



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

7th Session

Day 52

12th Assembly

HANSARD

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 1995

Pages 1252-1578
Pagination reflects print edition

The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 1995

Page 1525

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Good morning. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 107-12(7): Gun Control Lobby

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I have an emergency statement. Mr. Speaker, Bill C-68, An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons, is currently being debated in the Senate during second reading. The bill will soon be sent to the Senate Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for further review and public hearings. On behalf of the Legislature, the Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson, and I travelled to Ottawa on Monday to meet with aboriginal leaders Ovide Mercredi, Rosemary Kuptana, Jim Sinclair and Gerald Morin. We also met with a number of Senators representing both the Conservatives and the Liberals.

With respect to the Senate, we targeted Members of the standing committee and the Senate House Leader. In addition to pressing for public hearings, we asked the committee Members to consider visiting the Northwest Territories this summer and fall. We encouraged them to see first hand how northern people use guns -- not as weapons, but as tools -- and discover for themselves how impossible it will be to administer the licensing and registration provisions of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we impressed upon each Senator how important it is for our lawmakers in this country to meet the very people this new law would affect,

should it pass. We told them of Helmut Kohl's visit and the surprising, yet welcome, change of mind this leader has had regarding the fur issue. We said that if Chancellor Kohl could take the time to visit, then surely the Members of the Senate committee could do no less.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, during the meeting with national aboriginal leaders, we encouraged them to develop a united position on Bill C-68. To that end, they have agreed and accepted our invitation to meet in Yellowknife during the week of July 10th and plan to make Bill C-68 and the fur issue the main focus.

---Applause

As you know, we have done our best to make the lawmakers in Ottawa understand our point of view. In return, they offered up amendments that are, at best, window dressing. The promised consultation has been frustrating and grossly inadequate. Mr. Speaker, laws must make sense to the people they affect and to the people who must explain, enforce and defend them. In the case of Bill C-68, it is difficult to explain, impossible to defend and it will be incredibly expensive to administer and enforce. In addition, its effectiveness is questionable, at best.

Because of this, opposition to this hastily-drafted and poorly-researched legislation is building. Western provinces are concerned about jurisdiction issues and, like both territories, they are concerned about the costs of administration and enforcement. As well, the new government of Ontario has registered its concerns and some of the Atlantic Premiers are questioning the costs. With additional opposition from a united aboriginal community, it will be difficult for the federal government to remain indifferent to the criticism.

Mr. Speaker, no firm dates have been set for public hearings planned by the Senate committee. The consensus is that they will likely be held in the last part of September, with an October reporting date. We will know in the coming days, as the bill passes second reading and the Senate Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs releases its timetable.

In conclusion, I want to assure Members that the Caucus Subcommittee on Gun Control remains committed and dedicated to seeking an exemption for the Northwest Territories from the offending provisions of Bill C-68. Unless and until the many

practical difficulties can be addressed to our satisfaction, we simply cannot see how this bill can be supported. We will appear again before the public hearings to state our case on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and people of the Northwest Territories. Despite the fall election, we will make this lobby an important priority. Our last hope lies with the Senate. Hopefully, it will rise to the occasion and offer that sober second thought that Canada so desperately needs. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Mr. Pudluk, your point of order.

Point Of Privilege

MR. PUDLUK:

Point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if this very important document will be translated, especially into the Inuktitut language?

Page 1526

Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER:

The reason, Mr. Pudluk, why the statement wasn't translated is so that Mr. Kakfwi could make an emergency statement. The translation is now available. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

Mr. Speaker, my apologies. As I made my point of privilege, the translation did come in. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. Pudluk. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Todd.

Minister's Statement 108-12(7): 1994 Annual Report - Workers' Compensation Board

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the annual report of the WCB for the period ending December 31, 1994, in accordance with section 100 of the Financial Management Act.

The financial and statutory responsibilities of the WCB are threefold:

1. It must guarantee that compensation and the pensions awarded to injured workers of their dependants are paid in accordance with entitlement.
2. It must assess employers sufficiently and fairly to meet these obligations.
3. It should maintain stability and achieve a balance, providing benefits to injured workers, while keeping assessment costs to employers as low as possible.

These responsibilities are met by establishing and maintaining adequate reserves.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that the financial position of the Workers' Compensation Board improved in 1994. This has allowed the board to restore its reserves to desirable levels.

The future liability reserve ensures that the board is able to pay the total entitlement of its claims. This capability is often referred to as "fully funded."

I am pleased to confirm that again in 1994, the NWT WCB is fully funded. I should add that this is an enviable position to be in compared to the fiscal situation of other boards across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are several reasons for the board's positive results:

1. Increased hiring by employers operating in the north resulted in assessment revenue exceeding projections.
2. Thanks to a lower than anticipated consumer price index, supplementary pension increases in 1994 were less than expected.
3. In cooperation with employers, more emphasis was put in training on the job, graduated return to work and alternative job placements.
4. Third-party actions concluded by the board in 1994 recovered additional monies.

Although much of this report focuses on fiscal responsibility, I must emphasize that financial stability is not the only measure of success at the NWT Workers' Compensation Board.

In 1994, the WCB undertook a number of significant initiatives to improve the level of services provided to its clients:

- Implementation of an early intervention claims management model, which will ensure early assessment and diagnosis for injured workers and a quicker return to the workplace;
- A memorandum of understanding with the Department of Renewable Resources to ensure that harvesters injured in the course of their traditional employment receive fair compensation;
- A more "common-sense" approach to rehabilitation services, resulting in greater emphasis on-the-job training, graduated return to work and alternative work programs;
- A Special Needs Committee created to address the special requirements of injured workers and pensions with significant disabilities;
- A comprehensive review and restructuring of the industrial classification system resulted in fewer subclasses and a more equitable system;
- A new multi-industry classification, which allows employers engaged in more than one industry to reduce assessment costs by applying for separate classification;
- The safety incentive rate reduction program which, when it takes effect in 1996, will impose penalties on unsafe businesses within each subclass; and,
- The development of new programs and increased training by the WCB's safety education unit.

Mr. Speaker, the 1994 Annual Report that I will table today confirms that the Workers' Compensation Board continues to operate in an effective and responsible manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Thompson.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Bowhead Whales

MRS. THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in this House to voice the thoughts and views of my Inuit elders on the bowhead whale. Muktuk from the bowhead whale is a delicacy to the Inuit people, especially our elders who have sampled its flavour in times long past, and, Mr. Speaker, as has been well reported, in more recent times.

Page 1527

I struggle to express the concept of the delicacy of this fine food to people of other ethnic origins. Mr. Speaker, perhaps haggis, truffles or roast pheasant may bring to mind a comparative exotic flavour of a food my people hold in such high regard.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, between 1820 and 1830, approximately 750 whaling ships journeyed to our Arctic waters and harvested over 8,000 bowhead whales. The Baffin Island bowhead whales were hunted by Dutch whalers in the 18th century. Based on available records for 1719 and 1911, the records say that a minimum of 28,000 bowhead whales were taken from the Baffin Bay stock. This overharvesting not only lead to the shortage of this vital food supply, but also prevented generations of Inuit people from knowing the delicious flavour of bowhead muktuk.

Mr. Speaker, on many occasions, Inuit elders have tried to convey to the younger generation the excitement, the joy and the satisfaction of a successful traditional bowhead hunt and the sharing of muktuk with the entire community. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, this experience can now only be shared legally through the storytelling of our elders and the imagination of the listener.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent from my colleagues to continue.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Aivilik is seeking unanimous to conclude her statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mrs. Thompson, could you conclude your statement?

MRS. THOMPSON:

I have witnessed, Mr. Speaker, over the years, my father, now in his 70s, relay to visitors and students on many occasions the story of a bowhead whale hunt, complete with actions and an ethnic whaler's bowhead harpoon.

As nature takes its course in the Arctic, Mr. Speaker, many Inuit have witnessed the ageless relationship between predator and prey; of killer whales and polar bears feasting on bowhead whales. The retelling of these experiences have left our elders longing with envy, and wishing to reclaim their place in the natural order of life in which they too are hunters.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the fine people of Igloodik for sharing the recent bowhead muktuk with most of the elders in Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, this was a profoundly emotional moment in which many elders, fortunate enough to again taste the finest of traditional foods, remembered their parents and their relatives who had passed on before them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing the voice of the Inuit elders to speak through me today in this House.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Development Of The Cooperative Movement

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the Northwest Territories, one of the major economic developments over the last 30 years has been the development of the cooperative movement. Much of the credit goes to the federal government who saw that this made sense in the kind of jurisdiction that we have.

When I was a young boy, Mr. Speaker, everybody shopped at the co-op in our village. It was locally owned, all the employees were local, all the dividends went to local people, all the staff and management and everything was local, and people had a great attachment to it.

It's been a terrible battle for the co-op to get itself established in the Northwest Territories despite the sense that it made, simply because there was another huge corporation that had been here for 350 years:

the Hudson Bay Company, who fought like fury to stop it from getting a foothold. Many of the people who worked for that company remember the battles they had with local co-op people who were trying to provide competition with this monolithic force, which was at that time based in London and Europe.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Hudson Bay Company really doesn't operate in the Northwest Territories, we should not have opposition any more to this kind of development. I believe that our government should recognize what it has done, its achievements and importance to northern people and we should find in our hearts enough sympathy and understanding to provide the kind of support that this operation needs if it is going to survive into the future.

I shall be asking the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism some questions about this later. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Manufacturing Of Northern Products

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago, I asked a question in this House about the origin of the sealskin products passed out by the Minister of Renewable Resources during his department's O and M budget presentation last March. In his opening comments on the Renewable Resources budget on March 3, 1995, the Minister stated, and I quote from page 1064 of the unedited Hansard:

"In the eastern Arctic, we have been working hard to promote the sealing and fishing industry. This past year, in cooperation with Economic Development and Tourism, we researched consumer interest in seal and sealskin products. In 1995-96, we are working with the Broughton Island tannery and residents on the pilot project to produce and market these examples of high quality products. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to pass out some samples of products that are being produced. Mr. Chairman, we are providing seal pelts to the tannery through the fur pricing program."

Page 1528

This all sounds very promising, Mr. Speaker, but I am concerned that it does not seem to be consistent with

what the Minister was telling me in response to my question of two weeks ago. He indicated he was aware that the sealskin products were merely prototypes made by a southern company as a demonstration of the kinds of products that could be made in the NWT. However, the prototypes have Minnguq Sewing Group labels on them, despite the fact that Minnguq was not aware of their existence.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Minister assures us that there is active promotion of sealskin products and even a pilot project involving the Broughton Island tannery, the information I have indicates this is not the case. I have heard that there are plans being made to initiate a production line of products under the Minnguq name but the Broughton Island tannery, which is in dire need of work, is not a part of the picture.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any sense to me that this government spends considerable amounts of money on the fur incentive program and other renewable resource...Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue by Member's statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Ms. Mike.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any sense to me that this government spends considerable amounts of money on the fur incentive program and other renewable resource and economic development programs and, yet, when an opportunity comes along, our northern processors are left out in the cold. More must be done, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this government and agents of this government continue to pursue economic development initiatives within the Northwest Territories, we should continue to market our products nationally and internationally, but they must be made in the north by northerners and all the benefits must flow to northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On 25th Anniversary Of Buffalo Airways

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good morning; and good morning, colleagues. Colleagues, I rise today to extend congratulations to a truly northern aviation company celebrating 25 years of service to northerners and to maybe set the record straight about a company that people across the north have come to rely on for hauling everything from foodstuffs, personal mail, mining companies, trappers, fishermen and little league baseball players, who either fly free or at a minimum cost. That company is Buffalo Airways.

---Applause

Congratulations to a company that draws positive international recognition for its operating standards, standards proven to be so exceptional that leading insurance companies offer prime rates, providing an opportunity for this government to save millions of dollars over the next five years.

---Applause

Congratulations for a level of expertise demonstrated by a professional staff hand-picked by the company's president Mr. McBryan. Congratulations for building a reputation that's unbeatable for the quality of service and the degree of respect offered each and every customer. Congratulations to a company that northerners recognize for the Buffalo green that stands out so well against our snow-covered runways.

Here's a genuine northern company with a history that started at a small mining camp north of Yellowknife in 1946, a history that began in the imagination of a five-year-old boy playing on the shores of Gordon Lake, where he lived with his parents. At a time, Mr. Speaker, when toys were in short supply, young McBryan's toys were a couple of wooden airplanes that his father meticulously carved from the trunk of a jack pine tree, a territorial tree.

This, Mr. Speaker -- what I'm holding in my hand -- is the flagship of the Buffalo fleet as it's known today. This is a little airplane, the first airplane of the fleet, which would eventually become the larger Buffalo airplanes of today. In 1970, a young bush pilot showed up in Fort Smith with an Aztec, the first instrumental flight-rated airplane for hire in that community.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. In 1970, a young bush pilot showed up in Fort Smith with an Aztec, the first instrumental flight-rated airplane for hire in that community. Over the years, Mr. McBryan became a sincere friend and supporter of the trappers around Fort Smith. Indeed, in many cases, he was their lifeline back to civilization after months in the bush. Whether or not the trappers had the money to pay for the service, McBryan hauled them out to their trap lines, gear and all, including their dogteams, and then picked them up at the end of the season without fail.

That same Aztec doubled as a Bird Dog aircraft during the fire season and maintained a base in Fort Smith for medevac service for the rest of the year. It did not go south, Mr. Speaker. During that 10-year period, Buffalo Joe, as he became known, was called on to fly so many medevacs that in one instance, he had a mother from Fort Resolution give birth to her 11th child in the back of the Aztec, and she named the boy after the pilot -- Joe.

The little company was eventually sold to a young bush pilot that he had trained, the late Billy Burke of Fort Smith, who bought the float plane operation and renamed it Loon Air. During those years in Fort Smith, Mr. McBryan entered into a partnership with a couple of southern boys who eventually migrated back home and sold their partnership shares to McBryan who became the sole owner and operator of Buffalo

Page 1529

Airways, as we know it today. The company continued to grow from a couple of float planes to a DC-3 service, combined with a small fleet of helicopters. Buffalo today now owns the largest operating fleet of DC-3s in Canada, if not in all North

America. And this is a model of one of their airplanes, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

My colleague brought a cod head here one time, so I thought a model airplane wouldn't be so bad.

---Laughter

Long-time northerners will easily recall that Buffalo Airways has already provided 15 years of solid service to the forest firefighting industry at its base at Fort Smith and at Fort Simpson. Furthermore, Buffalo Airways has always been a leader in the support, hiring and training of young northerners wanting to enter the aviation industry. Pilots have come up through the training ranks and are held in such high regard in the industry.

Today young pilots, bubbling with more ambition than DC-3s and DC-4s can contain, have gone on to fly in the big leagues with the international airlines on jet planes. Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in being a Member of a government that is willing to demonstrate support for northern entrepreneurs. I am proud to be part of a government that is confident enough to take the necessary steps to ensure that millions of northern dollars will stay in the north. Indeed, a reputable northern company built, according to the dreams of a little northern boy, who used to play on the shores of Gordon Lake with wooden airplanes, who now owns real ones.

