



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**7th Session**

**Day 40**

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

**HANSARD**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1995**

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

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**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, Mrs. Thompson, Hon. John Todd, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Zoe

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):**

Merci, Mr. Lewis. Good afternoon. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**

Minister's Statement 78-12(7): NWT Association Of Municipalities - AGM

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Association of Municipalities held their annual general meeting in Iqaluit, April 28th to May 1st.

Representing the GNWT at these meetings were the Premier and myself, as well as MLAs, Mr. Dent, Mr. Ballantyne, Mr. Zoe and Mr. Patterson. Our representation speaks to the importance the GNWT places on the role of the NWT Association of Municipalities as a collective voice for matters of concern to municipal governments.

Also in attendance at the AGM were Member of Parliament, Mr. Jack Anawak, senior representatives of the RCMP, Federation of Canadian Municipalities representatives, special guests from Goose Bay, Labrador, as well as a number of senior GNWT public servants.

The NWTAM is made up of 47 member municipalities and the association is proud to point out that they are the only provincial/territorial association with 100 per cent membership of eligible municipalities. Forty member municipalities were represented at the association's 1995 AGM, an excellent turn-out.

A highlight of this year's AGM was a two-day planning session on municipalities and the criminal justice system. Municipalities are concerned that they have the best possible local policing and protection. Discussions were far ranging on the possibilities for integrated and coordinated local policing.

As Minister of MACA, I had the opportunity to officially invite the association's participation in our review of municipal legislation, which I announced in this House on April 27th. We also agreed to the association's participation in a review of certain aspects of the municipal capital assistance policy (MCAP), particularly the formula for community ability to contribute, which determines the required levels of community contributions to capital projects.

Elections were held for the new executive of the association and I would like to congratulate Mayor Dennis Bevington of Fort Smith on being elected president of the association for the coming year.

---Applause

I would also like to congratulate other Members of the newly-elected board of directors:

Mayor Charlie Furlong, Aklavik; Mayor Joe Kunuk, Iqaluit; Mayor Garry Hubert, Fort Liard; Mayor Tabitha Kalluk, Resolute Bay; councillor Peter Kritaqlilik, Arviat; Mayor Dave Lovell, Yellowknife; Mayor Tom Zubko, Inuvik; and, councillor Vern Tordoff, Hay River. Mr. Speaker, this list attests to the representativeness of the association and its unique position as a voice for municipal governments in the NWT.

I wish to thank the association for their invitation and their hospitality. The staff of the association were helpful and always accommodating. I look forward to working with the association's board of directors and their president in the coming months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Member's Statement On Misrepresentation By Firearms Task Force

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I expressed my outrage at the sham consultations undertaken in my constituency by the federal firearms task force. Several things said by the members of that task force to my constituents were disturbing to me. Firstly, the federal representatives told my constituents that they were committed to consulting on section 110(t) of the proposed Firearms Act. They also stated that the detailed consultations will happen this fall. The implication was, don't worry if you're feeling a little

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rushed today, there will still be lots of time to obtain your input this fall.

Mr. Speaker, section 110(t) allows for the making of regulations: "respecting the manner in which any provisions of this act or the regulations applies to any of the aboriginal peoples of Canada and adapting any such provision for the purposes of that application."

Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister of Justice has already stated publicly in introducing this bill to the House of Commons committee that all the substantive provisions of the bill will apply to aboriginal people and that, in effect, the regulations will only allow for minor modifications in how the bill is implemented in aboriginal communities.

One example that federal officials trot out regularly is that an aboriginal person may be appointed to be a firearms officer for the purposes of registering firearms in a community. As if any aboriginal person would want that job. Compulsory registration will still be required of every firearm. The regulations may allow a local person to get the job instead of a bureaucrat.

It's very important that our people understand, Mr. Speaker, that this bill amends the criminal law. It is very clear that the criminal law cannot be amended by regulations, certainly not in the manner being suggested by the task force. It's also very important that our people know that the federal government intends to ram this bill through the House before the summer recess. According to Mr. Rock's timetable, the new bill will be law by the time the firearms task force comes back to consult my constituents this fall.

When these officials told my constituents they'd be further consulted in the fall, they did not point out that,

according to their agenda, it would then be too late to make any substantive changes to the bill.

May I have consent to briefly conclude, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The honourable Member for Iqaluit is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Patterson.

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members. It will be under two minutes tomorrow, I promise.

What matters, Mr. Speaker, is what is put in the sections of the main bill now before the House of Commons, not what minor administrative changes are made in how the bill is implemented in our aboriginal communities through regulations. This distinction was not spelled out by the firearms task force when they were in my constituency and that is why I called their so-called consultations a fraud.

Mr. Speaker, what the task force is saying to us is: trust us, but everything they are doing indicates that they absolutely cannot be trusted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Support For Nova Construction

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very unusual for an ordinary Member to take issue with comments made by a colleague in the Ordinary Members' Caucus. We try to stay together and work together in harmony. However, the Member for Iqaluit is continuing to question the credentials of a Yellowknife businessman, and I hesitate to use his name because it's been used so many times in this House and he hasn't been able to defend himself.

But, on my initiative, I phoned him yesterday because I'm getting a little tired of hearing his name being batted around in this place with no one rising to defend him. By the way, he doesn't need a defence, but I feel an obligation to point out that Mr. Mike

Mrdjenovich, in fact, is a local businessman who has contributed significantly to the progress of this city. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that although piles of information have been given to the Member for Iqaluit about the operation of Nova Construction, I would like to give you a bit more information to show you what this business means to the city of Yellowknife and to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Last year, the company paid municipal taxes, \$208,206; land lease, \$86,403; the Iqaluit office, \$82,981; expenses of the Yellowknife office, \$588,032; the economic impact of all the work undertaken by this company - \$7,176,079; salaries of eight full-time people in the complement in the offices, \$279,000. In other words, roughly \$9 million a year is the economic impact of this company in the Northwest Territories.

The total capital investment in the Northwest Territories is \$35 million. We are always on about capital. We need capital. We need to grow.

This man, in fact, attracts money and activity. He is revitalizing the downtown core. In fact, the crappy -- I don't know if crappy is a bad word, Mr. Speaker -- but there were two unsightly buildings right next door to the Member for Iqaluit when he lived on that street. They have now been torn down and there are going to be beautiful new buildings right near the old arena. Everybody should be happy to know that.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Lewis, your time is up. Mr. Lewis, are you seeking unanimous consent to continue?

**MR. LEWIS:**

I am seeking unanimous consent to continue, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Lewis.

---Applause

**MR. LEWIS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very unusual for me, Mr. Speaker, to ask for consent to continue a statement, but what I want to say I believe has to be said, because I have listened for a long time now and have been tempted to say

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something. This man doesn't live in my constituency. However, he is a Yellowknife businessman, and somebody should do something.

Numbers? You want numbers so that you can call this gentleman. I will give you a whole bunch: 873-1910; 873-1577; 873-1505; 873-1602; 920-7121; 920-7131; in area code 819, 979-2554; in area code 403, 920-7141...There are two fax numbers: (819)979-2575; and the one I just referred which was 920-7141.

However, I also have listed on this paper, underlined in green, the personal number of Mr. Mrdjenovich, and because that number is confidential, I will tell the Member what it is if he wants to have it. But since it's an unlisted number, I am not at liberty to give it in this House today.

In fact, that's the problem. The problem is that he's a low bidder, and when you have that kind of competition, other people get upset. I know that in Iqaluit, for example, some people can charge \$2,200 for a one-bedroom apartment and this man charges only \$1,500, so people get upset by that kind of competition. They don't like it, and it comes to the floor of this House without people being aware of why people are trying to do something to undermine the credentials of this individual.

So, Mr. Speaker, now that we have all the facts on the floor, I hope that this man whose name has been dragged through this House on so many occasions will be allowed to get on with the things that he does well which are to build and build them efficiently and effectively so that the people of the Northwest Territories get value for money. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Forest Firefighter Safety Standards

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members will recall that yesterday I had asked the Minister responsible for the forest fire management program some questions about safety and maintaining standards to ensure the safety of our firefighters. As we are probably heading into the worst forest fire season in history, such considerations are more than important. I believe they are crucial.

Mr. Speaker, the request for proposals to provide air tanker services to the forest fire management program specifically sets out the minimum standards for both the aircraft and the pilot to fly them. For pilots, the standards are primarily measured in hours flown in a particular forest fire environment.

In response to my question about these standards yesterday in the House, Mr. Morin said, and I quote from unedited Hansard: "When you go to a proposal call, you want to find out what other contractors have to offer so you can carry out similar types of business with maybe less standards."

Mr. Speaker, I find this response quite disturbing. Does this mean that the minimum number of hours of experience required for a pilot to fly a plane into the heart of a fire is not really the minimum, that it is negotiable? I certainly hope not. I understand that some of the pilots do in fact lack the necessary experience to engage in this dangerous activity and they have been practising their skills on training flights. However, training is a poor substitute for actual experienced flying and the difficult conditions associated with firefighting.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns of my constituents about safety are real. I understand that forest firefighting can be risky. However, it is the responsibility of this government to ensure that every possible precaution is taken to keep our firefighters safe.

The Bird Dog officers who are concerned about flying right now have a wealth of experience between them. This experience has helped us fight fires effectively and safely with the least possible risk to the people in the air and on the ground. If the officers have concerns...I seek unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to continue with my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Thebacha is seeking unanimous consent to continue. Are there any nays? There are

no nays. Conclude your statement, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable Members. If the officers have concerns, I believe the Minister should listen carefully to those concerns and try to address them. The officers are not raising them to cause trouble but because they truly believe there is a serious potential for an accident to happen.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents and I continue to have concerns about safety issues for firefighting crews. I will continue to address these concerns to the Minister until I am satisfied that he and his department have taken everything in their responsibility to minimize the risks for our hard-working fire crews that will be fighting fires in the Northwest Territories this summer. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Concerns Re Proposed Federal Gun Control Legislation

**MRS. THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to discuss an issue which is of great concern to the people of my constituency. The proposed Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons, Bill C-68, quite clearly does not respect the agreements signed in May of 1993 between the Inuit of Nunavut and the federal government. This agreement states that the Inuit have the right to harvest wildlife without any form of licence or permit and without imposition of any form of tax or fee. Bill C-68 does exactly the opposite. It imposes a monetary burden on Inuit people who rely on harvesting wildlife

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to support their families. This is part of our culture and our traditional way of life.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the consultation process, as we heard yesterday from Mr. Patterson, was completely inadequate. Communities in the north have not been consulted adequately, and Inuit are left without any information on how this bill will affect their

lives. The federal government has not taken the appropriate measures to ensure that concerns at the community level have been addressed.

Once again, we see the federal government acting in a manner that does not reflect the current realities of our people or our values and beliefs. This gun control legislation should not and must not be imposed on the Inuit of Nunavut. I would encourage the federal government not to proceed with this bill until the matter is settled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Hear! Hear!

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Pudlat.

Member's Statement On Lack Of Consultation By Gun Control Task Force

**MR. PUDLAT:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a statement regarding the gun control act. Mr. Speaker, we are aware that there was consultation in some of the communities of the north, but my constituents weren't visited during the consultation process. If there was consultation done with my constituents, I would have been told about it. I feel there should be more consultation done with the communities regarding gun control.

Up until today, I have not been able to meet with my constituents regarding this, but I have been told that there should be more consultation done and a process so that every individual affected can be better informed about how it will affect them. I feel that when we are dealing with these bills, there should be consultation done with the communities. I'm not sure what communities were visited but from what I understand, the communities weren't informed prior to the visits. I would like to see my constituents being better informed about this gun control legislation because it will affect our people.

I just wanted to make a statement with respect to consultation. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Lack Of Federal Preparation Re Bill C-68

**MR. ALLOOFOO:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand today to talk about Bill C-68. Last month, my constituents were visited and they were not informed beforehand of the visit. We were only told by fax a few hours before they were coming. It was only the day before that we were informed that people from the federal government were visiting my constituents. (Translation ends)

There is a concern that Bill C-68 is going to adversely affect a lot of people in the Northwest Territories. I'm afraid that since the officials from the federal Department of Justice have visited some communities, now they can say they have consulted. They have not consulted. When they went to my constituency, they did not let me or the community know ahead of time. I learned by accident. The Member for Iqaluit was in Iqaluit at the time and he learned that the officials from the department were going to Igloolik. He contacted our Clerk and, fortunately, our Clerk was able to contact me to tell me the officials were going to Igloolik the next day. It was unfortunate that they didn't have the courtesy to let the people and me know they were coming in.

