



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

7th Session

Day 42

12th Assembly

HANSARD

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1995

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1995

Page 1197

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Antoine, Hon. Silas Arngna'naaq, Mr. Ballantyne, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Dent, Hon. Samuel Gargan, Mr. Koe, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Ms. Mike, 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):

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Our prayers are with the people. Good afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize eight young adults who have been serving as pages during this sitting. They were hired under the summer student program. The first one is Deegah-Yah Tatti, who is taking law enforcement; Colin Allooloo is going to RCMP college; Sheila Wong is taking architecture; Shane Poluk is taking business administration; and, Rosemary Mercredi is taking the teacher education program. She is over there. We also have Kylie Healy who is taking a Bachelor of Social Sciences; Sylvia Laviolette who is taking academic studies and Shelly Shiels who is taking secretarial arts. Did I say your name right? Shiels, sorry. So, those are our pages. Welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 82-12(7): Fort Norman Forest Fire

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to provide an update on the forest fire at Fort Norman.

Since this fire started two days ago, firefighting crews, both on the ground and in the air, have worked day and night to try to control the fire and protect the

community. In spite of best efforts, the fire is now very close to the community.

Because of the dangerous conditions, all ground firefighting crews have been pulled off the fire. Helicopters are still dropping buckets of water. As soon as the visibility improves, the large air tankers will resume efforts to protect the community.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, the MLA for Sahtu, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, and the Minister responsible for forest fire management, Honourable Don Morin, went to Norman Wells to meet with people who have been evacuated from Fort Norman and to look at the fire situation.

Early this morning everyone who was not needed to fight the fire was evacuated from Fort Norman. I take this opportunity to express support for those individuals who are fighting the fire and for those who have been forced to leave their homes temporarily.

Mr. Speaker, the hot and windy weather is expected to continue. As the weekend approaches, I want to remind everyone that the whole western Arctic is extremely dry. If possible, people who are out on the land should avoid having any kind of open fire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arngna'naaq. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Ms. Cournoyea.

Minister's Statement 83-12(7): Ministers Absent From The House

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say once again that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi and the Honourable Don Morin will be absent from the House today to review the forest fire situation in Fort Norman. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 84-12(7): Canada/NWT Infrastructure Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canada/NWT infrastructure program is a two-year program designed to support the development and renewal of local infrastructure and to create training and employment opportunities. The agreement includes the commitment of approximately \$5.4 million in Government of the Northwest Territories funding and an equal amount in federal contributions. Tax-based municipalities are also expected to contribute up to an additional \$1.6 million, which would increase the total funding for infrastructure projects to over \$12 million. The funding is divided between communities based on the number of working-aged people who were not employed in each community during the 1994 labour force survey. Minimum and maximum levels of funding for communities have been established.

This helps to ensure that smaller communities receive at least a minimum level of support even though their actual allocation based on the formula would be less. The program is being administered at the regional level by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Regional superintendents, in cooperation with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, have distributed information about the program to qualifying groups and organizations.

Page 1198

Local governments, band councils, designated land claim organizations, and public and private organizations were invited to participate by establishing community coordination groups in order to review, set priorities and recommend community proposals for funding. Every effort is made to encourage community consensus on proposals recommended for funding.

To date, Mr. Speaker, the co-management committee consisting of federal and territorial representatives has convened four times to review proposals. The meetings were held on November 9 and 30, 1994 and February 17 and March 31, 1995. A total of 61 proposals valued at nearly \$6.8 million were approved from 35 communities in six regions.

Twenty five long-term and 290 short-term jobs have been created by these projects. All proposals which are reviewed received an environmental impact review and must demonstrate that any required ongoing operations and maintenance costs will be provided by the project sponsors.

Ongoing meetings of the co-management committee are scheduled as the need arises to assess

submissions. As well, regions are encouraged to continuously advertise the program and solicit proposals from communities which have not spent their allocations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell, your point of privilege.

Point Of Privilege

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

I have a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Pursuant to Rule 20(1), and with your permission, I would like to rise on a point of privilege to clarify a matter that was, once again, reported on the 7:30 and 8:30 newscasts on CBC Mackenzie.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in committee of the whole, I withdrew a motion regarding the recommendation of a plebiscite question that should be put to the people of the Northwest Territories on the matter of raising the legal drinking age from 19 to 21 years. CBC failed to report the fact that the motion presented was withdrawn and instead stated that other MLAs voted against the plebiscite. Mr. Speaker, all Members are aware that there was no vote to hold a plebiscite. Once again, CBC has failed to report the accurate proceedings of this Assembly.

As I said yesterday in my point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the media has the responsibility to report accurately comments and proceedings of this Assembly as their interpretation and reporting are of importance with regard to informing the public of what is happening in this Assembly. I want to advise the House of this issue and trust CBC in the future will make every effort to report accurate proceedings and comments and not sensationalize issues. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Protection Of Porcupine Caribou Herd

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a statement about recent disturbing events which will impact the north slope caribou calving area. Currently, the United States government is trying to come up with a budget for the next five years. United States President Clinton has submitted a proposal to Congress, who are now in a process of deciding where the money will come from to fuel that budget.

This proposed budget includes a new revenue item where about \$1.4 billion will come from the selling of oil leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the so-called 10-02 lands, the Porcupine Caribou herd's calving grounds.

Mr. Speaker, the Gwich'in of Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories are very dependent on the Porcupine Caribou for cultural and economic survival. We are now in a situation whereby, once again, we have people in the south who are not directly impacted by the decision they make, making a decision about an area that is crucial to the lifestyles of northern peoples. The Gwich'in have depended on this caribou herd for hundreds of years.

For the US government to realize the \$1.4 billion in revenues, they must remove the current bans on development of these disputed areas. The Gwich'in are adamantly opposed to this. As far as I know, the Canadian federal government also established a position in 1987 which supports that the 10-02 lands be protected. Apparently, this was confirmed in 1993 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Andre Ouellett.

The United States President, Bill Clinton, also claims to protect the 10-02 lands and used this as part of his election campaign.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

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, colleagues. To date, both the governments of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories have supported this position. I hope that this government continues to support the Gwich'in in their fight to protect their heritage, their livelihood and economy by continuing to support the ban on development of the 10-02 lands, the home of the Porcupine Caribou. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Item 3, Members' statements. Ms. Mike.

Page 1199

Member's Statement On Implementation Of Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act

MS. MIKE:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about some of the problems facing families with custom adopted children. To describe these problems, I will use the community of Clyde River as an example. I am currently working with 13 families from Clyde River. Each of these families has at least one custom adopted child. These families are frustrated by the complications they have faced in trying to obtain birth certificates and social insurance numbers for these children. Some of these children are now of working age and are running into problems getting work, since they don't have social insurance numbers. (Translation ends)

Getting a social insurance number is a straightforward process for most people. However, for those who have been custom adopted, it can be a long and frustrating process, often ending without a positive result. I am now working with these families and the appropriate agencies here in Yellowknife to fix the situation. However, families should not have to go to their MLA to get help with birth certificates or social insurance numbers.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Whitford.

Member's Statement On Closure Of Stanton Hospital's Surgery Unit

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, before we returned to the Assembly, I held a constituency meeting to find out the issues the residents of Yellowknife South wanted me to raise in this House. One of the issues most often raised was the closure of the surgery unit at Stanton Yellowknife Hospital. While surgery is still being performed in the hospital, the actual surgery area has been closed since March.

The day surgery unit is still very well used by patients whose surgery does not require an overnight stay in the hospital. But those who do have to stay overnight are placed in beds in other units, particularly paediatrics and medicine. I understand the hospital has some legitimate reasons for having taken these steps. The number of patients requiring overnight stays for surgery has been very low lately and the hospital feels that the temporary closing of this unit lets them reallocate resources -- beds, nursing staff and so on -- in the most effective manner.

However, I do have some concerns. First, some of my constituents who have recently undergone surgery at Stanton were concerned about having been placed in other units. Some especially did not appreciate being placed in paediatrics where the presence of sick children who require much more care may have led to disturbing noises and they had concerns about infections. While I still have full confidence in the capability of the qualified and dedicated staff of Stanton Hospital, I understand the concerns expressed by my constituents.

As well, I'm very concerned that this closure may blur the perception of Stanton Hospital as a well-equipped territorial hospital that we are trying to develop. The Department of Health and Social Services, the various regional health boards and Stanton Hospital have made great progress in treating more northerners in the north. Not only does this save money in travel costs, but also allows northerners to receive their treatment closer to home and to feel more comfortable during what is often a difficult and stressful time for themselves and their families.

The closure of the surgery unit...Sorry, Mr. Speaker, 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, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. The Department of Health and Social Services, the various regional health boards and Stanton Hospital have made great progress in treating more northerners in the north. Not only does this save money in travel costs, but also allows northerners to receive their treatment closer to home and to feel more comfortable during what is often a difficult and stressful time for themselves and their families. The closure of the surgery unit, even if only temporary, may create a perception that Stanton is a second-class facility. I would not like to see this fine institution's reputation diminished because of this.

I understand that Stanton Hospital expects to reopen the surgery unit in August or September when a second general surgeon, a second orthopaedic surgeon and a second ear, nose and throat specialist will be hired. The hospital has also provided assurance that no patients are being diverted south because of the closure, that no one is being placed on a waiting list and the hospital can reopen the unit very quickly if patients require it. I appreciate those assurances. However, I still feel it necessary to express these concerns. I want to build both the usage of this fine facility and its image. I would not want to see that image affected by this temporary measure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Southampton Island Caribou Harvest

MRS. THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the caribou harvesting project in Coral Harbour. The caribou population on Southampton Island has been increasing quite rapidly over the last decade. Since 1967, when 48 caribou were reintroduced to the island, the population has grown to over 13,000 in 1991 and to more than 32,000 in 1995.

A report prepared in 1975 suggested that the island's carrying capacity is 40,000 caribou.

A caribou harvest took place this spring, in an attempt to reduce the size of the herd, while at the same time providing employment to the residents of Coral Harbour. A portable facility was erected near the herd where the skinning, cutting and packaging of 2,300 caribou took place. Over 150,000 pounds of meat was then transported by skidoo to Coral Harbour, flown to Yellowknife and then trucked south.

I would like to commend the citizens of Coral Harbour for their hard work in helping to make this harvest a success. They were involved in almost every aspect of the process: hunting, skinning, cutting, packaging and transporting the meat. The harvest employed over 25 people from the community. I would also like to thank the territorial departments of Economic Development and Tourism; Education, Culture and Employment; Health and Social Services; and, Renewable Resources, as well as the federal departments of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Agriculture for their cooperation and excellent coordination of the harvest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement On Absence From The House

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to advise the House that I will be absent from this House all day tomorrow because I'm tired...

---Laughter

No, because I'll be travelling to Cambridge Bay to attend the graduation ceremony of students of the Kitikmeot region from the teacher education program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Opposing Introduction Of NWT Sales Tax

MR. LEWIS:

Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This isn't a result of a formal constituency meeting but on my stroll through the streets of Yellowknife yesterday at noon hour and today at noon hour -- when I met my colleague Mr. Whitford who tried to claim my corner in the middle of the city -- I learned that one of the concerns that people have is this government has been thinking about introducing a sales tax.

I have tried to tell people that this is the last gasp of this government, there's nothing on the agenda, there is no legislation and no plans for this government to impose a sales tax in the few months that this 12th Assembly has left to live. I would like to point out though, Mr. Speaker, that all the great expectations of the goods and services tax imposed by the federal government some years ago have not produced the expected results and I would like to warn any future government that in our jurisdiction such a tax would really be regressive. Simply because, what happens when you put a tax on money that has already been taxed once in the form of personal income tax, what you are going to do is really reduce consumption, not just simply put money into the government coffers.