I rise today to point out the positive aspects of a genuine northern company that is caught up in the cross fire of a political battle that is taking place in this House and is detracting from the true meaning of northern entrepreneurship. I ask this House to join me in extending congratulations to Buffalo Airways, a genuine northern company celebrating 25 years of quality aviation services. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Evolution Of Government System

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the last day, I thought I would talk a bit about the need for increased cooperation amongst the elected leaders of the Northwest Territories. I think the misunderstanding we recently had between the aboriginal leaders and our Legislative Assembly brings home a plight, at

least to me, that we probably have to rethink how we approach some of these things.

Any misunderstanding that has happened is definitely not the fault of any individual Minister or of this government. I think our government can be quite proud of the fact that we have better relationships with aboriginal organizations than any government in the country.

However, times are changing quickly. The reality is that the regional land claims have given constitutional status to many of the aboriginal organizations. The division legislation has given legislative status to organizations such as NIC and self-government discussions have raised expectations and, at some point, many aboriginal organizations will be lost in the Constitution of Canada. That is a reality.

Another reality is that public government in the Northwest Territories has a legislative base. It has a very strong elected mandate and it is supported by a large number of people in the Northwest Territories and it isn't going away.

The third reality is we have a strong history in the Northwest Territories of community governments, mayors and chiefs, and our communities are well respected and are taking on new responsibilities. So unless we come up with some new structures in our government, we are inevitably going to head towards clashes. I think we will see that more and more unless we look at changing the way we do business here in the Legislative Assembly. The present system is too rigid to deal with these new realities. There is no doubt in my mind that there is going to be a lot of frustration in self-government negotiations, a lot of misunderstandings, as well as frustration in the division negotiations. Unless we find mechanisms where people can work out these problems, we are going to end up fighting amongst ourselves. 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 now, when Mr. Pollard and the government are putting together the transition document, is the time to think about some of

these things. If we don't do them, the results could be quite disastrous.

Next time, we should look at institutionalizing regular meetings of Cabinet with aboriginal/municipal leaders. There have to be regular opportunities for aboriginal/municipal leaders to meet with the Legislative Assembly and with committees of the Legislative Assembly. The next government should follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance, to have a separate intergovernmental affairs secretariat and aboriginal affairs secretariat, and we should look at setting up some bureaucratic structure that includes bureaucrats from aboriginal organizations that meet on a regular basis.

Unless there is a free flow of information some formalized mechanisms to work out problems and strategize, inevitably we will be turning on ourselves. I think the future of the Northwest Territories will depend on increased cooperation and problem solving amongst all the elected leaders of the Northwest Territories. It is my own feeling that we are not going to have the luxury to be able to fight amongst ourselves. There is too much at stake. At the end of the day, either we hang together or we are going to be hung separately one by one. Thank you very much.

---Applause

Page 1530

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Appreciation Of Constituents, Colleagues And Staff

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, or as my eastern colleagues would say, qujannamiik, uqaqtii.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, you see, I have learned something in this House in the last four years.

---Laughter

(Translation) Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking in my language. It seems that today will be the last day we will be meeting. So if all goes well, we should be finished our meeting today. We are representing the

people who have elected us into office. Our term is just about over. I hope we have worked well for people who have elected us. I would like to thank you for being the Speaker. In your term of being an elected official with the territorial government, you have learned the system of the territorial government, so I feel you have done the job well.

Four years ago, when we asked the Minister...I hope I work well with the people who are elected as Ministers. At the time, she said yes. Today I would like to thank the Premier. In the four years that I have been an MLA, I hope I have worked well for my constituency. I would also like to thank the Ministers who I have worked with. I would like to say thank you to her for working well with the Minister. When I questioned the Ministers and also asked for things, I feel I worked well with them. I would also like to thank the Ministers from the past. There are many things that we still have to work for in the future, whoever is in government after us.

Mr. Speaker, my time has run out, so if it is okay with everyone, I would like to continue my speech.

MR. SPEAKER:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Antoine. The MLA for Nahendeh is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been four years since we were elected. I have learned quite a bit from my four years as an MLA, how the system operates. I feel I've done okay in the four years that I've been an MLA.

We are representing our constituency and we to have to keep in mind: who are we sitting here for and what are we here for? These things should be thought out and remembered. That is the only way I feel things will turn out well for us in the future.

The Ministers have a hard job too, but they sometimes have to remember that their constituents are the people who have elected them and where they are from. Whether they're white people, Dene or Inuit, they should remember where they are from. They have to inform their constituents well.

(Translation ends)

...four years. I have thanked the Government Leader, the Ministers and my colleagues, the Members of the

Legislative Assembly, for support in the things that I wanted to do in my constituency over the last four years. I would also like to thank

the Legislative Assembly staff; Mr. David Hamilton and his staff.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MR. ANTOINE:

Mr. Speaker, I still don't know all the rules that well, but Mr. Hamilton and his staff are very able and they always guide me in areas where I have to work through this maze of rules that govern this Legislative Assembly. So for that, I would like to thank Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Speaker, I have been talking to my constituents and I will be taking another run at this position on October 16th.

---Applause

I have been telling them that in their requests and in their questioning, and I've been saying that I'm going to run again. Because of the work that has to be done ahead of us...There's a lot of work to be done. I would like to thank all the Members in this House for working with me in the last four years. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine, and good luck. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Pudluk.

Member's Statement On Environmental Concerns

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those of us who are here are all aware that today might be the last day of this session, the last session of the 12th Assembly. I would just like to make a short statement. I know that we have to speak on one particular item when we make Members' statements, but I think I will be making a statement on two items.

First of all, I would like to talk about the environment. We have a great concern about our environment today, and we have to take very good care of our

lands in today's world. Early in the 1960s, various companies came to the north for oil and gas exploration projects. At that time, they had to get permission from Indian and Northern Affairs so they could come up north to explore. But today, looking at the northern environment, there are a lot of items that have been left behind by those companies; particularly old, rusty barrels have been lying around all over the northern environment. Although we would like to take good care of our environment and our lands, it's very difficult to try and clean up our environment.

The companies that have been up here have been the ones that have destroyed the natural beauty of our country. Although they have stated that we should be taking good care of the environment around us...

Mr. Speaker, I would like to receive unanimous consent to continue my statement. Thank you.

Page 1531

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for High Arctic is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues. As I stated, we are very concerned about our environment. For instance, Panarctic went up to the High Arctic during the early 1960s. When they first started exploring they were very friendly to the people of the north, but now that they're almost concluding their projects in the High Arctic, they have stated that they would like to bury their equipment. They want to discharge all this old equipment out into the Arctic Ocean. Now they're very uncooperative with the people of my constituency. It seems like they're going against the very rules that DIAND has set out for them.

At the time, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the company made an agreement that they would look after their own garbage and whatever junk they might have, and they would have to do away with the things that they have left behind, but it seems that they are going against the very agreement they had agreed upon years ago. Now they just seem to be doing away with the toxic waste and equipment

for the people of the north to deal with. It's not just Panarctic, there are other companies that have just abandoned their waste. There is a lot of junk lying around in the Arctic, and they won't go back to clean it up. There are all kinds of barrels and heavy equipment that they're leaving behind.

I would like to, for the people who will be running in the future to become Members, encourage them to pursue this issue. Although the Indian and Northern Affairs department is responsible for this, they don't travel to the communities to see just how much junk there may be left behind by the companies.

The federal staff don't even bother to come up here. I know the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has a lot of power to do what they should do to clean up our Arctic waters, but they're not doing anything about this. We don't see any officials coming up north to see just how much damage may have been done to our waters or our lakes. They have no idea how big a problem this is.

I would like to encourage those future MLAs to pursue this. They should work hard to try and work with the federal government so they can clean up our environment, the northern waters and lands as we are very concerned about our environment. I wanted to talk about this issue, particularly.

Secondly, as I stated, I will make two statements on two different items. I would like to thank you all, all the new and veteran Members of the Legislative Assembly. I have worked with you very closely. Although it gets very stressful at times during our meetings, I think we have learned to work well together. I would like to thank the staff members of the Legislative Assembly for having helped us out in the long four years. I wish you the best in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Pudluk. As the dean of the Assembly, when you said you were going to make two statements under Members' statements, I was going to make reference to the rules with regard to a Member only making one statement, but the statement that you made on the environment and pollution was part of the issue too, just as baseball and football are part of sports.

---Laughter

So, I don't think you were out of order in this case.

---Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 654-12(7): Alberta Company Hired To Assist DC-4 Fire Crews

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell regarding Alberta companies contracted to assist DC-4 fire crews. Foulger Aviation Services and Ken Harvey and Associates were hired to work exclusively with the DC-4 crews and related support Bird Dog aircraft. Air Spray 1967 Limited of Alberta provided supplementary training to one of the Bird Dog pilots only. In the training flights, Air Spray deemed the Bird Dog pilot to be a well-prepared and above-average pilot who would qualify as an entry-level Bird Dog pilot with Air Spray. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Are there further returns? Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms Cournoyea, item 4, returns to oral questions.

Further Return To Question 563-12(7): Aircraft Services Used In Fighting Sahtu Forest Fire

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my apologies. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell on June 9th regarding the aircraft services used in fighting the Sahtu forest fire.

Mr. Speaker, depending on the smoke, wind and other conditions, the following resources were used to suppress the forest fire near Fort Norman and Norman Wells: four CL-215s, one DC-4, up to five helicopters, nine caterpillar tractors, nine fire crews and up to 40 extra firefighters. Mr. Speaker, in our opinion, this was the maximum number of resources we could safely deploy on this fire at one time. At one point, when conditions allowed aircraft to fly, we were circling about 3,000 feet above the fire. We watched as the five air tankers dropped a load on the fire every three minutes, helicopters moved men and equipment

back and forth, and crews and caterpillars worked on the ground. This is a tremendous amount of activity to coordinate under difficult and dangerous conditions and I supported the decision not to bring in more resources.

Since the forest fire risk was extreme in other parts of the territories, we also needed to keep some resources in these areas. Fire crews were not moved out of those areas and one

Page 1532

DC-4 remained in Hay River. As well, we issued a request for two CL-215s under the mutual aid resources sharing agreement. Since Quebec's were not available, Newfoundland agreed to provide the air tankers and they arrived in Fort Smith on June 11th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 539-12(7): Problems In Contacting Maintenance Enforcement Officers

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, thank you. This is in response to a question by Mrs. Marie-Jewell, asked on June 7th regarding problems with contacting maintenance enforcement officers. There's a very heavy workload handled in that program by only three staff members. The program receives a large volume of phone calls daily, which are being handled by the staff throughout the day. Although handling phone calls as they come in is important, it is also important for the staff to devote a good deal of time to the enforcement of files. It is difficult to work on enforcement while constantly taking phone calls.

The administrator of the program decided to conduct a pilot project to see if efficiency could be increased by directing the phone calls to an answering machine during the day and regularly collecting messages and returning phone calls. However, there have been several complaints from members of the public about the phones being connected to answering machines, so the pilot project has been discontinued. Effective immediately, phones will be answered from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon each workday and will be connected to the answering machine from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm each workday. Since the answering machine will still be used for partial days, the toll-free number will be discontinued. A new toll-reversal number will be

available for people to call long distance and the charges for these calls will be automatically billed to the program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 664-12(7): Date Employees Hired To Replace Dismissed Bird Dog Officers

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell on June 21, 1995, regarding the date employees were hired to replace dismissed Bird Dog officers.

Mr. Speaker, only one employee has been hired to replace the dismissed air attack officer and assistant manager of air operations. Mr. Ernie Campeau was hired as a casual air attack officer from June 19, 1995 to August 25, 1995. Mr. Campeau recently retired from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources where he was a regional air coordinator. He has been involved in air attack activities since the 1970s and has also prepared Ontario's air attack manual.

Over the years, he has bird dogged many different tanker types including CL-215s, heavy land-based, Cansos, Avengers and others. Mr. Campeau comes highly recommended by the Ontario government because of his extensive experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Are there further returns? Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Dent.

---Applause

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a couple of people who have given me an awful lot of political guidance over the years, along with guidance in other things, I must admit. My parents are in the gallery this morning: Doctor and Mrs. Dent. They were accompanied by my wife and young son but my wife had to take Tyler out of the

gallery before he was thrown out for creating a disturbance.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. I can see now why Mr. Dent looks pretty good in this House.

---Laughter

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would also like to recognize three seniors sitting in the gallery. I don't know if they are from Yellowknife or not, but welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 674-12(7): Review Of Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance advised the House that if Canada unilaterally cuts the non-insured health benefits for aboriginal people, it would affect services in the NWT. He also advised that the Minister of Health and Social Services is corresponding with the federal Minister regarding the current review of the NIHB program. Since two options the feds are considering would limit benefits to on-reserve Status Indians or on-reserve Indians on welfare, and either would be disastrous for us in the NWT, will the Minister commit to not only corresponding with Diane Marleau but to meet with her in person to discuss the issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question 674-12(7): Review Of Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, the meeting is being arranged. It is being set as soon as we can find an appropriate time for Ms. Marleau. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Page 1533

Supplementary To Question 674-12(7): Review Of Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance of this issue and the special relationship of aboriginal people with the federal government, will the Minister commit to keeping aboriginal groups informed and encourage their involvement in the federal review which is taking place right now?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 674-12(7): Review Of Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I can answer that in the affirmative. It has been because of the Department of Health and Social Services, from the time the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken over the responsibility of the management of health, that the aboriginal organizations have been informed on a continual basis on what we are doing and what our plans are. They are also informed of any recent information that we receive.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

Question 675-12(7): High Cost Of Infant Formulas In Eastern Arctic

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago, through a Member's statement, I brought up an issue regarding some formula for infants. For ladies who are single and are bringing up their family or for families that don't have a regular income...Mr. Speaker, I made a Member's statement regarding infant formula and the high cost of having to acquire

infant formula. A lot of mothers don't choose to breastfeed. My question is to the Minister of Finance. I apologize for not directing my question to a Minister before hand. However, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Can he give me a response as to what could be done regarding this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 675-12(7): High Cost Of Infant Formulas In Eastern Arctic

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if there is a problem in this regard, I would suggest that those mothers, if they are unable to provide that formula to the baby, should see Social Services. Mr. Speaker, that probably is not the long-term answer to this particular problem. I think we see, across the Arctic, the price of food is outrageous in some of the communities. We recognize that the high prices are extremely difficult for people who are not on a fixed income or are young single mothers. In the interim, if we could direct those people to see Social Services to get

some assistance, I am sure they will look at a longer term strategy in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 676-12(7): MACA Minister's Commitment To Visit North Slave Constituency

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs indicated that he would be planning a visit to my constituency; the constituency of North Slave. I wonder if the Minister is still committed to going to North Slave? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 676-12(7): MACA Minister's Commitment To Visit North Slave Constituency

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 676-12(7): MACA
Minister's Commitment To Visit North Slave
Constituency

MR. ZOE:

Can I ask the Minister if he would be able to do this
tour as soon as possible? As you are well aware, Mr.
Speaker, the writ will be issued at the end of August.
Could it be early July? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 676-12(7): MACA
Minister's Commitment To Visit North Slave
Constituency

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been
planning a tour of Mr. Zoe's constituency and a
number of others right after the end of this session.
The tentative plan is to undertake that trip next week,
possibly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal
Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. On
June 13th, the Minister stated that neither of the two
people laid off by the Department of Justice from the
legal interpreting program were interpreters. It was
the Department of Justice that was responsible for
these layoffs. Is the Minister of Education, Culture
and Employment aware that one of the people laid off
was a certified legal interpreter/translator who speaks
Dogrib, who has interpreted regularly for the courts in
the last few years and that she was the only
terminologist

Page 1534

responsible for collecting, documenting, verifying and
distributing legal terms for all the Dene languages and
in Cree? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs
From Legal Interpreting Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I want to indicate to
the honourable Member is what I said before; the
work that was being done primarily by these
individuals was a matter of terminology development.
We have other terminologists who were in the
government and we needed to put together a group
who dealt with terminology. I did not indicate that
these individuals did not interpret, I said their prime
responsibility was terminology development. We had
a number of other departments involved and we
needed to coordinate our approach to terminology
development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 677-12(7): Employee
Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister also stated, at
that time, that the development of legal and medical
terminology for Dene languages and in Cree would go
back to the language bureau in an effort to
consolidate these activities under one department.
The Minister must be aware that the language bureau
has received a \$294,000 cut in funding under the
Canada/NWT language agreement in 1995-96, more
than a 50 per cent reduction in their funding under
vote 4; and that other departments, boards and
agencies of the GNWT, as well as other groups, have
expressed concern that they cannot obtain services
from the language bureau because the interpreters
and translators are usually busy with other
assignments. The Minister must also be aware that
the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages in 1985
recommended that specialized medical and legal
interpreter/translator training be developed because

the language bureau had not been able to devote adequate time to training and terminology development in these specialized areas. I would like to ask the Minister were the language bureau's Dene interpreter/translators consulted on whether or not they would be able to handle these additional duties which originally rested with them, but which were transferred to the departments of Justice and Health after the task force made its recommendation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the information of the Member again, there are departments in which terminologists are located. There has been no indication on my part or the government's to remove the development of terminology for aboriginal languages. The suggestion being made is that, somehow, the responsibility is going to rest with the existing interpreter/translators. But there has to be a working relationship developed between the terminologists and the interpreter/translators. If there is no relationship between the people involved in translating in the communities and another group is developing terminology of which they have no knowledge, then what is the purpose of developing new terminology? It is clear that needs to be done, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you. I have a question, again, for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The question is, who will be responsible for the legal and medical terminology development in Cree, since the Language Bureau does not employ any Cree interpreter/translators? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. It's a new question, but nonetheless, I would like to indicate to the honourable Member that if there's a requirement for an individual, we will address that matter when the request is made.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Antoine.