They have not consulted in terms of seeking input from the people of the Northwest Territories. The bill, if it becomes law, will have a profound impact on hunters.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The honourable Member for Amittuq is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Alloofoo.

**MR. ALLOOFOO:**

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the bill would have an adverse impact on the people of the Northwest Territories. For instance, if the proposed bill goes ahead, it would be virtually impossible for me to loan a gun to my friend or to my family home in Pond Inlet so they could go hunting. Before I did that, I would

have to get a permit from Yellowknife so that my friend and family could take possession of my gun and go hunting. This practice would unnecessarily affect kids who are learning how to hunt.

If I did anything to contradict the act, it would make me a criminal. It would make many of my constituents, whose practices are safe but which go against the act, criminals, which otherwise they would not be.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge everyone in the Northwest Territories, especially the Legislative Assembly, to continue to pursue making changes to Bill C-68. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 3, Members' statements. Ms. Mike.

Member's Statement On Support For Member's Questioning Re Nova Construction

**MS. MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had not planned to make a Member's statement today, other than on Bill C-68. However, as a result of Mr. Lewis's Member's statement, I just couldn't sit here, Mr. Speaker, and listen to some of the words that were directed to the Member for Iqaluit, my colleague from the Baffin. I have no particular problems with the individual who has been mentioned many times in this House.

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Lewis indicated to this House, this individual has contributed quite a bit in tax dollars to

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Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform this House that this individual has a property leased to the government in one of my communities in my riding. It is good that Yellowknife benefits, but what about our regions and communities, Mr. Speaker?

I think the Member for Iqaluit has every right to question this government if we feel, on this side, that things are not being carried out properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Disruption To Air Services During Runway Extension In Pelly Bay

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transportation is preparing to upgrade the runway at the Pelly Bay Airport this summer. The project will lengthen the runway to 5,000 feet, and allow the runway to be certified by Transport Canada. The project also includes new airfield lighting and a new terminal building planned for next year. We are thankful to the Department of Transportation, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Hear! Hear!

**MR. NINGARK:**

I'm not finished yet.

---Laughter

However, Mr. Speaker, there is a problem with the project. While work is proceeding on the runway, the airline that serves Pelly Bay will not be able to use the whole runway for some part of the summer. They will only be able to use 2,500 feet of the runway. First Air has been using a Hawker Siddeley 748 to serve Pelly Bay, and Ptarmigan Airways has been using a Gulf Stream Combi, but these planes will not be able to fly into Pelly Bay while the construction is going on. Since the usable part of the runway won't be long enough, both airlines will have to use Twin Otters to connect their regular flights. This will cause delays, missed connections, inconvenience to passengers and airfreight customers, and extra work and expense for the hamlet.

I understand that both First Air and Ptarmigan Airways have asked the Minister of Transportation to provide financial compensation for the extra expenses which will result from this construction. I trust the Minister and his department will find a way to compensate these airlines during the project. These airlines work hard to service the people of Natilikmiot and they are making every effort to provide my constituents with the best possible service.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister will agree with me that they should be encouraged to continue to provide the best possible service. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Fair Treatment Of Civil Servants During Division Process

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're in the final months of the 12th Legislative Assembly. The election coming up on October 16th will begin the official countdown to the division of the Northwest Territories. Once that happens, that decision is irreversible. It's something like Humpty Dumpty; all the king's horses and all the king's men could never put the Northwest Territories together again.

---Laughter

Many people have worked for 20 years or more to achieve this momentous feat of creating Nunavut. We in the west offer our best wishes to the people of Nunavut as they embark on this huge endeavour. However, there are massive logistical problems to overcome before 1999. I think to all of us, the ever-diminishing federal funding is of grave, grave concern. The federal government and we must remember that we're not just creating Nunavut, we're creating two new territories here in the old Northwest Territories.

I know that the Government of the Northwest Territories is undertaking a lot of work in preparation for division. I sit as a Member on the division committee. We've met a few times and acted as a sounding board, but we don't have the mandate or the resources to actually do the preparation. However, I hope we've provided some useful advice in the course of the last few months. The division of assets and liabilities is going to be very tricky and it's going to be a very, very tough job.

Changes in the structures of governments in both east and west are causing a lot of concern to a lot of the civil servants who have worked for many years for the Government of the Northwest Territories. I think it is very important to clearly state for the record that both the new Nunavut government and the new western government have a moral responsibility to

retain as many of our present employees as possible. If the numbers overall are reduced, then there should be fair compensation packages and adequate lead times for any employees who won't be kept. I strongly believe that a system should be put in place early in the life of the new government to ensure that our GNWT employees, both east, west, headquarters, regional and community, are fairly treated; and, as I say, with enough lead time to minimize negative effects on them, their spouses and on their families. Most of them have made a long and sincere commitment to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, could 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. Conclude your statement, Mr. Ballantyne.

**MR. BALLANTYNE:**

Mr. Speaker, those of us who have worked with government and in government for many years know how important a loyal, dedicated, hard-working civil service is to ourselves, as politicians. I think it can't be overstated that if we want strong successful governments, both

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in the west and in Nunavut, we must treat our present employees fairly. If we plan it properly and do it early, we should have no problem achieving what that very important objective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Healing Workshop In Resolute Bay

**MR. PUDLUK:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise today and say that on May 11th, 12th and 13th there was a healing workshop in Resolute Bay, and it was mainly directed to the people who were relocated between 1953 and 1955 from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet. There was a healing workshop for those



people. It was not directed to just those particular people, but there were other people who were also invited up to our community.

During the workshop, the participants who were involved numbered 40 to 50 people. It helped a lot for those who were sexually assaulted when they were much younger, and the people who were relocated to Resolute Bay. Both those types of people held a healing workshop, even though it was only for three days. The people who assisted with the workshop came from other communities. I wish to thank those people who were courteous enough to assist with the workshop. The people realized what kinds of problems existed back then.

Those three days were very meaningful, and the people were able to return to their communities healed. If this kind of workshop continues in the future, then it's less doubtful that we would have a better future. Those people who have thought about committing suicide were also involved at that workshop. I am sure the number of suicides would decrease if those kinds of workshops were held in the communities, because they are supported from different communities and this was very helpful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Poor Consultation Of Gun Control Task Force

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I held a constituency meeting. A lot of the issues that came up at this meeting were a lot of the top issues that I've been confronted with in the last little while and at that meeting was the proposed gun legislation that is being fielded by the Honourable Allan Rock in Ottawa. I don't think there's a day that goes by that we don't hear on the news some criticisms of this bill - or some praise of it, mind you -- but, to the large part, the concerns the citizens have of this bill, people of the Northwest Territories, are going unheard. I know there is a very strong lobby to assist Mr. Rock in getting this bill through the House in Ottawa. There is some pretty heavy-handed stuff going on, as well.

Members of Parliament are not going to be able to speak their minds on it, for fear of losing whatever

positions they may hold within the government. This, Mr. Speaker, is certainly not the way, in our opinions, to go.

A couple of months ago, there was a public meeting held here in Yellowknife. Believe me, I've never seen such a blatant misuse of the public's time. They talked about consultation but when it came to talking about gun legislation, it was time for Mr. Rock to leave, and he did. People were outraged at the fact that he said he was in Yellowknife and listened to what the people had to say, when he didn't. Last month, we were in the Baffin and Keewatin and while we were there on other business, we met the people from Ottawa, a task force going around the north asking the public's opinion on this. No one knew they were even there. They didn't even know what they were doing in the Keewatin. People were very surprised. Mind you, people rallied to get to that meeting and told them what they thought of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek consent to continue?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, colleagues, Mr. Speaker. What has prompted me to rise on this issue, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they are saying they are consulting when they are going around talking to the public about the gun legislation. If the examples that I cited -- the meetings in Yellowknife, the Baffin and the Keewatin - - are any example of what consultation means, then I think we're in serious trouble. Because, in my opinion, that is not the way you consult people: letting people know at the last minute that there is a group to ask their opinion, without informing them so they could be prepared. Mind you, the people who were there rallied to make presentations and they made good presentations, right from the heart.

I don't know whether those concerns were ever taken back to Ottawa and related, about how this legislation would affect people in the north. Here, we show great respect for guns as tools and as a way of living. There are areas where Mr. Rock is on track with his legislation, where it deals with assault weapons and

things of that nature. But, here in the north, guns are everyday implements, much the same as tools are to farmers. If restrictions are put in the way to cause law-abiding citizens to become criminals next year, or whenever Bill C-68 is enacted, then I think something is wrong. I think we have to speak out and make sure the government hears what we're saying.

I know Members have already spoken about a number of these things, and I just hope they are going to be listened to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

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Member's Statement Congratulating Grade 12 Graduates From Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 27th, I had the privilege of addressing the 14 graduating students from the Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School in Rae-Edzo. This is the second year, Mr. Speaker, in which the grade 12 program has been offered at the JBRHS.

The graduating ceremony was well-attended. The graduating students received a great deal of support from many people, especially from their parents. The encouragement given by the parents for their children to go to school to get a good education is very important, and this was obvious with these graduates. The students also received a lot of support from their teachers, the local CEC and the divisional board of education.

Today, Mr. Speaker, with the changes both here in the north and around the world, completing grade 12 is a good stepping stone, but it should not be the end. We have to continue to encourage these students and others to pursue paths towards college or trades training, something that will both interest and challenge them and let them contribute to their communities.

To the graduates and all the people who helped them get to this important milestone, congratulations and best wishes for whatever road you choose to travel ahead. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Review Of Student Financial Assistance Program

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment questions about the student financial assistance program. The Minister indicated that the information and terms of reference were sent to Members. I received my package this morning. The Minister indicated that he would like our advice on this proposal and the terms of reference, so I would like to take this opportunity to give my comments and suggestions.

The review is quite timely and I believe it is dictated by the huge demands and less money. From what I read in the documents, there are strong indications that there will probably be cutbacks, reductions or some significant changes to how benefits are allocated to the students. It always seems that when cutbacks are being contemplated, this government seems to hire consultants so they can give us the bad news. But when good news and increases in services and programs are made, the Ministers or deputy ministers are always front and centre.

As I mentioned, the review is timely and we do need a proper evaluation of the program. I, and I'm sure other Members of this House, get lots of calls from students and they mainly complain about the benefits and the timeliness of their payments.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Koe, your time is up. Mr. Koe.

**MR. KOE:**

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, there are lots of complaints about the timeliness of payments. I have some suggestions for the contractor who is doing the review. These, I don't believe, were highlighted in the terms of reference. One of the key groups that must be consulted with, as I mentioned yesterday, are parents. Other than the students, themselves, I think the parents are the people most impacted by changes to benefits and financial assistance for students. They have to be included as part of the study.

The other groups are the aboriginal groups. I know that many aboriginal groups are now providing, through whatever resources they have, bursaries and scholarships to supplement student income. They have to be consulted. The other groups are the counsellors and administrators of the colleges, universities and high schools who provide advice to students when they are filling out applications or when they get to the university or college.

Another group who are highly impacted by the current financial assistance programs are single parents. They seem to have the most difficulty with adjusting to post-secondary education, especially if they have to move a great distance. Careful consideration has to be given to this group of students.

Also, under phase I of the terms of reference, attention must be paid, as I mentioned, to the timeliness of payments made to students. Currently, most students need large amounts of cash when they first get to university or college, either to pay their room and board or to pay their tuition fees and books. I believe their first cheques are one or two weeks after they register and they submit receipts. It may be a month. This is a concern, especially for first-time students who are not aware of the needs for cash when they first go south or wherever they are.

I hope the Minister will consider these comments and incorporate them into the review.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Applause

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Deh Cho Constitutional Conference Motion Re Bill C-68

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) I am going to be speaking in my language. Yesterday, during session, I tabled a document. This paper contained the meeting that was held in Fort Providence. There was a motion passed during that meeting and a majority of the people who were at the

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meeting had...What the motion was about was the gun law...What they objected to was the way the bill is presented.

For us over here, things are not the same as for people down south. We had invited Ethel Blondin-Andrew to attend this meeting. Bill C-68 was supposed to be read three times. It has been read twice now. We told her before it is read for the third time, all the concerns we raised during this meeting should be brought up to the Minister. (Translation ends)

Mr Speaker, last week, at the Deh Cho constitutional conference, a motion was unanimously adopted by all the delegates there with regard to opposition to Bill C-68. In that motion, we are directing our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew to vote on behalf of the constituents of the Deh Cho area; that is, to vote against the third reading of Bill C-68 when it comes up in Parliament. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS**

Return To Question 223-12(7): Status Of Funding Cuts To Victims' Services Programs

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, this is a return to a question asked by Mr. Dent on March 3rd with regard to status of funding regarding victims' services programs.