You are going to build up consumer resistance. They decide whether they are going to spend or not. Businesses get very upset when they see they have to charge ridiculous prices for things. You see sales where businesses say they'll swallow the GST and we won't have to pay that. It becomes a sales ploy or gimmick. We also have a very young population, Mr. Speaker. Older people like me have a fridge, a washing machine, furniture and all kinds of stuff because we've lived long enough and have earned enough money over a period of time to get the things we need to survive in our houses. But young people have to face a very uncertain future in terms of employment and the economy, and we should be very, very careful before we impose this kind of tax in this jurisdiction, given the kind of population we have, where half the people are below the age of 15. It is a population that really is very, very sensitive, a business community is just beginning to develop and I would warn any future government that it would not be a wise action to take. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Member's Statement On Baker Lake Traditional Lifeskills Program

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report to the House today on the excellent work being done in Baker Lake by Jacob Ikinilik and others. As we all realize, our elders who are rich in traditional knowledge and on-the-land skills are quickly being lost and our younger generations have not learned their ways. Without direct action the traditional ways will disappear. (Translation ends)

Over the winter, Mr. Ikinilik collected information from elders to include in the traditional lifeskills program that has begun in Baker Lake, organized by the volunteers and targeted students. The traditional camp has been set up and knowledgeable elders have been recruited as the role models for youth attending the camp. They were able to acquire some funding and make a feeble start in late February. A large two-room igloo was built near the community where youth and elders could spend time together. The school fully supported this program and the instructor allowed class time for classes to participate in this program.

I'm happy to see this cooperation and know they will have a very effective program. They are presently training young people in preparation of traditional meat. I am excited to see such initiatives coming out of Baker Lake. I have been working with the group and encourage them to continue.

My primary goal over the last four years has been to ensure the cultural program in the school was relevant and effective. The importance of these types of projects cannot be overstressed, and I commend all those involved in making them a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Page 1201

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Concern Re New Federal Firearms Legislation

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that I said I might speak for the last time on the gun control bill, the other day, but I continue to receive, daily, expressions of grave concern from my constituents about Bill C-68, the new federal gun control bill, and new problems emerge by the day. The latest has to do with the Honourable Warren Allmand.

Mr. Speaker, we had some sense of confidence in talking to Mr. Allmand who is known to many of us personally. The former Indian Affairs Minister knows the north and listened very carefully to the presentations our Caucus subcommittee made before his Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs on Bill C-68. Now, just when his committee is about to report the results of its deliberations on this very important bill, it seems that Mr. Allmand is to be dismissed as chair of the committee for having voted against a budget bill.

Mr. Speaker, a change of chairperson at this crucial time -- the chair who had listened to us and many other persons with serious concerns about this bill -- is a setback for those persons who placed their faith in the committee and its chair.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Patterson, your time is up for your Member's statement. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Is it up?

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the time correct?

MR. PATTERSON:

I don't think I've quite used up my time, Mr. Speaker, but I would like unanimous consent to continue whether I've used up my time or not. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time wasn't finished. I apologize, Mr. Patterson, for that. The Member for Iqaluit is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Members. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I fear that a change of the chairperson at this crucial time -- the chair who had listened to us and many other persons with serious concerns about this bill -- is a setback for those persons who placed their faith in the committee and especially in its chairperson. It will, I fear, cause further instability in a process which has already been criticized for not allowing enough time for thoughtful discussion and serious consideration of how the bill might be amended and might be made workable.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there is increasing concern about the costs of the administration of the new compulsory registration regime. It's well known we do not have the computer and satellite technology available in many of our communities to allow the Northwest Territories to become part of a national firearms registration network electronically, as contemplated by the bill. Installing the necessary computer and satellite facilities would represent a staggering cost in the north. Who will pay for these increased costs?

While communities like Chesterfield Inlet, addressed by my new colleague in the Legislature, a neighbour, are without local policemen due to funding shortfalls for policing in the NWT, will additional precious financial resources have to be spent on hardware and software for an electronic registration system no one wants or needs in the Northwest Territories?

There is also great concern over whether general hunting licence holders will have to pay for registration of their firearms. The policy now on whether GHL holders will have to pay for firearms acquisition certificates required by the present law, seems to vary widely in the Northwest Territories. Some local policemen are saying to people who apply for FACs that they will be exempted from paying a fee only if they can establish that they are on welfare; only then. Other people have found out and have been told that they will only be exempted from paying a fee for the FAC if they can prove that they are full-time hunters with incomes under \$30,000. Our MP is providing assurances that gun registration will not cost anything. But the federal Minister of Justice is saying that beyond the \$85 million that his government has committed to paying for the national registration system, users will pay the additional costs of registration.

Mr. Speaker, if aboriginal people and GHL holders in the NWT end up being exempted from fees for registration -- and I hope they will -- then who will pay the costs of implementing the system in the Northwest Territories? Will it have to come from our government?

Mr. Speaker, at every turn, this new legislation looks more and more like the most invasive piece of legislation ever proposed by the Government of Canada to apply to the north. I fear that it will be widely ignored or challenged by our constituents, and that the overall respect for law and order which has improved over the years in the north will suffer enormously in the process.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, someone somewhere in Ottawa must understand that this new regime is not only unacceptable, but also unworkable in the north. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Transitional Document For 13th Assembly

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the government are presently working on a transitional document to help guide the deliberations of the next Legislative Assembly and government as they grapple with a very difficult agenda which will be driven, to a great extent, by the realities of division and federal government cutbacks. The Standing Committee on Finance is

Page 1202

also working on a transitional document and hope to be working closely with the Minister.

The next Assembly and government will have their work cut out for them in order to provide a smooth transition to division. What I intend to do, Mr. Speaker, in the next few days, is to use at least some of my Member's statements to give some of my views of some of the ideas that perhaps should go into this transitional document and make a few suggestions to Mr. Pollard that may be useful in formulating the document.

It seems to me that the next Legislative Assembly are going to need a very tight and well-planned agenda. That agenda should be created very early in the life of the Assembly with input from Members. There should be a full debate on the floor of the House on what that tight agenda is. Because we don't have a party system, it is very difficult for the public to feel involved. It is important that we don't break down into bickering and regional differences. All MLAs should be involved in planning an agenda and debating it in the House so that it's out there for the public to have an opportunity to bless it or not bless it. At least then you are starting with something real and at least there is some possibility that the government and Assembly can be successful in completing their agenda.

I believe that, as I said, the agenda should be very tight. There should be an equal focus on two major aspects, I think. One is on building a real economy. I think we have to take advantage of the strengths in our economy. I think we have to be pragmatic and realistic. We can't afford to have our heads in the sand. If there are opportunities in mining, we have to take advantage of opportunities in mining. If there are opportunities in oil and gas, we have to take advantage of opportunities in oil and gas, or in the fishing industry. Somebody has to pay for our social programs, and it's up to us to create that economy. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the other focus has to be in creating healthy communities. I think those two go hand in hand because without healthy communities there aren't people to take advantage of a healthy economy.

So I don't think we have to have the left and the right ideological battle about what a government is all about. I think that here in the north we have to do both simultaneously. I think we are going to have to break some new ideological ground, because unless we get our people and our communities up to scratch we are not going to be in any position to take advantage of any economic benefits that might come to us.

We have said many times in this Assembly -- and I think it's very important in the next government and Assembly -- that education has to be a primary tool to achieve our goals. Education has to continue to be a focus.

I think one thing that is going to be very important for the next Assembly is that we can't allow constitutional development to dominate the whole political agenda. There are other forums for constitutional development. I think the government should be creative, should be helpful, should be supportive, but I don't think that we can afford the luxury of spending all our time here in the Legislative Assembly debating constitutional issues. I think people want jobs and people want to feel safe in their communities. They want community control. I think that's something that the next Assembly is going to have to decide very early on or the next four years could be wasted essentially fighting endless constitutional battles.

I also don't think we should reinvent the wheel. I think this government and this Assembly have done some good work. I don't think we should start over again on income reform and community wellness. I think we can build on the strategies that this government has started, so I think there is a very good basis out there that we can work on.

I do think, though, that we are going to have to revitalize and take a new look at our methodology for turning over powers to communities. I think there has been a lot of work done, there has been a lot of effort and it really hasn't worked for a number of reasons. I am not saying this to blame anybody. I am just saying that the times weren't right and it didn't happen. I think the next government is really going to have to look at a new way to focus their energies to turn over real powers to people in communities.

Lastly, and I think quite importantly, we are going to have to develop a very sophisticated, forward approach with the federal government. Inevitably the federal government is going to be trying to cut us back over the next four years. They are dealing with a major debt crisis. I think it's very important that we strengthen our Ottawa office; that we know exactly what we are trying to achieve when we deal with the federal government; that we have a very well-coordinated plan when we are doing it, together with a well-coordinated media strategy.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, these are just a few ideas that I have that perhaps the government and the Minister of Finance might consider as they put

together a transitional document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Member's Statement On Appreciation For Paving Of Highway 5

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend I drove on Highway 5, and I was extremely pleased to notice a lot of work being done on the highway.

---Applause

The work being done on our highway is the long-awaited continuation of our highway pavement. The last time our highway was paved was in the 1980s, about 12 kilometres out of Fort Smith. I think it was 1982 or 1983.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

---Laughter

Page 1203

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

The continuation of the pavement program was not placed in the capital plan due to the excuse of our highway traffic which did not warrant pavement. And it's not praise to Arnold McCallum, Mr. Speaker. It's praise to Bruce McLaughlin who was Minister of Transportation at the time.

However, Mr. Speaker, when the issue of paving was addressed in the budget session, I recall advising the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Todd, about the inequitable distribution of funds to address paving highways across the north. Mr. Todd immediately took the responsibility of addressing the inequity and found a method to find funds to pave our highway.

Mr. Speaker, I was extremely pleased to see local people working and, in addition, local contractors such as Herons' Trucking and C & R Construction assisting with the paving project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

I want to take the time this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to applaud Mr. Todd's actions.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this is what we call a good Minister in action, fulfilling his responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, in my experience, Mr. Todd is a Minister who, when he makes a commitment, will make every effort to fulfil it. On the other hand, if he can't do something, he will state it, which I appreciate, because he knows that he is just as candid as I am. Mr. Todd has always tried to accommodate Members, Mr. Speaker, and this is probably why I hardly ever ask him any questions.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Thebacha is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, once the paving is complete, I would welcome Mr. Todd once again to ride on Highway 5 with me so we can see what other paving is required. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage him to ensure further funding be allocated for future paving. But until then, Mr. Speaker, the constituents from Thebacha express our gratitude for allowing our future driving on Highway 5 to be more comfortable this summer and in the future.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Are there any further Members' statements? Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms. Cournoyea.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 314-12(7): Inclusion of GLOs In Workforce Adjustment Program

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Titus Allooloo on March 27th. Mr. Allooloo asked if government liaison officers who refused revised job offers for half-time positions would be eligible to participate in the workforce adjustment program.

The workforce adjustment program does not apply in cases where positions are altered or eliminated due to budget reductions. Government liaison officers who receive layoff notices were provided with layoff entitlements, including severance pay and priority status on competitions within the GNWT for a period of one year following their layoff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Nerysoo.

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

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

I have a return to an oral question asked by the Member for Thebacha on June 6, 1995 with regard to safety concerns of Bird Dog officers. I have reviewed section 13(1) of the Safety Act of the Northwest Territories. Section 13 deals with the concept of "unusual danger," relative to normal occupational hazards. The Safety Act of the Northwest Territories does not apply to air attack crews, because safety issues concerned with aircraft and airline transportation are dealt with through the Canada Labour Code.

On May 16, 1995, the chief safety officer was verbally contacted by Mr. Bob Robertson of the Union of Northern Workers, concerning a "right to refuse" by air attack crews involved in forest firefighting. Subsequently, the chief safety officer received the complaint in writing.

The chief safety officer advised Mr. Robertson by letter dated May 16, 1995, that the Government of Canada has jurisdiction in questions of safety involving air attack personnel, because section two of the Canada Labour Code defines "federal work, undertaking or business" to mean, among other things, "aerodromes, aircraft or a line of air transportation,..." The chief safety officer further provided the Union of Northern Workers with excerpts of the Canada Labour Code.

