34

12th Assembly

HANSARD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1995

Pagination reflects print edition

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1995

Page 977

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Hon. Silas Arngna'naaq, Mr. Ballantyne, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Hon. Samuel Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Ms. Mike, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Hon. Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Patterson, Hon. John Pollard, Mr. Pudlat, Mr. Pudluk, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Mahsi, Mr. Whitford. Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 66-12(7): Northern Accord

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, Members will be aware that for the past several months this government has been in discussions with all aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories, in an attempt to reach a common position on the devolution of the legislative authority for oil, gas and minerals from the federal government to the GNWT.

I must inform Members that yesterday these discussions reached a serious impasse, regarding the definition of aboriginal rights and self-government within the northern accord document, that threatens this process.

Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal groups have put forward a position that attempts to define self-government within the northern accord document.

Throughout these discussions, it has been our view that while we recognize the linkages between constitutional development, including the northern accord, and self-government, they remain two separate and distinct processes.

The northern accord is, primarily, an economic agreement that will allow the Government of the

Northwest Territories and, pending agreements between aboriginal groups and Canada, aboriginal claimant groups, and future aboriginal governments the ability to raise revenues from mineral development.

At the same time, we have recognized the importance of current and future self-government negotiations in this process. We have been committed to proceeding with the northern accord discussions in a manner that does not, in any way, abrogate, derogate or prejudice any aboriginal and treaty rights, including any future agreements reached between aboriginal groups and Canada. We have proposed to include wording within the northern accord that not only protects, but promotes the opportunity to negotiate agreements with the federal government on matters covered by the northern accord.

We believe this position is fair and, in fact, enhances the ability of aboriginal claimant groups and First Nations to begin

negotiations with the federal government on the self-government issues.

The Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs is prepared to meet with all of these groups to discuss in more detail this government's position on aboriginal self-government.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough the importance of this issue. This government is being faced with fiscal restrictions and federal cuts that will significantly erode our financial base and fundamentally affect our ability to deliver essential services to people in all regions of the Northwest Territories. At the same time, the options available to raise revenues to offset these cuts are limited.

Northerners cannot afford significant increases in taxation or service charges. Revenue generation from resource development is our best opportunity to raise revenues and retain a financial base that will allow us to meet the increasing demands for services in all of our communities.

I note that the protection of our fiscal base is of fundamental importance as it will be from this fiscal base that the resources to finance all future government that may eventually be formed from the existing Northwest Territories will have to come from.

Mr. Speaker, I remain committed to continuing these discussions in an earnest and genuine attempt to find

a solution to this impasse. Although we have reached this impasse, I am still prepared to work towards the May 31st deadline that was set by all parties in the process. I hope during that time we can develop a common northern position that we can bring forward to the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, if there is no resolution to these discussions at that time, I will have to go forward to Cabinet with the options available to determine a course of action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Minister's Statement 67-12(7): Snow Machine Trip To Coppermine And Return

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Renewable Resources' mandate involves working closely with those pursuing traditional aboriginal lifestyles. Our field officers in smaller communities

Page 978

work with local harvesters to responsibly manage our resources.

I would like to inform the Members of an innovative approach recently undertaken by Renewable Resources to facilitate contact between community harvesters and senior management staff. A snow machine trip from Yellowknife to Coppermine and return was undertaken during the sessional break. On March 15th, the deputy minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Joe Handley, and four others left Yellowknife by snow machine and travelled to Deline, then across Great Bear Lake to Hornby Bay and to Coppermine.

They then travelled back to Yellowknife via Contwoyto Lake through Lac de Gras area, reaching Yellowknife on March 27th. They were accompanied and guided along the way by many people from the various communities to which they travelled.

This trip proved an excellent way to meet people who live in smaller communities, and especially those who depend on the land for their livelihood. These people now know our senior departmental staff understand at

least a small amount about what it's like to be out on the land.

Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and the other Dogrib chiefs met with the group in Rae Lakes, checked their equipment and clothing, went over the travel plans and arranged a guide for them to Deline. Moise Rabesca provided accommodation for a night at his outfitting camp headquarters at Rae and loaned some equipment he felt they should have. Walter Bahya and his family travelled from Deline to Hornby Bay, guiding the group across that huge lake and over dangerous pressure ridges. Walter is quite proud that his wife is the first Dene woman to have travelled to the Hornby Bay area, probably since the turn of the century, at least. Colin Adjun, Stanley Klengenber and Josh Hunter guided the group from Hornby Bay to Coppermine. Bobby Algona, a Coppermine hunter and trapper born and raised in the Contwoyto Lake area ensured the group was able to make the trip from Coppermine to Contwoyto Lake.

Mr. Speaker, this trip provided an opportunity to meet with outfitters like Moise Rabesca and Gary Jaeb, with the Dogrib chiefs, with HTA members and generally with people from the communities. The meetings were informal and relaxed, which is the way we do much of our business in smaller communities.

It was unfortunate that my schedule prevented me from participating in this trip. I know the people in the communities were pleasantly surprised to see a deputy minister travelling by snowmobile over such long distances. This trip allowed staff to visit remote locations; to demonstrate their understanding of travel on the land; and, was completed at less cost than if the staff had simply flown directly to Coppermine without managing to visit the camps in between.

This innovative approach to fostering better relations between the department and communities was an overall success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Cournoyea.

Minister's Statement 68-12(7): Tabling Of Community Wellness Directions Document

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, today I will be tabling "Working Together For Community Wellness: A Directions Document," on behalf of the Ministers of the social envelope.

Mr. Speaker, northerners have said they need to have more control over health and social services programs. The community wellness strategy will give them more control. People in the communities know what their problems are, and they know how to solve them. Under the community wellness strategy communities will identify their own priorities and develop their own strategies for achieving wellness.

The document being tabled today is part of the ongoing work in developing a community wellness strategy. It will guide the government and the communities in their work to change the way health and social programs are planned and delivered. A completed community wellness strategy with a specific plan of action and implementation schedule will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in the winter of 1996.

But community wellness will continue to be a government priority in 1995-96. A community action fund of over \$3 million will be made available to communities and non-governmental organizations during this time. This money will help fund new and existing community wellness projects that cannot be funded through other programs.

The community action fund will be available only until the final strategy can be implemented, and will give priority to projects in:

-family violence;

-early intervention services for children and families; and,

-training for care givers.

Work on the final strategy will be ongoing in 1995-96. A working group drawn from the social envelope departments will coordinate strategy development. A community wellness steering committee of deputy ministers will oversee their work and continue monitoring other wellness issues. As well, regional community wellness conferences are planned for 1995-96. These conferences will provide further direction for the development of the strategy.

Working Together for Community Wellness:

A Directions Document provides our departments, the residents of the Northwest Territories and non-

governmental organizations with a blueprint for the community wellness strategy. It is the joint effort of the departments of Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Justice, Municipal and Community Affairs, the NWT Housing Corporation, and representatives from community and cultural groups, aboriginal organizations, women's groups and non-governmental organizations across the NWT.

Hundreds of people have helped make this document possible by taking time to guide us in the right direction. Their input and collaboration made this new vision possible. Let us now continue in that direction and make that vision a reality.

Page 979

Mr. Speaker, general release of the English and Inuktitut document will take place shortly. A French translation of the document is now under way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 69-12(7): Appearance Before The Federal Committee On Gun Control Legislation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I have an emergency statement. We have been advised late this morning that the Subcommittee of Caucus will appear before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs on Monday, April 24th from 7:30 pm until 9:30 pm. We will share the time with the Yukon government.

As Members know, Bill C-68, on respecting firearms and other weapons, has been sent to the Parliamentary committee for hearings. Hearings have been scheduled from April 24th to May 19th, when it is expected that the committee will report to the House of Commons and the House of Commons will deal with the bill before it recesses for the summer.

Unfortunately, no other groups from the Northwest Territories have been selected to appear before the committee. We will ask the chairman of that committee to reconsider this decision. However, since we won't know immediately if other

presentations will be accepted, it will be important for Members to encourage groups who have concerns regarding this bill to send us their concerns and the information immediately.

To that end, Mr. Hamilton's office, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, will once again advertise widely on how to reach the Assembly and the Members directly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Cournoyea.

Minister's Statement 70-12(7): Provincial/Territorial Ministers Of Health Conference

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the provincial/territorial Ministers of Health meeting in Vancouver.

As Members know, the health system across the country is undergoing reform and undergoing change. The recent cuts to health care funding and the impact those cuts will have on our national system of publicly-funded medicare was the main concern of Ministers attending the meeting.

Because of this, there is an urgent requirement for the federal government to work collectively with the provinces and territories to define the level of health care which will be provided to Canadians, and to establish a strong partnership designed to maintain uniformity of health services across the country.

In addition to the issue of medicare, the Ministers also signed off the master agreement on the Canadian blood supply program. This agreement completes an initiative began in 1991 and provides an administrative framework for the management of Canada's blood supply.

Mr. Speaker, a number of other significant health issues were discussed at the meeting.

These include the management of health issues in a national context, a physician resources management strategy, the national forum on health, the Krever Inquiry and the growth of private health clinics in the provinces.

There was also discussion on the need for the federal government to take action to control costs in areas

such as drug pricing and the need to identify and eliminate duplication between federal, provincial and territorial programs.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories intends to play an active role in the discussion on national health issues, particularly as they relate and impact on health delivery in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Pudlat.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Fire At Sanikiluaq Air Terminal

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make an announcement to my colleagues about what happened yesterday morning in Sanikiluaq. The airport terminal at Sanikiluaq experienced a fire yesterday. According to what I have heard, no one was hurt in the fire and also, Mr. Speaker, I've been told that this was an accidental fire. But, Mr. Speaker, the airport terminal in Sanikiluaq cannot be used until they get a new one. I heard that the Department of Transportation and DPW are currently working to determine what needs to be done with the building. I'm happy to announce, Mr. Speaker, that no one was hurt in the fire but I wanted Members to know that the airport terminal in Sanikiluaq burned down yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ballantyne.

Member's Statement On Seniors' Housing And Social Needs Study

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Senior' Society unveiled their seniors' housing and social needs study.

---Applause

It is my understanding that the territorial Minister, Mr. Morin, and also senior territorial civil servants were

there as the seniors unveiled this study. Some of the major recommendations of the study are as follows,
MR. SPEAKER:

- As there is a shortage of affordable and accessible housing in the Northwest Territories, new approaches for shelter must be developed for delivery to seniors by the public and private sectors;

- An overhaul of the current income security system for

Page 980

seniors in the Northwest Territories is required because the majority of seniors have low incomes and currently support spending is not focused;

- The delivery of programs for seniors is fragmented and lacks coordination. A long-term, holistic approach to seniors' needs, managed and directed by a senior government agency, in the NWT is needed. One of the first objectives of an agency dedicated to seniors should be to undertake a comprehensive evaluation to appraise seniors' services in the Northwest Territories;

- Renewed emphasis on home support and coordinated home care, as a primary means for promoting "aging in place" is advised;

- Institutional facilities to care for the needs of frail elders and those suffering from physical and mental disabilities should be developed;

- The abuse of seniors is reported to be widespread in the Northwest Territories and further research and reporting, as well as a public information campaign, is essential to safeguard seniors from abuse;

- Promotion and maintenance of proactive seniors' programs that encourage healthy nutrition, fitness, recreation and social development contribute to the long-term well-being of seniors. These programs should be enhanced and increased.

- A senior management information system which measures and tracks the costs in use of services by seniors is recommended, especially in light of public sector spending restraint.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude and thanks to Esther Braden, the president and to the NWT Seniors' Society. We, as legislators, often talk about the importance of seniors and elders to our society and to our lives.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, everything that we are and that our children can be, we owe to seniors and elders. They've asked to be partners with government, they've asked to take control of their own destiny, Mr. Speaker, we owe them no less. Thank you, very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Implementation Of Organ Donor Program In NWT

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about something that I've already spoken about on a number of occasions and I believe it is quite appropriate to discuss again today. Although we may be in recess at the time, the week of April 16th to 22nd is designated as National Organ Donors Awareness Week. I've been trying to promote an understanding and an awareness of organ donors for some time now, to let people know the good that they can do, even after their deaths if they choose to donate their organs to the living.

It is possible for every organ donor to help improve the lives of as many as 13 others; in many cases, making the difference between life and death; and, in most cases, a much better quality of life. For instance, allowing a blind person to see or freeing someone from a kidney machine to resume normal life. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear, I'm not asking for an expensive program that places unreasonable expectations on our local medical facilities. I'm referring primarily to people who travel on holidays, for business, educational purposes and other reasons to the south. In the event that these people die while in the south, large hospitals have suitable facilities to

harvest organs and tissue and can forward them to a transplant centre.

I'm talking about implementing a simple cost-effective, little program such as a donor card placed on the back of our existing drivers' licences. I'll tell you why I think this little program is worthwhile, Mr. Speaker. Donated eyes can restore vision by replacing corneas. This operation has a 90 to 95 per cent success rate. For someone with a failing heart, a donated heart is quite simply the gift of new life and is very successful in most cases today. Donated lungs are given to those suffering from fatal conditions like cystic fibrosis. For those suffering from liver failure, the only treatment is a liver transplant.

Because a person can live a normal life with only one kidney, each donor can help provide for two lives. Donated skin can be used to temporarily cover severe burns and speed the healing process.

Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to continue.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Those who choose to donate their organs often say they like the idea because even after their deaths, they have an opportunity to extend the gift of life to others. But, this is a very personal decision for individuals to make and I respect the right of those who do not, for whatever reasons, wish to participate in this program.

The issue as I see it, Mr. Speaker, is that this government, like previous governments, is reluctant to provide a simple method that would allow for our residents to make their own informed choices on this matter and provide a method by which this can be carried out. I'm puzzled as to why the Government of the Northwest Territories is so reluctant to provide the people with this option so they can clearly state their decisions regarding organ donations after their passing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 981

Member's Statement On Inuit CNE "Spirit Of The Arctic" Pavilion

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to the House on the Inuit "Spirit of the Arctic" pavilion being featured at this summer's Canadian National Exhibition. I'm pleased to report that the official announcement of the Inuit as the feature pavilion at the 1995 Canadian National Exhibition will be made April 20th at the annual general meeting of the CNE in Toronto. As part of this public announcement, throat singers and drum dancers will perform, and products manufactured across Nunavut will be displayed.

Mr. Speaker, feature pavilions at the CNE in past years have historically generated between \$2 million and \$4 million in direct sales of products. In addition, spin-off businesses, such as new distribution arrangements for products, have delivered a further future business to participants.