Mr. Speaker, Justice Canada has advised territorial Justice officials that funding programs of Justice Canada have been reviewed and that funding for victims' services programs in the Northwest Territories

will be forthcoming to each program. These funds are available for this fiscal year and it is expected that the funds will be available in future years, although to what level is not known at this time.

Victims' services programs were made aware of the fact that funds were available, and many have applied for funds. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although he is a familiar face, I don't think he should be taken for granted. I refer to our watch-dog for workers' rights, not in his usual seat today...

---Laughter

...the UNW's Ben MacDonald. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People**

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the western aboriginal leaders are meeting here in Yellowknife and I believe tomorrow they will be meeting with officials to discuss the northern accord. One of the major concerns and the theme underlying these discussions is the inherent right of self-government for aboriginal people. I would like to ask the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs what this government's position is on the aboriginal people's right to inherent self-government.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Return To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, I have sent a letter to the heads of all the aboriginal organizations today and I have laid out what I thought would be a clear statement. It is this government's position that aboriginal people have the inherent right to self-government. We have said that consistently for the last eight years. We have negotiated that in the Charlottetown Accord and we continue to uphold that position, as does, apparently, the federal government. Such a right is in section 35 of the Constitution.

We went further today to say that we are prepared in self-government negotiations to recognize that aboriginal governments would have the legislative capacity to govern and that subject matters contained in the northern accord -- which is oil and gas, and minerals -- must be negotiated in the context of self-government. Aboriginal governments, regional governments or public governments, in the future, will have jurisdiction over such matters and will be tied to whether or not they wish to provide programs and services. So we have been fairly explicit in reaching the concerns of some of the aboriginal leaders.

The concern has been once oil and gas matters have been devolved to the territorial government, does that exclude forever any possibility, in the future, should there be a regional government by the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, the Sahtu or the Deh Cho, that that would not be available for negotiations. I have said in a letter and I have said directly to them that this means that this government is prepared to support such a notion that in the future, 20 years or 50 years from now, should it become viable to negotiate forms of governments that would provide programs and services to aboriginal people and/or all people within a particular jurisdiction, we are prepared to discuss the extent of the geographic jurisdiction, and the subject matters which will include those that are included now under the northern accord. So this was a specific concern raised by the leaders of the Sahtu and I thought they were of concern to other aboriginal leaders, so I met with them over lunch, having just returned a few minutes ago and this was one of the issues that was raised. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

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Supplementary To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Minister made reference to letters sent to the aboriginal groups. I assume that he will be sharing those letters with us. Presently, some of the aboriginal groups are currently negotiating self-government and they are negotiating with the federal government. I would like to know what this government's involvement is and the guidelines being used in participating in these negotiations.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, in the past, for instance, when we negotiated the framework agreement under the Gwich'in claim and Sahtu claim, there was really no overall government position paper that was prepared to guide us through negotiations. So we have, as a ministry, developed a draft protocol and mandate discussion paper which Cabinet approved for discussion purposes. That is, Cabinet didn't endorse the paper as such but endorsed it for the purpose of consultation with officials of the aboriginal organizations. Some of the aboriginal organizations have responded, others haven't. The nature of the response has been marked by the fact that the federal government has yet to come out with its own paper.

At this time, it's our view that the territorial government will be involved and should be involved in self-government talks as a third party, but we've indicated we are open to discussions with the aboriginal leaders to make a final decision on that. They may very well decide collectively that they would prefer and find it more advantageous if the government comes with either observer status or as part of the federal team, which is the way that the claims negotiations were conducted.

That is the approach we have taken. We have asked very openly for the aboriginal leaders to advise us on the nature of our participation and involvement and the extent to which we will be taking part in the self-government negotiations. The letter that we sent to the aboriginal leaders will be shared with MLAs. I just wanted to make sure that the aboriginal leaders themselves had received the letters before we shared it and made public the letters to Members of the Legislature. So they will be circulated today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**MR. KOE:**

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker. During the negotiations and discussions on the northern accord, some of the aboriginal groups expressed concern that the northern accord should not shape or prejudice the outcome of self-government negotiations. I would like to ask the Minister, what is the government's position on this concept?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's our view that the wording within the northern accord as it is now, which the GNWT is proposing, gives the assurance to the aboriginal groups that it is our legal opinion that nothing in the northern accord prejudices or limits the power and the ability of aboriginal governments or other governments to negotiate subject matters contained within the northern accord at a future date. There may be one or two solitary legal opinions on the other side that do not agree at this time, but it's our view that the wording is generous and broad and provides that assurance, and we believe in that categorically. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**MR. KOE:**

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker. Most of the western aboriginal groups are in the process, as I mentioned, of negotiating self-government agreements with the federal government, and the Honourable Minister Ron Irwin from Indian and Northern Affairs has made all kinds of promises and commitments to various groups with what I am sure are very good intentions.

But from my understanding there has been very little progress made in these negotiations. So my final supplementary is, what is this government doing to help accelerate these discussions and negotiations between the aboriginal groups and the federal government?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 504-12(7): GNWT's Position On Inherent Self-Government For Aboriginal People

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has consistently conveyed to the federal government over the last few years that we are prepared to get into self-government discussions as quickly as possible and that the federal policy should be drafted and made available at the earliest possible date. It should be premised on the belief that the First Nations of Canada possess the inherent right to govern themselves; that the right includes many powers and jurisdictions; that it is contained within section 35; that the federal government should take a broad, generous approach to negotiating the rights of First Nations to govern themselves and that we would be supporting such an approach and have been encouraging the federal Minister to move forward as quickly as possible.

Having said that, we also recognize that the Minister has to do his homework, ensure that his colleagues are in support of the principles that he purports to support and believe in, that it's his job to get his colleagues, Cabinet colleagues and Liberal Caucus onside.

So, while recognizing that it should be done as quickly as possible, we've also been generous as a government in waiting for the Minister to deliver a policy that was stated in his own

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words, "due last April." So we are about a year behind but still optimistic that when the Minister delivers his policy, it will be well received and supported by the First Nations of Canada. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 505-12(7): Compensation For Airline During Construction Of Pelly Bay Runway

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Subsequent to my Member's statement regarding the upgrading of the runway in Pelly Bay, my question is directed to the Minister of Transportation who is my friend and colleague.

Mr. Speaker, during the construction of the runway in Pelly Bay, there will be economic hardship endured by the people of Pelly Bay, and people at Pelly Bay happen to own the only local business store in Pelly Bay and that is the Koomiut Co-op. My question to the honourable Minister, Mr. Speaker, is would the honourable Minister endeavour to find a way to compensate the airline during the project? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 505-12(7): Compensation For Airline During Construction Of Pelly Bay Runway

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is we are not in a position to compensate the airline for this short period of time in which there will be a "no time" on the strip. I believe it's somewhere around 14 days.

But I am having some discussions with the department and the airline to see if we can shorten those days up so that the impact on the community will be minimal. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 505-12(7):  
Compensation For Airline During Construction Of  
Pelly Bay Runway

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister. During the construction of the runway, as I have stated earlier in my Member's statement, will the honourable Minister assure the people of Pelly Bay that the rates, airline tickets and freight rate will not change during the summer construction of the runway? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 505-12(7):  
Compensation For Airline During Construction Of  
Pelly Bay Runway

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not in a position to dictate to the airline companies what their rates are. I do recognize the issue and the problem because of the high cost of living and the high cost of transportation in Pelly Bay. It is a very unique situation in the Arctic. However, I did talk to the First Air representative in Rankin Inlet two weeks ago and we are having discussions with the department to see if we can lessen what you call the "no time" on the strip where there would be some limitations for aircraft moving back and forth. I will do my best to reduce the 14 days, I believe, where it's going to cause a difficult burden on the people of Pelly Bay and the airline, and get back to the Member by the beginning of next week. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 506-12(7): Status Of Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for fire

suppression. Yesterday, the Minister advised the House that he would know today whether all the Bird Dog officers have had their safety concerns addressed and are prepared to go back to work. Can the Minister advise us of the status of the Bird Dog officers? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister responsible for forest fire management and programs, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 506-12(7): Status Of Bird Dog Officers

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that there are four CL-215s on the Horn Plateau fighting that fire and Bird Dog officers are accompanying them. There are also two others who are taking orientation in Fort Smith today and did yesterday, I believe. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 506-12(7): Status Of  
Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bird Dog officers from the CL-215s had no problem with their issues being addressed. It is the land-based program with the DC-4s where they have refused to fly because of safety concerns. Can the Minister indicate to this House whether or not the Bird Dog officers who have to fly with DC-4s have had their safety concerns addressed? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 506-12(7): Status Of Bird  
Dog Officers

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bird Dog officers who accompany the DC-4s have all been checked out and are well qualified. The DC-4s are presently going through orientation, and I believe it's in Hay River and

not Fort Smith. That's what is happening right now.  
Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 506-12(7): Status Of  
Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't ask if the DC-4s are going through orientation. I would like to know whether the Bird Dog officers who accompany the DC-4s have been back to work. Can the Minister indicate to us the status of the Bird Dog officers who accompany the DC-4s to address firefighting? Thank you.

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**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 506-12(7): Status Of Bird  
Dog Officers

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bird Dog officers who accompany the DC-4s are presently, it is my understanding -- in orientation in Fort Smith. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Final supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 506-12(7): Status Of  
Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can he indicate to this House whether or not these Bird Dog officers have gone back to work? Mr. Speaker, under the union agreement, employees truly concerned about their safety or the safety of others have the right to refuse work. I would like to know whether or not the Minister can indicate to us whether these Bird Dog officers have gone back to work to address firefighting in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 506-12(7): Status Of Bird  
Dog Officers

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that all the Bird Dog officers are working. Some are going through orientation, some are fighting fires at the Horn Plateau. Their concerns are being addressed and everyone will be getting on with the job and fighting fires.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Dent.

Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing Labour  
Standards Claims

**MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Safety and Public Services. Mr. Speaker, labour services is a branch of government that is often called upon to resolve labour standards disputes, especially in situations where employees feel they have been unfairly treated. Mr. Speaker, I think this is a fairly important function of government. I have been recently contacted by a constituent who advises me that she submitted a claim over six months ago to labour services and nothing has happened with that claim yet. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we've been told that some claims at labour services go back to last summer. They're nearly one year old and have yet to be actioned. Is it departmental policy to allow a year go by before claims even start to be actioned?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister responsible for Safety and Public Services,  
Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing  
Labour Standards Claims

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it's not departmental policy that issues of that significant concern are not actioned for more than a year.

**MR. SPEAKER:**



Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing Labour Standards Claims

**MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary, since most claims are probably launched by an employee when they lose their job, there is considerable financial stress and hardship on claimants. Will the Minister agree to immediately add staff to help clear up the backlog in labour services?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing Labour Standards Claims

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't make that guarantee to the honourable Member. I will advise the honourable Member, though, that I will look into the matter and ensure that the department will deal with this issue in a more timely manner. I will advise the honourable Member on the solution we may be able to use to allow the cases of the honourable Member's constituents and other constituents to be appropriately addressed in a better and more expedient fashion.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing Labour Standards Claims

**MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's commitment to deal with the problem. Could I ask the Minister to commit to responding to us within the next week, while the House is still in session?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 507-12(7): Delay In Processing Labour Standards Claims

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ensure that I will respond to the honourable Member and Members of the House. The matter of responding to clients may take a bit longer, but I will try to ensure that I respond appropriately to the honourable Member.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a further question for the Minister responsible for fire suppression. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has considerable experience with requests for proposals as a result of his various portfolios. It has always been my understanding that companies responding to requests for proposals must meet the qualifications set out in the proposal. However, Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated yesterday that the successful bidder, Buffalo Airways, did not fully meet the original requirements in the request for proposals for the fire suppression program.

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Are the standards set out in the request for proposals minimum standards for bidders, or are they only general guidelines which bidders do not necessarily have to meet? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister responsible for forest management programs, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The request for proposal was exactly that, a request for proposals from Northwest Territories companies to respond to the fixed-wing firefighting needs of the Northwest Territories government. We did have people submit proposals. They were evaluated by the department and, consequently, Buffalo Air was awarded the fixed wing contract.