Supplementary To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on the same issue of language transfer. I would like to ask the Minister, why wasn't the responsibility for Inuktitut legal and medical terminology development also transferred back to the Language Bureau if the aim was to consolidate these activities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 677-12(7): Employee Layoffs From Legal Interpreting Program

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for the advice. We'll take the suggestion and consider transferring the responsibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Pudlat.

Question 678-12(7): Infrastructure And Communication Concerns In Sanikiluaq

MR. PUDLAT:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will direct this question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In my constituency, the community of Sanikiluaq is getting larger and larger. I know the school board has changed their responsibility for that region, and it's very difficult in terms of transportation and communication. There's also a lake in between the school and the community. At this time, I know it's not possible to make arrangements for the planning

of municipal structures for school services for that community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 678-12(7): Infrastructure And Communication Concerns In Sanikiluaq

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look into the concern that the honourable Member is raising.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 679-12(7): Medical Travel Costs For Seniors

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question I would like to direct to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I have been approached by some seniors who are quite concerned about a number of initiatives being put forward by the government, at least they have the impression they are new initiatives. In this case, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Health. I would like to ask whether or not seniors are being required to pay for part or all medical travel to southern facilities, where in the past they were not required to pay?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Cournoyea.

Return To Question 679-12(7): Medical Travel Costs For Seniors

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I have recently received a series of questions from seniors on this matter. There are a number of issues they have raised and want clarification on, but I have not been able to look at all the issues they've identified or to get an analysis of the impact of the changes we are making on seniors. We're presently working on that and I will be in a better situation to answer, once I've made the

analysis on the impacts, if there are any. Mr. Speaker, there are some changes that have been made and we will try to address the number of issues the seniors have presented. Therefore, I'm not in a position to answer in detail whether all the issues are legitimate and to what extent there will be impacts on seniors, but I will make a commitment to deal with it as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Whitford.

Supplementary To Question 679-12(7): Medical Travel Costs For Seniors

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this concern is not only with the Department of Health and Social Services, but there are also concerns from seniors regarding departments such as Transportation and Municipal and Community Affairs where there are a numbers of different programs now being assessed fees. I would like to ask the Minister if she would assure this House that all the government initiatives that deal with seniors will be conveyed to seniors before they are surprised at the ticket booths and government offices they have to deal with. Could she assure that there will be some communication before they end up experiencing these initiatives first hand?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Cournoyea.

Further Return To Question 679-12(7): Medical Travel Costs For Seniors

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I've made a commitment to the seniors and I will make a commitment to this House that we will move on the matter as quickly as possible to ensure that when changes are made, communications get out early. I can make that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 680-12(7): Delay In Response From Labour Standards Division

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on June 6th when I asked the Minister of Safety and Public Services about why it was taking so long for a constituent's complaint to be dealt with by the labour services people, the Minister advised that he would look into the problem and get back to us. I was wondering if the Minister has a reply yet to that question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 680-12(7): Delay In Response From Labour Standards Division

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that, in general, labour standards disputes take various lengths of time to resolve. Claims require a certain amount of communication between both the employer and employee, a process which can be more complicated if either or both the employee and employer reside outside of the Northwest Territories. The length of time for investigation and resolution is also determined by their complexity and, therefore, it is difficult to determine whether or not a matter will be resolved in a timely fashion or will take an extended period of time to address and resolve.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 680-12(7): Delay In Response From Labour Standards Division

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The main problem that I brought up on June 6th was that a complaint had not even been actioned. The first steps have not been taken in the complaint for over six months. In fact, it appeared that there were some complaints that were almost a year old, and the investigation into the complaint had not even started. So the question was not about the length of time it takes to resolve an issue once the information is being sought; the concern that was being expressed, Mr. Speaker, was that it was taking too long to even get started on it. Can the Minister advise us if we have been able to deal with the delay in getting started on investigations?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 680-12(7): Delay In Response From Labour Standards Division

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will try to resolve that matter, so we can bring to a conclusion, or at least bring about the investigation into the claims in a much more timely fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 681-12(7): Update On Bird Dog Officer's Safety Concerns

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Safety and Public Services. It concerns the air attack officers who have booked off sick. I understand there is an investigation under way concerning this dispute. I hope it isn't a dispute, I hope it is simply a misunderstanding. I would like an update on this investigation by his department into these concerns.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Nerysoo.

Return To Question 681-12(7): Update On Bird Dog Officer's Safety Concerns

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise the House that on June 16, 1995, the chief safety officer wrote to Mr. Bob Robertson of the Union of Northern Workers to confirm that the refusal to work by air attack officers on Thursday, June 15, 1995, could not be upheld as constituting a legitimate right to refuse in the face of unusual danger. This ruling is on the air attack officers' refusal to attend the orientation session on June 15, 1995 and is separate from the original right to refuse, which is still the subject of an ongoing investigation. A large number of witnesses have been interviewed and more witnesses will be interviewed today. I can advise the Member that the chief safety officer is hopeful that he can conclude the

investigation by June 30, 1995. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 682-12(7): Translation Of Education Act Into Dene Languages

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, on March 30, 1995, the Education Act, which we are currently dealing with in committee of the whole, was tabled in English and French. I understand that it was translated into Inuktitut, although this did take a few weeks which, I understand, was of some concern to the Inuit communities. These versions of the bill were paid for by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister please explain what resources were made available to Dene/Metis communities to do the interpretation or translation of the bill in preparation for the Standing Committee on Legislation consultations, since apparently they received the English and French versions only? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know the details of that, so I will have to take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question 683-12(7): Status Of DC-4s Used In Fighting Forest Fires

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for fire suppression. We have heard a lot of controversy dealing with the DC-4s in forest firefighting. I would like to ask the Minister if these DC-4s are flying. Are they fighting any fires with them?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for forest fire management, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 683-12(7): Status Of DC-4s Used In Fighting Forest Fires

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend in the Fort Good Hope area, a DC-4 did action a fire and it worked very well, along with two Bird Dog pilots to bird dog a DC-4 into the fire in Fort Good Hope. It worked out quite well. We have been lucky all week. We have had cool conditions and rain, so we haven't had many fires. The DC-4s are able and willing, along with the pilots, to work and we will call on them when needed. They were used on the Fort Good Hope fire. They hit the head of that fire; hit their target right on. Then the ground crew came in behind them from Fort Good Hope and put that fire out in very short order. So the procedures we have in place to fight fires are working quite well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Thompson.

Question 684-12(7): Sale Of Staff Housing To GNWT Employees

MRS. THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be directing this question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. In smaller communities, the government staff want to buy the government staff houses. Can government staff buy staff houses in small communities up to this day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 684-12(7): Sale Of Staff Housing To GNWT Employees

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In every small community or every community that has staff housing, we do an inventory of that housing and work with other departments to see what they need to keep on stock for staff housing.

Those houses that become surplus will be available, but we do every community individually and work with the community as well as the local MLA to assist in selling those units. I will restate that they have to be surplus units. We can't sell off units we need for teachers, et cetera, in that community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 685-12(7): Criteria For Acquiring NWT Birth Certificate

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Safety and Public Services about what was needed in order to get a birth certificate. He took the question as notice and since it may be our last day, I was wondering if the Minister could respond to that question today.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 685-12(7): Criteria For Acquiring NWT Birth Certificate

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to advise the honourable Member, the criteria that is used for acquiring NWT birth certificates when a person is born in the Northwest Territories and applies for a birth certificate, is they must fill out an application for certificate of birth, which can be obtained by the vital statistics branch.

In Yellowknife, for a fee of \$10, vital statistics requires that the applicant provide the following information: their full name; their date of birth; the place of birth; their father's surname; and, their mother's maiden name. After the application is filled out, vital statistics search their records to ensure that information on the application is the same as what they have on file. If any of the information is inaccurate, vital statistics requests that the applicant either provide the correct information or provide another document, such as a baptismal certificate or an immunization card. Vital statistics does not ask for any personal identification from the applicant to process their application

because birth certificates are recognized as being an essential document for citizens of Canada. This practice is consistent with other provincial jurisdictions which accept applications for birth certificates by mail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 685-12(7): Criteria For Acquiring NWT Birth Certificate

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, since you can use a birth certificate to get a social insurance number, and since a social insurance number and birth certificate could then be used to obtain a passport, and in spite of the fact that other jurisdictions seem not to require personal identification, has this government considered the need for more security to ensure we're not making it easy for the criminal element to fraudulently obtain passports?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Nerysoo.

Further Return To Question 685-12(7): Criteria For Acquiring NWT Birth Certificate

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly not our intention to make it much easier. It was to ensure that there was simplicity in the process. I take note of the concern raised by the honourable Member, and will try to ensure...At least, I will discuss the matter with the department and ensure that we make the process not only simple for the communities, but also ensure that there are some considerations for security when filling out the applications.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 686-12(7): Duties Of Legal Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. It's with regard to the duties of the legal interpreting program. I understand that the training component of legal interpreting has been transferred to the colleges, and the terminology department has been transferred back to the language bureau. Who is responsible for any remaining duties of the legal interpreting program in the Department of Justice, what are their duties and how are these individuals funded? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 686-12(7): Duties Of Legal Interpreting Program

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, Bud Harvey, director of court services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 686-12(7): Duties Of Legal Interpreting Program

MR. ANTOINE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary to the Minister of Justice. I would like to ask the Minister what their duties are and how they're funded. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question 687-12(7): Improvements To Banking Services In NWT

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had hoped that Mr. Todd would be in the House because I had indicated earlier on that I was interested in asking questions about co-ops, but I'll ask a related question to the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance about a related subject, and the subject is this, Mr. Speaker. For many years now we've recognized that throughout the Northwest Territories the co-op

Page 1538

has acted as a bank, very informally. Many Members here, I know, are aware of this. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance what progress has our government made in trying to improve banking services in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, to remind the Members, if a Member isn't in the House, not to mention that fact. Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard.

Return To Question 687-12(7): Improvements To Banking Services In NWT

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable progress made over the last couple of years. We've seen more automated teller machines in the larger communities. We've seen arrangements made between certain banks and certain stores in the Northwest Territories with regard to debit cards. A major bank is moving into two more communities in the Northwest Territories: the Royal Bank is going into Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. There has been some progress made with regard to putting people who are dealing with Mr. Morin's Housing Corporation and require bank assistance, bank mortgaging, in contact with banks. We've seen good progress made in those areas.

Of course, I think Mr. Todd is actively looking right now at the co-op application they have in for assistance for a credit union. So I think there's not been as much as we would have liked, but certainly some steady progress, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Lewis.

Supplementary To Question 687-12(7): Improvements To Banking Services In NWT

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the co-ops have acted as the informal banks for many people in the Northwest Territories, for close to 30 years, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if in fact he would tell us in what way attempts have been made to formalize something which has really, up to this date, only been an informal arrangement whereby a range of banking services are being provided by the cooperative movement?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Pollard.

Further Return To Question 687-12(7):
Improvements To Banking Services In NWT

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think as most Members know, the co-op movement in the Northwest Territories, for many years, has wanted to start up a credit union in the Northwest Territories. They indicated originally that they had some seed money, they had \$1 million that they wanted to put into that particular venture, and they required some \$5 million or \$6 million from us, money that we didn't have. We made arrangements for the co-op to meet with the federal Minister. I can't recall the Minister's title right now, Mr. Speaker, but there meetings with the federal government. The federal government was not really keen on the idea, they were expressing lack of funds as well. But the co-op kept going and kept pushing and kept meeting and so on. The latest information I have is that Mr. Todd is actively working with

them right now and believes that it may come to a good resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 688-12(7): Funding For Medical Interpreting Services

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. This is with regard to the medical interpreter/translator program. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, on June 13th, said that the responsibility for the medical terminology development and medical

interpreter/translator training was being transferred to Education, Culture and Employment. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services please confirm that the vote 4 Canadian heritage funding, which was previously designated for health boards to do medical interpreter/translator training, will now be given to the colleges? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA:

Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 33-12(7): Resolutions Of The Nunavut Leaders' Summit On Education And Training

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, Return to Written Question 33-12(7), asked by Ms. Mike to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment concerning Nunavut leaders' summit on education and training resolutions.

I am pleased to respond to the written questions asked by Ms. Mike on June 15, 1995.

Further to the Nunavut leaders' summit in Gjoa Haven on January 19 to 21, 1995, could the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment please advise this House of any progress to date regarding:

1. A resolution requesting that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment review the adequacy of the present student financial assistance program for Inuit students:

The student financial assistance program is currently under review to examine all aspects of the program and will be completed by the fall of 1995.

2. A resolution recommending that the Minister collaborate with the Nunavut Implementation Training Commission and Arctic College to review the feasibility of relocating

Page 1539

the Sivuniksavut program to Nunavut and delivering it through Arctic College:

Preliminary discussions on this matter have been held by officials of the commission and the Nunavut Implementation Training Committee, Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. While all parties see value in the operation of a "transition program" which prepared high school leavers for post-secondary education, training or employment, there does not appear to be consensus regarding moving the program from Ottawa to Nunavut. We intend to continue to pursue the transfer of the program to Nunavut and to encourage delivery of the program through Nunavut Arctic College.