I would like to state that I am very pleased that the Honourable John Todd has seen fit to support this worthwhile project with a very generous contribution of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

---Applause

I trust that other departments will also take advantage of this opportunity to support the project, through their own existing programs or by offering services in kind and artifacts to the organizers. For example, our Department of Personnel offers summer employment for many students. The CNE offers unparalleled on-the-job training experience working in service industries such as restaurants and retail. I am hopeful that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and federal programs can help bring these job experiences to the Inuit youth, while at the same time ensuring a significant Inuit presence in the pavilion.

I understand that the event organizers are proposing pre-event seminar training sessions and a mentorship program to team Inuit youth with experienced service industry personnel. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Iqaluit is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Patterson, conclude your statement.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, promoting the fur industry is of interest and great concern to all Members, I know. This event is a great opportunity to once again tell the Inuit story on the seal controversy. Perhaps the Department of Renewable Resources could support display of seal fur fashions in the fashion shows being put on in the pavilion four times a day.

Other assistance from our government, such as the loan of artifacts from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, could help contribute to the success of this event and, I am sure, help attract tourism by enhancing northern awareness amongst a southern audience.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that our government will make every effort to capitalize on all of the many opportunities that this splendid event offers, with Ministers of all departments being receptive to making a commitment to ensuring the success of the Inuit Spirit of the Arctic pavilion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Healing Camp At Fort McPherson

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past weekend, I had the privilege of making a trip to Inuvik and to the Delta; I drove on the Dempster Highway to Fort McPherson and then, on the ice road up the river to the Ti'oondih Healing Camp. This is a camp that is owned and operated by the Gwich'in. At that camp, the first group of counsellors just graduated and enjoyed a meal with visitors from the various communities. I was very pleased to see the response and support that the Gwich'in provides to this camp. I am very proud to see the people who have just completed their four-week training program and see

how pleased and proud they were to graduate from this course.

Also, in the community, I enjoyed a lot of good hospitality, a lot of good food, and lots and lots of tea. I even participated in their local curling bonspiel. Today, I would like to thank everyone in McPherson and Inuvik for their hospitality. Also, because this is our last day before our Easter break, I would like to wish my colleagues here a happy Easter, and also everyone else across the Northwest Territories. Happy Easter.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Member's Statement On Development Of Agricultural Policy

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to encourage the government to continue to develop and complete the agricultural policy that they are working on. The other day I asked the status of it and I do want to indicate to the Minister the need for such a policy, particularly in my community. We all know that south of the lake we have a lot of nice, warm weather, we also have good areas for soil and things grow very, very well.

At this time, I want to commend an elder in our community, Mr. Harry Sudom, who works very hard during the summer months...

Page 982

---Applause

...and grows a lot of potatoes, enough to probably provide the town. But with the absence of an agricultural policy, it doesn't allow people to be able to set up a good farm to provide potatoes to the whole north. If we can encourage individuals to set up something which would provide potatoes to the north, we will be doing away with importing a product that we can provide in the north. So I would like to take the time to encourage the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism to continue working on his agricultural policy and complete it as soon as his department can do this, because it would address an

economic opportunity that we are all looking to provide to northerners.

At this time, I would also like to wish all of my colleagues a happy Easter and I hope they have a safe trip as they go home for Easter. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Member's Statement On Confusion Re Fort Good Hope Community Council Name Change

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the community of Fort Good Hope became a charter community; as a result, they have changed the name of their council from the Fort Good Hope Dene Community Council to the Ka'sho Got'ine Council. I would like to point out it is the name of the council that has changed, because today I read in a column of a "divine" writer that there is a suggestion that Fort Good Hope has become something else; that it has become Ka'sho Got'ine. The truth is the council has changed its name and Good Hope is still Good Hope. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Nerysoo.

Member's Statement On Renaming Of Stanton Yellowknife Hospital

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to rise to speak about a matter that was raised by my colleagues in the House yesterday, by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South and the honourable Member for North Slave.

It is with regard to a matter of discussion now here in the city of Yellowknife that was raised by the Stanton Yellowknife Hospital board. I wanted to make a couple of comments because it is important that all Members of this Assembly and people of the north recognize the importance of contributions of people, whether they are aboriginal people or non-aboriginal people.

I recall at one time a debate occurring in our Assembly about a change of name for our Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The kind of debate that occurred at that particular time was such that everyone came to the conclusion that Members couldn't agree with the name because the question was what name would we give it. Would we give it a Gwich'in name? Would we give it a name from the Slavey community? Would it be the Inuit community? Would it be a non-aboriginal name? The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say this: I do not have a problem with the name of Stanton, mainly because my view is that we have to recognize people for what they have contributed to the north. In our community, we have a health centre by the name of William Firth Health Centre, and he is a descendant of a Scotsman and a Gwich'in. The fact is that what we were doing was recognizing his contribution to the health services in our community.

I wanted to say that I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we take the advice of the honourable Member for North Slave and recognize that what we should be focusing on clearly are the services and the programs which are being delivered to our people. I agree with the honourable Member because I don't want the issue of names to confuse the responsibility that we have of delivering programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms. Cournoyea.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 335-12(7): Policy For Ministers Awarding Sole-Source Contracts

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell on March 28th regarding a policy for Ministers awarding sole-source contracts in areas outside of their ministerial mandates or responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, there is no policy which permits Ministers to award contracts or authorize expenditures in areas outside their ministerial mandates or responsibilities. All government expenditures authorized by a Minister, including by

means of sole-source contracts, are governed by the Northwest Territories Financial Administration Act and government contract regulations. Further direction is provided in the Financial Management Board's financial administration manual. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Return To Question 313-12(7): Status Of Recommendations For Fire Management Review

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell on March 27th regarding the status of recommendations for fire management review.

The recommendations in the report on the review of the Government of the Northwest Territories forest fire management program and policy were reviewed by a steering committee chaired by the deputy minister of Renewable Resources and consisting of the secretary to the Financial Management Board and the deputy ministers of Public Works and Services and Economic Development and Tourism.

Page 983

Two of 33 recommendations were not accepted by the steering committee. One recommendation and portions of four other recommendations were not commented on by the steering committee because they referred to the proposed aircraft maintenance facility, which was outside the terms of reference for the review.

In February 1994, the Financial Management Board accepted the steering committee's assessment of the report's recommendations. A copy of the steering committee's assessment has been provided to the honourable Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery some 25 students from the grade eight class of the Range Lake North School and their teachers, Sarah McDonald and Jim Bryant. Mr. Speaker, this is the second half of this very large class at Range Lake North School.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my executive assistant for six years, John Stephenson, who shared with me the ups and downs of politics. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just this morning, I was asked whether I am biased in favour of, or a spokesman for, the Union of Northern Workers since I have recognized their representative from time to time in our House. Just to establish that I represent everyone equally and not one organization, today I have decided I will not recognize that representative. Thank you.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Lewis.

Point Of Order

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that according to our rules you are only allowed to recognize someone. You are not allowed to stand and not recognize someone.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to remind Mr. Patterson that I believe this is the second time. I ruled you out of order the first time. I have done it and you are still out of order, so I want to

remind you. Item 5, recognition of visitors to the gallery. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not too often that I have an opportunity to introduce someone from my constituency. I am fortunate that I have two mothers in this world, and I want to introduce you to my mother, Doris Itsi, who brought me into this world.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a very important person in one of our Member's lives, and that is Geraldine, Richard Nerysoo's wife.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism some questions about the tourism study and events related to the tourism industry in the north. In one of his statements, the Minister was very adamant that the future state of the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories should be driven by the private sector. I can't agree with him more that it should be industry-driven.

On a question that I asked him about whether a broad range of tourism operators were notified of an upcoming meeting where a letter was sent by one of his departmental officials -- the deputy minister, I believe -- to a select number of operators, the Minister came back with an answer that not everyone could come to the meeting because of the cost. I think the intent of the letter was to inform people of this meeting and invite them to participate. I know letters are fairly inexpensive -- 43 cents, I think, to mail out a letter -- and we can reach a broad range of operators in the Northwest Territories. So I would just like to know if the Minister has had a chance to review the letter that was sent by his deputy to these operators, and ask whether a broader range of operators will be given an opportunity to maybe not participate directly, but participate through their partners or through the zone associations at this meeting?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps yesterday I was somewhat abrupt in my response to the honourable Member's question.

Page 984

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this is the last day.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we all need a break. Anyway, I would like to assure the honourable Member that I did discuss the matter with the deputy minister yesterday, and I want to assure him there will be provision made for a broader-based representation on this important issue with respect to tourism marketing in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

MR. KOE:

As mentioned yesterday, there are a lot of operators who seem to have been missed in the first list of invitations that went out. Will other participants be given an opportunity to feed into this process and have an opportunity to make their comments known on how tourism zone associations will be managed and operated in the future?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure my honourable colleague that every effort is going to be made to ensure whatever evolves out of this Western Arctic Tourism Association is reflective and, more importantly, representative of the industry in its broadest context. We are making provisions, within the fiscal restraints we all live in, to try to ensure we have broad-based representation in this review, to try to come to some consensus as to what kind of association we want that would represent western Arctic interests. And, when that association does get up and running, to redirect additional fiscal resources the department has into that association so they can more clearly reflect the needs of the industry, rather than just the needs of the department.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for those words. Will the Minister assure me that he will, or through his senior staff, direct the tourism people and other departmental people in the communities that this is a direction that is coming from the Minister, that tourism should be industry-driven, should be managed by the operators and that the membership, rules and by-laws will be set by the tourism industry itself?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 462-12(7): Increased Participation In NWT Tourism Industry Review

HON. JOHN TODD:

Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. There is no question in my mind that whatever the association or organization resolves should be clearly reflective of the interests of the industry. One of the partnerships I see, perhaps for the government, is in the distribution of dollars and an examination of the existing programs to see if they are relevant to the industry today and, if they are -- and I stress "if they are" -- what kinds of new programs and marketing plans do we want to put in place that should be industry-driven, in some kind of partnership with the government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 463-12(7): Implementation Of Organ Donor Card Program

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question I would like to direct to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, I have been accused of putting my heart into this project of organ donor cards and some Ministers have commented that it's going to cost an arm and a leg to pay for this.

---Laughter

---Applause

But, Mr. Speaker, nothing can be further from the truth. Drivers' licenses are already paid for by the consumer and we have staff that will process them. I've done some research into the costs of cards and they vary anywhere from \$600 to \$15,000 for 30,000 of them. I would like to ask the Minister whether his department has had a chance to review this project and look at its costs since I last asked about it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 463-12(7): Implementation Of Organ Donor Card Program

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Did he say his last gasps?

---Laughter

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. The department has, in fact, been reviewing this important initiative that the Member has brought up on a number of occasions. We felt at the time that it was impractical to carry out this request because of the lack of medical facilities in the Northwest Territories. However, in the honourable Member's statement earlier today he indicated that in southern Canada that isn't the case. So, I'm prepared to re-examine the issue and get back to the honourable Member as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago I asked a

Page 985

question of the same Minister regarding the delays in old age pensions. Since then, I have received information from the Premier's office. I'll read part of the information, **MR. SPEAKER:**

"We finally received an answer from the Edmonton office. They apparently sent out the cheques in time but there was a delay either in the transportation or post office. There are plans to open an office here to handle CPP and old age pensions."

My question to the honourable Minister is, when will the office open to handle CPP and old age pensions here in Yellowknife? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, that information was just given to us the other day, and when the question was asked there was no indication when exactly that would be. Because of the volume of work and problems that were increasing, I guess they are trying to get closer to the people they serve. They couldn't give us a date or time when they would implement such a plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister. Perhaps the honourable Minister could communicate with the airlines that currently have the contract to deliver mail to the eastern Arctic regarding the problem of delays in receiving old age pension and CPP cheques. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, at the same time that there were problems with old pensions going to the Kitikmeot region, there were also problems in Tuktoyaktuk and in the Keewatin, so it is questionable where the transportation problems occurred. The delay exists in several different regions and we didn't have time to argue the point in where the delays occurred. Was the delay in getting it from the office to the airline in the first place? Was it a delay out of Yellowknife? We can admit there was a delay but at which point the delay occurred was never identified.

I will commit to speak to the airlines about shipment of first-class mail and mail delivered to communities. However, I just wanted to assure the Member that, because of the delay in several different regions, the delay was not at the regional level. Somehow or

another we have to try to resolve this problem. As suggested previously, perhaps in the far north a few more days advance mailing would help the circumstances. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister. Is the honourable Minister indicating to the House that she will, in fact, communicate with the airlines that deliver the mail in these jurisdictions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 464-12(7): Opening Of NWT Office For Old Age Pensions

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I intend to do that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks we have talked a lot about mining. At the same time we're talking about mining, there seems to be increased interest in oil and gas exploration and activity in the Northwest Territories. My question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources is, what is the department doing to maximize the potential for the regions of the Northwest Territories to take advantage of the increased interest in oil and gas activity?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a difficult time with my hearing and I didn't quite get the end of the

question, Mr. Speaker, as my honourable colleagues have said many times, I have selective hearing.

---Laughter

I wonder if the honourable Member could repeat the question, my apologies.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne.

Question 465-12(7): Promotion Of Oil And Gas Opportunities In The NWT

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if hearing aids are covered under our medical coverage, but I think the Minister should enquire.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, there has been increased interest in oil and gas exploration in the Northwest Territories over the past few months. While we spend a lot of time talking about mining, there is a lot of interest in the territories in the area of oil and gas. My question to the Minister is, what is the Minister's department doing to ensure that the different regions of the Northwest Territories can maximize opportunities in the oil and gas field?

Page 986

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 465-12(7): Promotion Of Oil And Gas Opportunities In The NWT

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, my apologies to my honourable colleague in not hearing the question the first time around.

I know that there is some concern. EM&PR is overly preoccupied with the diamond mine, but I want to assure my honourable colleague that that is not the case. We are working closely with the people in the Deh Cho and other areas to provide them with some technical advice with respect to oil and gas. For example, we are working closely with Chief Harry Deneron. So we are paying attention to oil and gas, we are giving them support when they require it and

we are giving them technical assistance when required also. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ballantyne.