The request for proposals is so that people can propose to use how they would like to deliver, for example, so many gallons of water per minute...(Microphone turned off) The department made a decision to accept the proposal and it is a five-year contract. Buffalo Air was the winner and they will be carrying out that contract. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not disputing the fact that Buffalo Airways got the contract. In fact, at no point in time have I ever indicated disappointment in Buffalo Airways getting the contract. I want to make it clear to the Minister that the issue is not with regard to Buffalo Airways. The issue is with regard to the standards that are requested as requirements in his request for proposals. I would like to know whether the standards set out in the request for proposals' minimum standards for bidders are only general guidelines which bidders do not necessarily have to meet. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the request for proposals for fixed-wing bombers and Bird Dog planes, we did require certain standards. For example, we did put into the proposal that possibly you would need 12 doors that opened at two seconds and things like that, but we would consider alternates. That was very clear in the request for proposals. We would consider alternates on how the service is delivered to the Northwest Territories through a northern operator's company. We did look at the proposals, we considered them and they were evaluated extensively. In the end, we accepted Buffalo Airways' proposal. It saved this government approximately \$5 million over a five-year period. We feel confident that they meet the standards we can live with to fight fires in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't seem to be getting a total answer to my question. Would the Minister agree that the request for proposals' standards that have been requested are only general guidelines which bidders do not necessarily have to meet? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, in the request for proposals we did stipulate certain things. We requested from the bidders who were responding to the proposal to either meet those requirements or to give us alternatives on how they would do it differently. That is the whole idea of a request for proposals. That is what we did and we accepted a proposal from Buffalo Airways and we feel confident they meet the standards that we feel comfortable with in order to fight fires in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Final supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, from the Minister's reply that the request for proposals' standards are only general guidelines that the government adheres to. I would like to ask the Minister who determines what standards are acceptable for safety reasons. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 508-12(7): Standards In Requests For Proposals

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The basic standards for fixed-wing are determined by Transport Canada. Any other standards we want to add to that can be done. The senior management of this government are the ones who say how many hours are required, what experience pilots need or what type of aircraft we use.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Premier about what initiatives are under review by this government to try to generate new revenues. She requested I ask the Minister of Finance. What new revenue initiatives, other than current northern accord discussions, are being investigated to try to generate more revenues for this government?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

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Return To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, we are not presently investigating any new revenue options. Most of the Finance Ministers have done that. Mr. Ballantyne and his tax options paper in the late 1980s consulted with the Northwest Territories and outlined all the revenue initiatives that were available to us at that time. We have gone back over those documents and looked over them again. We will be making some suggestions to the Financial Management Board to get direction from them on which ones they want to investigate further. We will be asking departments if they have any ideas. At the same time, we will be asking departments if there are any ways to cut back. So right now everything is on the table and the Financial Management Board has

not given me direction on what they wish to have investigated further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. From previous discussions, there always seem to be barriers or impediments in place when talking about revenue generation. What impediments or barriers are there in place which complicate this government's ability to implement new revenue-generating initiatives?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Mr. Speaker, by far, the largest governing factor is the formula financing agreement with Canada, which is being further negotiated this week. That is the central piece of information around which we revolve all our forecasts. By far, the governing factor is our formula financing agreement. It affects Mr. Todd when he is trying to make arrangements with the government with regard to the northern accord. It affects when we look at diamond mines and how new regimes would affect them and us. We always have to come back to the formula financing agreement. For instance, the formula financing agreement affects transfers to this government from the Government of Canada. That is the largest limiting factor in our ability to raise extra revenues, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**MR. KOE:**

Mahsi. In the current fiscal negotiations with the federal government on the formula financing

agreements, was the Minister successful in getting the perversity factor changed?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Mr. Speaker, the federal government gets excited when we mention the "P" word. I will stay away from it, but I will indicate to the House that we were getting a direction from the Department of Finance in Ottawa, and the Yukon and ourselves met with Mr. Martin six weeks ago. We presented to them what we thought was a method eliminating some of the perverse affects of the formula and, at the same time, making it more reasonable for us to earn extra revenue in the Northwest Territories. That is what is being discussed this week by our working group people and I expect to get an update on Friday, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**MR. KOE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister stated that negotiations are under way this week on the formula financing agreement. Can the Minister advise as to what the current status is of these negotiations?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 509-12(7): Status Of NWT Revenue-Generating Initiatives

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I believe most of the work this week, Mr. Speaker, will centre around our counter to the federal government's suggestions about a new formula financing agreement. I think our proposal, which was jointly sponsored by Yukon and ourselves is what will be discussed this week. Once we find out how the federal Finance officials feel

about that particular proposal, then we will know what the next step will be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question I would like to direct to Minister Morin. I'm sorry, Mr. Todd; it deals with parks.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

(Microphone turned off)

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Well, it deals with forest fires but...Mr. Speaker, we have extremely dry conditions not only here in Yellowknife in the recreational areas surrounding the city, but all over the territories and it's becoming quite alarming to people that now that the weather is so good people are going to be out. I would like to ask the Minister whether his Department of Economic Development and Tourism who is responsible for parks and the contracts to look after these parks are having their attendants inspect and ensure that fire situations are not in existence. Last year, if I recall correctly, we had a number of fires in recreational areas due to campers. Has this been looked at,

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Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good question. Parks, fires, we have many of them. We are well aware, Mr. Speaker, of the high cost of containing fires in the Northwest Territories. This responsibility, as we know, currently lies with my honourable colleague, Mr. Morin. Our division of parks, I don't think is directly involved in spotting and controlling fires. But I

think it is a good suggestion that the honourable Member has raised, and I will review the matter with the deputy minister later on this week. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps my question would be a little more to the point of inspections of campsites and this type of thing to ensure that fires are not going to get out of hand, was more what I had in mind. We did have some situations where fires did get out of hand. I think more to the point is whether or not there should be a ban on campfires -- that is, unprotected campfires -- in anticipation of the extreme dryness we're facing. That was what I was directing more towards, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

I thought we were talking more about the larger issue of forest fires. My apologies, Mr. Speaker. The department does provide significant literature to the campers and campgrounds, et cetera, about the hazards of fires. Particularly this time of year when the weather is dry and sunny like it is in the east, it does provide information to campers and to people who are involved in the parks to be careful and to be vigilant in the use of campfires, et cetera. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister give us his assurance that he will instruct his department perhaps to put some public service messages on the radio now? I think literature is good and those who

are cautious read this, but those who are not listening to this program may pick it up on the radio if we have public service messages. Would he endeavour to do that? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 510-12(7): Inspection Of Parks For Forest Fire Prevention

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'll work with my colleague, Mr. Morin, who, as I said, is involved in the larger issue of firefighting. I think we're all aware of the enormous cost that's involved with this; last year, I believe, it was over \$27 million. I'll work out a bit of a program with him which will perhaps make the public more aware of the need to be vigilant and more careful as the dry season wears on. Thank you very much for these suggestions.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Mike.

Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**MS. MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. On April 27th, the Minister made an announcement in this House through a Minister's statement, on the review of municipal legislation, and informed this House that there would be a committee that would review and undertake some amendments to the legislation pertaining to the municipal government. He also informed this House that there would be terms of reference. I would like to ask the Minister what is the status of those terms of reference?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of exactly what the status is of the terms of reference but I'll get

that information and provide it to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Mike.

Supplementary To Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**MS. MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also in his Minister's statement, he informed this House that the municipalities would be asked for input into the review of the legislation. What kind of information have they been provided so that they can help or provide their input into the review of this legislation?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, I've advised the municipalities at the annual general meeting that the review of municipal legislation will take place and I've asked the board of directors to appoint an individual to sit on the steering committee that will oversee the municipal legislation review. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Ms. Mike.

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Supplementary To Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**MS. MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not every municipal government is a member of the NWTAM. I would like to know what kind of information has been provided to the municipalities on the review of the legislation? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 511-12(7): Status Of Terms Of Reference For Review Of Municipal Legislation

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, it's my understanding that every municipality in the Northwest Territories is a member of the Association of the Municipalities. To date, there is no information that has been provided because the terms of reference outlining the timetable and what information will be provided and consulted upon hasn't been finalized yet. After that time, the information packages will be going to each municipality, the Association of Municipalities and other interested organizations. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Question 512-12(7): Devolution Of Technical Officer Trainee Position To Pond Inlet

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works...I believe that the Minister is aware of an Inuk woman who has worked as a technical officer and as a project manager trainee, and has recently moved to Pond Inlet from Iqaluit. My question to the Minister is since DPW has many important projects in Pond Inlet and other High Arctic communities, is the Minister open to finding a way to devolve her position up to the High Arctic to support those projects? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 512-12(7): Devolution Of Technical Officer Trainee Position To Pond Inlet

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has brought this issue up to me previously as well as the Member from Iqaluit. We're looking at how we can best use the services of this lady in Pond Inlet to work on the projects that we have there. My understanding is that she does need some additional training in certain areas and we will work with the Baffin district to

enable her to work on those projects in Pond Inlet. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Supplementary, Mr. Allooloo.

Supplementary To Question 512-12(7): Devolution Of Technical Officer Trainee Position To Pond Inlet

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the employee had made a proposal to the Department of Public Works, with the full support of the regional staff of DPW, in terms of fulfilling her position that she could be used by the government in that particular area. Apparently, it requires headquarters' approval. Mr. Speaker, I wonder why her proposal, that was supported by the regional staff, hasn't been approved yet by headquarters. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 512-12(7): Devolution Of Technical Officer Trainee Position To Pond Inlet

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm unaware of this specific proposal that the Member is referring to but I will look into the issue and let the Member know. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

Question 513-12(7): Pilot Standards For Transporting Forest Fire Crews

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. There was a concern that was raised in this House about the safety of Bird Dog officers in firefighting. So my question is directed to the Minister responsible for forest fire management.

What I would like to know is, what about the firefighting crews? We have a number of firefighting crews in some of the communities, as well as government firefighting crews. They fly daily and a lot of times with different fixed-wing planes as well as helicopters. Is there a standard that the pilots must meet before they fly our crews around, and are the

fire bosses questioning the experience of the pilots that fly them around? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister responsible for the forest fire management program, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 513-12(7): Pilot Standards For Transporting Forest Fire Crews

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have met with quite a few of the fire bosses or the crew bosses and the crews since I gained this responsibility, and we have talked at some length about all issues in firefighting. I asked if they were at all concerned. I know that we have to bring in helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft at any given time when fires do become abundant. So I asked them at that time if they had concerns with the pilots. The one crew boss mentioned to me very clearly that they don't question the pilots as long as they meet some minimum standards to get their licence. As a matter of fact, one guy said last summer a helicopter pilot would show up who had never before been near a forest fire, and they would all jump in and work with the guy to make it happen and to make the job easier. They would actually help him with the loading of the plane, teach him how to load the helicopter and work with him because they know it's a team effort. They'll go out, and they know the number one priority is to fight fire.

So my understanding with the crew bosses and the crews I have talked to is that they don't have a concern. They know it's a team effort and they are all willing to go out and do the best they can. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

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Supplementary To Question 513-12(7): Pilot Standards For Transporting Forest Fire Crews

**MR. ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there a policy by the department on pilots? I am concerned about the crews. Fortunately, we have not had any serious accidents with the pilots because of lack of experience but there's always that possibility, and my concern is that we have crews that fly with pilots. I

am sure that the majority of them are experienced in forest firefighting but some of them don't have the experience. What is the policy on pilots without firefighting experience by this department? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 513-12(7): Pilot Standards For Transporting Forest Fire Crews

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Their experience would vary, but basically, the experience for the fixed-wing operators -- for example, Twin Otters or whatever we use to service the fires, or light to medium helicopters -- is different. I will be happy to get that information for the Member. But in order for these pilots of helicopters and fixed wings to fly, they have to have adequate licences that are issued by Transport Canada. So they would all have those licences and I will get that information.

As far as actual firefighting experience is concerned, I do not believe that is a complete necessity to carry the crews in and out. I guess the helicopter or fixed-wing pilots gain that experience as they work with the fire crews fighting the fires. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Renewable Resources. I think the Minister is aware that several Inuit-owned organizations from the Baffin region have applied for turbot quotas in sub-area O off Baffin Island and that I had urged this government to go to bat for them with Mr. Tobin. I would like to ask the Minister of Renewable Resources if he has done anything to pursue the interests of these Inuit-owned enterprises applying for turbot quotas in the waters off Baffin? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Return To Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have written a number of letters to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I have also just recently met with Mr. Tobin with regard to concerns that have been raised by Inuit fishermen in the Baffin region.

I recently received correspondence from Mr. Tobin indicating to me that, with respect to the permanent licensing for offshore ground fish, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with the help of the harvesting adjustment boards, is working to permanently reduce the number of ground fish licenses in the Atlantic provinces over the coming months. Now, I am sure the Member is very aware of the efforts that Mr. Tobin has made with the Spanish vessels and the difficulties he has faced with the struggle on the ground fish in the Atlantic. I believe one of the conditions was that there would be some reductions, and this is the indication that he has given to me at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware that unfortunately Canada gave back some of the turbot quota that it won in order to settle the contentious dispute in southern waters over the turbot. What I would like to ask the Minister is, what has he done to ensure that, of what remains, the Inuit get a fair share of the quota, recognizing that the Inuit land claim cites that special consideration shall be given to the principles of adjacency and economic dependence of communities when allocated commercial fishing quotas? Has the Minister been able to impress upon Mr. Tobin that whatever is left, even if it's a reduced amount, the land claim requires special consideration to be given to Inuit applicants for fish in their waters? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Arngna'naaq.