3. A resolution recommending that the Minister implement new strategies and programs to achieve greater success in graduating grade 12 students in Nunavut:

Over the past few years, we have increased access to high school courses by extending grades into additional Nunavut communities. During 1994-95, grade 12 was offered in 10 communities in Nunavut and it will be offered in 13 Nunavut communities beginning this fall. The 1993-94 graduation rates show that 66 out of 128 students enrolled in high school programs across Nunavut graduated from grade 12. The department expects a continued increase in the graduation rates of students from Nunavut as more communities in Nunavut offer high school programs.

4. A resolution recommending that the Minister implement a strategy to ensure adult training programs meet the needs of Nunavut:

Nunavut Arctic College has now been established and is addressing training needs for the establishment of Nunavut. Community consultation has helped shape the college's plans to provide programs and services to meet these training needs. As well, planning and coordination to address these needs is continuing between organizations involved in adult training in Nunavut including: Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Nunavut Implementation Training Commission, and

the Nunavut Implementation Commission. The GNWT is also currently involved in extensive analysis to assess the need for training and development of a public service in Nunavut.

5. Would the Minister indicate whether a detailed response to Nunavut leaders on each of the recommendations and their components can be expected in the near future?

The recommendations are being addressed. Some items such as the review of student financial assistance have received immediate attention. Others, which have long-term implications, require additional consideration prior to the development of a final action plan.

Return To Written Question 34-12(7): Person Years To Combat Forest Fires

Return to Written Question 34-12(7), asked by Mrs. Marie-Jewell to the Minister responsible for forest fire management concerning person years to combat forest fires.

The number of seasonal, extra firefighters and contract crew members used in 1994-95 and, to date, in 1995-96 to attack forest fires are:

1994-95: seasonal GNWT staff, 180; casual GNWT staff, 69; extra firefighters, 793; and, contract crew members, 85.

1995-96, as of June 20, 1995: seasonal GNWT staff, 146; casual GNWT staff, 54; extra firefighters, 99; and, contract crew members, 105.

The 1995-96 numbers will increase over the forest fire season. These numbers do not include indeterminate supervisory or administrative staff.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 8, returns to written questions. We'll take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 9: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Mr. Dent's Reply

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to clear something up right off the bat. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that this is not my swan song...

---Applause

...and that my constituents will see fit to return me to this House this fall. With that, Mr. Speaker, given the confusion about whether Mr. Lewis said he would be seeking re-election this October, I would very clearly state, right at the beginning, that I will be seeking re-election.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

MR. DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I have some good news for my colleagues; I won't try to break any records on length of replies to opening address.

---Applause

This being the first Assembly for me, I won't spend a lot of time looking back. I think that most of my comments will be aimed at the future and things I think the current government needs to try to conclude before the election this fall and goals we need to set for the next Legislative Assembly.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to remember that over the past three and a half years, we did get through a lot of legislation. That is something which has sometimes been forgotten. By my count, over 130 bills have been given third reading by the 12th Assembly.

Page 1540

---Applause

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame, shame.

MR. DENT:

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, some are more notable than others, but there has been a lot of important legislation that we have considered and passed in this House. One that I think was particularly important was the Deficit Elimination Act. Mr. Speaker, knowing that the revenue from Canada, coming to the Northwest Territories, is being cut -- the figures we

have heard so far are at least \$58 million next year and perhaps more and we are still not sure how much more in future years -- the fiscal pressures are mounting. The future is certainly less certain. I think it is important that we try to conclude the formula financing deal with the federal government. So I urge the current government to work diligently towards resolving that. I would like to see the Minister of Finance be able to announce before the election that he has, in fact, concluded a deal with Canada, which will provide some certainty. We are so dependent on that grant from Canada that we can't have any fiscal certainty without having an idea of what we can expect in future years.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we plan for cuts. We don't have much flexibility because the huge majority of our funding does come from the federal government. So we must be prepared to avoid massive and sudden program cuts, staff cuts or, especially because of the Deficit Elimination Act, deficits. The government should continue the budget process; don't hold back as was done before the last election.

Mr. Speaker, a new government coming in will undoubtedly have different priorities, but there just isn't time after the election to start fresh on a process. It is essential that our fiscal plan be on track for dealing with the expected and even unexpected reduction in financing next year.

It is also important that the groundwork is being done in case, in subsequent years, we require further cuts. The new government may very quickly need to be able to consider options and set priorities for future years. Without having that information on hand, they won't be able to get into it.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we have been lucky this far to be able to avoid the huge cuts to both programs and staff that other jurisdictions have faced. However, without good information well ahead of time, the next government may not be so lucky. It is important that we start preparing information, so that political decisions can be based on good information and not just gut feeling.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important that we start planning now on how to deal with job security concerns of our staff. Even if we can avoid fiscally-driven program cuts, which result in staff cuts, we face the reality of division which has to mean fewer jobs in the west. It is time now to start planning to look after our employees through retraining,

reallocation of jobs and so on. We have to make sure that we are providing for the private sector, so they can develop more jobs. That includes the mining sector. Mr. Speaker, I don't need to repeat the comments from my Member's statement of June 19th, but I think it is important to remember that we can respect the environment while encouraging mining, so we get the jobs for northerners. It is important to also state that getting a northern accord would mean, for sure, that benefits could accrue to northerners. So it is important we keep working towards that.

As I said yesterday in my Member's statement, we must be supportive of small business as well. We need small businesses to create jobs. But as the Standing Committee on Finance has said, Mr. Speaker, we need a balance. We need a balance between economic development and dealing with social concerns. One can be supportive of business and still have a social conscience.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, that we need to ensure that we are dealing with is concerns about job security and the affirmative action policy. Mr. Speaker, the review which is under way right now is much needed. I hope that the current review really looks for models that work.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

MR. DENT:

Our current policy, Mr. Speaker, is a total failure, both for aboriginal people and for non-aboriginal people. As Mr. Whitford pointed out yesterday, we have only increased by three per cent, the numbers of aboriginal employees in this government over the past five or six years. In the process, we have created serious racial tensions.

Mr. Speaker, the situation for summer student jobs last spring was boiling over with tensions which had been building for several years. Mr. Speaker, every single person with whom I have discussed this issue agrees; the ethnic make-up of the civil service should reflect that of our population. Mr. Speaker, no one I have spoken to disagrees with that. It doesn't now and, Mr. Speaker, that is shameful. But, Mr. Speaker, the current policy is not addressing the problem. I have to confess, Mr. Speaker, I don't know the answer. That is why I say I sincerely hope that the current review can produce an innovative solution. I will contribute one observation though, the one area

in which we seem to have had some success was when we actively targeted one specific area. I am talking about our success in increasing the numbers of aboriginal teachers in the north. Perhaps the success seen in more narrow targeting provides some clues to a new approach that we need to take a look at.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed,

MR. DENT:

Mr. Speaker, one of the highlights for me over the past three and a half years was in chairing the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. This provided an important opportunity for people from all across the north to get their message to this Legislature about how to improve our system of health and social services.

Mr. Speaker, the public consultation was extensive and, I think, led to some important recommendations. I have been heartened by the government response to the special committee reports to date, although there is a long way to go. Initiatives like the community wellness strategy are particularly welcome.

Mr. Speaker, one area I think we need to put a lot more emphasis on in health and social services -- not only there, but in areas like education and employment initiatives as well -- is

Page 1541

early intervention. Mr. Speaker, I think that our catch phrase should be "intervene earlier and more often."

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, you need to have a balance between economic initiatives and social concerns. Mr. Speaker, there are economic reasons for early intervention. Recently, a comprehensive study in California, which is not known as a particularly liberal state when it comes to finances, demonstrated that every one dollar spent on drug and alcohol treatment resulted in a seven-dollar savings. Mr. Speaker, it takes a heavy investment up front to save big money later on jail, welfare and medical costs.

Mr. Speaker, the evidence is clear, though, that intervening early works but only if it is done often. It can't be a one-time effort. It must be part of a comprehensive, long-term strategy. There are lots of

examples which have been proven to work and I say we don't need to reinvent the process. I say we should look at the models out there, find one that fits closest to our circumstances up here and adopt it.

I would liken my analogy, Mr. Speaker, to computer software. When you're considering computer software, you have two choices: to have your own programs custom-written for you; or, to buy programs off the shelf. My experience is that when software is custom written, it is generally very expensive compared to the off-the-shelf model and it will tend to have bugs, which need to be worked out over time and wind up costing you a lot more in money.

Mr. Speaker, whether in health, social services, education or income reform, we need to make sure we don't just go part of the way, which we've done too often in the past. We must make sure we have a good, comprehensive plan, including follow-up, and then follow it through. A program designed to effect social change must have a follow-up component to be successful or, too often, the change is only short-term. I think, Mr. Speaker, we have all sorts of examples of those in the north and we simply cannot afford programs that are not effective in the long run any longer.

Mr. Speaker, as a number of Members have noticed, after fiscal considerations in the next Legislature, division will likely be the major focus for Members of the 13th Assembly. The new Assembly must, right off the bat, find some way to deal with the issue so that our whole process doesn't fall apart in acrimony and discord. Whether through a committee, such as the Special Joint Committee on Division, or some other mechanism, an effective way must be found. We must find some way to better inform and involve all northerners -- and I repeat all northerners -- not just the aboriginal leaders, in the process. That might mean open or public meetings, maybe it means newsletters, whatever. Right now, people feel completely left out of the process. Lack of information leads to fear about where we may be headed. The next Legislature must deal with this problem quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the next area I would like to address is constitutional development in the west. I would like to go on record as strongly supporting the CDSC process. I believe that we in the west can come to agreement on the shape of our government before 1999. It won't be easy, and the federal government is making it more difficult on two fronts: their refusal to fund and support adequately the CDSC process; and

the slow pace of progress in negotiating self-government with aboriginal groups. Mr. Speaker, they may, in fact, be taking advantage of the situation to strengthen federal control over the north. If the CDSC process fails because of inadequate funding, the federal government can take advantage of the divisions among northerners to arbitrarily cut funding further. Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Ballantyne has noted, the federal government may not have the money to live up to the expectations they have created in the north and may not be willing to say so right now.

A similar situation would develop, Mr. Speaker, if the process falls apart because the federal government fails to conclude self-government negotiations. Northerners must be wary of a divide-and-conquer scenario, which is what the federal government appears to be following. It is difficult to comprehend how the federal government can expect that we would be able to come to an agreement on what the western government would look like after division until there is some certainty to what self-government means. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope the federal government will move quickly to the table to resolve that issue. In the meantime, we in the west must ensure we rally to support the CDSC as the tool to share information and strategy for dealing with federal intransigence.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I wouldn't try for any records and make this too long, and there are probably some in the House who think I've already done just that. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I was honoured to have been selected to be the first representative of the constituency of Yellowknife Frame Lake.

---Applause

The past few years have never been dull. I've enjoyed the work, especially on those occasions when I've been able to help a constituent solve a problem. I've learned a lot and have enjoyed working with the veterans and the new Members of this House. I would like to thank Mr. Hamilton and the Legislative Assembly staff for all their help and admit that much was needed during my period as a rookie.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend special thanks to my wife, Eileen, for putting up for the many evenings and weekends I've had to be away from home. It's been particularly demanding this past year, with the arrival of our new son, Tyler, and I appreciate all she's had to do to keep the family home going. Mr. Speaker, I can thank many, many more people. But the danger in doing that is I'd probably miss

somebody so, rather than listing a bunch of people off by name, I would just like to say a general thank you to those in my constituency and those in this government who have helped me over the past three and a half years to do the best I could for my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to wish those Members who are retiring best wishes in their future endeavours and to those running again, I hope to see you again next fall in this Chamber down here with the gladiators and not up above with the spectators. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. I also wish you the best and good luck. Perhaps you will get MVP for rookie of the year.

Page 1542

---Laughter

Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Whitford.

Mr. Whitford's Reply

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. I asked several of my constituents, in a humorous fashion, if I should go for the record that my esteemed colleague from Fort Smith has established, and I was told soundly and roundly, "Don't you dare." So, I don't dare.

---Laughter

I'm just going to say a few words, Mr. Speaker. Time has gone by since the opening address and I think a lot of us have forgotten what was really said in it, so I can't really reply specifically to the exact words. However, there are a few items that I've wanted to comment on in the House over the past little while but, unfortunately, time did not quite allow it. So, I'll touch on a few.

Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife South is a very large constituency by the standards set in the territories for ridings. I think the rule of thumb is 2,500 people. Just recently, I produced a newsletter and we distributed some 3,200 newsletters to the households, all occupied, although there are a number in the process of being constructed and we didn't include those. So,

it is safe to say that we're looking at nearly 3,500 households in my riding and that is about 8,000 people plus. I don't want to refer to it, as people do, in terms of the occupancy of football fields, but I think if you put a few ridings from the southern part of the territories together, they would just about be equivalent to the number of people in my riding. I think you can take Tu Nedhe, Hay River, Thebacha and, with all due respect, the Deh Cho, and it would equal about the same number of people.

I think one of the disappointments that I had as a result of this, although I'm proud to be the representative of all these good people -- and it's a very diversified constituency, with every ethnic group, practically, in the world represented and every strata of our economy, from miners, contractors, carpenters, business people, professionals and civil servants -- proud to be their representative.

But we had, at some point in time, tried to readjust the boundaries in the city of Yellowknife to distribute them around, and unfortunately, that was one of my disappointments because I was told that we couldn't do this for another few years because we had just adjusted that in the last four years or so.

I don't think the phenomenal growth that the riding has experienced was anticipated by any of us in our wildest expectations in such a short time. I think the population of the city of Yellowknife has grown to somewhere in the neighbourhood of 18,000 persons at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, and something like that sometimes requires action that may be constricted by laws and things that we do have in place; for good reasons of course. But it would have been nice to have been able to have some redistribution there to equalize it.

Nonetheless, I am very pleased and proud to have represented that large constituency and look forward to the challenge in the 13th Assembly as well.

Mr. Speaker, the population in the Northwest Territories has grown tremendously since the 1940s. It has doubled, I am sure, with the emergence of the north taking its proper place in the Canadian economy and political scene. We are now recognized not only by the people of the provinces but all of Canada for what we are, what we do and how we do things.

We have a fairly unique form of government. Its uniqueness has recently been challenged and no doubt will continue to be challenged, and we will deal with that as time goes by.

Recognition of our uniqueness comes from other countries as well. We have ambassadors and consulates coming to our Legislative Assembly and looking at the way we do things.

We are to be very proud. We have grown tremendously in the last 20 years, 25 years, 30 years. We have seen a tremendous growth in our population of northern people. People have come for longer periods of time and settled in to the north. They no longer come for a year or two years, then go away, never to return.

We are having people stay here and they are pioneering areas that, at another point in time, we never thought would see such population growth, and sharing with us their uniqueness as well. They are bringing to the north cultural activities. They are bringing us new foods, new ways of doing things and stuff that northerners are able to evaluate and take the good parts from and use.

We, in turn, give back to those cultures some of our uniqueness of our culture and our language and our ways of life. We share with them all of the resources that we have.

So this is a mutual exchange, and I see this because I have the opportunity to participate in many cultural events here in the city and in my riding. I am very honoured to be accepted by the variety of groups that are here in Yellowknife and across the north, too, to participate in whatever functions they have. It's indeed an honour. I don't just take, though, Mr. Speaker, when I get invited; I put back in to the function or the event something about the north.