We understand that the Union of Northern Workers did contact staff of Human Resources Development Canada, formerly Labour Canada, and that an investigation was launched. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. I would like to recognize a man who really probably doesn't need an introduction, since he is a known, familiar and I would even say, a beloved figure, in this Assembly. I could go on, but I

Page 1204

understand I only have 30 seconds. So without further adieu and without exceeding the time allotted to me, I would like to recognize a man who isn't here only in his official capacity representing the UNW, but also, I know, as a citizen who cherishes the democratic process. I refer to Mr. Ben MacDonald. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce and recognize some members of our Polish community in Yellowknife. Mr. Eugeniusz Buczynska and his daughter Malgorzata Buczynska, and their friend Iwona Marczak. Eugeniusz is visiting for three months and he is certainly looking forward to our hospitality. Iwona is hoping to immigrate to Canada.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Are there any further recognition of visitors in the gallery? Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I made a statement about the plight of the Porcupine Caribou herd and the 10-02 lands on the north slope. I would like to ask the Minister of Renewable Resources if he can give us an indication of what this government's position is for the continuing protection of the 10-02 lands.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Return To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has made every effort to comply with the concerns that we have received from the aboriginal groups in the area. In the middle of February, the Premier wrote to The Right Honourable Jean Chretien regarding a number of issues and one of those issues was regarding the calving grounds which the Member is concerned with. She pointed out the concerns that this government has with regard to Porcupine Caribou calving grounds.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

MR. KOE:

Koana, Mr. Speaker. There has been lots of lobbying going on and there continues to be lobbying efforts going on with the United States Legislatures. These lobbying efforts have been met and supported by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and by the Gwich'in. The Government of Yukon has also provided some financial assistance to support some lobbyists. I would like to ask the Minister what this government is doing to support some of the lobbying efforts that are going on currently in the United States.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The most recent activities that have been taken by this government have been through the Premier to the Prime Minister. With the information we are receiving from the Prime Minister's office, we have heard that the President of the United States is looking at this and is very concerned. I also understand that the State of Alaska is the jurisdiction which has been pressuring to open up the area in Alaska. However, the correspondence we have received has been that the President is in support of not opening up this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

MR. KOE:

As was mentioned earlier, the Porcupine Caribou herd crosses many borders; Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. Many people in these areas are dependent on the herd. So there is need for a lot of cooperation and consultation. I would like to ask the Minister, has the Minister or his officials been consulting recently with the Government of the Yukon or the Gwich'in on this particular issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have a discussion paper prepared by the Department of Renewable Resources on options and recommendations for protecting the caribou calving grounds. I believe that consultation will take place with the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in and the Nunavut renewable resource management boards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

MR. KOE:

I am pleased that work is ongoing and that an options paper is being developed. Can the Minister share some of those ideas with us now in terms of some of the initiatives that this government will be taking to ensure that the US Congress and the US Senate knows the position of our northern people?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Page 1205

Further Return To Question 543-12(7): GNWT's Position On Protection Of The Porcupine Caribou Herd

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be more than willing to provide the Member with any information that is being prepared. I would be willing to receive input from any Member who has concerns in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 544-12(7): Inclusion Of Non-Insured Health Benefits In Health Billings Agreement

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the Premier have, over the past few years, reported progress, most recently on the resolution of the health billings dispute with Ottawa. While the NWT took a hit -- we didn't collect all we felt we were owed -- the government did reach a settlement and an agreement for funding for the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, not too long ago, we heard that Ottawa is considering cuts to non-insured health benefits for aboriginal people. My question to the Minister is, are

non-insured health benefits covered by the new agreement the Government of the Northwest Territories reached with the federal government on health billings?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 544-12(7): Inclusion Of Non-Insured Health Benefits In Health Billings Agreement

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, the agreement that we reached with Ottawa did not include non-insured benefits. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 544-12(7): Inclusion Of Non-Insured Health Benefits In Health Billings Agreement

MR. DENT:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise whether Ottawa currently pays providers directly in the north for non-insured health benefits or do they reimburse this government for expenses?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 544-12(7): Inclusions Of Non-Insured Health Benefits In Health Billings Agreement

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, it has been the subject of a side agreement with the federal government in previous years. They reimburse the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 544-12(7): Inclusion Of Non-Insured Health Benefits In Health Billings Agreement

MR. DENT:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What would the impact be on northerners should Canada unilaterally cut funding for non-insured health benefits across Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to take that question as notice in order to provide a number to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Patterson.

Question 545-12(7): Resolution Of Fiscal Irritants With Federal Government

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, on many previous occasions in this House, the Minister of Finance has referred to what have been called fiscal irritants in our relationship with Ottawa and, particularly, with the Minister of Indian Affairs. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he's had a chance to work on some of these fiscal irritants and whether he's been able to make any progress in resolving certain of these fiscal irritants with the Minister of Indian Affairs, as we draw near to the end of the term of this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 545-12(7): Resolution Of Fiscal Irritants With Federal Government

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I have referred to a list of irritants. The federal grants in lieu of taxes to tax-based municipalities was a big one and that is presently going to Privy Council and will be gazetted. We hope that communities will receive their money, which they haven't received for the last few

years, by July 1st of this year. So, that one is out of the way.

I think Mr. Dent made reference to the health billings dispute and, although we didn't get an excellent deal, we didn't get a bad deal. That one is settled. The Inuvik utilidor issue is settled. We received a cheque from the Minister of Indian Affairs and are now starting negotiations with Inuvik on whether or not they would like to take over the utilidor. Regarding the RCMP billings dispute, Mr. Kakfwi is having some success there and we are trying to avoid going to arbitration, which we think would lead ultimately to a court case. I think Mr. Kakfwi has presented the federal Solicitor General something that he may be interested in accepting.

Just recently, in fact this week, we concluded negotiations -- I think successfully -- on the Inuvialuit participation costs which have been irritants for some years. That, really, is the last one of the so-called irritants that we have to deal with, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Page 1206

Supplementary To Question 545-12(7): Resolution Of Fiscal Irritants With Federal Government

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to learn that the Minister has had such success in dealing with these so-called irritants. I would like to ask the Minister if he could elaborate a little more on the origin of the Inuvialuit participation costs issue and indicate how a resolution of that issue might be shaping up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 545-12(7): Resolution Of Fiscal Irritants With Federal Government

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I can't take credit for concluding these arrangements. It's been a team effort by different Members of Cabinet and many of our staff across all departments. So, I want everybody to know that

many people worked on it. From the federal side, I would like to compliment Mr. Ron Irwin for making John Rayner the person we negotiated with most of the time. He's a person, I believe, who understands the Northwest Territories and has been very reasonable with us.

With regard to the Inuvialuit participation costs, Mr. Speaker, the federal government had up to \$186,000 in its budget for the last six, seven or eight years that should have flowed through this government to enable Inuvialuit participation on boards of management, particularly in the wildlife area. Through some mix up in paperwork, it hasn't been arranged and, consequently, the Government of the Northwest Territories was funding the Inuvialuit to participate on these boards and activities without being reimbursed by Ottawa.

As I said, it has taken some time but we were able to resolve it last week. The Inuvialuit, the Government of Canada and ourselves agreed that the Inuvialuit final agreement would be amended so there would be a contribution agreement between Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, and a contribution agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Inuvialuit to enable funds to flow from DIAND to us and on to the Inuvialuit.

Mr. Braden is currently in Ottawa today meeting with Mr. Rayner and putting the last touches to the agreements. Hopefully, he will bring back a letter of comfort to us that will say that Canada will flow the money before the amendment to the Inuvialuit final agreement, which could take some time yet. That would allow us to fund the Inuvialuit to participate on the boards and other activities that they required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 546-12(7): Receipt Of Yellowknife Applications Under Canada/NWT Infrastructure Program

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Earlier today, the Minister talked about the Canada/NWT infrastructure program. I was just

wondering if you could advise if any applications have been received from Yellowknife for this program.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 546-12(7): Receipt Of Yellowknife Applications Under Canada/NWT Infrastructure Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, I don't have that detailed information. I will give a copy of that information with regard to Yellowknife. And what I'll do, rather than just supplying it for Yellowknife, I'll get the information for all projects and provide a copy for all Members.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 547-12(7): Regulations Re Cleaning Of Caribou Carcasses

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question I would like to direct to the Minister responsible for Renewable Resources. It's kind of a distasteful question, Mr. Speaker, because it deals with the annual caribou hunt that occurs in this area in the fall and during most of the winter. It is a concern that is raised by people who have cottages and cabins out on the lakes: Gordon Lake, Prelude Lake, Prosperous Lake and other lakes in that area which are accessible to the public.

It appears that at times caribou are killed and taken to spots closest to the road. They are processed there and the hides and entrails are left on the ice in front of the cabins and by the road. It causes great concern. I realize that it's organic material, but I wonder if Renewable Resources has any regulations which determine where processing of large numbers of animals can take place.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that there is some sort of policy that is followed internally, but at the present time I do not know the answer. So I will take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Question 548-12(7): Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about the cuts that were taken out of the budget with regard to the boards. It is my understanding that 2.5 per cent was cut from all the boards across the Northwest Territories and, as a result, I know our CEC has had a tremendous number of public meetings and concerns regarding the cuts from our schools. We now have to absorb something like five PYs being cut and such classes as music, library and, possibly, physical education are areas that they are looking at. Only core subjects will be able to be delivered in the schools which I believe is very shameful because kids look forward to going to school when given the opportunity to take music or go into libraries, or take other than just core subjects.

Page 1207

Mr. Speaker, I know this government is in times of restraint but I am wondering whether or not the Minister has been able to look in other areas of his department to find a method to possibly reinstate the base funding that was cut from these boards across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 548-12(7): Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must advise the honourable Members that the review itself took place over a period of approximately a year, since the advice we received approximately a year ago on our

budgets was that we needed to consider the cuts. So it was done in conjunction with the boards.

Initially, we began with a ten per cent cut and we reduced it to a point where it was such that we made reductions of about 2.5 per cent across the board, with all our divisional boards of education. We reviewed the matter. We ourselves are taking a substantial reduction. That reduction includes approximately 29 PYs in our department which was approved by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 548-12(7): Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the Minister heard my question, but I asked whether or not his department was able to further review to determine whether or not there was any type of funding anywhere to be able to reinstate this 2.5 per cent cut that was granted to all the boards. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 548-12(7): Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our own assessment and review, having made the decision to make a number of cuts including those to the boards, we had to make the decision that there had to be some overall cuts and the result was that there was a two per cent reduction in the resources that we are providing to the boards.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 548-12(7): Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Would the Minister be able to advise this House with regard to the overall amount of funding which was cut from each board and provide it to the House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 548-12(7):
Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, I have the information. The problem is those are detailed questions, and I will certainly provide the honourable Member with the information.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 548-12(7):
Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Not a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker; just for clarification, is the Minister taking the question as notice. I didn't quite hear his reply. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 548-12(7):
Reinstatement Of Prior Funding Levels To Divisional Boards

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Member asked if I could provide the information, and I indicated to her that I would provide all Members with the information in written form. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ballantyne.

Question 549-12(7): Status Of Formula Financing Agreement Negotiations

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance and his officials have been talking to the federal government about the renewal of the formula financing agreement. I wonder if the Minister of Finance could just give us an update as to the progress of those negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 549-12(7): Status Of Formula Financing Agreement Negotiations

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was asked a question by Mr. Koe about this earlier this week, and I replied that there was to be a meeting this week of the working group which would be Canada, ourselves and the Yukon, to discuss the latest issues in the formula financing renewal. I was advised yesterday that Yukon was unable to attend so the meeting was called off. So that meeting will occur next week and I hope to be able to give this House an update by Thursday on what is happening.

What they will be discussing this week is Canada's position, the Yukon's position and our position so that everybody is very clear on where everyone is coming from. I anticipate that after that meeting there will be a senior management meeting, which would be at the deputy minister level, to further discuss those proposals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Page 1208

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 549-12(7): Status Of Formula Financing Agreement Negotiations

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that response. Mr. Speaker, I do have one concern. If

these negotiations drag out until after the election, I think it would be harmful to our position. I think the Minister has built a good rapport and the Premier has built a good rapport with the federal government, and I would feel much more comfortable if I knew we had a deal before the election. My question to the Minister is, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister optimistic that a deal can be concluded before the election? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 549-12(7): Status Of Formula Financing Agreement Negotiations

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no indication on Canada's part that they want to prolong negotiations. We have received support from both our MPs, east and west, with regard to our position. Audrey MacLaughlin, the MP for Yukon, is involved in the process as well, I am advised. There is no indication from any of the parties to prolong this issue, and I would venture to suggest that we will have an agreement whether we like it or not, Mr. Speaker, by the end of August. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I received a concern raised by one of my contractors in Inuvik, and it has to do with the privatizing of a task by the Ministry of Transportation. They are currently privatizing some of their activities. They recently let a tender out for the aerological weather observations program. I understand that there were quite a few bidders on this tender and that many local companies submitted bids. I also understand that the South Slave Research Centre also bid on this particular tender. So I would like to ask the Minister for clarification as to what the South Slave Research Centre is.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Laughter

Return To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. I'm not absolutely certain, Mr. Speaker, because I don't think the South Slave Research Centre is much more an independent regiment with the community than it is with our organization.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

MR. KOE:

Is the Minister saying, then, that the South Slave Research Centre is part of the NWT Science Institute, which is part of the Aurora College institution? I would like some clarification, please.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

---Laughter

Further Return To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to advise the honourable Member that they are part of the organization.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

MR. KOE:

Okay, if they're part of the organization, then most of its funding would be from this government in terms of the budget that it receives. And, I assume that part of their money is from third-party contributions or agents.