Further Return To Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my discussions with Mr. Tobin, he indicated to me the negotiations that he has been holding with the Greenland Home Rule; however, it was without consultation with either the Baffin regional HTA or the Nunavut wildlife management board. In our meeting, we had in attendance with us Jerry Ell who is a member of the Baffin Regional Inuit Association and also a member of a number of the regional boards in the Baffin who also impressed upon Mr. Tobin that there is a requirement that there be some consideration made to the Inuit harvesters in the Baffin region for sub-area 0. He has indicated to me in writing that in any discussions that will be held with regard to sub-area 0, consideration will definitely be made with the Nunavut wildlife management board and again, in writing, he has indicated that he has consulted with the Nunavut wildlife management board in the allocations that he announced just recently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for using his good offices to arrange this meeting and to include Baffin representatives. The Minister is

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well aware that last year at this time, when turbot quotas were divided up, NWT applicants only got about 10 per cent of what was allowed in the waters adjacent to Baffin Island. I would like to ask the Minister, is he optimistic after his meetings and discussions and correspondence with Mr. Tobin that this year we'll do significantly better than the 10 per cent we were allocated over Maritime companies last year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 514-12(7): Support For Inuit Applications For Turbot Quotas

**HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the allocations that were made in sub-area 0, there was a quota set for 1995 of 5,500 tons. In his news release, Mr. Tobin indicated that the Inuit quota for that area would be 1,000. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 515-12(7): Safety Concerns Of Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Safety and Public Services. Mr. Speaker, when I questioned the Minister responsible for fire suppression, he indicated that the Bird Dog officers are in orientation and are working. But I got off the phone about an hour ago and my information is that the Bird Dog officers have not yet flown and still refuse to work with the government. So, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Safety and Public Services a question. Air attack officers, better known as Bird Dog officers, in the Fort Smith region have expressed concern about safety. In fact, they have refused to work until their concerns are addressed. Has the Minister's department been involved in ensuring that the safety concerns of the Bird Dog officers are being considered and taken care of? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 515-12(7): Safety Concerns Of Bird Dog Officers

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will advise the honourable Member that we have not been involved, as a department, in these matters. It's an issue normally dealt with by each department. If there are very significant safety issues, obviously they have to be addressed by the current policies but, other than that, we leave it up to the individual departments to address those issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 515-12(7): Safety Concerns Of Bird Dog Officers

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason I asked the Minister responsible for Safety is because under section 13(1)(b) of the NWT Safety Act, which the Minister is responsible for, the Bird Dog officers have indicated they believe their employer, the GNWT, has contravened that section. I would like to ask the Minister, would he commit to this House to review section 13(1)(b) of the NWT Safety Act to ensure that safety standards are adhered to? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 515-12(7): Safety Concerns Of Bird Dog Officers

**HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will certainly review that particular matter and I will deal with my colleague on that issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 516-12(7): Increased Usage Of Forest Fire Ground Crews

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for forest firefighting. Many years ago, almost all the forest fires were fought by hand. Fire crews were trained and based in strategic places and whenever the fire season came about, a crew was ready to go. This also provided work for people in otherwise economically-depressed areas. There was some means of income and a lot of people looked forward to this, particularly young people, students and the like. It was hot, dangerous work but they still looked forward to working. I am happy to hear that the Minister has made some initiatives in that area, but I wonder if this is available for more ground crew workers, particularly students looking for jobs.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister responsible for forest management, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 516-12(7): Increased Usage Of Forest Fire Ground Crews

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Member is correct that that is the direction this government is going. We have listened well to what the communities have said. The majority of the chiefs, Metis presidents, as well as the firefighters themselves, said we should be fighting fires on the ground and using less aircraft. We've already moved in that direction; for example, by using DC-4s this year instead of DC-6s. Even by cancelling two short-term helicopter contracts, we can increase our ground crews by five, which would be 40 men actually out there fighting fires.

I know last summer we spent something like \$1.8 million on a DC-6 to fly 72 hours. That would put a lot of students to work, and a lot of men, fighting fires on the ground. That's where fires are put out, on the ground by the ground crews, not by bombers. Fires are put out by people who live in the region and actually work.

At the beginning of every year, we have orientation for Bird Dog officers, pilots, as well as engineers so they can all learn to work together. We also have firefighting training for our existing crews to upgrade their skills. We also have emergency firefighting training for every community, basically, to increase their ability to fight fires with ground crews. Every year, we're training more and more people and we have instructed them

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to make sure to train more people and give serious consideration for students who are going away to school. It's a good chance for them to make money, as long as they are trained.

In most cases, the crews that I have met with comprise five men, for example. If you have two crews of five men for a total of 10 men, eight of those men are capable of handling their own crews. So, we have the ability to increase the numbers to 40 men in a very short period of time. In every crew, you're allowed to have at least one untrained firefighter. So, there is everything in place for us to respond in a very quick period of time with more people. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Time for oral questions has lapsed. Item 7, written questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

**ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Written Question 27-12(7): Contract For Land-Based Air Tanker Services

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Public Works.

Would the Minister responsible for forest fire management provide to this House a copy of the actual signed contract for the land-based air tanker services for the firefighting services for the Northwest Territories?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 7, written questions. Mr. Patterson.

Written Question 28-12(7): Taxes On Imported Liquor

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Safety and Public Services regarding taxes on imported liquor.

1. What is the basis for the calculation of taxes on liquor imported to the Northwest Territories?
2. Is alcohol content considered in calculating the rate of tax on imported liquor?
3. Why is it that beer, with about half the alcohol content of wine, is taxed at about one-tenth the rate of wine?
4. Why is it that spirits, with at least four times the alcohol content of wine, attract a tax of only \$1.75 more per litre?
5. Has the Minister considered the relative health impacts of various categories of liquor in devising a regime for taxes on the importation of liquor?

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. We will take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The House will come back to order. We are on item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Zoe.

**ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Committee Report 9-12(7): Report On The Review Of The Financial Statements Of The Government Of The Northwest Territories And The Report Of The Auditor General For Canada For The Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1994

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Auditor General for Canada, Mr. Denis Desautels, forwarded his Report of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly for the year ended March 31, 1994 to the Speaker, the Honourable Sam Gargan. This document, along with the Public Accounts 1993-94, Volumes I and II, became the focal point of two days of public hearings in early May 1995, and one day of follow-up work at the end of the month.

The Auditor General's report is divided into seven chapters: chapter 1, matters of special importance and interest; chapter 2, financial statement issues; chapter 3, compliance with authority issues; chapter 4, audit observations; chapter 5, student financial assistance; chapter 6, municipal loans; and finally, chapter 7, hidden subsidies.

**The Process**

The Report of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly for the year ended March 31, 1994 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 6, 1995. The report was subsequently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for review.

The committee would like to thank the officials of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and all of the Government of the Northwest Territories departments for their attendance and responsiveness at the public hearings in May. The cooperation of the deputy ministers and their staff was very much appreciated

and contributed to a constructive and useful review process. The witnesses and the date they appeared before the committee are listed in appendix I.

This report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the Report of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly for the year ended March 31, 1994 is presented by issue, in consideration of the fact that, in some instances, more than one department has responsibilities in an area noted in the report.

#### Issues And Concerns

During the public hearings in May 1995, the committee discussed various issues raised by the Auditor General with senior departmental officials. At these public hearings, the committee requested additional information to clarify points of interest and address their concerns. At the end of May, the committee reviewed the proceedings, discussed the issues further and completed the preparation of this report. This section of the report summarizes the issues and concerns raised and presents the committee's comments and recommendations.

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#### Follow-Up On Previous Year's Recommendations

##### Forensic Audit Capabilities

In last year's report to the Legislative Assembly, the committee recommended that the government engage the services of a forensic auditor to address the increasing number of attempts to defraud the government, principally by employees.

The Comptroller General indicated that the personnel in the Audit Bureau have been trained in procedures and processes used in forensic auditing on a scale in keeping with the nature of frauds most commonly encountered. He felt that their qualifications are sufficient to address the needs of the Government of the Northwest Territories. He also mentioned that, should the need arise, forensic specialists can be contracted.

The committee was satisfied that the Comptroller General's Office was providing adequate audit services in this area with the resources available. The committee may wish to look at this issue again in the future to ensure the necessary level of expertise.

##### Listing Of Payments To Suppliers

Another recommendation from last year was specifically to the Department of Public Works and Services to provide a listing of payments over \$5,000 made to suppliers and contractors as a control and accountability measure. The listing, provided to the committee on a quarterly basis, could then be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The Comptroller General indicated that the program to deliver this listing has been developed and tested and departments will now be asked to verify results. The first listing should be made available to the committee in June 1995. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the 13th Assembly will undoubtedly look forward to receiving these listings on a quarterly basis. They will provide a valuable mechanism toward achieving accountability and fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I will now ask my colleague and deputy chairman of the committee, Mr. Ningark, to continue with the report. Thank you.

#### **MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ningark.

#### Review Of The Capital Planning Process

#### **MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the continuing problem, primarily encountered in municipal capital spending, of work being carried out prior to obtaining legislative spending approval, last year the committee recommended that the capital planning process be reviewed.

The committee heard evidence from the Comptroller General that the capital planning review is being conducted and completion is anticipated in July 1996. An interim report from the capital planning committee is expected in December of 1995. With respect to the main issue of municipal projects proceeding prior to funding approval, Mr. Voytilla noted that the intention is not to reduce critical consultation in capital planning, but to ensure communities understand their responsibilities. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has undertaken to advise communities not to expect approval and, if they proceed with projects prior to capital appropriation, it is at their own risk.

Mr. Speaker, in the interim, however, it should be noted that the Auditor General reported that in 1993-94, a hamlet started a community capital project for

which the Legislative Assembly approved funding for 1994-95. Although the expenditure was recorded as incurred, it was not approved by the Legislative Assembly.

The deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs assured the committee that the matter of municipalities endeavouring to accelerate the capital process has been discussed extensively with the Comptroller General's Office. He stressed that municipalities have been informed very clearly that they are responsible for all costs incurred prior to approval. He noted that, except for emergencies, they do not expect this issue to arise again.

The committee was encouraged by this response. However, "emergencies" tend to arise as they are needed and may be defined by their circumstances. Therefore, the committee wishes to stress in the strongest possible terms that, in the event that circumstances and spending plans change, appropriate approval processes must be followed. The Financial Administration Act provides a number of options by which changes to appropriations can be made, and should not be circumvented.

However, the committee recognizes that there is a difference between tax-based and non-taxed-based municipalities with regard to their ability to proceed at their own risk. There may often be sound economic reasons for proceeding ahead of schedule. In order to give the non-tax-based communities a chance to take advantage of limited and timely opportunities to secure needed capital development in those instances where it is financially beneficial to do so, the committee makes the following recommendation:

#### Recommendation 1

That the review of the capital planning process take into account the need for an exigent approval process to facilitate limited acceleration of capital projects where it is in the best interests of the community and will provide a cost saving to the government.

The committee will examine this particular issue when the capital planning review is completed and long-term solutions are proposed that will protect the legislative spending authority.

#### Video Conferencing Technology

Last year, the committee made two recommendations that dealt with investigating the potential options for use of video conferencing technology.

Mr. Speaker, the committee was informed by the personnel secretariat that this work has been initiated on a trial basis in staffing selected management positions. The project is currently limited by the restricted availability of the technology to Yellowknife and major southern centres. A report to the Standing Committee on Finance suggested favourable results

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so far. The secretariat has indicated that they will continue to refine and utilize the process wherever possible through 1995.

At this point, it would be useful to suggest that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the 13th Assembly examine the results of this project in the spring of 1996. If the benefits and costs warrant, the government should continue to pursue NorthwesTel regarding the implementation of the technology in additional northern centres.

Mr. Speaker, I will now defer to the Member for Baffin South, Mr. Kenoayoak Pudlat.

#### MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Pudlat.

#### Auditor General's Report - Issues

#### Environmental Liability

#### MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) As noted in the Auditor General's report for 1992-93, the government's financial statements should account for the anticipated costs of cleaning up the environment. Accounting for these costs will mean recognizing, measuring and reporting environmental risks and costs associated with the government's operations.