Any time an ambassador or a consulate general from some of the embassies that we have across the country comes here to our Assembly, I like to, if I have an opportunity -- and I have had a good number of them -- spend some time talking to them and showing them around the Assembly because what is in this building is, in fact, us. It's the people, the way we live, the way we've done things, the uniqueness of the eight languages interpreted simultaneously, the uniqueness of the fur, the wood that we use, and the sculptures that we have that signify our reverence for the land, the country that we enjoy and the cultures that have evolved. I share that with those foreign ambassadors, and they, in turn, take this away with them to let other people know.

We've emerged in the international scene, as well. Unfortunately, the most recent cases of our

involvement internationally haven't been all that favourable. In dealing with

Page 1543

the fur industry, I was overseas with the honourable Minister of Renewable Resources to try to lobby the Europeans to be able to cut through the emotion that is blocking and blinding their vision of how we live here. We received some success but we have also received a few setbacks, and, unfortunately, the time is drawing very near where this international agreement will impact soundly on us.

We have made every effort in the north to build up our fur industry and continue building it up over the years. Trapping did form the basis of our economy for quite some time, and, to some degree, it still does. But it's being inundated with opinions and a very strong lobby of persons. Perhaps they are in their right to do it, but they lack knowledge of what, in fact, they are saying about northern peoples and how we look at our renewable resources.

I hope that, through the Prime Minister's efforts recently with the G-7 summit and the invitation of the Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl, to look at some of the ways that people do live and their reverence for the land and the animals that they so depend on, that he may take back some of these things and be our ambassador to his own country. Where the Minister of Renewable Resources and I failed to make that little connection that would be so important, maybe Mr. Kohl can do that on our behalf after seeing it first hand.

I know we do get a lot of folk from Europe that come over to North America and the Northwest Territories to marvel at the beauty of our land and use our rivers and stuff like that. I hope, through our efforts here or at least some of the stuff that I do here, that they will take back a message that we are, in fact, very humane and that we do respect the land, the waters, the air, the animals and the vegetation.

Mr. Speaker, while I was overseas last year, I had an opportunity to pay my respects to the Canadian war dead at some of the cemeteries in France and in the Netherlands. I was there for the commemoration of the landing at Normandy by the allies which brought an end to the Second World War a year later. We just recently celebrated overseas in Europe, and particularly in the Netherlands, the Canadian contribution to the end of the Second World War through V-E Day. A good number of Yellowknife and

Northwest Territories people went over to participate in this ceremony.

One of the things that I tried to do before I went over last year was to locate some of the names of the aboriginal people who had fought in the Second World War and failed to return. I was not able to do that. While I was at the cemeteries, although I had hoped there was no one from the north in those cemeteries, I said a prayer on behalf of the souls that were there that had contributed so bravely to our liberty. The records of the northern people who put down their shovels, axes, picks and sledgehammers, hung up their traps, put away their hunting rifles and went off to join the military and put their services forward to serve Canada, is not well known. But we did have a number of aboriginal people who did go. My uncle was one, Mr. Speaker, who was there. He left the trapline and the family, and went overseas for a number of years. He was in the D-Day landing. Thank God he was able to come home safely.

Although I don't know all of the names because they were difficult to track, there were at least 20 from the Northwest Territories who did go. They were persons from the north. My mother had given me some information about the ones from Fort Smith, where I am from. There were five people from that community; Metis, Dene, and non-aboriginal persons who did go and served successfully overseas. Fortunately, they all came home.

We must set aside a special place to commemorate the veterans who did serve on our behalf and during the Second World War. Mr. Speaker, although we were just celebrating V-E Day in Yellowknife with several ceremonies, I hope that later on in the year, this Legislative Assembly will see fit to do its own commemoration and perhaps set aside a place in this building where visitors can come and see the respect we have for our veterans who served us so well.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors of the Northwest Territories are concerned that a number of initiatives being undertaken now by the government are going to impact on them over the next while. It is difficult to predict how much of an impact this would have on our senior citizens, but some of the things they have already noticed such as the increase in fees for licence plates and stickers have gone up from one dollar to around \$30. That isn't a big amount when you say it fast, but to a senior on a fixed income, it is a considerable amount. Some of the things they now enjoy as far as medical services will have some small fees.

All of these things combined add up to a clawback of a very limited amount of dollars they would have. A number of us in the House are aware of that and are concerned with that. We have pleaded with the government to look very carefully at how we do these things. I recognize the fact that they need to raise money in order to carry out some of the services, but it is also important to recognize the valuable contributions that the seniors have put in over the years. They have paid time and again, not only in dollars but physical, cultural and educational ways to our well being over the years. I think it is only fair that the young people shoulder some of the burden that they are now giving to us. Let them enjoy the fruits of their labour, so that in the years they have left to be with us, they will be appreciated for their long-term efforts.

I know that the government is looking at that and I know it is troubling to them to have to do these things, but I ask again that perhaps they take another look at that to see how it does impact. It seems to be small amounts, but it is like grains of sand; each individually isn't that heavy, but pretty soon it becomes quite a load. That load can break the financial back of some seniors on a fixed income.

Some of the happy times we have had here over the years and things we have done have impacted greatly on the territories. Just recently, we had an opportunity to bring forward and put through the Nursing Profession Act. That allows nurses to enjoy the recognition that they so rightfully deserve. It will help northern nurses to get into the nursing profession and help serve people like they want to. The nursing profession in the south is taking a beating right now. They are forced, because of closures of hospitals, to move to the United States, which welcomes them with open arms. Trained nurses are a great asset to the States. It is too bad because here in the north we

Page 1544

still need them. We also want to encourage students to look at that profession as an area that can serve the people in a way that is greatly respected.

I have seen, since the 1950s, the first graduates of the CNA program that used to be taught in Fort Smith by the nursing staff at the hospital, particularly by some nuns who were nurses. They showed tremendous pride on their faces of being able to be among the first of the graduates in their nursing profession. Although there were certified nursing assistants at the time, they had the door open for

something greater that they would not have had an opportunity to obtain because of the great distances the educational facilities at the time were. Many of them -- and I know many of them -- who went on to be registered nurses later on, not only nurses but they became the supervisory staff in our medical facilities. Unfortunately, some of them are getting on, like I am now. They kind of pass on this knowledge and this ambition to continue in this profession onto others. It is good to see that through Arctic College and the hospitals in the territories, we can now open that door a little bit more so that we can keep home some of the professional people we need for our well-being for the next little while. Not only do we save on the dollars that we would have spent in the south by training these people, but we also establish something that we may, in future, be able to sell to the south; that is the training program. Come north to learn how to do these things. We could sell these programs and generate income. This is very positive on the side of our government to look to that in the future as revenue-generating initiatives that we can benefit by.

Mr. Speaker, when we look around at the beautiful days we have been experiencing this year, some of us can always see a little gloom in such beauty. We enjoyed a beautiful summer last year and a mild winter. We had lots of snow and little ice. This year is starting off great. We have had warm temperatures. But the little gloom in the background is the low water. We had a dry summer and a dry fall. Although the snow was abundant this past winter, it didn't contain the moisture it should have. It would have been nice to replenish the water supplies in our lakes and rivers. As a consequence, last year, we ended up having to shoulder an extra cost in order to provide electricity for the Snare distribution system; Yellowknife being the major consumer of that system. We have low water and high water bills, which certainly follow each other.

Mr. Speaker, the beautiful weather that we see and the small amount of run-off in the spring is going to add up to extremely low water. I just heard a report on the radio this morning that said that Great Slave Lake was down to its record low level, and they haven't seen the water this low -- I don't know if I should go out on a limb and say ever before, because I'm sure at some time, it may have lower -- as far as records have been kept. The same as with Prosperous Lake, it has never been this low, since they started keeping records in 1948.

Of course, it's frightening because fall is only four or five months away, and I'm almost 100 per cent sure

that the Power Corporation is going to be putting forward a request for a rate increase that will impact us. We had one last year and ended up paying 11 per cent more. It's only been for a year, but there is every indication that they will be submitting another proposal and we will be asked to shoulder this burden. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's really fair that we, alone, shoulder this. We contribute to the Power Corporation through the rates that we do pay here and it is certainly one area I will be meeting head on to try to head off this possibility. Hopefully, the climate will change and we will end up with more rain next year to avoid this in the future.

There are a few other things that I had hoped to accomplish here, including the recycling of aluminum. When we look around our territories, we can see the numbers of containers that come into the territories on a one-way trip. They are all over the place. I think we could almost make the aluminum can a territorial plant, and that's sad too, because of the amount of value contained in these containers, which, if recycled, would represent a revenue initiative for the government. In a sense, it's certainly a money-maker for the entrepreneurs, but there is no deposit on them, unfortunately. That's sad because if there is no value attached to something, there is no initiative and people probably won't collect them as they should. If there were a deposit of 10 cents a can, people never leave a 10-cent piece on the street; they stoop to pick it up and the same thing applies to a can. I do this all the time; I never see a penny without picking it up. But collecting tin cans could become a business and people have asked that we try to set deposits on aluminum beverage containers so they can be collected and recycled. We do this with bottles, so there is value in it.

Mr. Speaker, I did promise that I wasn't going to go on for a long time; I felt, though, that I should mention those areas. They are not major items, but they are complimentary items that must be mentioned. The time allowed for this Assembly is drawing to a close and I would be derelict in my duty if I didn't make recognition of the veterans, seniors, some of the professionals we have, and to point out some of the facts: that we are seeing greater numbers of people retiring in the territories than ever before; and, that far more people are also staying here longer and raising their families here because they see it as a good place to be. We have lots to offer and they have lots to contribute.

Along with the excitement of seeing a country on the verge of blossoming in both economy and culture, we

have a very challenging four years ahead of us before division of the territories takes place, and an equally challenging time after division, as the two territories settle into a mode of life like nothing they've ever seen before. These are very challenging times. We are being challenged by what the Minister of Finance says about the economy of the territories, a buoyant economy according to the Minister of Economic Development because of mineral potential, diamonds in particular. But, although diamonds, gold, silver, lead, et cetera, are economically viable and we should look at them, we also have a tremendous human resource.

And that human resource can be accommodated in many ways, as the Minister of Renewable Resources tells us, with forests, agriculture, fur, fish, and certainly, tourism. We attract an awful lot of people to see the north and we should be cognizant of the amounts of dollars they put into our economy. We should assist our budding tourist industry here so we can accommodate these people, so they continue to come.

Page 1545

I guess I can say a lot about the types of services we provide for our people that are greatly appreciated and are necessary, because it takes us awhile to catch up to some of the services available to southerners. As we well know, we go to the south to receive medical care and other professional care, but we are bringing a lot of that home through the initiatives of our government. The Department of Health has established programs here and delivered services here that were never available here in the Northwest Territories before because of the small numbers of people. The small numbers of people have since grown and we're seeing the fruits of that, Mr. Speaker, in terms of dollars spent in the north rather than dollars spent in the south.

As Mr. Pollard tells us from time to time, anything we spend in the north is a dollar saved because it, in turn, is spent time and time again here in the north, rather than going south, a one-way trip out. So, we see the value of that, and the value we receive as recipients of these services. There are many programs that people now enjoy here in the medical area. They don't have to go south and it speeds up the healing process and also stops the trauma associated with relocation. We are certainly appreciative of that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to end with a thank you to all of my colleagues for their patience over the four years

that I've been in this House. I've worked hard with them, I hope, to achieve our mutual objectives which benefit not only my constituents but also help theirs. The research staff of our Assembly is second to none, as far as their qualifications are concerned and the effort that they put in to help us present our points of view as clearly and concisely as we would like, if we had the time to do this. To them, I owe a great deal of thanks, and to the support staff who keep all of the wheels of this Assembly moving through some pretty difficult times, under the tutelage of you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hamilton and the assistants to the Clerk.

I certainly appreciate the Hansard staff taking the time to interpret what I say and my meaning, and correcting some of my oversights. I certainly appreciate that.

Of course, I need the support groups that I do have in my constituency that helped me through these last four years to a great extent.

My family have always stood by me in this, and they will continue to encourage me in the future towards continuing this contribution to northern people.

I want to say, again, thank you to the Members of this House for allowing me the honour of being a Minister in this government for a short period of time; far shorter than I would have liked, but I had the honour of being there, and I accepted their comments with respect and I continued to do that after I became an ordinary Member.

The chairmanship and being on the Standing Committee on Legislation was indeed an honour; and, Mr. Speaker, I hope that I did justice to it as you did when you were the chairman.

I do want to say a special thank you to this Assembly for the honour of being on the short list for the Commissioner some time ago. It was indeed a highlight of my life to have been at least considered for that position.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you for allowing me this time to reply to the opening address. I said I wouldn't go on, but I did go on longer than I should have, perhaps, but thank you for your indulgence. I'll look forward to working with all of you back here in November.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. I also wish you the best and good luck. That was a good noon-hour speech. Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Arngna'naaq.

Mr. Arngna'naaq's Reply

HON. SILAS ARNGNA'NAAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments of my honourable colleagues' time today to speak on one of my cornerstones in life, one that I have tried to impress upon people at every opportunity over the past four years, especially those who are young aboriginal people. It appears that it will be the last opportunity in this Assembly until the fall.

This, Mr. Speaker, is education. My motto, in passing this on, has been "the key to the success of our people is education." It is a very simple motto, but it has the most significant meaning in my mind. I hope that by this statement, my colleagues will understand its meaning and will pass it on to their respective people.

I would like to break this expression into segments and go through each segment and explain.

I would like to start at the second segment, which is success. Mr. Speaker, each and every person that I have met has wanted to succeed in one form or another, whether it be to be able to receive social assistance -- which I believe must be the most degrading position to be in -- or to have a few million dollars and change. Mr. Speaker, I say this because most people believe that money is the only form of gratification by today's standards, although there are many other forms of gratification that are just as satisfying.

Succeeding means to fulfil one's dreams. How many of our young people, regardless of race, are going to be able to fulfil those dreams?

The first segment of the expression is the key. As everybody knows, a key will open a whole new world. The new world could be as simple as a new hotel room, which I am sure every Member is familiar with, to a new world, such as that experienced by our ancestors when they crossed the Bering Strait, or for those who came later, such as Eric the Red, Leif Ericsson or Christopher Columbus.

The key opens doors to wonders, to dreams or to the gates of heaven, if you are so inclined. The key has been referred to for centuries as an implement to new

beginnings. All people have had to start anew to become leaders of their times. For all peoples, to start anew has meant change from their usual lifestyles.

Page 1546

The most recent major change occurred with the industrial age. Others just as significant have been the search for new routes to the Asian markets by the Europeans and the search for new worlds by aboriginal peoples of North and South America.

Mr. Speaker, the key means change from our present lifestyle. That change has to be made by our people. The surest and most positive way to change people's lifestyle is through education.

Mr. Speaker, there is much to say about our people, as that applies to every single person in the universe. A person identifies with a people. The group of people will apply regardless of where you go in the universe. In this case, it applies to the Inuit, who, for centuries, were self-sufficient. You are able to see a minute sample of who they are in the production through the Tiktu series of the Netsilikmuit.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of race, "our people" has the same meaning, but it has meaning to each and every one of us, because it means our family, and our family has the most significance in our lives. They are the ones that have the most influence in our lives.