I'd like clarification about what policies are in place for a Government of the Northwest Territories agency, board or commission to enable them to bid on other government contracts against local northern contractors.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem with this particular matter is, on the one hand, I was criticized by the Members in the Assembly for not allowing the independence the organization had before for third-party agreement which we, in fact, supported. The other thing the honourable Member is raising -- and I appreciate the concern that he has raised -- is the matter of organizations getting involved in tendering processes against the private sector.

I've had an opportunity to review this matter, and the difficulty is part of the training that we offer to our community airport observers was, in fact, part of the organizational responsibility that the federal government used to have. The problem with it being privatized is that it now takes it out of the federal government's hands and, therefore, our ability to access that responsibility. We will reduce what would normally be a training opportunity for our airport observer program. It's a bit of a difficult one, yet we needed to ensure that we were part of the process. It was a bidding process and, therefore, didn't really take into consideration our training requirements as part of the tendering process.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Page 1209

Supplementary To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This causes a lot of concern, especially to the private sector, because they're competing against a government agency that is publicly funded. The overhead staff are already in place and they don't have to worry about winning

tenders to continue their operations, whereas it is quite difficult for a small company to do that.

I guess I'm trying to get an understanding of the dilemma this contractor is in. If the government is doing training for the SAR program, using the Science Institute and government contracts, then how do you propose that a private sector company take over this training? Is there any way or are discussions going on so that everybody wins in this situation?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 550-12(7): Description Of South Slave Research Centre

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concern raised by the honourable Member. It was only in the last week that I was made aware that we were involved in the bidding process and I had an opportunity to speak to one of the individuals who is interested in the contract, an individual from the private sector.

I just want to advise the honourable Member that, having heard the concern that was raised and having heard the comments that were made by the honourable Member, I will certainly have the staff review this matter and provide me with options available for the involvement of the private sector for this particular project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 551-12(7): Status Of Nunavut Travel Authority

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. I would like to ask the Minister if he could report on how things are progressing in setting up the new Nunavut Travel Authority. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 551-12(7): Status Of Nunavut Travel Authority

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I met last evening with the interim board of the Nunavut Travel Authority. The discussions and negotiations are progressing well as to trying to reach an arrangement with the three regions -- the Keewatin, the Kitikmeot, and the Baffin - - as to how a new authority would ultimately be represented; where the location of the office would be; the distribution of funding, et cetera.

The current interim chairperson of the Nunavut Travel Authority is Tracy Beeman who operates out of the Baffin region, the current interim executive director is Colleen Dupuis who currently runs the Baffin Regional Tourism Association and the interim board is made up of people recommended to me by industry for different sectors: hunting and fishing, adventure, et cetera.

There is one government representative on that who is Mr. Graeme Dargo and I've suggested, fairly aggressively, to the interim Nunavut Travel Authority board that all these arrangements have to be concluded by November 1st. Then they will determine an appropriate method to elect the board, decide where the office will be and how to distribute the funding, et cetera. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Patterson.

Supplementary To Question 551-12(7): Status Of Nunavut Travel Authority

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that report. I would just like to ask the Minister, is he quite satisfied that all three Nunavut regions are participating equally and fully in the development of this new authority? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 551-12(7): Status Of Nunavut Travel Authority

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I'm not satisfied. I think it's unfortunate that we can't have greater participation out of the Kitikmeot area but there is strong representation from the Keewatin and Baffin. There is a clear commitment by the interim board members to work closely with the industry in Kitikmeot to get increased representation. But, I think it's important to recognize that this is an interim board that is to develop the guidelines, the code of conduct, the way it is going to operate, and how the executive is to be elected. It is to make recommendations to me about the splitting of the funding.

You will remember that I spoke earlier in the House that it is the department's intent to transfer marketing dollars that are currently available in the department over to the industry, both in the east and west. While there may be a significant cut in the operational core funding, there will be additional dollars in terms of program funding. Hopefully, this will enhance industry's participation and ensure that where we spend the money is reflective of their needs in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Safety and Public Services. Mr. Speaker, the other day I asked about the safety of air tanker officers under section 13(1) of the Safety Act. The Minister's response today indicated that the Safety Act of the Northwest Territories does not apply to air attack crews because safety issues concerned with aircraft and airline transportation are dealt with in the Canada Labour Code.

Page 1210

Mr. Speaker, air attack officers are GNWT employees, so what responsibility does our government have, taking into consideration that these individuals are our employees? Why don't they fall under the NWT Safety Act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of legal jurisdiction. Presently, this government or any other government, I don't believe, has jurisdiction over the airline safety matters. That rests in the hands of the federal government. Whether or not they are employees of ours, the matter of safety issues related to transportation presently fall under the Canada Labour Code. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I responded to the honourable Member in the manner that I did today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you. The Minister is saying it with regard to airline transportation, but I am asking the Minister what responsibility our government has with respect to any individuals, whether they are air tanker officers, Bird Dog officers, et cetera, taking into consideration they are GNWT employees. Is he saying the responsibility totally lies with the federal government under the Canada Labour Code? Doesn't our government have any responsibility with respect to the Safety Act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, Mr. Speaker. I am saying that, presently, the way the rules and laws are in existence, the federal government's rules override our authority. Their jurisdiction rests within the matter of airline transportation. The honourable Member may be addressing the issue of public servants' ability to raise complaints with regard to safety issues and the safety of their working conditions. That normally comes through the Department of Personnel or Financial Management Board Secretariat. That is the general route they would normally go.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Just for clarification and for the record, is the Minister indicating the Safety Act doesn't apply to civil servants of the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, no. What I have said is that in the airline industry, which we do not have jurisdiction over, that is the area where the Safety Act does not apply. In areas where we do have responsibility and jurisdiction, the Safety Act is the rules by which any individual may file a complaint or raise a concern with regard to the safety of the working conditions in which they operate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Supplementary To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister clarify for me whether it is only under airline jurisdiction that the federal Canada Labour Code applies to, and not the NWT Safety Act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 552-12(7): Employment Status Of Air Attack Officers

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That may not be the only portion of responsibility. I will put together an information document and provide all Members with a copy of those areas where the Safety Act may not apply and the other portions of where the Safety Act would apply to make it clearer. It depends on a number of jurisdictional questions, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 553-12(7): Role Of Economic Development Officer Teams

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. Earlier in the session, I asked the Minister about the new itinerant economic development officer service that was proposed in the budget that was recently passed. The Minister responded to my questions stating that these positions will be filled by June 30th of this year. I will assume that that is still valid. However, I still have some difficulty in determining how these two teams of economic development officers will function. I would like some clarification. I would like to ask the Minister as to how these teams will operate. Will they be travelling to these different communities or areas when called upon or will they go on a rotating basis? I need some clarification.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 553-12(7): Role Of Economic Development Officer Teams

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there will be a schedule of travel and arrangements made. After all, that is the intent of this; to get in and service these smaller communities. I am sure that if there is an emergency or there are opportunities, we would be flexible enough to meet both of

Page 1211

these situations. There won't be an organized schedule because that is important to the constituencies and the clients. We will respond to the

specific requests of these communities or individuals within it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 553-12(7): Role Of Economic Development Officer Teams

MR. KOE:

I presume that the recruitment of these positions has been started if they are to be filled by June 30th. I wonder where the PYs for these positions are coming from. Are they new PYs or have they been reallocated from other tasks within the department?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 553-12(7): Role Of Economic Development Officer Teams

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe they aren't new PYs. There has just been a reorganization of the department and a shifting of resources into this important strategy that we have in place for the smaller communities.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 553-12(7): Role Of Economic Development Officer Teams

MR. KOE:

Has the recruitment started for these positions or are they people who are being reassigned duties?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid that I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I will take the question as notice and report back to the Member as quickly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Allooloo.

Question 554-12(7): Criteria For Workforce Adjustment Program

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the response that was given to me by the Premier. I would like to thank the Premier for giving me an answer on the government liaison officers. The government has a workforce adjustment program as a policy, I believe. If a government employee's position is eliminated because of program adjustments, they cannot apply to the workforce adjustment program. Is that true?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, there has just been some recent negotiations between the unions and ourselves with regard to workforce adjustment. I will take the question as notice, get the update and report to the House tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question was taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Allooloo, new question.

Question 555-12(7): Status And Treatment Of GLOs

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the government adjusting their program in terms of government liaison officers throughout the Northwest Territories, were they a special case aside from those normal government employees? They appear to have been treated differently than regular employees living in Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I would just remind Members that when they're asking questions to refer to the Minister the question is being asked of. I have to rush to see which Minister I should be asking myself, and it makes it a lot easier when you directly question the appropriate Minister. Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for not citing the Minister the question was directed to. I would like to ask the question, perhaps, of the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier answered a question today about GLOs and I think she answered it correctly. I think Mr. Allooloo just recently asked me a question about workforce adjustment, and I think what has happened is between the time of the GLO situation and now, there may have been some further negotiations with the UNW with regard to workforce adjustment. I have to find out the timing of those particular talks in order to come back and answer the question that Mr. Allooloo is asking. So, I'll take the question as notice and, as I said, report to the House tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. No, I'm sorry, the question was taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Koe.

Question 556-12(7): Approval Of Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Safety and Public Services. In the May 19, 1995 payroll envelopes, government employees received a consumer alert release from consumer and corporate affairs, a section of Safety and Public Services. This gist of this consumer alert is that, "Section 206 of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibits gambling activity in Canada, subject to what provinces and territories are allowed to do under section 207." The last part of the consumer alert document says, "The commercial crime section, RCMP, reminds you that illegal gambling is a felony offence." I would like to ask the Minister of Safety and Public Services, did he, his office or someone in the RCMP approve this consumer alert document for distribution?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Page 1212

Return To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of
Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. Just so it is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, I did not approve that insert. In fact, to be very clear, the deputy minister did not approve the insert. It was done, unfortunately, prematurely and without consent. We have since written a letter to all our directors, advising them that any inserts to be included in payroll envelopes must first receive the approval of the deputy minister. It was, in our view, a piece of information which was not required that caused, I think, a bit more concern and problems than it needed to.

Despite the fact that some of the information may have been correct, in our view, it was not something we needed to pay a lot of attention to. Rather, I think we want to advise the public of more serious issues.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of
Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

MR. KOE:

Mahsi. I would like to ask the Minister, then, who did authorize the distribution of this document because some of the information in it, as you mentioned, is true but some is not true. I would like to get clarification.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of
Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to get into the matter of identifying who was involved. I just want to accept part of the responsibility that it happened. The issue has now been dealt with. We have advised our staff that this kind of information should not be forwarded without the approval of the deputy minister in the

future. All of our directors have been advised of that. It was an unfortunate piece of information.

MR. WHITFORD:

I think it was a good idea.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Well, the honourable Member here probably thinks it is a good idea, but we're not certain that the information is absolutely correct. We were mentioned and the RCMP was mentioned in the information. There are legal questions we're now asking the Department of Justice to review and I'm not, at this particular time, prepared to discuss who should be held accountable. I probably should be and, therefore, I am answering the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of
Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

MR. KOE:

I'd like to thank the Minister for that information. I'm not saying it's a bad idea or a good idea, I think it's appropriate if the information is factual. The public should be aware of the laws in our Criminal Code. I find this particular document interesting because it states that illegal gambling is a felony offence. To my knowledge, "felony offences" is a term used in the United States of America. In Canada, we have indictable offences and summary offences. I wonder if the Minister is considering changing our Criminal Code Act to allow felony offences in Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of
Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you support me if I seek election as a Member of Parliament, I might be able to do it.

---Laughter

I just want to advise the honourable Member again that part of the information...I think the honourable Member has pointed out one of the problems, which is we're putting in information that might not be correct and reflective of legislation in this country. Therefore, I find it difficult to say that all the information is accurate. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, we have advised our staff that this type of information should not be provided to the general public unless it receives the support of the deputy minister and has undergone the appropriate legal analysis. The honourable Member has pointed out just one clause. I accept the comments that have been made by the honourable Member and the concerns raised.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Koe.