The responsibility for reporting these costs rests with the Financial Management Board Secretariat and they had indicated their intention to record and report these costs in the March 31, 1995 financial statements.

During the hearings, the Comptroller General indicated again that this was a difficult and complex area and that no one is currently leading the way in Canada. However, a GNWT "environmental committee" has been formed to address the issue, but has not yet developed its terms of reference.

At the same time, the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants is proceeding to develop guidelines and standards for measuring and reporting environmental liabilities. However, at the rate things are going, the March 31, 1995 deadline for GNWT reporting is not expected to be met.

The standing committee will be monitoring progress on this important issue due to the potentially costly impact on the GNWT and northern residents. It is also an important consideration in the division of liabilities as the creation of Nunavut approaches. In addition, the Auditor General's office has indicated that they will be monitoring progress on this issue each year.

#### Timely Financial Reporting By Consolidated Entities

The creation of new government corporations complicates the process of completing the consolidated financial statements of the government in a timely manner. Corporations like the NWT Development Corporation must consolidate their own financial statements with those of their subsidiaries. In addition, all statements have to be audited prior to consolidation.

The financial reporting resources of corporations and their subsidiaries are often insufficient, although the recent allocation of additional resources may address inadequacies. However, as more and more subsidiaries of corporations are involved in the process, it becomes increasingly difficult for entities to report on time. As a result, the government's consolidated financial statements must wait.

Although the comptroller general noted that considerable improvement was shown in this area since 1992-93 reporting, and things are looking even better for 1994-95, the committee will continue to monitor the reporting of consolidated entities. A review being conducted of the Financial Administration Act will provide an opportunity to examine legislative relationships with consolidated entities, boards and other agencies. The committee looks forward to the results of the FAA review and will note areas for improving accountability mechanisms at that time.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Charles Dent will now continue reading the report. Thank you.

#### **MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

#### Financial Reporting

#### **MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Public Sector Accounting and Auditing Board, PSAAB, policies and recommendations have been chosen as the government's accounting guidelines. In 1986, PSAAB released Accounting Statement 3, General Standards of Financial Statement Presentation for Governments. Two recommendations from this statement remain to be followed:

-a comparison of actual results with the government's original budget; and

-disclosure of the government's physical assets on hand and available for use.

Since the release of these recommendations eight years ago, these disclosures have not been made. The Auditor General maintains that in order to compare actual spending to the spending proposed at budget time, the financial statements and budgets should be on the same basis. Therefore, the government needs to include consolidated budget information in the consolidated financial statements to provide the necessary accountability.

PSAAB Accounting Statement 3 also recommends showing the value of physical assets used by the government (land, buildings, furniture and equipment) in the notes or schedules to the financial statements. Reporting these assets would show that the government has invested in physical assets with a future value and give a better picture of the true cost of programs. In addition, further PSAAB developments are currently being considered along that same lines for the reporting of public works or infrastructure as assets.

The government response from FMBS indicates a commitment to further investigate the possibility of compliance, particularly in the area of consolidated entities' budgets being incorporated in the government's main estimates and capital estimates for presentation in the financial statements.

On the question of physical assets, the government is committed to working toward a system for recording and reporting the cost of physical assets in 1995-96.

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The committee notes, however, that, with division of the Northwest Territories approaching, it is imperative

that the government continue to address the need to value and report its physical assets. The Auditor General's office informed the committee that it will monitor progress on this requirement.

Mr. Speaker, the next section is on information technology.

#### Information Technology

In chapter four, the Auditor General noted that the government's financial information system, FIS, which provides financial information on departments and programs, is over 12 years old and becoming obsolete. As timely and accurate financial information is crucial to decision-making, this system should be updated or replaced soon. A number of factors may influence this decision. The impending division of the territories and the future financial and information needs of two territories adds to the challenge. The Auditor General questions whether the new territories will inherit aged systems or will the government change now and possibly commit Nunavut to something it may not want or need.

As the development and implementation of such a system can take years to effect, a decision on this issue will need to be made soon. No matter which option is chosen, when the decision is made to replace the FIS, the necessary people and financial resources to do so must be made available.

The government's "informatics strategy" represents an important first step in the process, and the upgrade or replacement of financial information systems is a primary component of the strategy which addresses all the information systems needs of the government.

In discussions with the committee, the Comptroller General estimated that it would take three to four years to implement a new system. He also noted that the FIS was high on the priority list of things to change. The government currently spends \$200,000 to \$300,000 on updating each year. The cost of a new system is estimated to be between \$3 million and \$8 million, depending on the anticipated needs.

In order to provide an efficient and effective management foundation to address the impending decisions facing the GNWT as a result of division, the standing committee makes the following recommendation:

#### Recommendation 2

That the government proceed immediately to plan and implement revised financial information systems to meet the needs of Nunavut and the western territory as a priority for the division of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the next section is on the student financial assistance program.

#### Student Financial Assistance Program

In his report, the Auditor General raised the issue of the rising costs of the student financial assistance program and the limited resources available. This increases the need for reliable and useful results information. Program objectives need to be clearer and measurable to determine whether the desired program goals are being achieved.

The Auditor General notes that the "department's strategy identifies an increasing demand for student financial assistance and recognizes that the government's financial resources are limited". Regardless of how the department proposes to address the situation, whether by limiting access or lowering the level of funding available, the decisions must be based on reliable results information. The current program objectives are incomplete and the proper results are not being measured so that informed financial decisions can be made. For example, the current results information does not measure the number of students who successfully graduate from education programs or whether they return to the north and gain employment in their field of study.

Program evaluation is a useful tool to determine the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of a given program. The FMBS has an evaluation unit, one of the functions of which is to provide assistance in program evaluation to departments. The Comptroller General provided the committee with an update on the progress in staffing and organizing this unit and indicated a number of projects they were involved in, including reviewing and improving the management for results system.

The Auditor General recommended that the department, with the help of FMBS, evaluate the student financial assistance program to "determine what combination of grants, loans and remissions best provide value to the government, meet high level legislative policies and meet the needs of northerners".

The Comptroller General noted that the evaluation unit is involved in the review and evaluation of the student financial assistance program, having assisted with drafting of terms of reference and setting up a steering committee to oversee the review. The review is designed to examine and address the concerns discussed in chapter five of the Auditor General's report.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is encouraged by the commitment of the department and the office of the Comptroller General to address this situation. However, the committee takes the position that whether the government can afford to maintain the program as an "entitlement" is a political decision and any move to implement a policy change should not circumvent the Legislative Assembly. The education and training of northern residents is a stated priority of this Assembly and limiting access by any means must be fully debated by its elected representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to ask, if you would allow my colleague, Mr. Whitford, representing Yellowknife South, to continue the report.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Whitford.

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Secondments

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When government employees are seconded to outside organizations, it is much the same as giving money. These arrangements cost money. Therefore, as the Auditor General points out, "it is important that departments keep track of and report the full cost of secondments to the Legislative Assembly in a meaningful manner".

As of March 31, 1994, there were a total of six outside secondments of GNWT employees where the cost in administration, salaries and benefits were borne in part or entirely by the government. The Auditor General points to an example in which an employee has been seconded out for over five years at a total cost to the government of more than \$550,000.

In noting the significant costs to the government, the Auditor General made a three-part recommendation for better administration, control, accountability and

evaluation of secondments, including full reporting to the Legislative Assembly.

The Comptroller General responded by stating that his office will follow up with departments to ensure that existing requirements and procedures are being complied with. In addition, a policy will be developed to ensure greater consistency and the appropriate section of the human resources manual will be reviewed.

In addressing the committee at the public hearings, Mr. Voytilla indicated that the secondment process has been reviewed, and it was found that it wasn't meeting the current needs of the government. Pending Financial Management Board approval, the Comptroller General indicated that implementation of the new policy for secondments could happen as soon as the end of May this year.

In response to the recommendation to consolidate the administration of secondments into one department, the Comptroller General indicated that the administration and evaluation of secondments will be centralized in the Personnel Secretariat.

The committee acknowledges the value of secondments, both to government and industry, and will be very interested in the effects of the new policy and its impact on the administration of secondments.

Vote 4 And 5 Projects For Others

In chapter seven of his report, the Auditor General notes that "expenditures under vote 4 are not subject to the normal budgetary approval process of the Legislative Assembly. The current criteria for vote 4 and 5 projects require the costs to be identifiable and measurable and the project to be for a definite duration. Some projects have been going on for many years and the public expects them to continue. What is not known, however, are the indirect costs such as administration supervision, use of vehicles and accounting of vote 4 projects to this government. Unless the relevant departments indicate and allocate such costs to all vote 4 projects, the full costs cannot be known. To recover such administration costs, the government can charge an administration fee of 6.5 per cent of all vote 4 and 5 projects. However, the practice of departments has been to request the Financial Management Board to waive these fees. In fact, in 1993-94, only \$104,000 of a possible \$2.9 million was collected as administration fee revenue.



In addition, some vote 4 projects started out being fully funded by Canada but are now cost-shared. As such, a project may not fit the criteria for vote 4 and 5, and the expenditures should be subject to normal budgetary scrutiny in the Legislative Assembly.

There may also be costs to the government in excess of those in the agreement. In cases where cost recoveries are not effected, as in the case of a dispute, the government is committed to making an expenditure not authorized by the Legislative Assembly.

In its response to the Auditor General, the Financial Management Board Secretariat has committed to initiating a review of the vote 4 and 5 process to determine if the method of reporting is appropriate.

In the public hearings, the Comptroller General indicated that, primarily due to the changing focus from vote 4 and 5 projects on behalf of others to cost-shared programs and devolving programs to the territorial government, the entire process is being reviewed to clarify criteria or, if warranted, perhaps even eliminate vote 4 and 5. He stated that the results of the review and the recommendations for change will be presented to the new government some time in late fall of 1995.

**MR. NINGARK:**

That is the new government.

**MR. WHITFORD:**

That is us, Mr. Ningark. The Public Accounts committee of the 13th Assembly will look forward to examining the results and recommendations. Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I will stop here and ask the representative for Baffin Central, Ms. Mike, to carry on.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Ms. Mike.

Cash, Surplus And Increased Borrowing

**MS. MIKE:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General notes that "the government's March 31st net cash balance has been negative for three of the last four years. To cover this negative balance, the government needs to borrow." Essentially, expenditures are increasing at a greater rate than

revenues. In the last four years, the accumulated shortfalls have decreased the government's surplus by 62.8 per cent. It is anticipated that, if the decline is not halted, the government will face increased borrowing and interest costs.

It is important to monitor the cash/borrowing positions throughout the year. In last year's Public Accounts committee hearings on the Report of the Auditor General for 1992/93, the Department of Finance presented a forecast for 1994-95 which showed a deterioration of the cash position throughout the year.

At the public hearings in May 1995, the committee again requested an update of the present cash balance and the new

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forecast for 1995-96. The committee then discussed the government's cash position with the deputy minister of Finance, who provided an overview of the forecast. The cash and surplus positions are deteriorating further and the 1995-96 forecast indicates that cash shortfalls will force the government into short-term borrowing on a sustained basis as early as July 1995. (Translation ends)

As a result, and based on current interest rates, the accumulated interest on borrowing by year end could be as much as \$2.3 million. This estimate is subject to significant change depending on interest rate.

The deputy minister of Finance maintains that for the time being, it is to the government's benefit to lend its surplus to municipalities, for example, because interest earned from cash on hand reduces the grant from Canada. This is discussed in more detail in connection with the municipal lending practices.

The committee's main concern is that current estimates indicate a cash shortfall of almost \$120 million at year end. This is significant because the borrowing limit established by the recently amended Loan Authorization Act is \$100 million. It appears that the government may soon be in a position to request additional authorization from the Legislative Assembly. The committee is also concerned that it may also be necessary to address the \$400 million limit on accumulated borrowing set by federal Order-in-Council, as that total currently stands at about \$300 million.

The standing committee has taken on an enhanced "watch-dog" role as discussed in the 1994 public

hearings on the Auditor General's 1992-93 report. Therefore, given the crucial nature of the information to Legislative Assembly decision-making, the committee will be requesting monthly cash balance statements from the deputy minister of Finance. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask Mr. Allooloo to continue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Allooloo.

Recommendation 3

**MR. ALLOOLOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recommendation 3 is that the Department of Finance, through the Minister, provide copies of the GNWT Cash Flow Projection Schedule to Members of the Legislative Assembly on a monthly basis.

Administration Of Municipal Loans/Loan Lending Practices

Many capital and land development projects in municipalities are financed by loans provided by the government through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. The Department of Finance administers these loans which, for a number of reasons, may end up not being repaid, as was recently the case in one municipality.