Education, Mr. Speaker, has the broadest meaning in this matter. It is the final of the segments; however, it also has the most to offer in our lives.

The dictionary defines the word "education" as, "to provide schooling for, or, to develop mentally or morally, especially by instruction". When defined by the dictionary, education is very limited. However, as we all know, education means training; or, for that matter, experience is a form of education. When one is willing to gain knowledge, that is education.

We see life today as a comfortable way of subsistence, but the underlying fact is that it is much more stressful for aboriginal peoples because they did not grow up with this lifestyle. We can break this facade which displays a comfortable lifestyle through education.

Education will multiply the efforts of people who are trying to improve the life of their people.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes words have to be harsh for people to see what is meant by those words. Ten years ago, as chairman of the education society in Baker Lake, I put these words together, and Mr. Speaker, the paper is now brown as it has now been 10 years. It says, "Why are there so many Inuit unemployed today? This is a question that I have often asked myself. The answer I always come up with is that there aren't enough of them who are educated enough to work in the positions that are available. Where is their work? What jobs are available? All the government positions with MOT, RCMP, nurses, carpenters, managers, bookkeepers, teachers, just to name a few, are available in all communities: Baker Lake; Rankin inlet; Iqaluit; Inuvik, et cetera. Who runs the NWT right now? The government runs the NWT right now. Who is the government? People from the south who are brought up here at great expense to work and educate the Inuit. What I am trying to say is there are jobs around that your children could be doing five to 10 years for now, but first they need education.

You may have heard that years ago, around the 1960s, if your children had a grade 12 education, they would be able to get a job anywhere at any time. When you were told that, it was true then, but it isn't true anymore. Today, a person requires a grade 12 and more to get a good job. That is why not many Inuit are working; they don't have the education. You should be making sure your child is going to school and getting the proper education. They may not want to go to school today, maybe because one or several other students are teasing them or they don't like their teacher. I think you should be saying tough, you are going to school today. Don't say to them that they don't have to go to school if they don't want to and this is because you love them. If your child does not finish his or her education today, they will end up exactly the way you are. Maybe in a worse position than you are. Imagine what your favourite child will be going through when you are gone. Will he or she be able to get a good job? Will he or she be happy waking up every morning with no food or no money? What about his or her children? Will they be waking up in the morning to go to school after having a big breakfast? Will they be waking up to go to school at all? These will be your grandchildren.

I was told once that Inuit used to get up with the sun and go to sleep with the sun. What happened to that? Why aren't your children getting up in the morning? Is what they are doing at night going to get them a job after your gone? What happened to all your parents

taught you, to teach your children the proper ways? Did your parents teach you to stay up at night? Did your parents teach you to sleep in the morning? If you really love your children, then you should be teaching them what will be good for them after your gone. If you don't, who will?

In the next five or ten years, who will be working; your children or more people from the south? What will your children be saying about all the people who come from the south and get all the jobs? When the Inuit lived on the land, they had to learn from their elders how to hunt, trap and live on the land. They had to work hard to live. Today we live in a society where teaching is done for us. Their minds are being moulded for us. You should be helping them to teach your children. Bring your children to school tomorrow and have them run our country in 25 years. There are a lot of opportunities out there, but you have to work to get them. Don't expect someone else to do it for you, you will never get anywhere that way.

Mr. Speaker, that was 10 years ago. I think that statement would still apply to this day. Mr. Speaker, after I made that statement, some people took note and do have children who are now very productive in the community. I spoke in the House, at one point, that the problems in our education system do not completely lie with our system; parts lie with the parents, many of whom are aboriginal and do not understand the western style of education. The statement was an attempt to put a focus on the system for those people.

My hope, by making this statement, is that you will take the intent of the statement and pass it on to our young aboriginal people. Mr. Speaker, the key to the success of our people is education. Thank you.

---Applause

Page 1547

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Arnagna'naaq. Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Koe.

Mr. Koe's Reply

MR. KOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ministers can relax today. I have no report card for them. I am not going to make any profound statements on what has happened in the past and no profound statements on my visions for the future, and I don't wish to set any records for speaking. I do wish to make a statement

acknowledging the many good things and the many good people, whom I have had the opportunity work with and the privilege of associating with during my short three years and eight months as an MLA.

Being an MLA, as has been mentioned by some of my colleagues, has been quite a learning experience. This is my first term and it is quite different from being a bureaucrat in the system. It has been a fun time, although there has been some down times. You learn to live and roll with the punches, and learn the art of compromise. There are many issues I have been involved with and I didn't win on every one; but, overall, the term, in my estimation, has been quite successful.

I would like to thank a lot of people who I have worked with. Most of all I would like to thank my fellow colleagues. All of you have been very good to work with on the standing committees, the special committees, our trips and we have had a lot of good times. We have done a lot of hard work. I would like to thank the staff, especially David, for his work and the corsages today. All the staff of the Assembly have been quite patient with us "new fellers." They gave us good guidance, pats on the backs or kicks in the rear-end when we needed it. It has been quite an experience working with knowledgeable people. I would also like to thank the interpreters. They work hard and long. On days like today, they get many speeches and it becomes a long day for them.

All the Ministers who have served this term, their deputies and staff, have also been quite helpful in working with the issues I have raised. It has been quite beneficial to the constituency I represent. I would like to thank those people for working out the issues and complaints.

I also would like to give special thanks to Roger Connelly, the regional director in Inuvik. He has been quite a dynamic fellow and has been very helpful in dealing with the issues people raise pertaining to all departments. I would like to thank all the staff in the Inuvik region. There have been several mayors in Inuvik during my term and they also have been quite helpful and we have worked well together. The chief and band council, the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council, especially Chief James Firth, who has been quite a good change for the community and band. He has developed the band into quite a dynamic force, not only in economics but in community and social events.

The chairpersons from the Inuvik Community Corporation and their directors, especially Dennie Lennie and Billy Day. They've been quite helpful and have worked hard to get issues raised, especially working closely with the town and the Gwich'in. All three groups have organized and have been able to work together to get a lot of projects under way that are being built in Inuvik. I would like to thank them.

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council have also been very helpful in getting not only issues from Inuvik dealt with, but from the whole region. There are many organizations also in Inuvik that I've had the opportunity to work with and meet with. There are too many to mention, but I would like to thank them all.

As with most MLAs, we all came into this job with different priorities that we promised to work on, and there are a few that I would like to mention. The key one is the construction of the new recreation complex in Inuvik. I'm glad to say that a foundation has been laid and they are starting to build it now. There's an active fund-raising committee in place and I wish them well. The visitor's centre is now open, the ribbons were cut several weeks ago and that's another major piece of infrastructure that's going to be very helpful for the tourism industry in that region. I wish the tourism industry well in their endeavours. There are changes, as we are all aware, not only in tourism but in all activities related to government. That is going to have an effect on the industry in the west and how they operate, and I wish the operators in the region well, this year and in the future.

The group home for handicapped adults is now under construction and, if all goes well, we will be cutting the ribbon for that some time this fall. Another project which I've worked on with the community and the Arctic College board and staff was to enhance the programs and the role of the college in the region. I would like to thank the Minister for his work in getting the college back up to where it should be, to the point today where the classrooms and residences are all overflowing. They are running a lot of good programs, and I would like to thank the staff and the people involved with Arctic College. Incidentally, the term "Arctic College" has changed to Aurora College, which is the same name the campus holds, Aurora Campus, and I would just like to pass a message on to the Minister that a lot of people in Inuvik still believe the campus should be called Aurora Campus.

As I mentioned, I'm very encouraged by the cooperation of all the organizations in Inuvik that are

working together. There has been a real change in how things get done. Special accolades should go to the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit and the town for the work they've done together in promoting Inuvik and getting a lot of projects under way. Another group that's very active is the Inuvik interagency committee. It has involved all the health and social services groups in the town and has been very proactive in doing the work that's going on now.

I would also like to thank my various constituency workers. There have been a lot of them since my term and they've all had a role in the success that the town and myself have had in getting work done.

Page 1548

The people who were on my campaign team, I would like to thank them for the work they've done. And all the people of the Beaufort-Delta communities, they always have words of encouragement and urge you on to continue the work you do. The people of Inuvik, especially, have been very supportive in the type of work that's going on and I thank them for their encouragement.

In my travels across the north, I've met many people and I've mentioned in this House that since we're on TV now, people are able to watch the Legislature in action. Through the committee work we've done, we have travelled quite a few times to the communities and they watch the activities of the committee. They always have words of encouragement for us, in terms of what we're doing and how we do it.

I especially want to thank my family, my children Kevin, Jamie and Kerry; and, especially my wife, Lynda. They've had to put up with my antics and activities, especially the travel, but overall, they've been very patient and supportive of what I'm doing. I hope to see you all again in November. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Koe. I hope to see you too. Item 9, replies to opening address. Mrs. Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson's Reply

MRS. THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My time in this office has been short so, this time, I will make this a short reply.

---Laughter

I can say that I have learned a lot in this short time and I would like to recognize the cooperation of everybody to ensure that my goals for Aivilik were met.

Mr. Speaker, I had many items to cover on my agenda for this very short time but the two most important issues were Bill C-68, the gun control bill, and the Inuit elders, in relation to the Bowhead whale. I would just like to make a correction in my statement this morning about the whalers in the 18th century. It was not only the Dutch, as I indicated, it was also the British and others responsible for the slaughter of whales. I just forgot to read that sentence.

Mr. Speaker, these two issues needed to be voiced, even in the short time I had and I had the pleasure to speak on these two very important issues on behalf of my Aivilik riding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my husband, partner and best friend, Tom, for all the support he has given me and the encouragement to run in the Aivilik riding. I would like to thank our sons, Trevor and Randy. Though they weren't born from inside, under my heart, they were born from my heart. They have had a lot of patience in this short time.

I would also like to thank Brian Armstrong, my assistant, for being here and working long hours sometimes, and for his energy -- which I needed for the short time I was here. I would like to thank my mom and my dad for the high expectations they have for all their children. It was more like a nunnery with four other sisters in my family.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I especially would like to thank my dad. He gave me advice before I started my career as a teacher about 19 years ago: he said, "Nutaraq -- the name he calls me, which means "my little child," -- never use the term often used by non-aboriginals; I know." He said not to use this term because if someone is teaching you, you might miss something that you might need to know. I also would like to thank him for voting for me, after a conversation that he, my mom and I had about traditional leadership. When I asked him, "Dad, would you vote for a woman today as a leader," he asked, "What do you mean?" I replied, "If, say, a woman was running for a mayor in your town." He said, "No, I wouldn't vote for a woman

leader." Then he encouraged me and told me that he voted for me.

---Laughter

His grandfather, Angutimmarik was a well-know Aivilik leader in the traditional days. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my mom and dad for all the encouragement they have given me in this short time.

I would like to thank all the people who elected me to this office, for I needed this experience for the future of the Nunavut government so that I will be able to assist my people better, whether as a politician or a public servant. When the by-election for the Aivilik riding opened, Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Coral Harbour, Louie Bruce, said the person going into this office was just going to test the waters at this time to see if they like it or not, and that person would float or sink.

Mr. Speaker, I felt I came into the rapids, into a very organized confusion, but I feel I was prepared and determined to succeed in this short time. I had to make sure I had the right equipment to float and swim. I knew that if this didn't kill me, it was going to make me stronger.

---Laughter

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that, as an Inuk, I have the survival skills instilled in me by my elders to be able to survive in any type of harsh environment.

I was happy to be here while the Education Act was being addressed. It's an area I'm comfortable with. I know with this act, Mr. Speaker, we should be able to produce bilingual, bi-cultural aboriginals for our future, with the support of Innuqatigiit and Dene Kede curriculums and also aboriginal teachers dedicated to education.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that our aboriginal culture and language will survive. I'm sure the Department of Education of this government will make sure we get more aboriginal teachers by setting up more field-based training programs or closer-to-home programs to produce more aboriginal teachers in the west and in the east.

---Applause

Page 1549

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 9, replies to opening address. Ms. Mike.

Ms. Mike's Reply

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity, through a reply to the Commissioner's opening address, to say a few things on behalf of my constituents and to express some of my views about our government and the programs it delivers.

Mr. Speaker, this is my first term as an elected Member of this Assembly, and I must say that the last four years has been a very enjoyable learning experience for me. First of all, I would like to pass on some compliments on some of this government's initiatives, that I think went fairly well. One is the community transfer initiative. Although this did not get off as we had expected, I think the next four years will see more communities taking on more responsibility from this government. I hope that this government will continue to fine-tune this initiative. I say this because I still see room for that, if we are going to be giving our communities more control.

One of the problems I see in the communities, Mr. Speaker, is we are missing control over our government staff whose supervisors are usually situated in regional offices. And I think there is room for municipal governments to be part of the protocol of our government in overseeing the improvement of some of the programs delivered at the community level, such as using community-elected officials to act as monitors of employees in the communities. I hope that this government will continue to improve the community transfer initiative. I must say that I was very happy to hear that this government started a pilot project in the Baffin to include the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and that MACA was to be the implementing department.

As well, there is the buy-north policy. I think it is working well for the private business sector in our communities, but I must caution this government that this policy not be abused. I have learned that in some communities of the NWT, local businesses that are using this policy sometimes overcharge the government. We must make sure that we are getting good value for our dollar. The private sector should know that as long as this policy is in place, their sector will thrive on some of the government dollars we have.

Regarding the income support program, I think the Premier and Mr. Nerysoo have done well on this, since the time when I had the Social Services portfolio

and had asked my deputy minister to bring forward the already-written document of the previous government, when Mrs. Marie-Jewell was Minister of Social Services. There are really no limits to this program, if this government is going to succeed in implementing this program. I hope all the communities can tap into it so our "employables" can continue their education and, hopefully, find employment; if not, start their own businesses through the education they have received. On the community wellness strategy, I was impressed when our Premier tabled that strategy. I must say she did a good job. When I was Minister of Social Services, the document I brought to Cabinet was only a wellness strategy. She has done a great job in expanding it and getting the other departments involved as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, on our political development, as you know and everyone knows, Nunavut is only four years away and in 1999, this government will divide. I do have some concerns on the western part because there are so many different interest groups that are almost totally independent. I do wish them well in achieving their political goals, especially their Constitution. I do wish they could work interdependently so they can achieve the goals they would like to see.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take the time to thank the government on behalf of the community of Clyde River; since I was elected, they are now enjoying their new community hall. I think this year the new nursing station will be completed and an addition for the school was completed earlier this year. It is already in use. This addition was very much needed because some of the classes were held in the library and any other room that was available.

On behalf of Pangnirtung, I would like to thank the NWT Development Corporation for building a nice fish plant, which was opened last summer. Although the turbot fishery is very new to Pangnirtung residents, the well-experienced hunters have certainly been out in the Cumberland Sound fishing. This has created income of some much-needed dollars to some families.

I would like to thank the Department of Education for putting in a gymnasium in Alookie School, which also gave more room for much-needed classrooms in that school.

I would like to thank the Department of Transportation for the breakwater. This was much needed for the small marine vessel owners. As you know, we get

severe storms in Pangnirtung and some boat owners have been losing thousands of dollars during the storms. So this is much appreciated, Mr. Todd, by the tourism operators, fishermen and hunters.