Supplementary To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. So will the Minister be making corrective adjustments to this document or to the information in the next payroll package that goes out?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 556-12(7): Approval Of Consumer Alert Re Gambling Activities

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Well, put it this way, I really believe there is other, more important information that should be provided to the staff. Again, I don't want to take up a whole lot of time trying to discourage friends and staff from doing things that are illegal. I don't want them to be recommending that, but, at the same time, I'm not really interested in encouraging our staff to go around, nor would I encourage the RCMP to go around and monitor whether we have hockey pools, for instance. I think that would be inappropriate. I think there are other, more serious criminal matters that the RCMP should be involved in. Many of those issues have been raised in this Assembly: drugs; youth crime; and, other criminal activity.

I find that information is important, but it should also be taken in the context of the seriousness of the issue. But I will review the matter and ensure that

information is appropriately and correctly provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 1213

Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Renewable Resources. Yesterday, I asked a question about sealskin product prototypes that were passed around last session while we were dealing with the budget of the Department of Renewable Resources. My question was taken as notice by our Premier and my question was to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. Mr. Speaker, my question is, was the Minister made aware that the products that he passed around were not products from the NWT?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was aware that they were not products of the Northwest Territories. They were merely prototypes that were put together by a group down south who are professional garment makers and were used to demonstrate what types of products could be made from sealskin products. My attempt to show these products in the Legislative Assembly was to show the types of products or merchandise that could be produced in the Northwest Territories because these prototypes were developed for a particular project that was being done in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If, in fact, they were just samples of the types of products that can be made in the NWT, why did those products have Minnguq Sewing Group labels on them? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that was the organization that the prototypes were made for to show that these are the types of products that can be made by that particular organization. I believe that was work requested by...Was it Minnguq? I am not quite familiar with the title. They had requested these prototypes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information provided to me the last time I visited my constituency was that they, too, were surprised that there were products being made under their name. However, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not convincing me that the Minnguq Sewing Group had made these requests. Otherwise, I would not bring it up in this House. That is the reason why I asked if he was made aware that the products that he passed around in this House were made outside the NWT and the sealskin was actually from Newfoundland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only relay the information that I receive, and this is the information that I received. Now, the products that the Member saw in this Assembly, I believe were just a demonstration of the type of products that could be produced in the Northwest Territories. The products were solely to be used as prototypes by residents of the Northwest Territories. It could be that the Development Corporation or some other organization had set this up on behalf of the Minnguq Sewing Group, and I believe that was the direction that the products were going, and I'll ensure that those products will end up with the group that the labels were titled under with a follow-up to the organization within the respective department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister ensure in the future that there is an actual letter from the presidents of organizations if similar things should happen through his department? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Further Return To Question 557-12(7): Minister's Knowledge Of Newfoundland Sealskins

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Yes, I will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions, is now over. 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:

Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 11-12(7): Report On The Review Of Bill 25 - The Education Act

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. The Standing Committee on Legislation report on Bill 25, the Education Act.

Page 1214

Overview

The Standing Committee on Legislation has spent the past two months reviewing Bill 25, the proposed Education act. This report details our findings. The report begins with a brief description of the development of the proposed act, moves to a description of the review process and ends with the details of the issues and concerns raised during the review and how the committee addressed those issues and concerns.

Developing A New Education Act

Consultation on the development of a new Education Act has been ongoing since the Special Committee on Education was established in 1980. Detailed efforts began in 1990 with a series of workshops across the north and the development of a paper called "Help Improve The Education Act."

From March to April 1994, the department consulted with students, trustees and school board officials in a series of focus groups to discuss strategies for education program delivery and legislation in the north.

In May 1994, the discussion paper, *Voices: Direction for Improving the Education Act*, was widely distributed with a questionnaire to education agencies, municipalities and band councils, cultural organizations and other interest groups. The discussion paper was based on comments and direction received by the department since 1990.

The department also received public and stakeholder input in preparing *A Strategy to 2010*. In addition to the view of northerners, much of the direction for improving northern education was founded on current educational research, the directions of the Legislative Assembly in *Reshaping Northern Government*, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Canada* and the

philosophy of education presented in *Our Students, Our Future: An Educational Framework* (1991).

A legislative discussion paper containing a preliminary draft of the legislation was developed for consultation and comment. The department distributed the paper to people and agencies in the north to encourage discussion and provide further direction in order to refine and improve the draft legislation prior to introducing the new Education Act in March 1995.

The Standing Committee on Legislation conducted an internal review of the paper and suggested a number of improvements. The proposed bill reflected not only the input of the committee, but many of the thoughts and suggestions the department received from the education boards early in 1995.

The Committee Review Process

Community Consultation

The Education Act affects, either directly or indirectly, the lives of all northerners. The committee believed very strongly that all northerners needed a final opportunity to comment on the bill before it was discussed in the Legislative Assembly. To provide this opportunity, the committee undertook an extensive consultation process across the Northwest Territories.

The proposed act received second reading in the House on March 10th. Between March 13th and 16th, packages were mailed to all major stakeholders. These included aboriginal organizations, communities, band councils, schools and special interest groups. These packages included a letter explaining the consultation process and a copy of the proposed act.

Advertisements ran across the NWT during the final week of March. These advertisements detailed the community consultation process and explained how people could get more information or arrange to make a presentation.

During the final week of April, a second series of advertisements ran in northern papers, again reminding people of their opportunity to comment on the act. Additional reminder letters were sent as well to specific organizations.

Beginning on May 8th, the standing committee broke into two five-person teams. One team travelled to Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. The other team travelled to Inuvik, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson.

Arrangements were made to hear from people in the surrounding communities in these centres. The committee, as a whole, returned to Yellowknife for the last of the public hearings May 18th and 19th. In each community, there were public hearings scheduled both in the evenings and during the day. Anyone who wished to make a comment to the committee was encouraged to do so.

During its travels, the committee heard from 33 organizations, 19 education bodies and 42 private individuals. A list of all presenters is attached to this report. There were many important issues and concerns raised during the public consultation. The committee found this input very useful in evaluating the bill and its potential impact.

Mr. Speaker, I will now ask your permission to ask my colleague, Mr. Pudlat, to continue this report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Pudlat

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Mr. Speaker, I will be reading slowly and also the interpreters will know that I will be interpreting slowly.

Committee Review

After the community consultation was complete, the committee met to review all of the comments made and issues raised during the public meetings. Each issue was addressed in one of three ways: as a potential change to the bill; as an issue addressed in the bill in any other way; or as something which was a valid concern but which could not be addressed through the act.

The committee then met with the Minister to raise general issues and to complete a clause-by-clause review of the bill. During the clause-by-clause review, the committee proposed a total of 85 motions to amend the bill, 83 of which were supported by the Minister. Of these motions, 63 represented changes in response to public concerns and 20 were technical in nature. As a result of these motions, the House will consider a revised bill, rather than the version tabled in the House in March.

Page 1215

Looking At The Act

The proposed Education Act is intended to strengthen community control of education in the north and redefine the roles and responsibilities throughout the system. The department contends that it is also designed to promote parental and community involvement in education and enable communities to develop a vision for their schools and for their children's learning that is consistent with their own values and particular circumstances.

Students, parents, the community, through the district education authority or through means such as advisory committees and public meetings, and educators are recognized as the key partners in education. Their involvement and participation in the education program is emphasized throughout the bill.

Bill 25 is structured to reflect the partnership approach emphasized by the Minister. Following the preamble, there are sections on interpretation, students and parents, educators, governance, the Minister and finances and, finally, regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to turn this over to my colleague, the representative for North Slave, Mr. Zoe, to read the rest of the report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pudlat. Mr. Zoe.

Preamble

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The preamble helps to establish the overall philosophy of the act. As a result, the committee addressed a number of issues in the preamble.

Treaty Rights

The committee heard a concern about how the bill would impact on treaties and the right to education for status Indians, particularly in the western Northwest Territories.

There was a reference to treaty rights in the preamble but it was buried in other Charter references. In committee meetings, an amendment was made to highlight section 15 of the Charter by placing the reference in a separate paragraph.

Quality And Standards Of Education

Across the Northwest Territories, the committee heard concerns that, no matter what system is in place, a high standard of education was very important. People want their children to be educated in a way which would allow them to compete with students anywhere in Canada. In committee meetings, the preamble was amended to add a new paragraph dealing with the need for a level of education consistent with the levels generally required across Canada.

Freedom From Violence

In keeping with the Assembly's position of zero tolerance for violence, the committee agreed with a suggestion that this position be specifically stated within the preamble. As a result, an amendment was made in committee meetings which added the need for a safe and positive learning environment to paragraph two of the preamble.

Equality Rights

During committee meetings, the final preamble paragraph was amended to include reference to section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms dealing with equality rights.

Interpretation

The Principal In The NWTTA In the proposed act, the role of principal as amanger has become much clearer. In the public hearings, the committee heard a range of views on what principals do and whether they should be in the NWTTA. Some suggested that, as managers, principals should be excluded from the NWTTA. Others saw a more cooperative role with the principal as a master teacher. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment should review this area and determine whether, with the change in scope of principals' duties, they should remain in the bargaining unit.

Revising Definitions

During committee meetings, a number of amendments were made to definitions in response to concerns heard from presenters. These included:

- adding reference to acting and assistant principals to the definition of education staff;
- adding definitions for French governance structures;
- revising the definition of superintendent;

- adding a definition of local programs (which includes the concept of religious instruction); and,

- clarifying the definition of parent.

Hours Of Instruction

In the current Education Act, the total days of instruction for the school year were identified in clause 97(1): "Schools shall be in session a minimum of 190 days in each academic year."

Under the proposed act, the hours of instruction would be identified in the regulations. During committee meetings, the department indicated these hours would probably be based on 195 instructional days per year. The committee was not satisfied with this. While Members understand the need for flexibility in the number of hours in a school day, they strongly believe that the total instructional hours should be set in the legislation, not regulations. Not only will this provide a clear standard, it will also ensure that there is serious consideration given to any potential changes made in the future to instructional hours.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Legislation recommends that a clause be included in the proposed Education Act which would clearly lay out the total annual instructional days for kindergarten, grades 1 to 6, and grades 7 to 12.

Page 1216

Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague for Yellowknife Centre to continue, Mr. Lewis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Lewis.

Part I

Students And Parents Access To An Education Program

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed act recognizes a student's entitlement to access an education program in a public school, public denominational school, private school or through home schooling. This entitlement is limited by the

age of the student, five to 21, by residency requirements, and by citizens.

The bill provides that, although a student over the age of 21 is not entitled to access, it is within the authority of the district education authority to offer an education program to students over the age of 21. The committee is supportive of an upper age limit of 21 as opposed to the previous limit of 19.

Inclusive Schooling

The committee heard many comments on the inclusive schooling section of the bill during the public hearings. As a result, during committee meetings, the entire section was amended. The section now ensures the right of all children to instruction in a regular classroom setting. Decisions on support services are to be determined at the local level and the limiting phrase "where practicable" has been removed.

Inclusive Schooling Funding

Many of the concerns with the inclusive schooling policy come from the issue of resources. Presenters said that the policy was sound but, if adequate resources are not provided to see it through, students are only being "warehoused," rather than educated.

The concerns with funding are twofold. First, the resources dedicated to special needs do not seem to be sufficient to implement the direction, as laid out in the policy and as implemented in the 1980s when students were returned to the north from southern specialist institutions. If the policy is to work, adequate resources must be provided. The second issue relates how divisional boards use the funding allocated for special needs. As one presenter said, "you can say every child has special needs," so resources originally intended for a specific group of children are now being used to address a much broader set of needs. Some Members saw part of the problem in the lack of definition for what the Minister means by special needs.

While the issue of resources cannot be addressed through the legislation, the committee believes that resources are crucial to successful implementation of inclusive schooling.

Recommendation 2

So, we have recommendation 2. The Standing Committee on Legislation recommends that the government evaluate the formula funding provided for

inclusive schooling and the processes used by education bodies for allocating this funding among students, taking into consideration the inclusive schooling policy.

Mr. Speaker, I will now defer, through you, to the dean of the House, Mr. Pudluk.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Mr. Pudluk.