The Auditor General has identified the following concerns:

-When borrowing for most long-term capital projects, municipalities must obtain approval of their taxpayers. However, where the loan is to be repaid from the proceeds of sales of developed land, the municipality can request a waiver of taxpayer approval. In this event, the loan can be repaid only from the sale proceeds and not from general tax revenues or special funds created for other purposes. If, as happened in Iqaluit, the municipality is unable to sell the land, then the government is on the hook for the amount of the loan.

-The Auditor General commented that, particularly in times of fiscal restring, it doesn't make sense for the government to assume risk without resource. He suggests that if the government wants to be in the business of lending money, it should:

- establish sound business practices

- analyze projects for viability

- assess all risks.

The Auditor General notes that the government has loaned millions of dollars to tax-based municipalities for capital projects. Given economic realities, it may be time to look at alternatives. For tax-based municipalities, he suggests that private sector financing may be an option, and could include refinancing existing loans. This would have the advantage of freeing up significant amounts of cash for the government to address other needs, and also improve commercial lending experience in the north.

In discussions with the committee, the Department of Finance indicated that they will continue to explore alternatives for meeting municipal borrowing needs. The deputy minister of Finance informed the committee that the government is in the process of re-examining its position on borrowing and then lending its surplus. For now, meaning the present fiscal year, this practice still appears to provide a net benefit to the government because the interest earned by the government from municipal loans does not reduce the grant from Canada. Therefore, municipal loans are attractive as a government investment. The results of the review will be presented as options for Cabinet to consider.

The standing committee understands the dynamics of the situation, but cautions the government that, if the costs of the municipal lending program exceed the net benefits, the government should endeavour to institute fall-back measures to minimize the impact on our financial position.

The Auditor General also recommended that the criteria for waiving ratepayer approval be reviewed and changes should be made to allow greater flexibility in collecting delinquent loans from a municipality's general and special funds. On this issue the deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs noted that it was not an option, as it is contrary to the spirit and intent of the municipal legislation.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has indicated that they established the Debenture Review Committee in 1993 to review municipal loan applications. The committee will assess the viability of land development projects and make recommendations to the deputy minister and the Minister regarding waiving of ratepayer approval. The department "supports more rigorous scrutiny of long-

term borrowing where ratepayer's approval is waived."

The Department of Finance also informed the committee that the number of municipal loans is decreasing. Ratepayers are

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turning down requests for funding and where their approval is waived, the new Debenture Review Committee is asking serious questions of municipalities regarding self-liquidating developments.

The Department of Finance, in cooperation with Municipal and Community Affairs and Justice, has also recently completed a new Financial Administration Manual Directive for municipal loan agreements. It was sent to the Financial Management Board in March 1995.

The committee noted that the tightening of controls and the installation of the Debenture Review Committee seems to be an improvement. However, the standing committee is concerned that the government must take every precaution, and analyze every risk, to ensure that there is a net benefit in the municipal lending process. The committee also encourages the government to take every possible step to lessen the impact of long-term loan agreements on the government's financial position.

Mr. Speaker, I will now ask our colleague and chairperson of the committee, Mr. Henry Zoe, to conclude the report. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Mr. Zoe.

Overexpenditure

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1993-94, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment incurred an overexpenditure of \$942,000. The committee discussed the circumstances with the deputy minister who indicated that it amounted to less than one-half of one per cent of their total budget. He explained that unexpected increases in a number of areas, including student financial assistance and advanced education, accounted for most of the overspending. Essentially, the department was unable to forecast an additional enrolment of 300 students in January 1994, and the expenditure was incurred in the fourth quarter.

The committee would like to remind departments that section 32 of the Financial Administration Act prohibits overspending appropriations, and any indications of this likelihood should be addressed within the provisions of the act.

Acknowledgements

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker, would like to thank the departments and their officials who appeared as witnesses before the committee on short notice. Their cooperative and responsive efforts contributed greatly to a constructive review of the Auditor General's Report.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 9-12(7) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts; therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Natilikmiot, that the Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the Review of the Financial Statements of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Report of the Auditor General for Canada for

the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1994, be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

Mr. Zoe.

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 9-12(7) of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The Member for North Slave is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Zoe, you have unanimous consent.

**MR. ZOE:**

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The report will be put into committee of the whole. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Whitford.

Committee Report 10-12(7): Review Of Bill 32, An Act To Amend the Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act, No. 2

Introduction

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Over the course of the 12th Assembly, a number of initiatives have been taken relating to the conduct of Members and to the possibility of Members or candidates being convicted of criminal offences.

On December 8, 1993, Members of the Legislative Assembly passed a motion to adopt the Members' code of conduct guidelines. These guidelines are a statement of guiding principles that reflect a level of moral commitment of shared values and a minimum level of behaviour that is expected from Members of the Legislative Assembly.

On February 11, 1994, Members of the Legislative Assembly passed a motion that the Legislature adopt the principle of zero tolerance for violence against all people.

In December 1994, the government introduced Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Elections Act. Responding to a recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling, this bill included an amendment allowing prisoners serving sentences of less than two years to vote in Territorial Court.

However, the Elections Act specifies that anyone eligible as an elector is also eligible as a candidate. This would imply that prisoners would then be able to run and serve as Members of the Legislative Assembly. Concerns were raised that allowing this would violate the spirit behind the Members' code of

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conduct and the declaration of zero tolerance for violence. As a result, Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2, was introduced by the government in March 1995. This bill provides that prisoners may not be candidates in elections. Bills 15 and 19 received assent on April 14, 1995.

The concern about perceived violations of the code of conduct and zero tolerance declaration, however, still exists. At present, subsection 6(2) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act has the effect of expelling a Member who is sentenced to a term of imprisonment. But many crimes of violence do not always result in jail sentences. Many of those convicted of common assault and sexual assault, for example, are given fines or probation for first offences.

Introduction Of Private Member's Bill

Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, was introduced by Mr. Charles Dent, MLA for Yellowknife Frame Lake, as a private Member's public bill on April 10, 1995. As originally introduced, it would provide that any Member convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code where "violence against a person is used, threatened or attempted" would be expelled. This would address the concern that one who is convicted of a violent offence, yet not sentenced to imprisonment, should not be permitted to sit as a Member.

Upon second reading in the House on April 26th, there was much debate on the principle of the bill. There was concern that past offences could lead to a Member's expulsion; however, this would occur only if the conviction for that offence occurred after the Member's election to the House. Some felt that the bill should be broadened to cover more offences; for example, all Criminal Code offences, or offences involving illegal drugs. Others felt that the bill should cover those who are found guilty of an offence but are given an absolute or conditional discharge. As well, concern was expressed that the bill, as presented, allowed no discretion for the House; any crime involving any degree of violence, from a slap to murder, would be treated the same.

When Mr. Dent spoke to the principle of the bill in the House, he mentioned two possible amendments which would address some of those concerns. First, he wanted to see the bill broadened to include sexual

offences against children. While sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, and incest are obviously grievous and inherently violent offences, they may not be considered as violent in the legal sense. Second, Mr. Dent proposed distinguishing between crimes prosecuted by summary conviction and those prosecuted by indictment.

#### Committee Hearings

The Standing Committee on Legislation heard from Mr. Dent in public hearings on May 25th. There was further discussion on the issues raised by Members earlier in the House. Some discussions arose concerning whether the bill should cover drug offences or all Criminal Code offences; however, the committee agreed that such amendments would go beyond the principle of the bill, and would therefore be out of order at this time. There was also significant discussion on the nature of amendments which would address points raised by Mr. Dent.

Also appearing at these public hearings was Ms. Lynn Brooks, executive director of the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories. In her presentation, she noted that we too often see leaders in the NWT convicted of violent offences. She also noted that most employees in the north would lose their job if convicted of a violent offence, and questioned, "Shouldn't political leaders live up to that same standard?"

#### Amendment To The Bill

Following the appearances of Mr. Dent and Ms. Brooks, the bill was amended in committee to meet Mr. Dent's suggestions. Crimes "involving the sexual exploitation of children" are now included in the scope of the amended bill. Furthermore, the "automatic" expulsion of a convicted Member would now only occur when a conviction is the result of an indictment. If the conviction is the result of a summary conviction, "The Legislative Assembly shall...determine whether it is necessary...to expel the Member..." The privilege of the Assembly to exercise discretion is thereby preserved.

One final part of the amendment also ensures that "the right of the Legislative Assembly to expel, suspend or discipline a Member" is not limited by this amendment, nor by any other part of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Mr. Dent concurred with the amendment as carried in committee, and the committee agrees that this bill is now ready to be reported to the House for consideration by committee of the whole, as amended and reprinted. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 10-12(7) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Natilikmiot, that the report of the Standing Committee on Legislation on the review of Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

Mr. Whitford.

**MR. WHITFORD:**

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 10-12(7) of the Standing Committee on Legislation moved into committee of the whole for today.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Are there any nays? There are no nays. The report will be put in committee of the whole for today.

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Item 11, reports of standing and special committees.  
Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills.  
Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, I have three documents to table. The first two I wish to table as a Minister. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 110-12(7), concerning Bill C-68, an Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons. It is letters from the hunters' and trappers' committee of Holman Island, the First Nations band of Wrigley, the Inuvik Hunters' and Trappers' Committee, and the Tsiigehtchic Charter Community of Arctic Red River.

I also wish to table Tabled Document 111-12(7), concerning Bill C-68 which includes resolutions from the Deh Cho First Nations leadership, the town of Norman Wells, the K'asho Got'ine Charter Community Council of Fort Good Hope, the Inuvik Native Band, the Aklavik Gwich'in Council and the NWT Association of Municipalities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 112-12(7), three community council resolutions from Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope and Deline, and one letter from the Sahtu Dene Council supporting Bill 32, an amendment to the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to provide that a Member who is convicted of an offence involving violence against another person must resign. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 21(1) of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table Tabled Document 113-12(7), the Pension Administration Report for the Year Ending March 31, 1995.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

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

Mr. Speaker, according to Rule 42(10), I wish to table Tabled Document 114-12(7), a response to Petition No. 5-12(7), tabled by Mr. Todd and responded to by the Minister of Health and Social Services.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Patterson.

**ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

Motion 21-12(7): Transfer Of Prosecutorial Responsibilities To The Government Of The Northwest Territories

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to give notice that on Thursday, June 8th, I will move the following motion, seconded by Mr. Ballantyne, MLA for Yellowknife North.

I move, seconded by the MLA for Yellowknife North, that this Legislative Assembly endorses and supports the commencement of negotiations to transfer prosecutions from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories provided that the transfer does not prejudice any negotiations in the Northwest Territories on aboriginal self-government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS**

Bill 33: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act, No. 3

**HON. JOHN POLLARD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 8, 1995, I shall move that Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Sorry. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 5-12(7), Report on the Review of Rewriting the Liquor Laws of the Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper; Committee Report 9-12(6), Investing In Our Future, October 1994; Committee Report 10-12(6), Report on the Review of the 1995-96 Capital Estimates, with Mr. Whitford in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

Good afternoon. The committee will now come to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee consider, in the following order: Committee Report 5-12(7); Committee Report 9-12(7); and then perhaps Committee Report 10-12(7).

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

---Agreed

Committee Report 5-12(7): Report On The Review Of Rewriting The Liquor Laws Of The Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Whitford):**

The committee agrees. Committee Report 5-12(7), the Report on the Review of Rewriting the Liquor laws of the Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper.

Members have received copies of the report. Are there any general comments on the report? The chair recognizes the Member for Thebacha, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

General Comments

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a fair number of comments with respect to the report in itself.

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After looking at the liquor law review and the rewriting of the liquor laws and with respect to addressing the Standing Committee on Legislation, even though I wasn't an active Member when they were reviewing this, I believe it is necessary to make remarks about

some of the comments I heard in my community when the public meetings were held.

I feel, in looking at the report the Standing Committee on Legislation has developed, it is quite brief, given the amount of effort that was put into the review and the amount of participation by people from all across the Northwest Territories. I find the report fails to include many of the important points raised during the consultation. So I will have some comments with regard to these omissions when we make concluding remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly have been fortunate and been able to talk to many different people with respect to having the assistance of many different people and making comments on this report. I have met with the band council and different individuals in my community on the report itself and the follow-up of the rewriting of the liquor laws that was developed by the department.

I have also had a lot of assistance from Nancy Peel, who was previously the chairperson of the Alcohol and Drug Board of Management regarding what areas need to be addressed. This report, in itself, appears to criticize the department for not endorsing a specific plan. I find that the department, to develop a specific plan for a new bill without getting input from the standing committee and from Members of the House, would not be able to fairly present the comments that people had expressed across the Northwest Territories. I think that the plan, as we give direction to the government, should come from the Members. I believe that this would allow the government to develop what they would like to see and we would be able to give them direction as to what we would like to see them develop. They would then be able to implement it.