Also, we appreciate the new air terminal. We don't have to crowd any more, trying to check in our luggage in that little room. There is lots of room now and it is very much appreciated. This year, there is going to be a renovation to Attagoyuk School, which the students and parents have been waiting for a long time. This school is old and the heating has been causing a lot of problems to the community. Some of the high school students would sit in the classrooms with their parkas on, it would be so cold. I can assure the government that the renovation to Attagoyuk School is very much appreciated.

I also would like to thank my constituents for having supported me throughout some ordeals that I have gone through when I was on Cabinet. I want to thank my family, who supported me in every way, especially my dad, Jamasie Mike, who looks after my daughter while I am here doing work on behalf of my constituents. Also, I would like to thank my sister, Rita, who has been a great help in looking after my daughter, Nadia. I want to thank my sisters, Eena and Lucy Mike.

I also would like to thank some of the NWT residents who used to call me when I was a Cabinet Member to show their support and not to give up in this Assembly. The majority of those people have been women who called in to say we are behind you, hang in there. I would like to thank those people who

Page 1550

have shown great support to me during my four years in this Assembly. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Zoe.

Mr. Zoe's Reply

MR. ZOE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words under this item. First of all, I would like to thank a number of people within the North Slave riding. Foremost, the grand chief and

the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council. I have worked very effectively with that particular council. I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart. Without them, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the type of successes that my region had would have happened.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of organizations that I would like to point out. I have four communities in my riding and would like to thank all the municipal councils, each local band council and education council. I would also like to thank the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education for their great work. They have worked very effectively with my office. They have pursued a number of initiatives. There has been a lot of good things coming out of this particular area.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, we had a disaster last year in one of my communities. They had a fire in their school which was completely burnt down. I was very appreciative of the divisional board, who conveyed very strongly to the Minister of Education that we needed a new school. The facility is in operation as of today. The department has responded very positively to our needs. There have been other initiatives that the divisional board of education and the local CECs have pursued, such as renovations to various facilities. Those facilities do age and, from time to time, require major renovations. I am glad the Minister of Education is looking to assist the various communities in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, there have also been new programs incorporated into the regional high school in my area, and I am very appreciative of the Minister supporting the needs of the community and also of the divisional board. They've been pursuing this issue for a number of years and it became a reality, Mr. Speaker. It has been two years now since we have had grade 12 graduates coming out of the regional high school.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the support and also the cooperation that I received from the Dogrib Treaty 11, as I indicated earlier, they have been very helpful, not only to my office but also to the government that we have today. They've been working very effectively together in a spirit of cooperation and in a spirit of partnership. Mr. Speaker, the leadership from my area has been working very hard to pursue the betterment of the lives of the community members in the four communities that I represent.

I would just like to say, with regard to economic development, Mr. Speaker, one of the major initiatives that my area has anticipated and has got into, is

hydro development. I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the Premier - - who is also the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation -- and the Power Corporation's board of directors and president for working very effectively. It has been very hard at times when they were negotiating with the Dogrib Power Corporation, but today, Mr. Speaker, I can say that although we had our ups and downs in this whole area, I think it has been very positive. We do have the project on stream now, and I believe that the construction is under way. This project will create power not only for Rae-Edzo, but also for the city of Yellowknife. It's going to not only deplete the use of diesel in Yellowknife, but it will also create revenue for the Dogrib people who own the corporation. In that respect, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank, as I indicated, all the people who were involved in the success of this particular initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say a few words with regard to Economic Development and Tourism. Again, I would like to say thanks to the people who serve on the NWT Development Corporation. They've been very helpful within the Dogrib region. As you may be aware, they've assisted in the smaller communities in terms of funding them for their various facilities -- such as the hotel in Snare Lake and the new store in Rae Lakes -- and they have also assisted a number of small businesses in the whole region.

I would just like to say thanks to those people and also the people at the community level, the local corporations that we have, for instance, the Wek'Weti Development Corporation, the Gameti Development Corporation, the Wha Ti Development Corporation and also the Rae-Edzo Development Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the people who serve these corporations. I have had discussions with them on a number of occasions when various issues happen. As one would know if you were in business, you do run into various issues, perhaps regulations you are fighting with or the policies that the government has; they come to me and we try to resolve those issues with the government.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I am very happy with the Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. As you know, mining initiatives in this area are key and, I believe, will be resources that the whole territories can benefit from, particularly in my region.

As you know, the diamond industry has been very big in this part of the country, and I think, through

cooperation among the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, the leadership from my area and the various mining industry people who are involved, we've come to agree that the mining sector is very important, not only for ourselves but for the betterment of the territories. I was very happy to see that the mining industry has been very cooperative with the leadership from the North Slave region. I know that the government has also been cooperative with my people in the North Slave region in that respect, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again with regard to economic development and tourism, I think we've been very supportive of trying to get into the spirit of partnership. My area has always indicated that this is how we are going to pursue economic development, and I think it shows. I think it shows by my region going into, with the assistance of the government, various partnerships with various companies such as engineering companies, construction companies and so forth.

Page 1551

Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that we have moved in the right direction because, by creating this partnership, there is no animosity among people coming in from outside the region and trying to take all the initiatives that are coming, or getting into businesses of their own.

Mr. Speaker, with this new cooperation and partnership that the region has encountered, I think a lot of new jobs will be created for our young people who are graduating and the ones that are unemployed and so forth. So I think we have moved in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to transportation, I am very appreciative of the support that we have received to date from the Minister of Transportation regarding airports. As you know, there are a number of airports that were upgraded in my area, and I am very appreciative, because they are the link to the outside world, except for the few winter roads that we have in my region.

Mr. Speaker, there haven't always been very successful stories. For instance, with regard to transportation, I can assure you that we had our ups and downs, especially when we renegotiated a number of negotiated contracts with this particular department. Nevertheless, I think overall the Department of Transportation has been very

supportive, and I am very appreciative of that because it made my job much

easier, and I am sure my constituents were quite happy with the outcome.

With regard to housing, Mr. Speaker, as everyone is well aware, housing hasn't been a very big success, I think, in all small communities, particularly the smaller communities, because of the funding cuts from the federal government. It is going to be a continuing problem that the 13th Assembly will have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to Municipal and Community Affairs, as everyone knows, I have always respected this particular department. We have worked very effectively together to address a number of concerns at the community level with regard to municipal infrastructure: equipment, roads at the community level, new land development, et cetera. But the department has been very cooperative.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, through my association with the NWT Association of Municipalities and their board of directors, I think they've been quite happy with the manner in which the department has been conducting themselves. I haven't always agreed with them, but there are a number of initiatives that the department has done that I'm very appreciative of. One that comes to mind is the new formula that was developed three or four years ago, when they revised the formula funding for hamlets and tax-based municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, there are other issues I would like to touch on but, as Members are aware, we still have a lot of issues that we have to deal with today. I would just like to reiterate and say to the people of the North Slave region that I think we've made great strides in my area. I know that the government has been very cooperative with us from time to time. As one knows, every issues that's brought forward may not always succeed but, nevertheless, I think the majority of our concerns from my area, I believe, have been very successful. I hope that the government will continue to move in that particular direction, to assist particularly the smaller communities which don't have the luxuries of the larger centres.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say I appreciate the cooperation from my colleagues in this House, and also yourself, Mr. Speaker, for all the assistance that you've given me; and also to the staff of the Legislative Assembly. I think the staff have provided

very good support, not only to myself but to all the Members in the Legislature.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I can see all of you back in the fall session. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. I also wish you all the best and hope to see you again. We'll take a 10-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We're on item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Antoine.

Mr. Antoine's Reply

MR. ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a reply to the opening address. I would like to make some brief comments since this will be our last sitting here. I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words.

Mr. Speaker, as a Dene, I'm proud of my heritage, and I'm especially proud of our ancestors when I hear the oral history of the people who came before us on this land. Mr. Speaker, we're the original people of this land and all descendants of the Dene should be aware of their heritage, if they're not yet so.

Mr. Speaker, studies now show that there are Dene people not only in the Northwest Territories and in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, but also in the United States; in states such as Washington, Oregon, up to California, and especially into Arizona and New Mexico. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel into the Navaho country and I believe there are over 400,000 Navaho in the state of Arizona and New Mexico. There are Apaches in New Mexico. They call themselves Dene and their language is very similar to ours, so we have a lot of commonalities in this area.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Dene family is all over North America, whether we came through the Bering Strait as they say, which I disagree with. Perhaps we came from the other way around, from North America into Asia, who really knows, Mr. Speaker. However, there is attempt now, Mr. Speaker, to get all the groups together to find out common roots of the Dene culture. There's a project in progress which the Dene Cultural Institute is doing and it is not different from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference funded by governments. This project is to get the Dene people together for cultural reasons and, perhaps, economic and spiritual reasons. I believe this government should encourage and support this endeavour.

Page 1552

Aboriginal rights and treaty rights is also an area of concern that I've always had, Mr. Speaker. There are land claim negotiations that have been concluded in the north, while others are still going on today. There are treaty land entitlements with the Treaty 8 group and discovery talks are going on with the Deh Cho First Nations. All of these initiatives must be encouraged and supported by this government, Mr. Speaker, and resources should be provided for ongoing discussions. The Deh Cho First Nations, which I'm very familiar with, have been trying, since the AIP was defeated in 1980 for all people, to deal with the federal government. Since last year, they have had two meetings with the federal government.

in the discovery talks. There is still a lot of work to be done, Mr. Speaker.

The history of the aboriginal people in the north goes back beyond the 1960s, but in the 1970s, a lot of development work was started by the Dene and Metis in the Mackenzie Valley. At that time, terminology such as "colonization" and "oppression" were common words used by leaders of the day. It's true that such things are in existence. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that at one time, as a young man who had long hair, I asked a government official for a job and the answer was: "If you cut your hair, maybe I'll consider hiring you." What is this? What kind of attitude was that? We've gone far beyond that today, Mr. Speaker, but we are not there yet. There is still a long way to go to achieve self-determination for aboriginal people.

We are plugged into the public government system and that still has to be worked out. A lot of things need to be cleared up in the area of treaty and aboriginal issues with this government. That is the

kind of work that has to happen in the next few years. This government and the Legislative Assembly have to work with the aboriginal people in the west in future, to try to overcome and clear up the outstanding issues.

This ties into the whole process of the northern accord being discussed yesterday and today in Yellowknife by aboriginal leaders and the government. There is an attempt to move the oil, gas and mineral administration from the federal government to the Northwest Territories, which I'm sure everyone supports. But the question is, once we get it here, who controls it. This is where the dilemma is. There are aboriginal groups who have land claim agreements and have turned over that responsibility to the territorial government. However, there are other groups who have not yet done that yet; namely, the Dogrib, Treaty 8 and the Deh Cho First Nations. There has to be an arrangement struck with these people and the government should not move ahead unless there is consensus by everybody at the table that the northern accord can go ahead.

Moving on to the Education Act, Bill 25, that we're dealing with today, Mr. Speaker. I must honestly say that I feel very uncomfortable with this bill. I think a lot of work still should take place with this bill, mainly because although the official bill was tabled at the end of March and the Standing Committee on Legislation did their work and went into the communities, I think the people in the communities still don't have a grasp on what this bill is about. Even during the last few days, while we have been struggling through this bill in the House, we're still questioning a lot of the clauses and making amendments to try to make it fit with what we're hearing from the communities.

In the Yukon, there is a whole section on aboriginal education in their legislation, which we don't have. Here, we're trying to fit it into a few clauses here and there. I think we should take a closer look at it. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm trying to do the best I can as an MLA to try to accommodate the process here, and making changes to the clauses, but I have to honestly say that I'm very uncomfortable with this bill at this point in time.

There is the whole treaty issue as well. In the west, we have two treaties: Treaty 8 and Treaty 11. The history I know from my people is that agreements were made by officials when the treaties were signed in 1921 and 1899 that education would be a right for aboriginal people in the west. The bill attempts to ensure that, but I'm not too sure whether it will

accomplish this. The current bill that we're operating under doesn't accommodate that, although we've been able to make amendments to the bill to try to accommodate it. I don't know, after we have struggled through it, how the final bill is going to work and I have some discomfort about that.

I would like to move on to the health issue, Mr. Speaker. In 1988, the health responsibility was transferred over from the federal government to the territorial government, and I recall in the Deh Cho region when this was going on, that the chiefs were very uncomfortable with the process and they established conditions on how that should work. Now these conditions don't seem to apply, they are overlooked and not taken into consideration when health is being discussed in the region.

The health billings dispute is a very serious thing that this government is trying to deal with. I want to commend the Minister of Finance and the people in government for trying to resolve this issue. The onus is on the federal government to provide health services to aboriginal people, treaty people and Inuit. If they are reneging on it, it is their responsibility. The arrangement we have made is the best one we could reach at this point in time, I am told. My concern is that there are conditions for three years, but after that, what happens? I am concerned about the treaty issues. If that is the best we could do, what does it mean in the future for people who say they have aboriginal and treaty rights for health from previous treaties when the non-aboriginal people first started moving into this country?

Also on health issues, in the communities there are less and less doctors and services in terms of medical health; X-rays, blood tests, examinations by physicians, et cetera. Many people from the communities are now flying into Yellowknife.

Page 1553

The idea is to try to get all the specialists in Yellowknife, so people from outlying communities will be flown in to be examined by these doctors. In Fort Simpson, at the airport terminal, there are posters; the school children who go and visit different facilities make posters about it. One of the posters in the airport terminal says the airport is the place you go when you get sick. This is the perception that young people have; when you get sick, you go to the airport. That means you have to fly to Yellowknife. The airport isn't the place you go when you get sick, it

should be the hospital or nursing station. That is what is happening with the way health is in the north now.

With regard to Justice, Mr. Speaker, I have to commend the Minister of Justice, Stephen Kakfwi, for the work he has done in this department. In terms of new and innovative approaches to justice, especially the community justice committees, is a good thing. There is one in my constituency in Wrigley and there is one that was just formed in Fort Simpson. They are talking about forming one in Fort Liard. I have to commend the justice specialist who works out of Fort Simpson, who is a former Member of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Nick Sibbeston. He is doing a fine job.

This new initiative really comes from a lot of different ideas. Earlier I mentioned that I was in Arizona and New Mexico. The first time I went there was with the Minister of Justice and a number of MLAs on a fact-finding tour. We met extensively, all the days we were there, with the different justice systems in the state of Arizona; particularly with the Navajo, who have their own government and judicial system, right from the Supreme Court judge down to their own police force. So there is an aboriginal community that is doing it on their own. The community justice system is similar to theirs. This is one part of North America where aboriginal people are doing something and we are learning from their experience. This is a good way to learn. The community justice committees are a good way to deal with some of the smaller infractions to the laws that happen in communities, instead of JPs and magistrates dealing with these things. Now it is the community justice committees made up of people from the community such as elders, young people and specialists. They sit down and ask them, for the first time ever, why they broke the law. They counsel them and fine them. This is a very good innovative approach to justice in the north.

The other area in justice I really have a lot of support for is the move towards trying -- instead of warehousing inmates in very expensive facilities with high administrative costs -- to deal with inmates by putting them in bush camps or some place on the land close to the communities, so the communities have input into how inmates are taken care of out on the land, or example.