Accommodation

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the terms of the proposed act, accommodation in another community will be provided by the education body in that community, as the Minister directs, if grades 10 to 12 are not available in the student's home community. Members were concerned about how much freedom of choice students actually have in deciding where to go for senior secondary schooling. Presenters also felt students should be restricted to districts within the division and the cost of funding the accommodation should be the responsibility of the home district authority. Additional concerns in this area were problems with students changing districts in mid-year and responsibility for foreign exchange students attending our schools.

The Minister pointed to the senior secondary schooling policy as the document which addresses these concerns. Members will be watching the implementation of this section to determine whether, in fact, the concerns are actually addressed.

Treaty Rights And Choice Of Education

There were discussions about treaty rights to education and any limitations on choice, particularly in the western communities. An acknowledgement of treaty rights is included in the preamble to the bill. While committee Members were sympathetic to the concerns raised by presenters, until treaty and other aboriginal rights are clearly defined, there is no way to include it in this act. To try to include it would imply a resolution and definition of these educational rights which is not the case.

Registration

Some concern was raised in the eastern communities regarding the registration date clause in the bill. It required that students must be registered by the first

day of school. During committee meetings, the section was amended to allow for cases where families are out on the land and do not make it back to their communities by the first day of school.

Home Schooling Fees

The bill allows parents to be reimbursed for approved education costs relating to home schooling. As written, the section is optional at the request of the parent; they do not have to claim these costs but can if they wish to do so. In conjunction with a change made to the home schooling section of the proposed act, this addresses many of the concerns of the presenters on home schooling.

Page 1217

Kindergarten

Bill 25 originally proposed a floating kindergarten entrance age of five years within five months of the start of the academic year. While this provided flexibility, most presenters felt this was not the best way to set entrance to kindergarten and instead favoured a set date or a testing system. It was pointed out that with a floating date, children in different communities with the same birth date would have different access to kindergarten depending on the academic year adopted by their school. There were concerns about how this would work for children who move within the school year from a district where they weren't old enough to one where school started later and they were old enough for kindergarten or vice versa.

As a result of the public discussion, the proposed act was amended in committee meetings to have a set date of December 31st for the age of eligibility for kindergarten entrance.

Home Schooling

A new element being included in the proposed act is home schooling. There are a number of families across the NWT currently home schooling their children for a variety of reasons. The committee heard from many of these parents on approval of home school programs. The presenters felt strongly that, as long as their programs met general educational goals consistent with the NWT school system, they should not require program approval from the superintendent in their division. The committee agreed with this concern and, during

committee meetings, amended the bill to delete the reference to superintendent approval.

Presenters also wanted the ability to register with a non-resident school board. However, the reason for registering is to allow for monitoring of home schooling and to provide any support the parents might want, such as partial access to school programs like drama. For this reason, the committee supported the provision that registration must be with a local board and not one unable to provide on-location support.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to ask my colleague from Natilikmiot, John Ningark, to continue with the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Student Participation

In reviewing the bill, it was the intention of the committee to ensure all stakeholders had a voice in the process. To facilitate this, the committee met with students in some of the communities visited to talk about the bill and to gain a student's perspective. The committee realizes that students feel they could have been more involved in the development of the legislation and will try to find ways to include students in the process more effectively in the future.

Student Representatives

Members were very pleased to see a section of the proposed act allowing for a student representative to attend district education authority meetings. As a result of comments from presenters on the scope of the student representative's role, the committee feels it is important that the district education authorities ensure students, as ex-officio members, are included in the process in a meaningful way. While the committee recognized the concern regarding students' participation on issues like discipline of a teacher which may come up at an authority meeting, Members feel students should be encouraged to attend and participate in as much of the authority's public meetings as possible. Mr. Speaker, the committee also feels it is important to ensure that student representatives are actually selected rather

than this clause being a nice but unused idea in the act.

Parents' Responsibilities

Some presenters called for a strengthening of the parents' role in the education process, particularly in the decision-making regarding their child's education program. The committee agreed and during committee meetings, amended the bill to have a phrase giving parents the right and responsibility to "be involved in making decisions that significantly affect the education, health or safety of the student."

Another amendment in committee meetings addressed the concern about parents needing a principal's permission to observe their child in class. This section was rewritten to better reflect the partnership between home and school, while ensuring the principal can maintain order and a safe environment for all students in the school.

Members also felt strongly that organizations such as parent advisory committees were crucial to the ongoing partnership between parents and schools. Although there is a section in the act which would allow for the creation of advisory bodies, the committee does not feel this adequately expresses the opportunity for parent advisory committees at the school level.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Legislation recommends that a phrase be added to the bill to specifically allow for and encourage the establishment of a parent advisory committee in each school.

Attendance

Many questions were raised during the public hearings about how and when the attendance provisions would be enforced. More details on the process will be included in the regulations. It will be up to each community to decide to what extent they wish to use this provision and actually charge anyone.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Thebacha, Mrs. Jeannie-Marie Jewell, will now continue with the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Attendance Fines

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An interesting suggestion was made by a few presenters during the hearings regarding the fines for non-attendance. The suggestion was that the fine money be returned to the local district education authority to assist in developing programs locally which would encourage children to come to school. The committee agreed with this suggestion.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Legislation recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment review this suggestion to determine if there is an effective and economical way of returning fine revenues to the education body which generated those revenues.

Student Records

During the public hearings, the area of student records received a fair amount of attention. There was a lack of clarity in what is included in a student record, how items are placed on or taken off a record, and a general concern about confidentiality. The Minister assured the committee that these questions about process and detail will be addressed in the regulations, yet to be drafted.

Student Conduct

In keeping with the partnership approach to education, the section on developing school rules was amended during committee meetings. The revised section now includes parents, school staff and students in the process for establishing school rules.

Student Suspension

Two amendments were made during committee meetings to address concerns raised by the public. First, there was an amendment to clarify the potential role of the superintendent as a third party in trying to find other options for a student before they are expelled. Second, an amendment clarified that, even if a child is attending school under a court order, the suspension section is still applicable to that child.

Part II - Education Staff

Recertification Of Teachers

There were many concerns across the north about the quality of instruction and the need for teachers to maintain a certain level of professional standing. These concerns included graduates from the teacher education program, as well as teachers with a bachelor of education degree. Most suggestions centred on a five-year recertification period. As a result, the bill was amended in committee meetings to allow for recertification. The actual requirements for recertification will be detailed in the regulations.

Role Of Teachers

Two amendments were made to the bill to clarify the role of the teacher. The first amendment specifically states that teachers will teach in accordance with the curriculum. The second amendment places responsibility on teachers to undertake professional development rather than just attempting to do so.

Board Of Reference

The proposed act included a board of reference for reviewing cases of teachers who felt they had been wrongly dismissed. At the suggestion of the NWT Teachers Association, an amendment was made in committee meetings to remove the board of reference and stay with a single adjudicator.

Principals

In the east, a presenter asked whether the legislation would allow a school to appoint co-principals. An amendment was made in committee meetings allowing the appointment of more than one principal in a school.

There seemed to be confusion during the public hearings regarding the five-year terms for principals. In addition to general concerns about how this would affect the decisions of principals nearing the end of their term, there were also many questions about whether a principal could be appointed for additional terms. The bill was amended in committee meetings to clarify that principals can be re-appointed for an unlimited number of additional terms of up to five years.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask Mr. Allooloo, my honourable colleague, to carry on from this point. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Marie-Jewell. Mr. Allooloo.

Principal Certification

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is an option in the bill for a principal to request a one-year extension on the time to obtain principal certification. However, there was no involvement of the superintendent, as supervisor, in the approval process. An amendment was made to the bill to include the superintendent in the approval process for extensions.

Assistant Principals

The public questioned why a school needed to have 10 teachers before it qualified for an assistant principal. The committee agreed, and Bill 25 was amended in committee meetings to allow the decision regarding when an assistant principal is needed, to be made at the local level.

Role Of The Principal

Three amendments were made by the committee regarding the role of the principal. The first specifies that the principal is responsible for ensuring the curriculum is taught. The second clarifies that the principal is responsible for assigning duties to school staff. The third changed the mandatory attendance requirements for principals at district education authority meetings, instead requiring principals to attend the meetings when requested to do so by the authority.

Page 1219

Part III - Cultural Diversity

Language Issues

In all communities, the committee heard a concern about the role of the Minister in determining the language of instruction. Presenters felt strongly that since communities could already choose the language of instruction up to grade 2, the proposed wording would actually take away some of the responsibility currently at the local level. This section was amended in committee meetings to leave the decision regarding language of instruction with the district education authority. A small amendment was also made to this section allowing for more than one language of instruction.

Language Resources

Most presenters addressing the language issue were pleased to see the recognition of all official languages in the bill. However, ability to teach in languages

depends on the availability of teaching resources and materials for the language of choice. There was a strong concern that, unless the government makes a commitment of funds to develop in this material, it will never be done and in reality only a few languages will be taught in the schools.

The committee agrees that without adequate resources, most of the languages will either never be used or used only in the lowest grades.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Legislation recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment ensure adequate resources are available to ensure the development of curriculum as required in official languages of the Northwest Territories.

Cultural Variation

Generally, presenters and the committee were pleased to see the strong emphasis on culture throughout the proposed act.

Spirituality And Religion

One of the most controversial sections of the proposed act is the section on spirituality and religion. Under the current act, there is a provision for religious instruction as part of the school program. In the proposed act, this provision was removed in response to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Presenters in every community raised concerns regarding the changes to religious instruction. They felt that Bill 25 takes away from the opportunity to provide doctrine-based religious instruction through the schools. The only option for religious instruction of this type would be through a local program option which took into consideration the beliefs and feelings of those of different faiths.

After considerable debate and discussions about what avenues were open legally, the paragraph of the bill regarding religious programs by the district education authority was amended during committee meetings. Most Members agreed that what was important was the teaching of spirituality and the values that come from a strong sense of spirituality. Therefore, the amendment removes the references to religion and provides the opportunity for a district education authority to provide instruction in spiritual values and beliefs.

Part IV - Governance

Superintendents

Education boards were very concerned over the proposed section of the bill which suggested that the Minister was responsible for the appointment of superintendents. Currently, superintendents and directors are appointed by the boards. In keeping with the idea of more local control, an amendment was made removing the paragraph referring to the Minister appointing a superintendent. This leaves only the references to a superintendent employed for an education division.

Education Bodies - Specific Concerns

Concerns regarding the attendance of education body members at meetings, number of members on a district education authority, terms of office, in camera meetings, alternate members for divisional councils, and filling vacancies were raised during the public hearings. In response, the committee made a number of amendments during committee meetings.

The amendments included:

- flexibility in the number of district education authority members, between five and seven;
- a correction to the election date;
- a clause adding an alternate representative to the divisional council with full responsibility;
- limitations to in camera meetings based on the regulations;
- clarification that divisional education councils are corporations;
- the ability to easily fill vacancies even if there is only one vacancy; and,
- a reduction in the number of meetings an education body member could miss before losing their seat.

Requesting A Different Structure

The proposed act allows communities to petition the Minister for an alternate form of education body. This answers the concern about recognition of local forms of governance already established. There were questions raised about the petition process. While the actual process will be defined in the regulations, the committee did amend the proposed act to require the Minister to respond to a petition within 90 days.

The Responsibilities Of Education Bodies

A key issue for the committee was the responsibilities of the different education bodies. Presenters expressed concern over the flexibility and lack of clarity in how this new system of governance would work. While the emphasis on local involvement in education is applauded, Members felt that the division of powers between the district education authorities and the division education councils is so flexible and lacking in structure that confusion will arise, resulting in the status quo rather than increasing local powers. Members were also

Page 1220

concerned about how divisional councils would operate efficiently and economically when they provide a different set of services and support to each of the district education authorities within their mandate. If this system of governance is to be successful, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will have a major task of working with the various education bodies to facilitate a satisfactory sharing of duties which will meet the needs of each community.

Presenters wondered why the existing names, divisional board and community education council, could not be retained. The committee understands the department's explanation that this is a completely different system of governance that requires new names. However, a question remains about whether the education bodies could choose to retain their current titles regardless of the formal terminology in the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I will now defer to the Member for Inuvik, Mr. Fred Koe.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Mr. Koe.