Supplementary To Question 465-12(7): Promotion Of Oil And Gas Opportunities In The NWT

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I think it is always wise to look ahead to the future. There might be time when the Northwest Territories oil and gas is marketable. Does the Minister have any plans, along with representatives from the regions, to meet with the oil and gas industry to see what we can do as a government to attract more investment in this area?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 465-12(7): Promotion Of Oil And Gas Opportunities In The NWT

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recognize what my honourable colleague is saying. He addressed the issue in the House earlier this week. Clearly there is a need to be more aggressive in the marketplace and explain to industry that we are open to business under certain conditions.

No, at this time, there were no provisions made on my department's part to move forward with a delegation into Calgary and other areas. However, we did discuss it informally earlier this morning, and my honourable colleague's comments over the last two or three days are well founded and we have to be more aggressive in the oil and gas field as we have been in the diamond and mineral fields. I want to assure my honourable colleague that is what we intend to do in the coming months, but to date we have not done it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, during question period, I was questioning the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment with regard to a statement that he made in the House called "partners in education." In the statement he stated that there is a review of the student financial assistance program in the new fiscal year. Further on in his statement, he said that the territorial government will also need to review its funding levels to the colleges as we have reached a point where we must reduce spending and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

This is quite a loaded statement, Mr. Speaker, it could mean all kinds of different things. So, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this department exactly what he means by saying this government has to reduce funding levels. Further on he said we must reduce spending. What does he mean by that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In providing the statement, Mr. Speaker, I was informing the honourable Members -- and I think an issue that we are all grappling with at this particular time -- about the amount of financial resources that we have available to us, whether or not it is in this government or whether or not it is in institutions that act on our behalf as our agents.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member made a number of statements in this Assembly about the way in which we deliver programs. The honourable Member pointed out a very successful program in his region. For us to continue or pursue the suggestion that the honourable Member made about the idea of a permanent institution to deliver that program, which was the arts program, requires us to rethink the way in which we spend resources in Arctic College. What I was doing was indicating that in order for us to respond to the suggestions being made in this Assembly and the requests that are being made in our regions, we must assess our priorities and we must review our expenditures in the regions in order for us to accommodate the requests that have been made by other regions.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that response. Could he tell the House what his department is doing to review these funding levels to the colleges at this time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the situation right now that we are all faced with is with regard to the financial resources that will be available in the future for any of our government's institutions. I point this out not to indicate that this government is not committed to

Page 987

developing Aurora College or Nunavut Arctic College, but rather there is a need for us to assess the programs and services that we are providing in Aurora College. Also in the campuses that we have established and the programs that we are now offering, there are other components to financing our programs.

I can advise the honourable Member, we have to determine whether or not social assistance can be a proactive program that is used, for instance, for post-secondary education. The aboriginal groups that have signed final agreements for claims have a number of dollars identified for training, education in post-secondary institutions. The question we then have to ask ourselves is how do we get the confidence of these organizations so that they can become partners in the delivery of post-secondary programs.

Some of these organizations -- as in the experience that we have had with the Gwich'in -- have allowed us to be partners in the development of programs and

also the aboriginal organizations have provided resources.

The other component is third party funding; programs that we run on behalf of other organizations or other governments. All these are factors on how we deliver programs, Mr. Speaker. They have to be reviewed and we have to provide the information and the advice that is necessary to spend these resources.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you. When the Minister stated there will be a review of the student financial assistance program in the new fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention and to the attention of other honourable Members, that some Arctic College students who passed, who wish to further their education, have experienced difficulty because the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is acting like the collection agency for Arctic College.

If money is owed to the college, and even if the student is eligible for education assistance, the students have difficulty receiving further assistance until the Arctic College account is clear. I would like to ask the Minister if this particular policy is going to be reviewed at the same time as the total student financial assistance program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly can be one of the issues raised in the review. However, I do want to advise honourable Members that one of the problems that we have encountered historically is the matter of financial resources owed to Arctic College or some other institutions. The fact is, collection agencies also request us to forward any resources or money paid out to individuals, including financial student assistance. It's not only a matter of our government collecting those resources. The fact is, we've been

asked in some instances to collect on behalf of other organizations.

That's a factor which has to be dealt with with students as well. It's not simply a matter of us being a collection agency. We feel there is a need for us to deliver programs effectively and in support of students. But, at the same time, there is the issue of responsibility and accountability of students. It can be one of the issues that's addressed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the statement that I'm referring to was made on Monday, April 10th. The Minister stated that the Government of Canada, in announcing the new Canada social transfer has the intention to reduce spending in the social envelope; assistance to health, education and social assistance, by \$7 billion.

I would like to ask the Minister, what are the implications of this statement to us here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 466-12(7): Reductions In Student Financial Assistance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise the honourable Member that we have not yet identified all the implications. One of the reasons we have not done that is we have not got into formal negotiations with the federal government on the types of arrangements we would be prepared to accept in a regional agreement of block transfers. That work still has to be done. Part of the direction for our agreement will come from the advice given to us by the task force on income reform and recommendations from the standing committee on the issue of income support programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Alloo.oo.

Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some time earlier this session, I asked the Minister of FMBS about students hired during summer break by the government. The response I got from the government was interesting: that they couldn't get away from paying students \$18 per hour and more because of the collective agreement. Those are last year's rates, this year they are probably more.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister understands the situation very well, I believe. Our interest is to hire as many students as possible in small communities where there are very few jobs. Also, Mr. Speaker, the private sector cannot compete with the government in this area. They have to pay minimum wage, which I believe is between \$5 to \$7 per hour. I wonder if the government is working on finding ways, in the interest of hiring as many students as possible for summer break, to allow that

Page 988

to happen? Is the government working on policies or finding out ways to get away from the collective agreement for casual workers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Chairman of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, as I said to Mr. Patterson last week, in 1992 there were 416 placements of students; in 1993, 668; and, in 1994, 785, so we are managing to place more students, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the issue the Member raises; that is, if we paid less, we could probably hire more people and spread the wealth around. We recognize that and I've committed to this House that I will have the issue raised with the UNW at the earliest opportunity to see if some accommodation can be made in that particular area, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind that summer break for some communities, like the communities of Pond Inlet and Hall Beach, will be towards the beginning of June until early August, and since that time is approaching very quickly, when does the Minister think he will be able to talk to the union? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, we're just entering an arbitration process with the UNW at the present time. I really have to be honest and say to this House that I don't think we'll be able to resolve this issue in time for this hiring season, but the Minister of Education, the Minister of Personnel and myself are well aware of the importance of these students who are hopefully coming back to spend their working life in the Northwest Territories. They need the support they can get through money paid to them for working for the Government of the Northwest Territories through the summer. We're well aware of that necessity and are doing everything we can to make sure we hire as many of those students as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the government having to comply with the collective agreement. Is the government also looking at ways of using third parties instead of having the private sector pay these summer students so the wages will be compatible with other independent

businesses? Are they exploring the area of contract agreements? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, we're not hotly pursuing that particular avenue. We don't want to have a grievance raised about contracting out. But, certainly, we'll do everything we can to make sure we hire as many of those students as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my community of Pond Inlet, the government has only been able to employ two summer students. With the amount of money in casual wages allocated to the community, they could probably employ 10 to 12 students. Can the Minister assure the community that they will be able to do that by the summer break? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 467-12(7): Policies For Student Summer Employment

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I can't make that assurance. As I said, I don't think we'll be able to resolve this issue soon enough for this particular hiring season. Probably the reason there are not as many jobs in the smaller communities is the jobs happen to occur in the denser communities. We don't apportion a certain amount of money around the Northwest Territories to hire students. Many times, it's done on the basis of a requirement for more people in the summertime because of increased activity. I would suggest that those summer activities are the reason that the jobs are increasing. I won't be able to say to the House

and to the Member that we'll be able to hire more students in his particular community because I don't think we'll get that issue resolved that quickly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Dent.

Question 468-12(7): Review Of Labour Standards Legislation

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Safety and Public Services. Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister if he would consider setting up a committee of business and labour representatives to undertake a quick review of the report on employment standards tabled in 1990, and make recommendations on changes needed immediately to our labour standards, and to further recommend on the process should a more detailed study be seen to be needed. The Minister said he would consider this idea. Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister could advise us now if he will be instituting such a review of our labour standards.

Page 989

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 468-12(7): Review Of Labour Standards Legislation

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to advise the honourable Member, firstly, so that it's clear for Members, I believe in the past two years our priority for legislation in this House was the issue of the new Mine Health and Safety Act and the whole issue of the regulations, and also the matter of the liquor law review. I say thank you to my colleagues for the support they have given me in that. I do want to say that the labour standards legislation is now one of our top priorities. It has to be, in my view. Certainly, from having discussions with my colleagues, it is one of those pieces of legislation that is long overdue for amendment.

I don't have a problem with the suggestion that is being made by the honourable Member with regard to a group of individuals being assigned a task in the

business and labour area. I do want to say, though, that there are a few other components that are important: one, representation from Nunavut; two, the representation from the aboriginal community.

I do want to say that we're now looking at, after having spoken to the Premier, having the group look at the documentation and the work that was conducted for the work to be done by the workplace commission had it been established, which it wasn't.

The other component that would come out of these discussions should be a strategy, an approach, a transition process that has been requested on this whole labour issue. I will advise the honourable Member that we are developing an approach for looking at the possibility of a meeting in May or June, depending on the agenda and the issues. I will speak directly, Mr. Speaker, to the representatives of labour, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, along with representation from Nunavut businesses and the aboriginal groups. We intend to fund it from within. Our expected costs are much more than the honourable Member would have wanted, but it's my view that we have to spend the money in order for this group to get together to give us some sense of where we have to go. So we are going to approach it and we are looking at that agenda.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what I will do is once we've laid the agenda out, I will advise the honourable Members, through written communication, of the agenda items and the approaches. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 468-12(7): Review Of Labour Standards Legislation

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister making the commitment to undertake the review. It sounds like it's going to be more detailed right off the bat than what I had been suggesting. A concern is now on the timetable. Can the Minister advise whether or not it is still going to be possible to get the report back from this group before the end of this

calendar year so any recommendations they make can be considered fairly quickly?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 468-12(7): Review Of Labour Standards Legislation

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly my intention to have some advice given to this Cabinet on the approaches that would be necessary for us to proceed with the amendments or the development of new labour standards legislation. What is important to us is that there are a whole bunch of new partners in the whole matter of employment management. The Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, for instance, under the agreement, has arrangements for employment through negotiated agreements. There are situations where new legislation is required for conditions of employment. Generally throughout the Northwest Territories, we're talking about the whole issue of division.

I also want to say to the honourable Member, I'm hoping that this round table discussion will lead to some basic principles for the development of new legislation, but also could lead to a blueprint for the new government to action. In other words, it will lay the framework. What I'm trying to do is get public input into laying out a framework; not only action on our part, but laying out some direction. That, in my view, is a much more substantive approach.

The other component, Mr. Speaker, and the honourable Member has mentioned this, is the ongoing consultative process. I would like to see the advice of the group as to how we might approach this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees or the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 90-12(7), NWT Tourism Association Review -Executive Summary, March 1995. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as required by section 32.2, subsection (4)(b) of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling Tabled Document 91-12(7), a list of each case where a 1993-94 expenditure exceeded the 1993-94 activity budget by an amount exceeding \$250,000.

I have another document, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as required by section 32.1, subsection 2 of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling Tabled Document 92-12(7), a list of all interactivity transfers exceeding \$250,000 within departments for the period October 28, 1994 to March 9, 1995.

Page 990

Mr. Speaker, I have another one. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 93-12(7), Working Together for Community Wellness: A Directions Document, on behalf of the Premier. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 94-12(7), MACA Reorganization Review Report...

---Applause

...which is the executive summary of the report of April 1995, prepared by RT and Associates and Ernst and Young. I will make the full document available to those Members who wish to review the details of the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 18-12(7): Government Use Of Airline Travel Points

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, April 26, 1995, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Baffin Central, that the Executive Council immediately develop and implement a policy that would allow for the creation of a corporate account for travel points. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent to proceed today with my motion on the review of official languages services.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Iqaluit is requesting unanimous consent to deal with Motion 17-12(7). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Patterson.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 17-12(7): Review Of Official Languages Services

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and honourable Members. Do I need to read the motion?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

MR. PATTERSON:

Yes. I should know by now.

---Laughter

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Microphones turned off)

MR. PATTERSON:

I was wondering if it could be read into the record.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

MR. PATTERSON:

WHEREAS federal funding for official language services has been substantially reduced by the Government of Canada for the 1995-96 fiscal year;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to reviewing priorities in all official languages programs but has not completed that review;

AND WHEREAS some departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories have already made decisions to reduce vote 4 funding for official languages programs, but some departments and vote 4 official language programs have not been reduced;

AND WHEREAS there is considerable concern about reductions planned in the legal interpreters program of the Department of Justice and its possible harmful effects on the rights of accused and the overall administration of justice;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories proceed as soon as possible with its overall review of all official languages programs in cooperation with NWT organizations with an interest in official languages;

AND FURTHER that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories in cooperation with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly review the effectiveness and cost of official languages services provided for the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

I sense that there is good support for the motion so I won't speak at length, but I would like to make a few brief points. First of all, Mr. Speaker, there have been cuts that have taken place in official language services, even though the Premier who is in charge of official languages has said that there is a review under way of all programs. Logically one would think that the review should have taken place before cuts were made haphazardly and randomly, but this doesn't seem to be happening.

The legal interpreters program is only one of many programs where cuts have been made and have been felt in the government departments, but also in communities.

For example, I think we should be concerned that the amount of funding for the aboriginal languages enhancement grants, which is a portion of the agreement available to communities to undertake their own language activities, has been reduced. This program is administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This reduction took place even though the GNWT had assured communities that this would be

Page 991

one of the highest priority areas for maintaining levels of funding. That doesn't seem to have now happened.

Several positions at the language bureau in Yellowknife have also been vacant for a long time: the Inuktitut linguists' the training officer; the manager of professional services; and, two editor/paraphrasers. The result is that on-the-job training and other support services are now almost non-existent for language bureau staff.

There are other areas where there have been cuts that are affecting services in the communities. For example, the number of clerk interpreters in health centres, who have been funded to take training in conjunction with Arctic College, has been drastically reduced.

Funding for research and development of renewable resource management terminology in aboriginal languages has been cut.