If the government went along and developed the legislative action paper, deciding to raise the drinking age and imposing either new fines for bootlegging or opening more liquor stores like they're doing in the south. I think then, and rightly so, Members would probably say they weren't consulted.

I feel, out of respect to the committee system, the action paper should have been framed in this particular manner. But, as I said, I don't believe this report has done an in-depth overview of community consultation and community remarks.

With respect to some of the specifics, Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate that one particular area, besides

bootlegging, that I felt I heard a lot of comments about was the drinking age. There was another area where I felt the committee report was particularly inaccurate. If I go to page 4 of 7, in section E, it states that, "Although talked about extensively in all the regions, raising the legal drinking age was not supported by the witnesses who appeared before the standing committee." As I said, I didn't participate in the public meetings; however, I do know that the support for raising the drinking age -- especially by our chief and the community members who went to the public meeting in Fort Smith -- was given.

Although it states, "the concept of raising the drinking age was not supported by witnesses who appeared before the standing committee," in reviewing the public meeting reports which I requested, I don't think that comment is accurate. I believe that several witnesses did support an increase in the drinking age. I know several of the students who came in from Fort Smith to attend the committee's public hearings in Yellowknife -- Arctic College students taking the alcohol and drug program -- certainly commented on the idea of raising the drinking age.

I know many leaders from across the Northwest Territories -- and I recall reading something about the chief from Jean Marie River -- stated that the drinking age should be raised. I also recall that a professor from the University of Western Ontario, Professor Robert Solomon, who is probably one of the leading experts with regard to liquor legislation, made a comment about raising the drinking age.

If I recall correctly from my notes, Mr. Chairman, the committee was also informed that the Dene Nation went so far as to pass a resolution at its meeting last summer which supported increasing the drinking age. So, I think there is discussion from the public about raising the drinking age from 19 to 21.

I know, Mr. Chairman, that this is an issue that many people disagree on, just as many people have expressed a concern to us about it. Many people feel the drinking age should remain at 19 years of age. When the representatives of the brewing industry appeared before the standing committee, no doubt they recommended that it not be changed.

I certainly feel strongly that people should have the opportunity to indicate which way they want the government to go. I feel this is the sort of thing that people of the Northwest Territories should decide on. So, therefore, I would certainly like to see a plebiscite question included on the ballot during the upcoming

territorial election. That may be one way to address this particular issue.

This question could be straightforward, such as: "Do you support raising the legal drinking age in the Northwest Territories to 21 years or do you support leaving it at 19?". That would mean either a yes or no answer.

I looked this report over three times. I read that there wasn't a consensus on this issue, but I do know that there were concerns expressed in the public meetings in the different parts of the north. Mr. Chairman, I feel that some MLAs probably find it to be a hard decision to make one way or another, and rightly so. I, myself, have different viewpoints on it. I think because it is an issue that really affects a lot of people, the people of the Northwest Territories should decide on it.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think supporting the concept of a plebiscite certainly would help us determine whether the drinking age should be raised. Knowing how plebiscites go, they are certainly not binding on the new government but, at the same time, a plebiscite has the same status as a formal opinion poll. I think it would be a very effective way of encouraging people of the north to discuss this issue and to send a signal to the new Legislative Assembly about how people in the north feel with respect to the drinking age.

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Mr. Chairman, I have many other comments with regard to this. However, at this time, I would like to move a motion with respect to the drinking age.

I would like to move that the committee recommends that a question be developed to determine whether voters in the Northwest Territories want the legal drinking age increased to 21 years; and, further, that this question be included as a plebiscite during the fall 1995 territorial election.

Mr. Chairman, the only thing I forgot to do is get my motion translated and I would like to request that this motion be translated at this time. I would like to continue with my comments once this has been addressed. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Your motion has to be translated and written, so we will take a few minutes to ensure that it is translated, written and distributed to the Members. Thank you.



---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Committee of the whole will resume. For the record, Member for Thebacha, will you please read the motion.

Committee Motion 50-12(7): Territorial Plebiscite On Legal Drinking Age

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Executive Council develop the form of a question to determine whether voters in the Northwest Territories want the legal drinking age increased to 21 years of age;

And further, that this question should be put to a plebiscite during the fall 1995 territorial election.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Question has been called. Mr. Patterson.

**MR. PATTERSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have great respect for the opinions of the Member for Thebacha, but I also know that the committee, whose report we are debating, considered this issue at some length and is representative of constituencies from all across the territories. I just want to say that I believe this is a difficult question because like many of the issues that face us as legislators, there are advantages and disadvantages to raising the drinking age.

One of the advantages is that it may prevent some young people from starting drinking when they aren't quite ready to handle that responsibility. It may help reduce some of the problems that we see among some young people who have alcohol problems. I am not unaware of the problems that young people have with alcohol, whether they are 19 or not. However, Mr. Chairman, the other side of it is that if the drinking age is raised, then it becomes the forbidden fruit and

there may well be a tendency for people to resort to illegal means to obtain liquor, exposing themselves to getting into legal trouble or they may resort to other non-legal abuses like drugs.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure that my constituency has opinions on both sides. I suspect that elders in my constituency may feel that raising the drinking age might diminish the alcohol problem, but there are probably many younger people in my constituency who feel that since they have the right to vote, the right to join the army and defend their country, they should have some of the privileges that are associated with those rights as well.

So, Mr. Chairman, I don't think this is a simple question. I suppose that is why the Member is suggesting it be put to a territorial vote in conjunction with the forthcoming election. The first question I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, is -- and maybe the legal advisor or the Clerk could assist -- is there a mechanism to put a question like this on the territorial election ballot if we should approve this motion? I know there is a Plebiscite Act that allows us to have a plebiscite on any question, but those have traditionally been stand-alone plebiscites. I think the last one cost almost \$750,000. So I guess before we vote, I would like to ask if someone could enlighten the committee; is there a way to do what Mrs. Marie-Jewell suggests be done; that is, add a question to the ballot in the forthcoming territorial election. So in addition to electing your local MLA, you would be giving an opinion on the drinking age. Is there a way of doing that under the present Election Act? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. The question has legal implications. I wonder if the Law Clerk could be brought to the table. Mr. Clerk, did you want to attempt to answer that question?

**MR. PATTERSON:**

He knows the answer.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Mr. Clerk, did you want to attempt to answer that question?

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

He knows the answer.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

We need the Law Clerk anyway.

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

Mr. Chairman, if I understand the question, is there a mechanism to put in on the ballot for the territorial election in the fall of this year, the Plebiscite Act is a separate act, so it would mean that there would possibly be two ballots: one for the territorial election and one administered under a territorial plebiscite. There would be a ballot for the plebiscite question. There would be two separate ballots.

There may be some concern, Mr. Chairman, regarding the residency requirement because the residency requirements are different for the Elections Act than they are for the Plebiscite Act. Those are things that would have to be discussed by the Executive Council.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Patterson.

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**MR. PATTERSON:**

Mr. Chairman, the Clerk's answer leads me to believe that it could not be easily done and that, in fact, if we use the Plebiscite Act we'd have to perhaps have two enumerations: one for three-year residents and one for the lesser requirements of the territorial election. I'm not convinced that there's an easy mechanism to do this.

The other point I would like to make is that I'm not sure that it's fair to dump this issue on the Executive Council, they have weighty matters to consider enough. I think this is the kind of issue that should be dealt with in the Assembly. I think we should be prepared to voice our opinions here today. I would like to say, on balance and with no disrespect for the opinion that exists, the drinking age should be increased. On balance, I'm quite confident that the majority of my constituents would not see this as something that would help problems with alcohol in the community.

As the committee has recommended, encouraging people to learn about alcohol, its dangers and encouraging young people to become aware of the risks and the responsibilities associated with drinking, to me, would be more effective. I fear, in fact, that raising the drinking age would just drive the problem underground to a significant extent. I think young

people in the north are now aware, as well, that they are part of a country that ... They're widely travelled and they understand that they are part of a great country. We would certainly be, if we moved in this direction, be setting up a category of drinking rights for our young people that is quite different from just across the border, for example, in Alberta, in the Member's own riding. I'm not sure that that kind of variation is going to be helpful nor would it be welcome by young people in the Northwest Territories. I think I know how they'd react if we were to make this move.

Mr. Chairman, on balance, I'm prepared to respect the committee's considered recommendations on this one. It's a difficult question, whatever we do won't please everybody, but I'm inclined to go along with the recommendations of the committee. I know the committee worked hard and heard witnesses from all across the territories. That's the thing, the committee didn't make a recommendation so it's going to stay the way it is. The Member's motion would have this issue put to the people with the recommendation that the voting age increase. I shouldn't call it a committee's recommendation but I'm prepared to go along with the committee's conclusion that raising the drinking age would only create other social problems; that they'll experiment with illegal drugs and non-beverage alcohol and therefore rather than raise the drinking age and rather than put the question of raising the drinking age to the public, we should concentrate our efforts on public education campaigns.

The bottom line is, after some consideration, I am going to vote against the motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. I believe the honourable Member for Iqaluit was just making a point. I believe the Member for Thebacha had her hand up earlier. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

**MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few comments on that. I certainly recognize the Member's concern with respect to the Plebiscite Act in comparison to the Legislative Assembly Act in the way the question could be put forth. It's not that the process is difficult, from my understanding.

There could be many things done. I mean, we could simply amend the Plebiscite Act within the next

couple of weeks to make it consistent with the Elections Act, and I believe it's a small amendment, so it's not too hard to do.

But, Mr. Chairman, one thing I want to bring forth is that it states in the committee report, "talked about extensively in all regions". Although talked about extensively in all regions, the raising of the legal drinking age was not supported by the witnesses who appeared before the standing committee. I believe that there were quite a few. I read many of the reports on the public hearings, and there were comments alluding to supporting raising the drinking age, and I believe the best and fairest approach to it would be to allow the people to decide. That's why I feel that the cheapest, most cost-effective and economical way would be to look at the form of a plebiscite, a question, along with your ballot for election.

With regard to saying that this responsibility is going to be given a little bit more to the Executive Council, we are recommending that they look at this and see if there's a way that it can be done. I find that this issue comes up time and time again, and I think it's something that the new Assembly, because they are going to be looking at rewriting liquor laws in the next Assembly after spending extensive consultation throughout the Northwest Territories over the past year, are going to look at what they should put in the new liquor laws. I think that, in order to address that, this is one way of giving them a direction.

This committee report is very vague. With all due respect, there are no recommendations. It's basically a report on the report that the government presented. I find that I was somewhat disappointed in reading that report because it was really vague in giving direction to the government. What do we want in our liquor laws that we want developed? We have an archaic liquor law system. How do we want to shape it? This is a form of shaping it. We sit here every day, and many times when we sit here we always say that the biggest problem in the Northwest Territories is alcohol and drug abuse. Until we, as leaders, offer some guidance as to how we are going to deal with alcohol, then I can't see it getting any better.

I mean, sure, a few campaigns do provide public education. It's something that we've got to deal with. But at the same time, I think that if we want to change laws which will affect people then I believe that we have to certainly go out and ask the people if they want the laws changed. I think that this is the fairest, most effective, cheapest way of finding out whether or

not the people of the Northwest Territories want to raise the drinking age legally from 19 to 21.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I certainly hope that Members take that into consideration when they vote on this motion, not placing MLAs in the position of having to make a decision on something like this, that it's the people of the Northwest Territories that will decide this, and the easiest way to decide this is to see a plebiscite question during the territorial election. Thank you.

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**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

The hour being 6:00 pm, I will rise and report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole, Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 5-12(7) and would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

It is seconded by Mr. Antoine. The motion is in order. 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. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 26: An Act To Amend The Jury Act

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River, that Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Jury Act, be read for the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

---Carried

Bill 26 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

**ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

Mr. Speaker, there will be meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance at 9:00 am tomorrow, and of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 10:30 am.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 7, 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
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Committee Report 5-12(7), Report on the Review of  
Rewriting the Liquor Laws of the Northwest Territories: A Legislative Action Paper
  - Committee Report 9-12(7), Report on the Review of the  
Financial Statements of the Government of the  
Northwest Territories and the Report of the Auditor  
General for Canada for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1994
  - Committee Report 10-12(7), Report on the Review of Bill  
32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and  
Executive Council Act, No. 2
  - Bill 25, Education Act
  - Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and  
Executive Council Act, No. 2
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
  - Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and  
Executive Council Act

22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. This House stands adjourned until  
Wednesday, June 7, 1995 at 1:30 pm.

**---ADJOURNMENT**