French As A First Language Issues

MR. KOE:

Bonjour, M. President. The various Francophone groups in the NWT were consistent in their message to the committee that the proposed legislation did not go far enough to address the rights granted to a French language education under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In considering these concerns, the committee received additional legal opinions on the issue. As a result, a number of amendments were

made during committee meetings to various parts of the bill. These amendments provided additional definitions or clarified the governance structures for French as a first language schools. The committee is satisfied that Bill 25, as it is now written, should address the requirements of section 23 of the Charter.

Part V - Role Of The Minister

Role Of The Minister

A major criticism of the proposed act was the wide-ranging powers of the Minister. The many references to ministerial authority did not seem consistent with the partnership approach and increased local authority cited in the preamble and statements about the new act by the Minister. A number of amendments made during the committee meetings addressed this concern. References to approval by the Minister for things like hiring superintendents and choice of language of instruction were removed from the bill.

As a result of these amendments, the committee feels that Bill 25 is now more reflective of local control over education and the Minister's role is more one of setting standards and curriculum and providing general policy direction.

Part VI - General

Regulations

The proposed act provides a framework for the Northwest Territories education system. However, the details of how things will really work are found in the regulations. A number of items found in the current Education Act are to be moved to regulations. Many presenters expressed a concern to the committee that leaving so much to the regulations did not ensure that the concerns of the public or the legislators would be addressed. The fact that regulations do not require approval of the Legislature or public consultation only strengthened the concerns. Members strongly agreed with the concerns about the regulations.

The committee was therefore very pleased with the Minister's agreement to an amendment which, for the first time in territorial legislation, places a requirement on a Minister to consult on the regulations in an act. The proposed act requires the Minister to consult with education bodies and, where appropriate, other interested parties on any new or amended regulations relating to the act. This consultation is to apply both

to proposed regulations and on the actual drafts of regulations. The committee believes this amendment will ensure that the concerns of the public and education bodies will be heard and addressed in the regulation-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I will return the report back to our chairman, Mr. Whitford, for the committee's final remarks. Merci.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Whitford.

Acknowledgements

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The complete rewriting of the Education Act is a mammoth project. The committee would like to express its appreciation to many people for their efforts and contributions. First, the committee would like to thank all of the presenters at the public hearings. This input was very valuable and, the committee believes, has improved the proposed act.

Second, the committee would like to thank the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and his staff who provide extensive details and spent many, many hours clarifying various parts of the bill. The committee also appreciated the Minister's cooperative approach in considering changes to Bill 25 as a result of the community consultation. Finally, the committee would like to take this opportunity to thank its staff for their efforts in ensuring the committee was well prepared and able to complete its work in a satisfactory and constructive manner.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MR. WHITFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's the chairman's prerogative to say thank you to committee Members for their diligence and hard work in helping to get the act to this point. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Whitford.

Page 1221

Motion To Receive Committee Report 11-12(7) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Legislation. Therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Natilikmiot, that the report of the Standing Committee on Legislation on the review of Bill 25, Education Act, 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 11-12(7) of the Standing Committee on Legislation moved into committee of the whole for today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). We don't have unanimous consent.

Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. 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 34: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1995-96

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 12, 1995, I shall move that Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1995-96, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request your agreement that I stand down my motion today. Perhaps, just for a moment, I could explain that Mr. Kakfwi is not able to be here for this debate affecting his ministry. For that reason, I would like to stand it down today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

This motion will be on the order paper for tomorrow. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Pollard.

ITEM 17: 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 move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kivallivik, 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. 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 33 has had first reading. 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(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 Bill 32: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2; Bill 25, Education Act; and, Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, with Mr. Lewis in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

I would like to call the committee to order then. Good afternoon, colleagues. What would Members like to do this afternoon. Mr. Dent, did you discuss this with the Government House Leader?

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Committee Report 5-12(7) and then move into consideration of Committee Report 9-12(7); following that, Committee Report 10-12(7) and Bill 32.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree with that order of business?

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. Lewis):

All right, then. We will turn to Committee Report 5-12(7), which is where we left off yesterday, I believe. Any further discussion on Committee Report 5-12(7)? Mr. Koe.

General Comments

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make a few comments on the Review of Rewriting the Liquor Laws.

As Members are aware, three years ago, motions were passed and then work was done by the Beaufort-Delta regional leaders in trying to get some changes made to the liquor laws to allow them to issue permits on amounts of booze or liquor that an individual can buy. There is a lot of concern in those communities about bootlegging and the quantities of liquor that an individual can purchase, and I am very pleased to see that the committee has addressed these in the report.

I am also very pleased to see that they have addressed the issue of increased control at the community level. This is one area where the communities, especially those in the northwestern area of the territories, really feel strongly that they should have more say and more authority to control the flow or sale of liquor within their boundaries.

The report didn't address all the issues that were in the legislative action paper but I assume, by not addressing them, that the committee was in favour of a lot of the issues that were raised in the action paper. I know that in the public hearings many of these were addressed by a lot of the presenters and we all understand that not everybody agrees on every issue and there may not be a definitive way to deal with each issue. But generally there was consensus on items raised that many are contentious, and in the act we have to have ways of dealing with these issues.

So those are some of the comments. I just wanted to give acknowledgement to the leaders in the Beaufort-Delta communities that we are getting closer to making the things that they raised law and, hopefully early in the next Legislative Assembly when the act is finally drafted, the issues that they've raised will be included in the new law. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Committee Report 5-12(7) then. Does anybody have anything further to say on this report? Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are we dealing with the liquor laws? I will speak very briefly to the issue.

Mr. Chairman, I represent two dry communities in my region, one being my home community, Pelly Bay, and the other, Gjoa Haven. Many years ago when I was working for the hamlet, the people of Pelly Bay wanted to go dry, and we communicated with the government at that time through Social Services and through the Justice Minister's department. Because of the problems the use of alcohol was causing for the community, a number of elders got together with some of the community leadership and they wanted to do something about the problem. So the community petitioned the government, and we were told that when we have a plebiscite, if the majority of the people wanted to go dry then that would be the decision of the community through the plebiscite, Mr. Chairman.

For the people of the community, mainly the elders and some women who were very anxious to go through with the plebiscite, the anticipation was that once we have a dry community it will remain a dry community. It will be such: a dry community. We didn't realize, Mr. Chairman, that once you have a plebiscite and the majority of the people decided to go dry then you have a dry community. We didn't realize then, Mr. Chairman, that it was only a technically dry community. Just about every other week -- I am sure this is also the case in Gjoa Haven, Pelly Bay and probably other dry communities in the particular jurisdiction -- people bring in liquor from other communities that are wet.

We have had many public meetings about this problem of alcohol in a dry community; I underline "a dry community." We have had many meetings. Some of the leadership, elders and women are frustrated that, because of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there is little a law enforcement agency can do to make sure that a dry community is a dry community. We were told many times by the Justice people and by the RCMP enforcement agency that only if the RCMP has a reasonable ground to believe that a person is in fact bringing in liquor can that person be searched.

So, as a result, because there is not much the law enforcement agency can do to search for liquor, even though Pelly Bay is supposed to be a dry community as is the case in Gjoa Haven, people still drink. Perhaps the problem is not as big as a totally wet community but there is a problem in a dry community.

I don't know if there is much we can do about enforcing dry communities to make sure that there is no liquor in the community but I don't think in this particular jurisdiction there is such a dry community. To me, it's a big joke. I think it's a big joke that dry communities are supposed to be dry communities.

I wish that there was something that we could do about that. I wish that once the community decides to become a dry community, it is a dry community. Okay. Just a point I would like to make. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Any further comments on Committee Report 5-12(7)? Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct this to the chairman of the committee. I wonder if, in its deliberations, the committee considered a question that I find often comes up in my riding, especially since Iqaluit took the bold step in 1976 of closing the local liquor store to over-the-counter sales; a step that I don't think has ever been regretted by the majority of residents in the community, although it has been complained about by some.

Ever since that decision was made -- as a result of a petition by the people of Iqaluit to the then Commissioner, Stuart Hodgson, who acted decisively to agree to the community's request -- the simple question has come up as to whether

Page 1223

drinking is a privilege or a right in the democratic society that we have in the Northwest Territories.

I would like to ask the chairman if that question came up, and whether the legislative action paper dealt with that question. Is it premised on drinking being a privilege in the Northwest Territories and not a right? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Do you wish to respond, Mr. Whitford?

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't recall whether this issue was raised specifically to that but I do recollect that, in general terms, people did talk about the rights

or the privileges of the use of alcohol. It certainly must be regarded as a privilege because in many cases there are certain restrictions, licences and permits and stuff that are required to allow people to consume alcoholic substances.

I, again, don't recall anybody raising that as a specific issue that we could have sunk our teeth into and it became something that we entered into our report. What I do recollect, and other Members could assist me if they choose, is that it was regarded, in general terms, Mr. Chairman, that the consumption of alcohol was not a right but that it was a privilege. I think that's the way it was seen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thanks very much, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the chairman's comments and I would like to say that that's the answer I would have hoped to get. I think that's the view of most people in the Northwest Territories.

I would like to make an additional comment, Mr. Chairman, if I might, again regarding the experience in Iqaluit in local control. I think the community deserves to be commended for having taken the initiative to deal with the problems that were occurring with sometimes unrestrained alcohol consumption in private homes. The community said to the government, we're not saying that our community should be dry, but we don't want to make it quite so easy for people to purchase liquor through the government-operated liquor store, and the Commissioner and the government of the day responded.

I would like to say that when the committee report notes the premise that there should be increased control at the community level, based on the experience of my constituency, I would like to say that I believe this control should extend not just to options for possession and ordering of liquor in a community but it should also extend to the question of establishments licensed by the government to sell liquor.

I think that when the paper and the legislation deals with the question of local control of liquor, it should be broad enough to include taking into account the views

of a community about whether or not a liquor store should be established in a community.

I know that this has been and will continue to be an important issue in Iqaluit, but I suspect it will also be an issue in other communities. It may be that in a community where a liquor store is established, they may discover that certain problems were created that weren't there before and I would hope, as the citizens of Iqaluit were able to do, that the community could subsequently petition its government to reconsider the establishment of a liquor store in that community.

I think local control should include local control over vending establishments as well. That might also be the nature and the hours of operation of such a vending establishment in a community. That may go without saying, Mr. Chairman, but I would like to note that on the record, having particular regard to the experience of Iqaluit. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Patterson. There was motion, I think, in connection with more control yesterday, so I'm sure the government has noted your concerns.

We're still on Committee Report 5-12(7). Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Chairman, I know that we're probably at the point where we're almost closing debate on this particular matter of the legislative action paper on rewriting liquor laws. Mr. Chairman, I would like to, before we conclude consideration of this item, thank the honourable Members for their comments and certainly for introducing the motions that they introduced over the past several days.

I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, and all Members, that their views along with the motions that were passed here in committee of the whole will be considered carefully as we proceed with the development of the new Liquor Act. This liquor law review... I must remind all Members that it was originally launched by my colleague, Mr. Todd, in December 1993, who was then the Minister of Safety and Public Services. Since then, Mr. Chairman, I am particularly happy, since I assumed the responsibility for the portfolio with the progress of the comprehensive review of the Liquor Act.

I have felt from the start that this review was timely and important. Our present Liquor Act, as several

Members have pointed out, is now 25 years out of date and is in serious need of an overhaul. We need to ensure that the definitions, systems, institutions, standards, penalties, and offences are carefully developed to ensure that our regulatory system is effective.

To me, the key to our success in this Legislative initiative has always been found in the five principles that emerge from our public consultations. I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that I am pleased that in one of the motions passed yesterday by our colleague, the Member for Thebacha, and supported by the House, that the House has now chosen to endorse these principles as the fundamental ideas that will guide the development of our legislation. In doing so, honourable Members have established the foundation for a liquor regulatory system that prioritizes the basic health and safety needs of people in the Northwest Territories; a foundation which recognizes that the wellness of our northern communities can be influenced by the way we, as a government, exercise regulatory authority over liquor.

This is an approach that jurisdictions all around the world are talking about following. We're not just talking about it, Mr. Chairman, we're doing it. With the feedback we have received from this House and with the benefits of grassroots ideas and

Page 1224

recommendations that came forward during our public consultations, my officials will now be able to work closely with Mr. Kakfwi's department to create a new Liquor Act.