So, Mr. Speaker, the cuts are being made without a plan and without an overall review. I know that the groups in the Northwest Territories that are concerned about aboriginal languages are most anxious to give

advice to the government about how cuts should be made and how priorities should be set. They know, and we all know, that federal funding has been drastically reduced. So the purpose of this motion is basically to encourage the government to quickly proceed with the review and to consult with the aboriginal languages groups rather than making random cuts without explaining and being accountable to the communities and the organizations that they serve.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I recommend that we should be willing to look in our own back yard. I know that we are very proud of the Official Languages Act and the simultaneous interpretation that is provided in this Assembly in all official languages. But, Mr. Speaker, we have been subject to severe funding reductions and we have to now say that even this service in our Assembly should be reviewed. It is expensive, I am told it costs about \$11,500 for each sitting day to provide these services. That would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$600,000 to \$800,000 a year, depending on how many sitting days we have. That is a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

I am not saying that it is money that shouldn't be spent, but I am saying that we should look at that sum of money alongside the money that is being spent for legal interpreting to support the rights of accused people in courts, and the other very important community programs and services that are being provided. Let's review everything and let's agree that because of the drastic funding cuts, we have to review everything.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about the legal interpreter training program as an example of a cut that I don't think has been very well thought out. I haven't been pleased with the way the government has explained what is happening. The Premier and the Minister of Justice say that the training part of the program will be transferred to Arctic College. Yet, the Minister of Education said in the House yesterday that no final decision had been made on that matter; that he was awaiting the results of a consultant's report. Meanwhile, this morning on the radio, we heard Florence Smith, the head of the interpreter training program at Thebacha Campus of Aurora College, saying that she is confident that they will do a fine job of taking over this program.

So we are getting mixed signals about what is really happening and I think that is because the government has not taken a global look at the funding and really is

cherry-picking here and there in a random fashion and making cuts.

I was also concerned that Mr. Kakfwi suggested that it was the federal government that had cut the PYs in his department. With respect, I don't think that is quite true, Mr. Speaker. We know that the federal government cut the global funding to the Government of the Northwest Territories, but it was Mr. Kakfwi who cut the two PYs in his department and recommended that they no longer be funded out of the aboriginal languages funding. So, it is not quite correct to suggest that the federal government is the bad guy in this case when decisions are being made by Ministers for the departments in a random fashion.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are reasons why we should support a timely and urgent review of these programs and it should be done in conjunction with the groups that are concerned about official languages in the Northwest Territories, including the Francophones. Mr. Speaker, I know these groups are anxious to participate and to offer their experience in delivering these services. The Commissioner of Official Languages has recommended that they should have a role. So far it seems they may not be involved, but it would be useful to get their advice because they are people who are dedicated to the use of the aboriginal and official languages in the Northwest Territories and they have experienced delivering these programs.

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I hope Members will support this motion. I think if the review takes place, it will eliminate a lot of the uncertainty and confusion that we have seen with the legal interpreter program and some of the cuts -- some of which we may not even know about -- that have been executed by departments unilaterally and without consultation with those affected, including Members of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Lewis, as seconder, do you wish to speak to the motion? Mr. Patterson? Question has been called. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I did not have my hand up when you asked with respect to speaking to the motion. Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat concerned at the way the wording of this motion is developed. I will just make two comments that I certainly agree with the intent of the motion. However, I am concerned with the comments, and I quote the last paragraph, **MR. SPEAKER:** "And further, that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, in cooperation with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, review the effectiveness and cost of official languages services provided for the Legislative Assembly."

Page 992

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the cost of providing official languages to the people of the north for the Legislative Assembly, and I certainly agree with the total concept of this Legislative Assembly being granted to the people of the north in official languages. I am somewhat concerned; as Mr. Patterson stated, we do possibly spend \$11,000 per day. However, reviewing the effectiveness and cost may allow for some aboriginal languages to be eliminated, and I am concerned, and I state this for two reasons.

Many of my constituents speak Chipewyan. Unfortunately, I don't speak it fluently. I understand it to some degree, there is no doubt. But many of my constituents also speak Cree which is not provided by this Legislative Assembly. I am concerned that they may feel that, if no Member in this Assembly speaks Chipewyan, it may not be effective and cost-efficient to provide that language. Possibly, by this motion, it could result in that particular language being eliminated by this Assembly, and I am very concerned with that. I will state that I have a difficult time supporting this motion with the particular wording, "in reviewing the effectiveness and cost of official languages services provided for the Legislative Assembly", so I would like to propose an amendment, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Go ahead with your amendment.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I move to amend the motion by delete the words, "review the effectiveness and cost of official languages services provided for the Legislative Assembly" and implement "Legislative Assembly

review of official languages services provided for the Legislative Assembly". Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I would like to get a copy of your motion and get it translated so we will take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We have an amendment to the motion on the floor. For the record, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, could you re-read your amendment, please?

Motion To Amend Motion 17-12(7), Carried

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that the motion be amended by deleting the words "effectiveness and cost of" from the last paragraph.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion, as amended.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

To the motion, now, as amended. Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some problems with the motion. I remember back to Norman Wells. At that time, Mr. Zoe demanded to have Dogrib interpretation, we didn't have it, and we shut down the House. That precipitated quite a heated debate on how we were going to proceed, how we were going to proceed with French and how we were going to proceed with the aboriginal languages. Out of that, there was a committee formed which I was a Member of. We met with many, many groups across the territories and, at the end of the day, there was quite a

bit of support for the symbolic use of all the official languages in the Legislative Assembly.

One thing that many of us -- I think everybody in this room, at one time or another -- whether here or in southern Canada, have probably spoken about is that our Assembly has simultaneous translation in all of the official languages. That is very important. There are those who say that money can be spent elsewhere and there are very good arguments about how the money can be spent. But one of the very significant ways we protect the official languages is through the use of them in the House of Assembly.

I think it is something that has been commented on by commentators, politicians, and observers across the country and around the world, that we have more official languages here than they do in the United Nations. I think it's something everyone here can be proud of. Though I understand what Mr. Patterson is trying to achieve, I can't support the motion. I just want to make it very clear that I stand by the original decision that every official language will be represented in this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion, as amended. Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was a Member of the ABC committee that reported to this House on the work of the Languages Commissioner. Members will recall that many of the comments that we made in fact substantiated the sentiments just expressed by the Member for Yellowknife North, that this was a very important place and the use of languages in this Chamber was an example to the rest of Canada and to the rest of the world, in many ways.

When I looked at Mr. Patterson's motion asking for a review of all our language programs, he was looking for the seconder of his motion. Being somebody who doesn't always have his feet in concrete and is prepared to look at things or re-examine, I said sure, I don't mind seconding the motion to examine the things we do because I think we should always be reviewing the things we do to see if there is a way of doing them better.

I believe it's in line with the sentiment expressed sometimes that we are very, very quick to impose

discipline on all other kinds of people but we never look at ourselves. I thought that the report of the Languages Commissioner never really gave us good, concrete reasons. It wasn't a real review, if you like. It was just a catalogue of sentiments about what went on here and whether it was the best use of money, and whether we could be doing things with that money in other program areas. That's not the purpose of this motion, as it has been amended, Mr. Speaker.

What it does is say that, as a responsible Assembly, where we have new realities to face with regard to our funding and the

Page 993

ways we have to serve people, it is always good to review. In light of the statement just made by our Premier, if you recall when we looked at the main estimates for the executive offices program of the Executive, we were told about the tremendous struggle that is taking place with regard to the Canada/NWT official languages agreement, the fact that we were asked to take a more realistic look at our demands. The \$30 million we asked for and the \$9 million counter offer made by the federal government has led us to a position now where we don't have the kinds of money that we would like to have to solve all our problems.

I agree with all the sentiments that have been expressed about the importance of language as it is used in this House, but I'm not the kind of individual who says, in light of everything that happens around us with regard to the way we're funded, that we shouldn't always be examining, reviewing and seeing if we can do things better than we do.

It's for that reason that I have no problem in seconding Mr. Patterson's motion and also will be quite happy, in fact, to support it when it comes to a vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion, as amended. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the risk of being accused of having my feet in concrete, having been a Member of the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions which did, in fact, recommend that this House not accept the Languages Commissioner's suggestion that we review the provision of

simultaneous translation in the House, since that was only recently, I think, dealt with by this House, and since, as was pointed out in the Premier's statement on languages, we have, in fact, received more money for official languages than what we had expected to get when the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions made its recommendations to this House, I would have to say that I have great difficulty supporting this motion.

I think ABCs, in their consideration of the provision of all official languages in this House, did weigh the symbolic value and importance of maintaining the provision of those services, I think we have to recognize just how important it is to preserve those languages and ensure they are used. I think that seeing them used here in this House is a very important, symbolic way of having them preserved.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will just advise that I'm afraid I will not be able to support this motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion, as amended. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) I will be speaking in my language. Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking about the motion pertaining to official languages. I think it is good that the federal government is helping us fund official languages. There are a lot of official languages in the territories and when we meet, interpreters translate for us simultaneously. In doing so, people across the NWT are able to understand what we are saying in their language.

Also, the department that looks after the training of interpreters has released the two people who help to train court interpreters. Because of this, when native people go to court, I don't know how they are going to be interpreted for in court.

They are reviewing how the Official Languages Act is working at present. Although the review hasn't been finished, they have released some of the people. This is what I do not agree with.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is saying that we should be reviewing the Official Languages Act and would like to meet with all the people who are affected by the Official Languages Act. This is important to me.

As long as the Legislative Assembly has been sitting, we have had simultaneous interpreting and they have done a good job. So what is now being said is that they will be revising the usage of the official languages. There are many languages across our territories. We should be talking to the people who are affected by the Official Languages Act. (Translation ends)

What I am saying here, Mr. Speaker, is that I think the main point here I would like to stress is in the "now therefore I move" section of this motion, the section that deals with "in cooperation with the NWT organizations with interest in official languages". I think that is the key area for me because, up to this point, this Legislative Assembly, since introducing the official languages services which I have always supported has developed it to this point.

Now that there are cutbacks from the federal government, there are diminishing resources to provide this service as we have known it to date. There have been some cuts that have been implemented by certain government departments and, at the same time, there is a review that is going on. This review is not yet concluded. Already, the government is making some decisions to change the way they provide the official languages services. I guess that is the main point that we are trying to reach here. Where do we go from here? This is the direction of this motion. What I would like to stress in this motion is "in cooperation with the NWT organizations". Instead of just a merry, breezy type of consultation, we should have a more in-depth involvement of all the individual aboriginal language groups in the north in this review because, up to this point, I have heard a lot of comments by different aboriginal leaders, different organizations which deal with culture and so forth.

Language is the key; language is the key to the cultures of the different aboriginal organizations in the north, and therefore, they have to be really involved in this whole process if this motion goes ahead.

(Translation) This is as much as I would like to say. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

(Translation) Does anybody else want to speak to the motion? Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember some years ago when official languages were introduced into the Northwest Territories, Mr. Zoe raised the issue in Norman Wells speaking his first language, the Dogrib language, and that is something that shut the House down at that time. At

Page 994

that time, it created quite an uproar and people insisted that all aboriginal languages be represented in this House.

I also remember when there was another Minister responsible for the languages program when I was an ordinary Member in this Assembly. The majority of the people in my riding speak the Chipewyan language, and because I did not speak that language was the reason the government was using for not supplying interpretation in the Chipewyan language.

But we all know that language, whether it be Chipewyan, Dogrib, North Slavey or whatever, is carried live on CKLB to our constituencies, and whenever I visit the elders in my constituency, they always talk about listening to me on the radio. It is more important that the languages service provided in this House is provided outside of this House to the ridings. That's where the people listen to it and they get some comfort in listening to it in their own language and the elders do understand Chipewyan.

So we fought to get the Chipewyan language into this House so that our elders could listen to it and understand what is going on with this House and I'd be very disappointed if we looked at taking the Chipewyan language out of this House, or any other aboriginal language. I view it as an essential service to the people of the Northwest Territories. We are all elected to serve the people of the Northwest Territories, so that is what we should continue to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mahsi, Mr. Morin. (Translation) Does anybody else want to speak to the motion? Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) I would like to say in my language that I don't agree with the way the motion is written.

When we met in Norman Wells, we spoke about this issue and about the people in the Northwest Territories, where only two languages were recognized: English and French. When we talked about it then, we want all our official languages from the Northwest Territories recognized; it is now recognized in the way we want it recognized.

Since there are a lot of cutbacks in the money that we get from the federal government, there are programs that are being cut. It is because of these cutbacks that the programs are cut.

I don't really agree with what's happening here. We're supposed to use any official languages that we have here. We have the right to use our language. But when I think about this, the way it is written, I don't agree with it, so when we vote on this motion, I will not support this motion.

Also, since the government has had all these cutbacks, how can we improve these programs for the people? That is what we are looking at right now. I don't agree with the way the motion is written, so when it comes to a vote on this motion, I will not support it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

(Translation) Does anybody else want to speak to the motion? Mr. Patterson, would you like to conclude speaking to the motion?

MR. PATTERSON:

I am glad that Mr. Antoine and some other Members understood the thrust of my motion, which is that we should look at official languages programs in consultation with the organizations that care about them. We are not the only people who care about aboriginal and official languages in the territories. There are a lot of organizations which are involved, which are concerned. We should look at them all, and we should recognize that we have to start setting priorities because we don't have as much money as we used to have before.

That's what the motion is about, Mr. Speaker. It's not about official languages services in this Assembly. It's not about saying official languages should not be used in our Assembly. What it does say is we should have a thorough review of all official languages programs and we should not exempt the official languages programs that are used in this Assembly. Everything should be on the table. I think the official

languages groups in the Northwest Territories would want to have input into all the programs and maybe, Mr. Speaker, just maybe, they can tell us ways in which we can make the services provided in this Assembly more accessible to people in the Northwest Territories and more effective in communicating what this government does. Maybe there are ways that the service even here can be improved.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind Members that I've been hammering away for a week, with support from other Members, about the legal interpreting program because I felt that it was unfair that cuts were made in this program in secret, by Ministers, without being accountable to the organizations and institutions served, without being accountable in this Legislature and without being accountable to the official languages organizations in the Northwest Territories. I don't think that's the way we should set our priorities, by having Ministers cherry pick, make cuts and make arbitrary decisions that we may or may not find out about at all in this Assembly.

The Premier said there was a review under way. All the motion does is recommend that this Assembly endorse the review and that it should cover all official languages programs. I do not like to see the debate characterized as being a debate about whether or not we provide simultaneous interpretation in this Assembly. The motion is about whether we review the programs, in light of the drastic cuts imposed on us by the federal government and whether we're prepared to participate and to allow the public to participate in setting priorities, in light of these dramatic funding cutbacks.

That's what the motion is about, Mr. Chairman, and I think we should look everywhere, including our own backyard. That's the simple thrust of this motion. If we don't support the motion and agree to a review, then we're surrendering authority to a few Ministers to make arbitrary cuts without looking at the total picture, and without accountability to the people who are interested in and concerned about these programs.

I think that would be retrogressive. I think Members have been frustrated, as I have, about trying to find out what's going on, wondering why cuts are made in advance of the review being completed, or wondering why cuts are being made in advance of a consultant's study that was supposed to decide how a program should be reorganized. Let's get it out in the open, let's involve the organizations that are concerned, that I know

have good ideas, let's involve Members of this Assembly, and support the review that the Premier said she's already undergoing anyway. It's not a controversial motion. It's to support a review that's already under way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills.

Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1995-96; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Fair Practices Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act; Bill 22, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1994-95; Bill 23, Write-off of Debts Act, 1994-95; Bill 24, Community Employees' Benefits Act; Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Land Titles Act; Committee Report 2-12(7), Report on the Legislative Action Paper on the Office of Ombudsman for the Northwest Territories; Committee Report 3-12(7), Report on the Review of the Legislative Action Paper Proposing New Heritage Legislation for the Northwest Territories; Committee Report 4-12(7), Report on the Review of the 1995-96 Main Estimates; Committee Report 5-12(7), Report on the Review of Rewriting the Liquor Laws of the Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper; Committee Report 6-12(7), Report on the Review of the Legislative Discussion Paper on the Draft of the New Education Act; and, Committee Report 7-12(7), Report on the Second Annual Report, 1993-94, of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT, with Mr. Lewis in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

I would like to call the committee to order. Yesterday, we completed item 12 of Bill 1, Executive offices. Mr. Dent, what is the wish of the committee?

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 1 and Committee Report 4-12(7), specifically to consider the budgets of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Finance and Public Works and Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree with that order of business?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 1: Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1995-96

Committee Report 4-12(7): Report On The Review Of The 1995-96 Main Estimates

Financial Management Board Secretariat

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

There is no dissent. With that proposal in mind, then, we'll go on to FMBS. It's Mr. Pollard's responsibility and is on page 02-25 of your books. Mr. Pollard, do you have any opening remarks?

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Financial Management Board Secretariat provides support and services to the Financial Management Board and to departments. The secretariat has been together in its current form for 21 months now, and its responsibilities include:

- internal audit and evaluation;
- comptrollership;
- human resource management;
- information management; and,
- operational and capital planning.

Mr. Chairman, the secretariat's 1995-96 budget requests a total of \$41.197 million and 211.2 person years. This is a four per cent dollar reduction from the 1994-95 main estimates and a two per cent person year reduction.

The largest part of this reduction, Mr. Chairman, we anticipate to achieve through negotiated or awarded reductions in employee benefits. There have already been savings realized in the collective agreement signed with the NWT Teachers' Association last year, and other savings will result from the extension of similar changes to benefits for excluded and management employees announced last fall. Mr. Chairman, the negotiations with the Union of Northern Workers have proceeded to arbitration. We cannot be definitive with respect to the impact of the new agreement that will result through the arbitration process.

Mr. Chairman, there is some limited forced growth in the 1995-96 budget proposal for the secretariat. Additional funding is being requested to:

- deal proactively with the escalating number of arbitrations;
- handle growing numbers of special investigations;
- improve our ability to address new requirements in financial reporting; and,
- undertake some needed training in investigative techniques.

As we proceed through the budget, I can provide further explanation for these requirements. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks and I would be pleased to try to respond to questions from the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much, Mr. Pollard. Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Setting Priorities

As part of the 1994-95 O and M review, the committee raised a concern regarding the large number of initiatives proposed by the Financial Management Board Secretariat and its ability

Page 996

to effectively carry out all of those objectives. In reviewing this year's estimates, it is apparent that the FMBS needed to more clearly define priorities.

For example, one year ago, the secretariat was very forceful in its presentation regarding the need for a strong program evaluation unit within the government. Developing an evaluation capacity was highlighted as a priority. The committee agreed that this type of evaluation would ensure an effective use of the limited funds available for government programs and accepted the person years and other funding allocated to this area. However, in this year's budget, the secretariat is reducing the funding committed to evaluation and indicated very slow progress in this area.

The committee is disappointed at this reduction. A thorough evaluation of departmental programs would very likely result in savings and efficiencies far greater than the cost of an adequately-funded evaluation unit. Committee Members strongly suggest that the government reconsider this decision.

Another area identified as being of high priority was the new informatics strategy. This strategy would provide government-wide standards for data processing, storage, and management. However, despite a costly study which consumed a great deal of government staff time, the informatics strategy seems to have lost its initial emphasis. Departments are seeing little or no benefit or improvement from the initial efforts made by FMBS in this area.

While the FMBS tries to carry out a wide range of priorities, it is difficult to see which are more important. As a result, crucial areas, such as collective bargaining, have not received the focused attention from the organization that it should have. Instead, people have been tied up dealing with the many small issues.

Committee Members also urge the secretariat to reduce the number of planned initiatives, and to concentrate on a few priorities which will be of significant benefit to the government as a whole. The secretariat's unique position as a central "super-department" means that its influence is very strongly felt, for better or worse, throughout all government departments.

The government should review the role of the Financial Management Board Secretariat which

seems to be overcentralized with too many responsibilities. The results of this review should be available when the new government takes office.

Front-Line Workers Support Program

The committee was pleased to hear that initial work had begun on an assistance program for employees. The need for this type of program was recommended by the Special Committee on Health and Social Services and this committee supports that recommendation. Members believe employee assistance programs are crucial, particularly for front-line workers who deal with the stress of serving our communities. If our teachers, social workers, nurses and other program delivery people are not strong and healthy, they are unable to work with the community.

The committee is concerned that this initiative should be made a priority with front-line workers.

Committee Motion 40-12(7): To Adopt Recommendation 13, Carried

Therefore, Mr. Chairman I move that this committee recommends that the government proceed with a pilot project for a front-line workers support program during 1995-96 and provide a report on the success of this project during the review of the 1996-97 O and M budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thanks, Mr. Antoine. The recommendation is part of the report and normally we go back to the motions after the report has been read. But since you made the motion, then I'll rule it in order. So, to the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Seconded.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Proceed, Mr. Antoine.

Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. ANTOINE:

Mr. Chairman, during the 1994-95 O and M review, the committee again recommended that the government consider creating a mortgage investment corporation. Although there is still no mortgage investment corporation in place, the government is preparing a prospectus to help assess the viability of such a corporation. The committee urges the government to proceed with this project in a timely manner.

Separation Of The Capital And O And M Budgets

Beginning with the 1992-93 budget, the capital estimates were separated from the main O and M estimates, and considered separately by the standing committee and by the Legislative Assembly. The rationale was that, by approving the capital budget in late autumn, there would be sufficient time for contracts to be tendered or negotiated, materials to be ordered, and shipments to be made during the brief shipping and building season applicable to many communities.

This process has not fulfilled its expectations. In Investing in our Future, the committee said:

"It became apparent during this last committee review that the separation of the budget into two parts is artificial and may even be counter-productive. It is impossible to examine capital expenditure requirements without considering the fiscal framework. The fiscal framework contains both capital and operating elements that require joint consideration.

Page 997

"Soon after the two budget sessions were implemented, the Standing Committee on Finance recognized that it was unrealistic to review proposed capital expenditures without considering the associated direct and indirect incremental operating costs. Now the committee reviews incremental operating costs of capital projects outside of the context of departmental operating budgets. However, the picture still is not complete."

The committee understands the rationale for separating the budgets and reviewing them in two separate sessions in the Legislative Assembly.

However, the reality is that tenders are not being let early. There appears to be real obstacles in the way of changing the tendering system to meet the established objectives. Even with an earlier approval process for the capital budget, government departments have not proven able to execute contracts in the manner expected when the dual budget process was introduced.

The departments put a tremendous amount of work into preparing for a full budget session in the fall. Committee Members are concerned that what little gains are realized through having two budget sessions are not worth the cost of the extra work needed by the departments to prepare for two budget sessions.

It appears, then, that the issue is not the timing of the approval of capital estimates, but the planning abilities of the departments. With better planning, there is no reason contracts could not be ready to go on April 1st of a new fiscal year.

Members of the committee are convinced that there should only be a single budget session each year. The time, effort and cost of split capital/operations and maintenance budgets outweighs the potential benefit originally anticipated. The next government may want to consider having only one budget session per year, while encouraging better capital planning in the departments. This concept should be developed further by the current government, and included in the transition plan they will be preparing.

The committee had recommended a review of the current process of separate reviews for the capital and O and M budgets. The review was to include an assessment of alternative methods for achieving early tendering of capital projects. The government is currently working on an analysis of this issue and the committee looks forward to reviewing the final results and recommendations. In the meantime, the committee will be looking for evidence of increased coordination between the Department of Public Works and Services and other departments to ensure the benefits of having a separate capital budget process are achieved.

Management And Delivery Of Capital Projects

In Investing in Our Future, the committee noted:

"Concerns arose throughout the committee's September 1994 review about the way in which capital projects are planned, designed and managed

by the Department of Public Works and Services. Committee Members wonder if the means of coordinating and managing capital projects adopted by the Department of Public Works and Services, on behalf of the government as a whole, are as efficient and effective as they should be."

While recognizing the significance of the project management function, it is important to remember that it is an overhead expense. In times of tight financial resources, it is particularly important to ensure that capital spending brings about maximum benefit to communities and that overhead expenses are minimized. As a result, the committee recommended that the Financial Management Board assess the current project management process and report to the committee by the end of 1994.

The government has expanded the recommendation to include a review of the entire project management process and provided the committee with preliminary information on the review. The committee suggests that, while the review will be worthwhile, things can be done to improve the process in the short term. For example, the Department of Public Works and Services should enforce deadlines for tendering to ensure the maximum benefit and cost-effectiveness is achieved on all projects. Departments should give adequate priority to preparing a well-planned capital budget. The committee also encourages the government to assign the management of smaller projects, such as small garages, directly to the community where the project is to take place.

Labour Relations

Labour relations is, and will continue to be, a very important part of the government's agenda. Committee Members have noted a high number of grievances being referred to arbitration.

There appears to be a lack of utilization of the joint consultation process. Where possible, labour relations issues should be handled quickly, efficiently and as close to the location of the employee(s) affected as possible. Not only will this save the government from wasting time and money in extensive arbitrations, it will improve the morale and the productivity of all employees, including managers.

That's the report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Pollard, if you would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber, I would have to ask my colleagues if that is okay. Do you want to bring people in to help you?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

If I might, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

If there are no objections, then Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, please bring in the witnesses.

Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Maybe for the record, Mr. Pollard, you can introduce your witness, please.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Lew Voytilla, secretary of the Financial Management Board.

Page 998

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard and welcome, Mr. Voytilla.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

General comments on FMBS. Does anybody have anything to say? Mr. Ballantyne.

General Comments

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Mr. Chairman, I have just a few general comments. This secretariat has a very difficult task. It's an infamous central agency and has to deal with all the very strongly-held beliefs of departments that they know what they're doing, that everything they're doing is very, very important and that the secretariat really shouldn't be questioning what they're doing or how they're doing it. But, there is a real need for a central function and for a group to provide some discipline on spending through government programs.

Although the Standing Committee on Finance has some constructive comments to make about how we

feel things can be improved, I want to go on record as saying that I think the chairman of the Financial Management Board and the secretary of the board have done a very good job under difficult circumstances. The examples that we use aren't meant as criticism of them.

On a personal note, having studied this government and Legislative Assembly for many years, I think that this government and Assembly, like previous governments and assemblies, take on very ambitious programs. We try to do a lot of things. I think sometimes we and the public forget that there are only 65,000 people in the Northwest Territories and we really do have a very small government. The sort of things that the Ontario government can do or the BC government can do, the sophisticated programs that they can run, becomes very difficult for us to do. We can't do them all, just because we don't have the numbers.

I think what has happened over the last 15 years, and it's not just this government, but probably with every government, is we've always tried to do too many things. We've loaded down our civil service with too many tasks. When you do that, it is just physically impossible to complete all the tasks. I look at our political structures and compare that to 65,000 people in southern Canada who have a mayor, six alderman, and a small administration. They would elect part of an MP and part of an MLA, and that's it. We have a very, very complex structure to try to manage the affairs of 65,000 people.

There's a lot of pressure on our government to do the things that people see are being done in other jurisdictions. It gets very, very tough. There are some examples given in our committee report of the evaluation initiatives of the department which they weren't able to achieve. The reality is, at the end of the day, with limited resources, we have to decide what we're going to do with them. Sometimes, unfortunately, a decision is made to deal with the issues in the field and not give the resources to the central agency to evaluate what will happen there. It's too bad because, as our report said, many times the evaluation component could probably pay for itself.

The other example was that of the fall budget. I think the original intent, and it was a good one, was there was a very legitimate concern that we were having problems getting our construction done on time. I think the experiment was one that really had to happen because if we hadn't tried it, people would be still asking for it today. It wouldn't have gone away. I

can't argue with the original Minister's decision and the Cabinet's decision, because they were getting a lot of criticism, to do something differently.

Two things happened with that approach. One is, unfortunately -- and this is not the fault of the secretariat or the Minister -- there are other reasons why departments were late, so we weren't able to totally achieve the major objective of the split budget. The second, and to me the most important, issue -- and why we in the Standing Committee on Finance think this issue should be looked at again -- is that though you can separate, physically and in time, consideration of a capital budget and O and M budget, the reality is both budgets are inextricably tied. The other reality is, you end up with two full-blown budget debates; one in the fall and one in the winter.

The inordinate and amazing amount of work that goes into preparation of the budget by the civil service is really mind-boggling. What, in fact, happens is that the civil service, for the weeks going into two budget sessions, essentially, is dedicated to just that and they're not free to deal with a lot of issues in the depth they probably should. I definitely think the time has come to weigh the pros and cons of what you achieve with a fall budget and what the de facto results of having a fall budget means, as far as workload. I definitely think, at the very least, it's time to review that to see if the decision that made sense four years ago continues to make sense.

I do want to say that in the next four years, this particular central agency, the Financial Management Board, the Finance Minister and chairman, are going to have an extremely difficult job. What we've seen in our system of government, not just this government but the system of government that has evolved in the territories, is that in our consensus system, the chair of the Financial Management Board doesn't have all of the institutional tools he or she needs to exact discipline on the Cabinet, though I think this Minister has done a very, very good job with the limited tools available to him to keep the Cabinet on the fiscal straight-and-narrow, and to accomplish what he's accomplished. I think he, the secretary, and their staff deserve a lot of credit.