If all continues to go well, we anticipate developing a bill for introduction to the 13th Legislative Assembly as soon as possible, following the fall 1995 territorial election. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the bill at that time. As well, I want to inform the House that we will be following up on some of the other public recommendations outlined in the earlier legislative action paper, as well as on the comments made by the Standing Committee on Legislation during its recent review.

For instance, it became clear over the course of the liquor law review that we need to do more to promote responsible decision-making about liquor. We are entering into negotiations with some of the manufacturers to explore new public awareness strategies. The legislative action paper stresses that the ongoing evaluation of the impact of liquor is

essential and we are now working with other areas of government to establish systems that will enable us to examine the health correlations and other outcomes of our liquor policy.

At public meetings and at standing committee hearings, we heard about the importance of strengthening our approach to enforcement and, as the honourable Member for Thebacha pointed out yesterday, we have now undertaken a review of our inspection program that will be completed concurrently with the development of the new Liquor Act. Both the Standing Committee on Legislation and, earlier, the Special Committee on Health and Social Services have made recommendations about the need to empower communities with local measures for controlling liquor. We are in the process of exploring legislative mechanisms and community transfer possibilities that will do just that.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to acknowledge the many people who participated in the public consultation process that led to the formulation of the department's legislative action paper. We've heard from people from all segments of northern society, people of all ages and from all regions. We heard from aboriginal organizations -- the Dene Nation, the Deh Cho Tribal Council, the Kitikmeot Regional Council and others -- and from groups like the Status of Women Council, the Registered Nurses' Association and more.

We have heard from the bar owners and people in the hospitality business, from RCMP detachments, from representatives of large liquor manufacturers who came up from the south, from the insurance industry and from university experts. We heard from individuals who have been active in working to address community concerns about alcohol, people like Buck Storr from Aklavik, Chief Gerry Paulette from Fort Smith, Madeline Qumuatuq from Iqaluit, Thelma Tees from Yellowknife, Woody Elias and Charlie Snowshoe of Fort McPherson, John Campbell and many, many more too numerous to mention.

But we also heard from northerners who don't usually get involved in this kind of exercise, folks who just had an idea or two about how liquor control can be improved in the Northwest Territories. These are the people who turned out at public meetings, sent in survey responses, or took the time to send us a letter or give us a phone call. I believe the entire liquor law review process has been strengthened enormously by their input.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I'm enthusiastic about moving to the next stages of this process, and I would again like to thank my honourable colleagues for their comments, advice and their input over the past three days.

Mr. Chairman, it would be remiss of me to conclude these discussions by not acknowledging the work of the deputy minister and the staff of the Department of Safety and Public Services. And, more importantly, I want to acknowledge one individual who has accepted the responsibility for this review for approximately two years now, a man by the name of Alan Downe.

---Applause

I want to acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, through you and the chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislation, the work of the staff of this Assembly and the staff of the committee, especially those translators who have had to do a lot of work on our part. I want to thank you for the input and support you have given us. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

On that happy note, do Members feel this is now concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay, that item can be taken off of the paper tomorrow, then. We will go on to the next item suggested by the committee, 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.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 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, Mr. Chairman, along with the Public Accounts 1993-94, Volumes I and II, became the focal point of two days of public hearings in early May of this year, and one day of follow-up work at the end of the month.

Mr. Chairman, the Auditor General's report is divided into seven chapters: chapter 1 deals with matters of special importance and interest; chapter 2 deals with financial statement issues; chapter 3 deals with compliance with authority issues; chapter 4, audit observations; chapter 5, student financial assistance;

Page 1225

chapter 6, municipal loans; and finally, chapter 7, deals with the issue of hidden subsidies.

Our committee presented its report on Tuesday, Mr. Chairman, and I believe Members had an opportunity to review it. We have three recommendations in the report but before I deal specifically with the recommendations, maybe I can go back to you, Mr. Chairman, to hear from other Members who may have comments on the report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Zoe, the committee report was read into the record on Tuesday. If Members still have general comments or something they wish to contribute, now is the time. It seems that we have had ample opportunity, Mr. Zoe, to discuss your report so maybe we can deal with your recommendations. Do you want to say something, Mr. Koe? Okay, sorry, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Koe.

General Comments

MR. KOE:

I just have a few comments on the items that were raised in the report, a couple questions come up. In terms of the follow-up on previous years' recommendations, there was a recommendation on the forensic audit capabilities. In previous sessions, I raised questions about the frauds that were occurring in government and the need to control that. I would like to ask a question which should be addressed to the Minister of Finance, but I'm not sure who can

answer this. Currently, what has been done in terms of trying to control and defray fraud attempts in the government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Carry on, Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

The audit process would find out about fraud after it has happened. I am more curious on the prevention of fraud. That is the area I would like to focus on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We are discussing the report. Mr. Pollard, do you want to respond?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the last year and a half, we have been offering workshops to departments and to various regions, discussing with them how important it is to have a paper trail and to have correct accounting procedures, particularly when they are dealing with cash and that has been fairly well attended by most of the departments. I must say the departments that have recently been clipped are probably the first through the door and that is the kind of preventative sessions that we have been having with departments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

The area of video conferencing technology is another area that is of interest. I note in the committee report, the last sentence of page 5 of 16, states that if benefits and costs warrant, the government should continue to pursue NorthwesTel regarding the implementation of technology in additional northern sectors. I assume that is technology to do with video conferencing. The comment I want to make is NorthwesTel is not the only company that is capable of doing these things. There are many companies that provide this type of information and technology, as we know, changes quite rapidly, almost daily. There are other companies that are able to provide maybe more updated types of technology. I am just wondering why NorthwesTel is the only one specified in this report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Zoe, it is your report.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the video conferencing technology issue, the government has been adhering to our recommendation from the previous year. They gave us an update on what they are currently doing and what they are planning to do in the future. It was stated to our committee that the government was dealing specifically with one particular company, which was NorthwTel. Currently, they are the only ones who are providing these services in Yellowknife and Iqaluit. That was the information provided to us by the government representatives that appeared before our committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

I just want to make it clear that we can't limit our options to only one company. They are a major provider of services in terms of telephone and computer linkages in the Northwest Territories. We can't limit our options to only one company. With expanding technological devices that keep coming onto the market, we have to keep our options open and there may be cheaper options. I just want to make that comment.

The next area is the area of environmental liability. Again, this is a new and emerging field that we have to be very cautious and conscious of because our north is a pristine country, as we know, and we wish to keep it that way. We want to keep it clean of contaminants on the ground, in the water and in the air. There are high costs associated with this. Those who live in Yellowknife all know this because of the testing that has been going on with the mines. It is a very costly and new field that businesses and government is entering into.

The aboriginal groups are also getting into this business, especially the Inuvialuit and the Nunasi Corporation in terms of DEW Line clean-ups. It is a new area and the issue that I wish to address is the GNWT Environmental Committee that has been set up and is referred to in the report. Who is on this committee and are they including people who are in the business of cleaning up and working with the

environment, for example, the aboriginal companies? Are they part of this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. I don't know if there is anyone in the House who can answer that question in terms of who is responsible for things in the environment area. If anyone wants to take a stab at it, that is fine. Do you want to try, Mr. Pollard?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Chairman, yes, a committee has been formed. It has not, as the report says, developed its terms of reference, or it had not at this particular time. I will get the names of the people who are on that committee and provide it to the House post-haste, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Mr. Koe.

Page 1226

MR. KOE:

The next area is on financial reporting. The committee made some lengthy remarks in this area, but I am curious that it takes such a long time to respond to recommendations made. On page 7 of 16, the area that is highlighted took eight years once recommendations were made. Yet, disclosures still hadn't been made. I know that changing the system and upgrading the system is costly. On page 8, information technology, it states that our financial information is 12 years old and becoming obsolete. Anyone who is in the financial business knows that timely and accurate information is required to make good management decisions. So I am very pleased that the auditor and the committee addressed these items.

It has to be looked at and the issue of the informatics strategy was one of the items that was mentioned in the Premier's address to the Legislature and it was raised in question period several times. I think it has been two years since we have heard what the status on this is, and that was supposed to be the catch-all strategy and the new information technology in this government. So even that's taking two years to develop, and I am sure if we ever get the strategy developed it will be outdated and obsolete.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

The other area that the committee highlighted was the vote 4 and 5 projects. Again, a lot of our projects, especially the official languages, our monies under the Official Languages Act, fall into this category, and monies for housing that we get from the government fall into this category. When we are dealing with our budgets, our O and M budget in particular, there are always blank spaces, and we are always waiting until negotiations take place. It's always nice, I guess, to have information when we are dealing with a particular department.

One question I would like to ask, especially in the area of official languages -- I know there's supposed to be a lot of consultation with official languages groups, and I also know that there have been considerable cutbacks in the amounts of money that we are getting under vote 4 -- is ongoing consultation with the recipient groups in terms of how money is allocated for the particular areas and projects?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. We are dealing with the report but there are items that relate to it, I suppose. Mr. Pollard, can you respond to that somehow?

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Mr. Chairman, unfortunately Madam Premier and Mr. Nerysoo are on the phone with Mr. Morin right now in Norman Wells. They probably would be better to answer than myself, but my knowledge of it is that there are discussions ongoing with various groups about the impact of the new languages agreement and that the Premier has been handling most of that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Are you done, Mr. Koe? No? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

The final item I would like to raise is the whole issue of the cash or non-cash amounts that this government has. We seem to be borrowing and always seem to have a negative cash flow.

I guess the concern I have is that we are now looking at possibly two years of deficit budgets and the

amounts of borrowing needs obviously has to increase to cover the needs. I just want to highlight that because I think it's very important that we try to keep ourselves in a positive cash flow situation. This government can't be in a position where it's going to be paying so much for interest on borrowed money that somewhere down the line we overburden ourselves so that we can't keep up payments. That's how the federal government deficit keeps growing. Its debt load is so high and the interest it pays is so high that it is almost impossible to recover and get back to positive cash flows.

I would just like to make that comment because it's been highlighted by the committee, knowing the fiscal position that we are coming into, not only this year but next year -- next year it will be worse. So I don't know if there is a recommendation that I'll support of the committee's making, but I am just wondering if the Minister had any comments on that area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Pollard.

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a concern about cash flow. We used to have an arrangement with Ottawa whereby we drew down on our money that we received from them when we needed it the most and even Ottawa is getting a little more difficult in that regard. So it is something that we are concerned with. It's something that we will address through the budget process this year and make some recommendations to the next government, and we will be as vigilant as we can about those particular large payments that come from time to time. In fact, most of the departments call us before they are going to issue large cheques so that we can time it so that we do have the money in the bank. So I recognize Mr. Koe's concern. I share that concern, and we are trying to be vigilant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Pollard. Have we now concluded general comments? Does anybody else have general comments to make? You are finished, Mr. Koe, as I understand it. If there are no further general comments or statements, then, Mr. Zoe, I believe you have some recommendations to make. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the issue of the review of the capital planning process, our committee has made our first recommendation.

Committee Motion 55-12(7): To Adopt Recommendation 1, Carried

Therefore I move, Mr. Chairman, 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.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. I believe all Members have a copy of that motion. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

Page 1227

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Mr. Zoe.

Committee Motion 56-12(7): To Adopt Recommendation 2, Carried

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Chairman, on the issue of information technology, our committee would like to make the following recommendation.

I move, that this committee recommends 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.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Everybody has a copy of the motion. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our committee would also like to make the third recommendation. It is on the issue of cash surplus and increased borrowing.

Committee Motion 57-12(7): To Adopt Recommendation 3, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance, through the Minister, provide copies of the Government of the Northwest Territories cash flow projection schedule to Members of the Legislative Assembly on a monthly basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee has made only three specific recommendations and that concludes the remarks and comments of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree that Committee Report 9-12(7) is now concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much. That will be removed from the order paper for tomorrow. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

MRS. MARIE-JEWELL:

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

There is a motion on the floor. It isn't debatable. Those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I shall rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 5-12(7) and Committee Report 9-12(7). I would like to report progress with three motions being adopted and that Committee Reports 5-12(7) and 9-12(7) are concluded and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Koe. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 9:00 am tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Friday, June 9, 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
- Page 1228
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
 - Motion 21-12(7), Transfer of Prosecutorial Responsibilities to the Government of the Northwest Territories
 17. First Reading of Bills

18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and

Executive Council Act, No. 3

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

- Committee Report 10-12(7), Report on 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, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, June 9, 1995, at 10:00 am.

---ADJOURNMENT