But, I also think, that in the transitional period, I hope the Minister of Finance and chairman of the Financial Management Board will make some recommendations in the transitional document that will be going to the next government as to how the next chair and next Finance Minister will have more

mechanisms to ensure that the government is fiscally responsible.

Now I know Mr. Pollard uses his wit, his intelligence and patience to talk Ministers into not spending and every technique known to Finance Ministers to achieve results, but it is very, very difficult. And, again, a reality of our system is that at the end of the day, the Finance Minister is, in many ways, accountable for those decisions because the Finance Minister is responsible for the budget. The same way that we lay a lot of accountability at the feet of the Premier and don't give the Premier all the tools necessary to do the job, that is also true with the Finance Minister.

Page 999

I would just like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, I think the Finance Minister has done a good job. The recommendations we made were made with a lot of thought, and we hope they are constructive. I hope that the Finance Minister will use the wisdom of his four years of experience to prepare the next Finance Minister for the even more difficult job that it will be a year from now. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. Do you have a response to those words of wisdom, Mr. Pollard?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to audit and evaluation, there has been some work done in that area. There are draft program design standards that have been prepared and they are ready for review by FMBS. There is a discussion paper on the evaluation policy which has been widely circulated. The work is proceeding well on the development of organizational design standards, and an evaluation of the management for results system is nearing completion.

We have also been involved with some projects with departments:

- An evaluation framework for several community mental health projects in the Inuvik region;
- An evaluation framework for the new prime fur program;
- An evaluation framework for the investing in people initiative;

- An evaluation framework for the Cape Dorset community transfer;
- A review of the student financial assistance program and the early childhood pilot project;
- An operational review of the South Slave Divisional Board of Education; and,
- An organizational analysis for the Arctic A airports transfer.

So, Mr. Chairman, we have been doing some things in that area. I have admitted that we haven't done as much as we would have liked to. We think that there are programs out there right now that need to be looked at to see whether there are some efficiencies, or to see whether there are still programs that we should be embracing.

With regard to some of the other comments that Mr. Ballantyne made on the fall capital budget and the spring O and M budget, being the person that put that system into place, I tend to defend it. But I am certainly prepared to recommend that it be looked at to see just where there could be improvements made. I don't think there is nearly as much work or as many problems involved in the capital plan as there used to be, simply because with the consultation with the communities that the Premier does, a lot of that priority and jockeying for position is taken out of the system and most of the departments have their people working on these areas anyway. So a lot of the problems have been taken out.

Certainly I see less competition, either in the Standing Committee on Finance or on the floor of this House, for projects because we know in advance what the envelopes are and where projects are in the process. But I will admit that it has not worked as well as I would have liked it to have worked, with regard to getting projects under way sooner. We are getting projects under way sooner, but they are not nearly as quick as I would like them to be.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Antoine made some comments with regard to negotiating with our unions and so on and so forth. My position on that is very clear, Mr. Chairman. There is a process in place and I have said that I would abide by that process, that I wouldn't try to bring legislation into this House, unless things got really out of hand, or they got really unreasonable. So, if Members are somewhat frustrated by the lack of progress, as they might say, with regards to reaching a collective agreement, I can assure Members that

the process that is in place between ourselves and our unions is being used by both sides to the best of their ability. We haven't reached an animosity stage. We are in agreement now to go to arbitration. I didn't want to see it end up that way, I would have preferred to reach a negotiated settlement at the table, but that was, unfortunately, not to be. The union thought that our demands were too great and we thought their demands were too great, so it will go to arbitration and we will see what falls out of it. But we've certainly seen both sides using the negotiating process, the bargaining process, in good faith, but nevertheless to each other's advantage.

So, there will be transitional documents and I will be glad to work with the Standing Committee on Finance and incorporate their concerns as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thanks very much, Mr. Pollard. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a brief comment about labour relations. Mr. Chairman, I note that the Minister referred in his opening remarks to the escalating number of arbitrations. I am not sure what causes these growing numbers of arbitrations. My experience in the Baffin region, and my opinion, is that a lot of them result from the

Page 1000

failure of the joint consultation process to nip problems in the bud and resolve them before they escalate and become a very expensive undertaking for both labour and management in arbitrations. Not only expensive, but time consuming.

I know many people who have waited a great length of time for sometimes important, but sometimes relatively minor, issues to be dealt with in the arbitration process. I think it is to be avoided at all costs and I think the union would agree with this as much as managers

So I would just like to ask, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister agrees that perhaps the joint consultation process could be used more effectively closer to home, closer to the location of the job site, and whether or not this secretariat agrees that wherever possible energies should be devoted to solving problems at the local and regional level rather than

having them escalate to a situation that requires arbitration.

In some cases I believe that arbitrations result when grievances are dealt with by distant headquarters personnel who don't know the people involved and don't know the local conditions that have provided a problem in the workplace, so they make decisions which may look okay by the book but are insensitive and inappropriate in the local workplace and therefore lead ultimately to arbitration.

So I would appreciate if the Minister has some thoughts about this and agrees that we should take some steps to try and solve problems before they get to arbitration. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with a lot of the comments that Mr. Patterson has made.

We do see a grievance start out right at the workplace level that in hindsight could have been handled there, but there may be some inexperience on the part of a manager. Sometimes we see it's emotional. Sometimes we see that it just escalated because it just got out of hand. Other times it reaches us in Yellowknife and we will say that this maybe shouldn't have gotten here.

I agree that there is a problem, and I have spoken to the Premier about regional directors possibly having more of a role in this particular area at the regional level simply because I know that there is at least one regional director right now who is saving some of these grievances from occurring, and I think that more of these things could be resolved with some better training at the local level.

When it does occur, if the regional director or someone had the ability to intervene and sort of mediate the issue, we may see fewer grievances. Grievances, if we can keep them down, will mean fewer arbitrations, Mr. Chairman.

One of the problems that we have on those arbitrations right now is that there are so many that it's time consuming and difficult to deal with all of them. The union is aware of the problem, as are we. We have spoken about it and are trying to address those issues. So I am aware of the problem and we are

doing what we can to resolve it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much, Mr. Pollard. Anyone else on general comments or general statements? Do Members agree that we can go on to the detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Line By Line

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We are on page 02-25, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, total O and M, \$2.339 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Human Resource Management

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. On page 02-26, human resource management, total O and M, \$24.9 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Financial Management

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Next, 02-27, financial management, total O and M, \$10.553 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Audit And Evaluation

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Next, 02-28, audit and evaluation, \$3.405 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much. Next, on to page 02-29, details of grants and contributions, \$4.407 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Next, 02-30, information, detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, total program, \$7.402 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Page 1001

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis): Okay, that concludes the detail. Back to the program summary then on 2-24. Total O and M, \$41.197 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Now I think we have to return to the summary which is on 02-6. Executive departmental summary, total O and M, \$56.251 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much. Do Members agree that we have concluded the consideration of the Department of the Executive?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Pollard, and thank you very much, Mr. Voytilla.

Department Of Finance

We are now on the item dealing with the Department of Finance, located in section four, page three for the overviews in your blue books. Does the committee agree, first of all?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Is the Minister of Finance prepared to make the opening comments on his department?

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Chairman, there is a net reduction of over \$300,000 in the 1995-96 expenditure budget of the Department of Finance. This reduction is primarily due to lower interest costs on Northwest Territories Power Corporation promissory notes as a result of the annual redemption of 10 per cent of these notes.

As well, the contract negotiated with the government's banker will reduce financial costs in the 1995-96 main estimates by over \$200,000.

On the revenue side, Mr. Chairman, the payroll tax which was implemented on July 1, 1993, is estimated to generate new revenue to this government of \$12.4 million in 1995-96, an increase of almost \$700,000 from the 1994-95 estimates.

Mr. Chairman, the department has devoted a significant portion of its time in developing studies and conducting discussions on formula financing with the

federal government. These studies and discussions have addressed such issues as "perversity,"

the gross domestic product ceiling, the measurement of tax effort and the treatment of investment income.

Mr. Chairman, for fiscal year 1995-96, the grant from Canada will be frozen at the level of grant entitlement for 1994-95. The grant for 1995-96 is therefore estimated to be \$876 million. Because the formula financing agreement will be suspended for 1995-96, total revenues will become more uncertain since the failsafe provisions of the agreement will not apply.

Mr. Chairman, the taxation revenues for the Department of Finance, shown on page 04-15 of the main estimates document, include the revenues from the two percentage point increase in the corporate income tax rate introduced in 1994. Corporate income tax revenue for 1995-96 is projected to be \$30.3 million, an increase of \$7 million from the 1994-95 revised forecast.

Tobacco tax revenues for 1995-96 will increase by more than 30 per cent or \$4 million, over the 1994-95 main estimates, as a result of the government's decision to maintain tobacco prices when the federal government reduced its excise tax on cigarettes by \$5 per carton.

Total taxation revenues are expected to be \$140.2 million in 1995-96, up \$6.8 million from the 1994-95 main estimates.

The increase from \$11.7 million to \$12.4 million in payroll tax collections between 1994-95 and 1995-96 is based on projected increases in economic activity and wage rates in the Northwest Territories.

The interest earned on the government's temporary cash balances is forecast to decrease from \$1.5 million to less than \$150,000. This decrease results from four years of deficits since 1991-92 and the resulting elimination of the government's accumulated surplus.

Associated with the decrease in cash balances is the cost of borrowing to meet the government's obligations. Interest costs were not included in the 1994-95 expenditure estimates and are not provided for in the main estimates for 1995-96. Members were asked in this session to approve a supplementary appropriation of \$1.2 million for 1994-95 interest costs. A supplementary estimate for 1995-96 interest

costs will be presented in 1995-96 when interest costs can be more accurately determined.

In total, revenues budgeted in the Department of Finance, excluding the grant from Canada, are expected to increase by \$3.5 million over the 1994-95 main estimates.

As noted earlier, Mr. Chairman, the expenditure budget of the department is reduced by \$558,000 of interest on redeemed NWTPC notes and by over \$200,000 of bank service charges. These reductions are partially offset by an expenditure increase of \$150,000 for a tax options study and \$340,000 for increased insurance premiums.

In total, Mr. Chairman, the expenditure budget of the Department of Finance will decrease by \$313,000 from the 1994-95 main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Page 1002

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance prepared to make his opening comments? Mr. Antoine.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

Statistics

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An important factor in some financial arrangements with the federal government are territorial population statistics. There are currently two different versions of these statistics. The federal government relies on the figures from the 1991 Statistics Canada census. However, these figures are substantially lower than those prepared by the bureau of statistics. The bureau of statistics uses a combination of information from deaths and births to health care card applications and returns to assess the population.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

Recommendation 14

The committee recommends that the Department of Finance actively encourage all northerners, through

an awareness campaign, to participate in the 1996 census.

Banking Services

For many years, Members of the Legislative Assembly have been raising concerns regarding the lack of banking services in most communities. The committee noted during the review that some banks are starting to move into communities in the north. For example, it is expected that there will soon be banking facilities in Cambridge Bay.

The committee is aware of and supports the contractual arrangement for banking services which the government has negotiated. Without undermining this arrangement, the committee suggests that the government encourage the development and enhancement of banking services in smaller communities.

Property Taxation

The issue of property taxation was discussed with this department and with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in the review of the 1994-95 main estimates. At that time, the committee recommended that the taxation policy in general taxation areas be reviewed and a plan developed to resolve all outstanding issues in this area, with particular reference to treaty concerns. The committee was informed during this review that a study is under way and the final report is expected in September 1995. This issue should be highlighted as a priority for the next government in the transition plan.

Committee Motion 41-12(7): To Adopt Recommendation 14, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee recommends the Department of Finance actively encourage all northerners, through an awareness campaign, to participate in the 1996 census.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Your motion is in order. To the motion. I have been reminded that we don't have a quorum. I shall sound the bells.

Thank you, I recognize a quorum in the House. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

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

---Carried

Does that conclude your comments, Mr. Antoine?

MR. ANTOINE:

That is the end of the comments from the Standing Committee on Finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Does the Minister wish to bring in witnesses to assist him?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

If I might, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Of course, they agree. Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Minister, would you be so kind as to introduce your witnesses to the committee?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mr. Eric Nielsen, the deputy minister of Finance; and, on my left is Bill Setchell, the director of finance for the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Welcome, gentlemen. I noticed since Mr. Nielsen was here last time, his tan has faded somewhat since he was in Africa. General comments. The chair recognizes the Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

General Comments

MR. ANTOINE:

I would like to hear the reaction of the Minister of Finance with regard to the Standing Committee on Finance's report on the Department of Finance. We made a number of points on statistics, banking services and property taxation. Does he have any comments on those? Thank you.

Page 1003

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the statistics, Mr. Chairman, Ralph Joyce is going to a Council of Statisticians meeting in early May to discuss this particular issue. I whole-heartedly support the Standing Committee on Finance when it suggests that we all have to get out there and make sure we get everyone we can in that census next year. I can't tell you how important that is.

Mr. Chairman, we have a large birth rate in the Northwest Territories and a burgeoning birth population. One of the disadvantages we face when we compare ourselves with other areas of Canada is they include immigration into their statistics. I think it is very important and incumbent upon us as politicians to make sure that everyone gets into that census. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Minister Pollard. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to go to the Minister's opening comments. On page 2 in the second paragraph, the Minister talks about the fiscal year 1995-96, when grants from Canada will be frozen. Further on, he says because the formula financing agreement will be suspended for 1995-96, total revenues will become more uncertain, since the fail-safe provisions of the agreement will not apply.

I would like to ask the Minister to explain to me what the fail-safe provisions of the agreement that will not apply are, making total revenues uncertain. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister, what are the fail-safe provisions?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Chairman, when our eligible revenues went down, the grant from Canada went up. With the suspension of that fail-safe provision this year, there will not be a safety net there for us if our eligible revenues go down. Conversely, Mr. Chairman, if our eligible revenues go up, then we should not suffer on the way up. It's the "fail-safing" going down, when our eligible revenues go down, that is of concern to us, particularly in the area of corporate income tax, which is a volatile commodity and has shown peaks and valleys over the years. That's where our main concern is, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. General comments. The chair recognizes the Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Just very quickly, Mr. Chairman, I know Members are anxious to get on, I would like to say that I think it is an accomplishment that the formula has been frozen at the 1994-95 level. I know we're facing all kinds of pressures and it's not going to be easy living with those amounts, but, I think Mr. Pollard deserves credit for having achieved this feat.

I believe it is only due to his hard efforts and the relationship that he has developed with Mr. Martin that we were spared the knife this current fiscal year. I think there were bureaucrats and officials who would have advised that a harder line be taken with the Northwest Territories. It didn't happen, there was good reason it didn't happen, when one looks at the hits we've taken this year on health billings, forestry, and housing. We had a very good case to make but bureaucrats, particularly, and advisors are never as sympathetic as they should be to these realities we all understand in this House.

I would just like to have on record my gratitude to Mr. Pollard for the efforts he made and his achievement. It's no small achievement, Mr. Chairman, getting our grant frozen. Next year is another matter. It is going to be very much more difficult. Negotiating a new formula is another matter. But, I think we should stop for a minute and give credit to a very hard-working Minister who achieved something significant in getting

the grant to the level we will be benefitting from this coming year. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Would Members please applaud now. Thank you.

---Applause

Thank you. Mr. Minister, there have been some compliments paid to you, do you wish to respond?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I can take hardly any of the credit at all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Microphones turned off)

---Laughter

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

I think the department works hard with the Department of Finance in Ottawa and also with the Yukon in putting forward positions, and I must say that the Premier played a big role in this, through her correspondence with the Prime Minister. She also attended the crucial meeting with myself and Mr. Martin and gave me lots of support.

I will also say that, in fairness to Mr. Martin, who has a very difficult job and has far greater problems than we have, Mr. Chairman, he has shown to me that he is willing to be fair and is willing to listen to new ideas, although he has also told me that he is a hard man and wants to meet his targets. He has given us a fair hearing so far and I anticipate his continuing in a fair manner, trying to understand the difficulties that we have in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Minister Pollard. General comments. Does the committee agree that we go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Line By Line

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Directorate, total O and M, \$654,000.

Page 1004

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Revenue And Asset Management

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Revenue and asset management, total O and M, \$4.213 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Fiscal Policy

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Fiscal policy, total O and M, \$883,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Tax Administration

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Tax administration, total O and M, \$778,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Bureau Of Statistics

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Bureau of statistics, total O and M, \$571,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Details of grants and contributions. Grants, \$1.861 million. Is that right?

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

I'm sorry, I was looking at actuals. My apologies. I was just trying to sneak in some money. Grants, zero.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

I was just checking to see if the Minister was alert. Detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, zero.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. These are information items. We will return now to page...Sorry, Mr. Koe, I didn't see your hand.

MR. KOE:

On page 04-15 under general revenues, I know the Minister made some reference to this in his opening remarks. Under general revenues, the investment interest is estimated to decline from \$1.535 million to \$143,000. That's a big decrease in investment income. Can the Minister indicate in a little more detail why there is this huge decline in investment interest?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the reason that the interest income is declining is because we don't have as much cash to invest as we used to have when we had a large surplus. That's the real reason. In fact, we had to borrow this past fiscal year, although we're going to be all right this year -- for the first six or seven months anyway -- because we received the \$24 million from Canada for the health billings dispute. We just haven't had the amount of cash to invest, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Program summary, total O and M, \$7.099 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Does the committee agree that we've concluded with this department?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, on behalf of the committee, thanks to you and your witnesses for assisting us.

Department Of Public Works And Services

The next department is Public Works. Is the Minister responsible for Public Works prepared to make his opening comments?

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services 1995-96 main estimates.

The proposed operations and maintenance budget is \$120.794 million and 492 person years. This budget represents a net reduction from 1994-95 of \$6.4 million, or five per cent, and a reduction of 19 PYs, or four per cent. In addition to the \$120 million appropriation, the department also manages \$72 million through petroleum products and the granular program and public stores revolving funds, and, the systems and communications charge-back the accounts.

The sale of staff housing and the long-term housing strategy has resulted in the reduction of 15 maintenance positions from the department's building and works activity. These positions were located in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Baffin, Keewatin and Fort Smith regions. As of March 6, 1995, 286 housing units and one apartment building were sold resulting in revenues of \$20

Page 1005

million. GNWT staff purchased 179 units while 107 units were sold through public tender. Another 100 sales are pending, as are the sales of two apartment buildings in Yellowknife.

There will be savings in the vehicle and equipment activity by combining staff responsibilities in Inuvik, Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. Savings will also be achieved in the purchasing activity, due to overall government cutbacks and an increase on the limit of local purchasing authorities, which will give departments more control over their purchasing.

Under the government's community transfer initiative, maintenance responsibilities for government infrastructure were transferred to the hamlet administration in Cape Dorset in April; in Holman in October; and, will be transferred to Tuktoyaktuk in April, 1995. Cape Dorset and Holman agreements saw five PYs transferred from the department to those hamlets. This experience has shown, however, that much staff time is required to negotiate with the communities, plans for the transfers, develop procedures and reports; and, to provide effective after-transfer coordination and support to the community.

The building and learning strategy is now in 12 communities; in all regions. There was \$1.725 million committed to fund the strategy in 1994-95. About 100 local residents have been involved in the programs, such as pre-trades training and site superintendent training.

The workload for project officers has increased because of the construction training programs under the building and learning strategy, and the complexity of managing the many special procedures for project delivery. Thus, the department proposes to establish six new regional project officer positions. Agencies outside the GNWT are getting more involved in capital project management and need technical assistance. The department proposes to add a facility planning position in its construction management division to provide technical advice on project management to communities, aboriginal organizations, boards and agencies.

In the accommodation services activity, the department has been implementing the Yellowknife office plan. To deal with consolidation and decentralization initiatives, the government's office requirements in Yellowknife have decreased. Therefore, there is need to relocate and consolidate staff. The net result of completing a five year capital plan in Yellowknife will be an accumulated savings of \$4.5 million, and a further savings of \$1.4 million each year afterwards. To achieve this, however, will require the management of approximately \$2.7 million worth of construction.

Public consultation on the business incentive policy began in November 1994. At the end of February 1995, we completed the first round of public meetings. Based on what we heard from those consulted proposals for discussion will be presented to Cabinet. Following that, we will go back to the business community and the public will give their comments before the policy is finalized.

As promised during the last sitting of the Assembly, new provisions have been introduced for monitoring and enforcing northern local content requirements in our contracts. New

requirements for the use of local, commercial accommodation by our contractors have also been established.

As you know, Cabinet has directed that many millions of dollars spent annually on contracting aircraft for the forest fire program be redirected to northern-based companies. As a result of the proposal call to northern air operators for the provision of air tanker service, a five-year contract has been awarded to Buffalo Airways. The contract will be awarding subcontracts to other northern operators for smaller Bird Dog aircraft. The total value of these contracts could exceed \$18 million, but will all go to northern

contractors. Previously, these contracts went to southern firms.

In response to concerns from Members, the department has been working with the Housing Corporation, the Department of Transportation, Economic Development and Tourism and the Financial Management Board Secretariat to draft a policy on negotiating contracts. The policy has been completed for Cabinet review. We will continue to work towards the improvement of telecommunications service in under-served NWT communities. A presentation was made to CRTC, in which we have objected to NorthwTel's plan for additional access charges to upgrade services in the communities, stating that the residents should pay no more for access than other NWT residents.

The department has continued to work with the Department of Transportation to reduce resupply costs. Regarding the Keewatin resupply strategy, we are examining Rankin Inlet instead of Churchill as the resupply hub for petroleum products. We are working with the Greenland government to examine economies of scale in petroleum product resupply to the Baffin regions.

The vehicle pool in Yellowknife will be eliminated. The departments will meet their short-term vehicle needs through the private sector. The government's photography function will also be privatized. Mr. Chairman, this budget represents significant change over the last three years, brought about by government's restructure initiatives and direction to do more in the NWT with NWT residents and businesses.

During the past four years, the department's budget has been cut by a net amount of 70 person years and \$11 million. This has meant major change for employees, at all locations and levels, in what they do to provide services to the community and government. It hasn't been easy for either employees or clients. In 1995-96, department staff will be challenged to examine how we do what we do to complete their adjustment to this restructure.

Page 1006

Mr. Chairman, that completes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any Member's questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance prepared to make his opening comments? Mr. Antoine.

Standing Committee On Finance Comments

Negotiated Contract Policy

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Negotiated contracts between the government and northern businesses have been the subject of some controversy since the government started the practice. As discussed in last year's report, committee Members are generally in favour of the goals of the policy. However, the committee felt that full disclosure of the details of such contracts was a critical part of ensuring and maintaining public confidence in the government, and made a recommendation to that effect. The Minister agreed with the recommendation and promised to disclose the details of negotiated contracts.

Unfortunately, the department is responding very slowly to last year's recommendation. Recently, the Minister informed the committee that a draft policy is still being developed, and may be ready after March. The committee is disappointed that it has taken this long for the government to address the issue of disclosure. They are especially concerned that the department appears to be delaying this policy until after the upcoming election. Committee Members suggested to the Minister that they would be reluctant to approve this department's budget unless this policy had first been approved and tabled in the House.

Privatization

Last year, the committee congratulated the department on having privatized such areas as publications and printing. Committee Members agree that privatization should be considered whenever it would both reduce government operating costs and would provide an opportunity for northern entrepreneurs and economic development.

However, this year, the Minister made no mention of any privatization initiatives, other than the elimination of the photographer's position. The committee encourages the department to continue to look for areas which would be better and more efficiently handled in the private sector, perhaps including such areas as warehousing and records management, as mentioned by this committee in last year's report.

That's the report of the Standing Committee on Finance, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Does the Minister wish to invite some of his staff to assist him at the witness table?

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please assist the Minister in getting his staff.

Mr. Minister, would you introduce your witnesses to the committee.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mr. Bob Doherty, deputy minister; and, on my left is Mr. Dave Waddell, director of finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, we couldn't hear your last remark.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mr. Bob Doherty, deputy minister; and, on my left is Mr. Dave Waddell, director of finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister, welcome gentlemen. General comments. The chair recognizes Mr. Antoine.

General Comments

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister about the concerns raised by the Standing Committee on Finance, mainly on the negotiated contracts policy. There was a draft policy that we understand was developed and may be ready after March. The committee had expressed that they were disappointed that it was taking this long. I would like to ask the Minister about the status of this draft policy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This draft policy is one of the many things this department does and we have worked on many things during the past year. It is in the system, it is waiting now for Ministers' signatures which should happen, possibly, next week. It will be going to Cabinet during the week of the 24th to the 28th. If it gets approved, I will bring it to the House.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

The other comment is with regard to the privatization that we would like to see. We would like to know whether the Minister and his department have been looking at privatization. I understand from his comments that the Minister is saying that the vehicle pool in Yellowknife would be eliminated and departments would have to look to the private sector for the requirement for vehicles. I would like to know exactly how this is going to happen. I wonder if the Minister could explain that to me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

Page 1007

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On April 1, 1995, the vehicle pool in Yellowknife was privatized. Departments will have to meet their vehicle needs by going to the private sector. There are people in the community who have businesses that rent vehicles. If you want one, you can go rent it. If you can justify it,

you can go and buy one through your budget. That's how it will be done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

What will happen to the existing vehicle pool that the government has? It is past April 1st, so I take it that this is in force right now. I would like to know what happens to all the vehicles the government has in Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of the vehicles have been reallocated to other regions, instead of buying new ones; some we have dropped the insurance and plates of and they are sitting, waiting to be disposed of. There are different disposal methods including public tender, some clubs might need them, things like that. As of April 1st, there are no vehicles available through the pool. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

The final concern I would like to express during general comments concerns the business incentive policy. We've been through this numerous times and, from the comments the Minister made to us here today, public consultation on the BIP started in November 1994 and at the end of February 1995, they completed the first round of public hearings. He also said that proposals have been developed for presentation to Cabinet and another part of the process is that they will go back to the business community and the public to get comments on the proposal before the policy is finalized.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could elaborate further on the BIP and tell us the time frame we're looking at before we see a final product. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Members know, the business incentive policy has been in place for some years. It was basically designed to help develop business in the Northwest Territories. It wasn't necessarily a policy to generate jobs in the communities. Some of us were a bit naive, I guess, in saying that if we develop the business incentive policy to develop northern business, those northern businesses would hire northern people.

That's not quite true. We did develop northern businesses but they hired southern people; not all, but some. The concern in 1994-95 is we want to make sure that the dollars we spend in the Northwest Territories are spent not only on northern businesses, but that they generate jobs in the communities for local, northern people. That's what we're attempting to do now, through the business incentive policy. We have gone to consultations with businesses and interested groups and have the documentation back. It is in its final draft. Hopefully, I'll get it within a week. I will then take it to Cabinet and then it will go back out to the business community. We'll have it in this House when we come back on June 5th, it will be final by then. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

That was the final comment I wanted to make on the Minister's opening remarks but I have a couple of other concerns. They have to do with constituency matters. One of them, again, is the telephone services that the people in Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and Jean Marie have right now.

During the official opening of the community hall in Nahanni Butte, the Honourable Don Morin and John Pollard were in Nahanni Butte at that time. Mr. Pollard was receiving an important call from Ottawa for additional funds for the government and he was asked if a fax could be sent to him to sign it, so that this government could receive additional money. But, unfortunately, in Nahanni Butte there is only one telephone and no fax line, so that did not happen. That is a good example for the Minister; to see the problems that the people in the communities have in the lack of modern telecommunication systems. I don't know whether the government lost out on a couple million dollars from this situation, but the point

is that type of service is required in the communities. Communities have been asking for it for some time now.

I just wanted to state that there is a business in Fort Simpson called Senga Services, that has been talking about doing another type of communication system for the smaller communities. They are not using the satellite system. It is a different type of system where the fax, telephone, and modem connect into the communities. They have done that in Jean Marie River. Just last week, the community enjoyed that for a couple of weeks, but the trial period is over.

The company has a system that could work in the communities. I was wondering if the Department of Public Works and Services have had any discussions with the business in Simpson that is doing it. If so, I would like to get some comments from the department on what their analysis of that system is or if that system is adequate and satisfactory to the people there. If this system that we are trying to get through NorthwesTel is going to be time consuming, it would be good to use another type of system such as the one that I just described. I am not too familiar with it, I don't know the details of it, but it seems to work.

NorthwesTel wants to put in a system that costs a substantial amount of money. The system that I am referring to does not take those kinds of funds. I don't know what the quality of the service is, but I am told that there is a fax line, modems and additional telephones that people in the communities could enjoy. If I could get some feedback from the department on this, I would appreciate it at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

Page 1008

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I received a fax from Fort Simpson this morning. I have forwarded it to the department to investigate this new system Mr. Antoine was speaking about.

We have also received some information from a company called Northern Communications, Mr. Pook, I have met with them and I have instructed the department to meet with them to explore those opportunities as well.

I met with NorthwesTel today and I haven't had a chance to brief Members on it, so I will do that now. I met with four people and we were looking at negotiating with them for supplying the actual dish into the communities, fax machines, computer services for the schools, everything that is needed for communications for advanced education, as well as fax and individual telephones. We are negotiating with them and we should be finished negotiations no later than June. We are negotiating with the attempt to install telephone services into Colville Lake, Trout Lake and Snare Lake this summer; and Nahanni Butte, Kakisa, and Jean Marie River next year.

That is what we are negotiating right now with NorthwesTel. So far we are finding that the negotiations are going very well. I will keep Members up to date if anything evolves from that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

It is good to hear that something is finally happening that will be beneficial to these communities. It would be good to be kept up to date on this because every time that I travel into these communities -- which I will be doing soon, after this session is over -- it's one of the first concerns that people raise; what is going on with the telephone and fax systems.

It will really come in handy for the smaller communities because nowadays everyone uses a fax. Whenever you write a letter you fax it and everybody gets it instantly. There they have to wait for their mail and they don't have a regular mail system into the small communities. They have to depend on when the next charter is going into the communities, it could be a few days, it could be a week or 10 days. Their communication system is very bad, it is very poor.

Nowadays there is instant communication and it would really help. One of the examples is that whenever a Minister goes into a small community -- especially Finance -- there might be a situation like the one I described with Mr. Pollard, where he wanted to use a fax but there wasn't one, and it might cause some problems that way.

I want to move on to another concern I have in Fort Simpson. The village of Fort Simpson was told last fall that they had to pay quite a substantial amount of money for heating the recreation complex. Originally

there was a steam plant that provides heat to the school, Deh Cho hall, and the Bompas hall. There was a study done and they were saying that there was excess heat wasted there. So when the recreation complex was built there was an extension built to provide steam heat to the recreation centre.

The recreation complex used this system. They put in the real complex system for heating with pipes and valves and all kinds of bells and whistles. It cost a substantial amount of money to put this whole system in there, to make use of the excess steam heat. But last year, the department had informed the village that they had to pay a large amount of money for the heat. The village did not anticipate that and, therefore, did not budget for it. There was a concern that was raised to me about that.

I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware of this situation. And I would like to know if the department has met with the village on this point? And if so, what was the result of that meeting? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On July 10, 1987, the village of Fort Simpson confirmed their decision to connect to the GNWT central heating plant, with an understanding that the cost of heat would be the responsibility of the village. On July 15, 1987 the GNWT responded positively to the village's request and the complex was connected to the central heating plant, but that no agreement for billing costs was completed.

In June 1994, the village of Fort Simpson was approached by the GNWT to finalize an agreement on heating costs. The village expressed concern over the cost of heating and the department is currently negotiating with the village to establish the rates. The proposed revenue is \$50,000, while the estimated actual cost of the heat is \$100,000. The village received a contract for heating costs in November 1994. The annual rate of \$50,000 has been established for the first year to allow time to test and meter in the system. The village is negotiating with the Deh Cho Regional Divisional Board of Education and MACA for the funding for the arena. The contract has not yet been signed.

We are still in negotiations with the village and we'll deal with it accordingly and with an open mind. We'll try our best to solve this issue as soon as possible. We are still in negotiations and that's where it stands right now. MACA is involved as well, to make sure that all the bills are paid or whatever.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Yes, it would be good if the Minister could provide me with the background information on this one here, if he could, in a hard copy. I would appreciate that.

The concern I have is with what was explained to me. If that's the cost, I don't know how it would be for the future. I would like to ask the Minister if his department is looking at other sources of heat for the other buildings like the Bompas Hall, the Thomas Simpson school and the Deh Cho hall. Are they considering getting away from the central heating system and putting in individual heating systems? Has the department considered that and, if there are going to be any changes made, what are the plans for that?

Page 1009

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the first issue about providing you with a briefing on the background, I will write you a letter right away on that issue.

Also, we are reviewing the cost of a steam heat system compared to stand-alone systems. Once something has evolved from that review, I will be quite happy to share that with the Member immediately as well, and I will make sure that the department does that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. The chair recognizes Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Getting into the definitive objectives, Mr. Chairman, there is one area that looks interesting. One of the activities is to carry out a two-year of a three-year program exchange of technical information to promote construction, consulting, manufacturing and business opportunities in Yakutia, Sakha. What is that? Can the Minister explain that to me? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have an agreement with the government of the Yakutia, Sakha republic for an exchange of technical information on building codes and building technology, areas in which we are perceived by circumpolar countries to be one of the most advanced in the world. We have an agreement with them, and the federal government funds the majority, \$1.3 million for three years, to carry out this agreement. That's how that village was built over there. As well, there is now an airport and air terminal building being built.

It's a good agreement, and it works well. It creates jobs for northerners to go over there.

From time to time, we do get requests for Ministers or elected officials to travel, but I've been there already. It's really nice and the people are really nice. Next time they request that, I will make sure to invite other Members to take my place. I know Mr. Whitford has volunteered. Mr. Antoine, you may like to see that place, how that program is carried out, and how those people live. They are aboriginal people as well, and they are not much different from us, except they are living in the 1940s and we are living in the 1990s. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

I would like to ask the Minister about this. Are there northern companies and businesses employed? Do they have contracts over there at the present time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Yes, and I believe I made that information available to Members of this House. There is a whole list of northerners and northern companies that worked over there on that village. Right now, Ferguson Simek Clark, Clark Bowler, Robinson and companies like that are there starting to build the air terminal, or they are pretty close to building it.

The village is finished, it's being used. We have a couple of people from Public Works and Services over there on the exchange program who are teaching them how to maintain the village to Canadian standards. The people over there seem very impressed with the buildings that we have provided through the private sector.

There are good opportunities over there, and all we have to do is continue to work with them to develop those opportunities for our private sector in the Northwest Territories.

I believe that there were some people over there from Mr. Antoine's riding as well, but I forget how many and who.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

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

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Minister knows I have really only one concern about his department, and I know we are very close to adjourning so I will try to keep this brief. It is about the transfer of Transport Canada's tank farm and POL facilities in Iqaluit, and, incidentally, in Resolute Bay, although I wouldn't dare speak about Resolute Bay, which is in conjunction with the takeover of Arctic "A" airports.

Mr. Chairman, just some brief comments. I basically want to say, first of all, that the present system which tenders the whole resupply to a private company is producing, in my view and in the view of my constituents, pretty good value for service.

For example, in Iqaluit, the price of home heating oil is 38.69 cents. I don't know if you can easily compare Rankin Inlet with Iqaluit. I know that in Rankin there is a big freight premium. I think it's about 12.5 cents a litre, compared to four or five cents that we pay in Iqaluit from Montreal. Setting aside the freight costs, the selling price of heating oil in Rankin Inlet is 61

cents. In Dorset, the selling price is 57 cents. So, at 38 cents in Iqaluit, we are getting a pretty good deal on home heating oil. We are also getting a pretty good deal on gasoline, I believe, compared to costs in other communities.

Mr. Chairman, one of the two issues that I think the department is considering is marine transportation. I understand consideration is being given to combining the three eastern Arctic resupplies; the ones that the government is doing and the ones being done now privately in Iqaluit and Resolute Bay. I would just like to suggest that I believe it might be unfair to Iqaluit consumers if the result of combining the resupplies is that their base rate goes up. Now, if by adding to the volumes of the total resupply, Iqaluit and Resolute Bay can bring savings to the system and to other communities, I'm happy to see that. But I wouldn't want to see it done with the result of the base rate for Iqaluit going up.

In other words, if you're going to achieve economies of scale on freight by adding Iqaluit volumes, the people of Iqaluit should still enjoy the same base rate that they're paying now, after transfer. Pass the savings on to other communities but

Page 1010

don't bring the Iqaluit freight price up in the process. I don't think that would be fair.

Secondly, on price structure, after the GNWT takes over Transport Canada's facilities, I would like to see the same approach taken that is being taken now by Public Works Canada in pricing and contracting policies. This would mean that there would be a call for a tender for product resupply for Iqaluit and, I would suggest, Resolute Bay and maybe other eastern Arctic communities. The tender would cover local delivery, plant operation and maintenance and it could allow a capital recovery surcharge, which I think is working very well in Iqaluit where, for a small per-litre cost, the capital infrastructure is being maintained, environmental reserves are being established and it is not a draw on the GNWT's capital requirements. We know the facilities in both Resolute and Iqaluit are going to last a long time, they won't need to be replaced. I think the present system could continue to work.

I would like to note -- and I'm not carrying the flag for Shell Canada; Shell just happens to be the current contractor and it could be Esso or any other company during the next round -- but I was impressed that

Shell, all told, is handling about 120 million litres in the Arctic -- they supply northern Quebec, Iqaluit and Resolute Bay -- with three staff.

Now I hesitate to ask the Minister how many staff would be required to handle the 200 or so million litres that POL administers in the Arctic. I think it's a lot more. I guess if you look at Sir Roger Douglas and the trends in shrinking government wherever possible, if the private sector is doing it, and can do it as lean as mean as big companies like Shell and Esso do, that rely on their international network to support the drop in the bucket that Arctic fuel delivery would be, then why don't we continue to take advantage of that corporate capacity and avoid adding expensive PYs to our government?

This is my point of view, Mr. Chairman. I know the Minister is considering these options right now. I would just like to get my point of view on the record. I would also like to say that it's very important to my constituents that before final decisions are made, there be full consultation with customers and consumers affected. It's not just the people who buy gas and heating oil in Iqaluit; it's also the airlines that use the airport and even a small change in their prices affects everything, as the Minister knows. I would also like to see consultation with the other major users of the service.

I hope that whatever is done, we will continue to promote Iqaluit as a place where international airlines can buy fuel. We are competing with Gander and places in the States. We have a chance to attract more business in this area and, whatever is done with this take-over, that opportunity should be exploited because it will be to the benefit of not just my constituency but also to the whole eastern Arctic.

In a nutshell, not wanting to prolong this, those are my views. I hope they'll be taken into account by the Minister and the department. I want to say again, please consult before this major decision is finally made because my constituents have strong views on it. I don't want to take a lot of time in committee of the whole because it's a local issue for Iqaluit and Resolute, but it is a major issue because of the importance of fuel and its relation to airline travel. Those are my points, I will say no more, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to assure the Member that I have listened, with great interest and I do hear what he's saying. After the rent scale, my middle name is "Consult" so I will be consulting with all interested parties and listening.

--Laughter

Because, any changes we make affect people and we're elected to serve people so we should consult with them. His views are on the record and I will consider them when we adopt a new policy. He'll get another kick at it, anyway. So, I thank him for his views.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I thought your middle name was "Teflon."

--Laughter

General comments. Are there any further comments? Do we agree that we go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Line By Line

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Page 08-8, directorate, total O and M, \$6.906 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Project Management

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Project management, total O and M, \$7.614 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Accommodation Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Accommodation services, total O and M, \$39,727 million.

Page 1011

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Buildings And Works

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Buildings and works, total O and M, \$25.143 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Vehicles And Equipment

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Vehicles and equipment, total O and M, \$3.516 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Utilities

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Utilities, total O and M, \$24.603 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

Supply Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Supply services, total O and M, \$7.168 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Operations

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Operations, total O and M, \$1.825 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Systems And Communications

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Systems and communications, total O and M, \$4.293 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Details of grants and contributions. Information items: schedule of lease budget requirements; petroleum products revolving fund; public stores revolving fund; systems and computer services; and, granular program revolving fund.

Detail of work performed on behalf of third parties. Total department, \$11.488 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Program summary, page 08-7. Operations and maintenance, total O and M, \$120.795 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you. Does the committee agree that we have concluded this department?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for assisting the committee. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to thank the Members for passing my budget and I would like to thank the staff who put the budget together.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. The chair will now recognize the clock as being precisely 6:00. I shall rise and report to the Speaker. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

We are on item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1995-96, and Committee Report 4-12(7), Report on the Review of the 1995-96 Main Estimates, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Pudluk.

---Applause

To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. It is my understanding that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to assent to bills. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if Her Honour, the

Page 1012

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber and assent to bills?

ASSENT TO BILLS 15, 19 And 20

COMMISSIONER MAKSAGAK:

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, it gives me pleasure to assent to the following bills: Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Elections Act; Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2; Bill 20, Loan Authorization Act, 1995-96. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Nunavut Caucus immediately after adjournment tonight, and at 10:30 tomorrow morning, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance.

Orders of the day for Monday, April 24, 1995:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, No. 2, 1995-96
 - Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Fair Practices Act
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act
 - Bill 22, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1994-95
 - Bill 23, Write-off of Debts Act, 1994-95
 - Bill 24, Community Employees' Benefits Act
 - Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
 - Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Land Titles Act

- Committee Report 2-12(7), Report on the Legislative Action Paper on the Office of Ombudsman for the Northwest Territories

- Committee Report 3-12(7), Report on the Review of the Legislative Action Paper Proposing New Heritage Legislation for the Northwest Territories

- Committee Report 4-12(7), Report on the Review of the 1995-96 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 5-12(7), Report on the Review of Rewriting the Liquor Laws of the Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper

- Committee Report 6-12(7), Report on the Review of the Legislative Discussion Paper on the Draft of the New Education Act

- Committee Report 7-12(7), Report on the Second Annual Report, 1993-94, of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request unanimous consent to go back to item 13, tabling of documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

We haven't adjourned yet. The Member for Hay River is requesting unanimous consent to return to item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Pollard.

REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Members. Tabled Document 95-12(7) is the Chief Conflict Commissioner's report on allegations against the Premier. In his report, the Commissioner dismisses the complaint in its entirety and states that it falls perilously close to being frivolous or totally political in nature. The Premier has asked that I table that document in the House today, and I am taking this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Prior to adjourning the House, I would like to wish each and every one of you a joyous and blessed Easter and safe travels over the Easter weekend and until you return. By the authority provided by Motion 16-12(7),

Page 1013

the House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday, April 24, 1995.

---ADJOURNMENT