I would like to make a few comments, Mr. Speaker, on the affirmative action policy. As an aboriginal person, I support the intent of the existing policy. There was a lot of debate in previous assemblies on this whole issue and the reason for this policy...The

aboriginal people in the north are the majority in the north, but that isn't reflected in the civil service. The attempt is to reflect the population in the civil service. Some place along the way, the true intent of this policy hasn't been met. We still don't have the numbers of aboriginal people in the civil service. Instead, whenever we try to make change, there are a lot of unforeseen consequences that result. Right now, there is a great debate on this issue at the grass-roots level where there is a review on how to address this policy. I agree that this assessment should take place. It is becoming an issue where there are many racial overtones.

There is resentment by non-aboriginal people towards aboriginal people who are placed in certain jobs because of this policy. I know a lot of aboriginal people, especially in the smaller communities, support this policy, yet the media does not get their views aired in public. It is a negative impact on the aboriginal people who get the jobs, in certain cases. They get a hard time from fellow workers because of this. I know there are some aboriginal people who want to get the job on their own merits, and many of them could, without the affirmative action policy. I would just like to reiterate that there has to be a close look at this whole policy and instead of fighting over the affirmative action policy the way it is, we have to look at the intent of this policy to see if it is being met. At the same time, there are side consequences and debate based on racial issues. It is becoming more of a negative policy. We should assess that.

On the housing issue, Mr. Speaker, there has been a very negative impact on housing in the Northwest Territories during this term in government. The reason was that the federal government cut all funding that was previously given to the territorial government to provide houses. In the past, people were given HAP units, home assistance program units, that helped many communities. In terms of housing, we have come a long way in all the communities in the north. As we travel around, we see that there are a lot of very good homes built in the communities. The NWT Housing Corporation has to be commended for all the accomplishments they've achieved in housing.

Getting back to the federal government cuts, it has a very negative impact on the housing in the communities, as well as to this government. This is one of the big reasons that our government is now in a deficit, because of these federal government cuts and we weren't able to get it back from the federal government. Even the funding that goes for the treaty

people we weren't able to get in the north. In the south, in the provinces on the reserves where there are treaty Indians, there is funding that goes to them for housing directly from the federal government. Whereas, even though we have treaty people in the Northwest Territories, we don't have that opportunity to access that funding. I don't know why that is. There might be some politics being played between this government and the federal government based on that. But if that's the case, treaty people in the north shouldn't be used as a pawn in that type of politics.

On Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency people would like a sustainable economy, with maximum economic benefits going to the people of the region. That is the position that people in the region have always taken; that if any types of government contracts or jobs go into the region, they should go to the communities first, then to the region, then after that, go to other people in the north. There are X number of dollars that go into a community or a region, then if the people from the region don't have the size or the equipment or the know-how they don't get it and it goes to places that have those resources.

Page 1554

I know there is a difference of opinion of this particular issue in this House, but that is the position that I have always taken and will always continue to take. In that regard, I think the government policies that govern this have to be looked at and changed to allow the people and the business in the smaller communities to have those opportunities first.

It comes from many years of experience where years ago, funds would go to a region and the people from the region didn't benefit from it. Now, with the tight fiscal position, everybody is really keen at looking at any type of funding that goes into the region. The people in the communities and the regions want to have that opportunity before everybody else to take advantage of whatever is there.

Mr. Speaker, there is oil and gas exploration beginning to happen in my constituency around the community of Fort Liard. This is with the chief and band council, and the whole community is involved in it. This is a major exploration that is going to happen. It started last winter, and this summer and this winter there is going to be massive exploration. I think that this government should work with the community to

try to maximize the benefits that this opportunity will provide to this region.

With regard to forestry; the whole Liard Valley in my constituency has a big forest with big trees. There is a lot of potential to develop forestry there. People in Fort Liard, with their resource management committees, have done some studies. They have done some test cuts into some of the areas. They did different types of cuts to show what kind of effect it would have on the forest. I would like to say that what I've seen from the air in the helicopter when I've flown over those areas is that it doesn't seem to have had that much of an impact. But I must qualify that by saying that it was only a small area where they did the test; but if we were to open up the whole area for more of that, I don't know what kind of effect it would have. This is certainly the direction that the community resource management committee is taking in this whole area.

In Fort Simpson, the band also has a resource management committee that was looking into a number of resources; one of them being forestry. Personally, what I would like to see in the Mackenzie Valley is that forestry be developed with community control. This is what the people are saying in that area, that if we could develop the forestry by logging some of the trees and even setting up a sawmill in that area that is controlled by the people in that area. From there, you could go further, getting into more of a sustainable type of wood product industry. Perhaps we could get into doors, windows, frames, furniture or whatever. If you do that, then you're looking at a high upfront cost, even looking at a kiln to dry the boards. So we would be looking at a major operation in that area. We could even go further and get into a chipboard type of mill, which again we would be looking at a very high cost. So we would have our own lumber industry in the north, we would have employment for people there; there are all kinds of different potential opportunities in developing forestry.

The people in the area have been very conscious of that, they've done some work over the years with their resource management committee. Mentioning the resource management committees, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the funding that they were working with the federal government is being deleted, it's getting less and less. I think these community resource management committees are very good, I think that's the way to go. They have community involvement and develop the resources in their area. That is a potential ally to the territorial government, and they could work with the territorial government but they

need some funding for this area. So I think this government should look at that to see if they will be able to support them in that area. In the long run, you're looking at developing resources; and, is the government going to do this on its own? It's going to have to come from the communities, and who best to decide on which area to cut and what not to cut except for the people in the community.

Under economic development, there is a mining possibility in my constituency with San Andreas Resources having the Prairie Creek properties. It used to be the Cadillac Mine where they're doing some exploratory drilling again this year, and they're seeking funds to try to open up that area. They've been meeting with the people in the community to determine the type of support and type of work that they may have.

Unfortunately, during their process, they're using chemicals that are very harmful to the environment. They'll be putting them into a tailings pond and that is raising some concerns from different citizens in the community. The Prairie Creek runs into the South Nahanni, into the Liard, and joins the Mackenzie. So if you have any type of a major spill of arsenic, then you're into major problems with all the water systems down the valley. So this is a concern that has been expressed by me. Even though it's a mining possibility that could develop the economy in that area by providing jobs and business opportunities, on the one hand, there's the environmental protection concerns that we have to consider equally as well.

The other economic concern in my area is in the area of tourism. Tourism is a very good business for certain people in my constituency. The Nahanni National Park is placed in my constituency. The Great Falls, the beautiful mountain scenes and the river which people want to canoe down is a very big tourist draw. There are tourists from all over the world that come into my area to look at the sites and travel into the mountains, and there are an increasing number of people going into that area. The Nahanni Ram Tourism Association was just developing and they had a majority aboriginal board representing all the communities. They were just developing and getting into tourism in a big way when the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and his department decided to change tourism funding by splitting the tourism association into two. Now this group of people is lumped into the west, along with all of these other high-powered business types. I'm afraid they might get swallowed up by the sharks.

---Laughter

There is a fear there; a fear of the unknown is what it is. But I'm sure that if everybody puts their heads together, there will be a way of solving the issue of tourism.

Whenever a person gets into a business, there is always the possibility of being successful or of failing and there are some businesses in my constituency who are in that situation. I just

Page 1555

want to say that this department has to have more compassion and work with the citizens to help them recover from problems.

With regard to my position on the Standing Committee on Finance, first of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Finance, Mr. Pollard and his able right-hand man, Lew Voytilla, for all the work we've done together through the last three years. It has been quite a learning experience for me, as a MLA for Nahendeh coming from Fort Simpson and getting involved in the Legislative Assembly and the standing committee system. The predecessor to this position was Mr. John Todd, who moved on to become a Minister. He was the chairman of SCOF when we first started and he demonstrated his capabilities in dealing with a lot of the issues. It was good to work with him.

I would like to thank Mike Ballantyne, who's an old veteran who knows all the tricks of the trade, for all of his wise counsel in the Standing Committee on Finance. I would like to thank Mr. Charles Dent, another Member of the Standing Committee on Finance. Mr. Dent is a very well-informed MLA, a business person, and he's a very big asset to the Standing Committee on Finance. I would like to thank Henry Zoe who was on the committee from the Dogrib area. He has been an MLA before and knows how business is conducted in this committee. I would like to thank Mr. Dennis Patterson, a former Government Leader and Minister, who is also very wise in his work with this House. He has a lot of experience that he shares with us. Once he got into the Standing Committee on Finance, I think he finally realized how things work on this side of the House. After a little while, he really fit in well and it really was an asset to have him. Rebecca Mike is also on the committee, a former Minister, and she has a very good understanding of how things go on. She helped us in this committee. The newest Member was Manitok

Thompson, who just joined us in this committee. For the few times we had meetings, she contributed and I would like to thank her for that.

I would like to thank the committee clerk, Doug Schauerte, for the support and work he did for the committee.

---Applause

I think he did very good work. And I would like to thank the researcher we have now, Robert Slaven. He has done excellent work for us here. Mahsi.

---Applause

The next item I wanted to mention was the transition document that the Standing Committee on Finance passed a motion in this House to have developed. The reason for that is, as we finish this government and complete this term, there are a lot of things on the table and a lot of work which has been done on certain issues. The transition document should demonstrate the different areas of transition so that whoever is in the House in the fall after November will have documents they can start from. Rather than starting from nothing, they will at least have something to look at and there will be a starting point for the next government. The Standing Committee on Finance will also be developing its own transition document on what we think are the important issues that the next government should deal with, as they take over.

In the area of deficit management, we have passed a motion in the House for the next government to follow certain guidelines. The idea here is we don't really want to use those guidelines, but they are there just in case we need them. We set the parameters on how the next government will work in the financial area.

In the Standing Committee on Finance meetings, we spent many long hours together whenever we had to go through the capital and O and M review process. Everybody from this committee really contributed well. We had many meetings on each department and it was a really gruelling process but we managed to survive, and we're at the tail-end of our term for that.

With regard to the capital that went into my area, in Wrigley the biggest expenditure was a little bridge that went across the Willow River and the finishing of the road into Wrigley. It was a big commitment by this government to finish the bridge and road. It means that we're a little further down in the valley and I

guess the next step is to try to push the road further, past Wrigley, and into Fort Norman. That's what we'll have to achieve the next time around. This is still on the table and is something we have to work on.

Unfortunately, there have been cuts in the Transportation budget and about \$1.5 million was cut out of a task that is really going to affect my constituency. It is for the maintenance of the road in my area. I spoke about it in the House previously, because I have a big concern about it. We have had good roads in the past, there were nothing wrong with them, but now with these cutbacks I'm very concerned that not this year, or next year, but maybe in the third year, we will see major deterioration. That will mean a major capital one-time expenditure to repair it to a good standard.

We have more and more tourists travelling on the highway system and they do the loop. That is, they come up through the Hay River, Enterprise area, to Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, and then down past Fort Liard and then hit the Alaska Highway. Many people do that when they travel to the north and we have been advertising it, which draws a lot of tourists up here. We say that we have very good roads and if our roads begin to deteriorate, we're going to be in serious trouble not only in repairing the roads, but also in drawing the tourists; we need to develop the tourism industry in the area.

I know the Minister has discussed with the Minister of BC, the problem out of Liard where the road that goes from the BC border to the Alaska Highway is in need of major repair. His counterpart in BC is responsible for the maintenance of that road, and if the Minister could meet with this Minister, perhaps the road could be upgraded. Another idea I raised earlier in my term was at the Alaska junction, north into the Northwest Territories, we have a big sign, but perhaps we could develop a tourist information centre at that spot run by people of the north and if arrangements could be made to lease a piece of property there and put up a structure there, we could catch the tourists going to Alaska. If you aren't aware of the turn-off, you miss it. There is only one sign. The idea is to try to draw more tourists into the area.

In the Wrigley area, the community was able to fix the roads. I would like to thank the Ministers of MACA and Transportation

for that. I would like to recognize the chief, Chief Jim Lennie, and the council and elders. They work very hard to run their own community. That is one community that is run by chief and council. If you have ever been there, you know they run a good community and they have to be commended for that.

I would like to recognize the former chief, Gabe Hardisty, and the council that were there the last few years. They did very good work. We worked together very well to try to provide different programs and services in that community.

I would like to talk about Fort Liard. The chief is Harry Deneron and they have a council. Mr. Deneron is the driving force in Fort Liard that has been able to, during the years, help the community develop to the point where it is. He may have a lot of problems in the communities, however, he is a very positive force in that community. He has been able to draw economic development into that area. The Liard Valley Development Corporation, which has been in financial trouble in the past, is now slowly getting out of it. Different parts of the corporation are doing very well, especially Deh Cho Air, under the direction of the operator/manager, Rob Borrelli. In Fort Liard, you have a lot of dynamic people who are independent and they try to develop their community the way they would like to see it. In a community like that, everyone lives together in the community and the desire is to try to make life better for themselves and for everyone. There has to be a spirit of cooperation in areas where they have similar concerns. There is going to be a difference of opinion, but that shouldn't jeopardize the cooperation that exists there.

In the beautiful community of Nahanni Butte, at the mouth of the South Nahanni River, out of the Nahanni National Park, is a place where a lot of tourists go by when they canoe out of the park. There are quite a few people who do that. Now they have a new assembly building. I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Public Works and Services for this new building. It was opened last winter and the community council is utilizing that facility very well.

Now with the help of the NWT Development Corporation and ED&T, a new store has been developed. It is built and is going to have a store, hotel rooms, coffee shop, craft shop, a place to wash your clothes and shower facilities. This is a good thing for government employees or tourists who

paddle out of the mountains. This is a very good opportunity for the people of Nahanni Butte.

Trout Lake has very industrial people. They have great fishing and are trying to utilize that. They are trying to fix up their fishing lodge. They have been doing that for many years now. There is some support from Economic Development and Tourism in this area. There is a combination new school/assembly hall that was jointly done, uniquely, with the Department of Education and MACA two years ago. It is a very successful building. The people enjoy the facility to its full extent with much appreciation to the government. Trout Lake is also experimenting with gardening. They still have that. They have been raising chickens, pigs and so forth. They are very industrious.

In Jean Marie River, they built a new school and they are currently building a road with the support of Transportation. I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation for the support in helping this community finish off the road. It isn't going to be finished this year, but most of it is going to be finished. Hopefully, it will be completed next year.

In Fort Simpson, presently Bompas Hall has been fully renovated. It was a unique project where a company from Yellowknife was involved and worked along with the band. A lot of local people worked with this program and the majority of workers were the community people. So the community really benefitted. It is almost completed now. Now the Thomas Simpson School is going to be renovated. Everything is being moved out and they are beginning to work on it. I hope the success that Bompas Hall experiences in building it and utilizing people from the community will stay on and be used for the other school. The work will be done by Clark Builders. I hope they use the example of the other building.

The Minister had committed himself for paving part of the road out of Fort Simpson. I would like to express my appreciation for that, as well the communities would like to express their appreciation for that. I worked for awhile with the village council in Fort Simpson, Ray Michaud, and the council, as well as Herb Norwegian, the band council and the Metis Nation office there.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to mention the fur issue. During my term in the Legislative Assembly, I had the opportunity to travel abroad. I know some of the Members kind of resented it, saying you always travelled. I always give an opportunity for other

people to travel first. In this case, the way it worked was I was able to go to Europe to Strasbourg and Brussels to meet with Members of the European Parliament on four different occasions. It was a very good experience. One of the issue that concerns me very much is the whole area of trapping and the fur issue. A resolution was passed in the European Parliament to ban wild fur into Europe. Europe, being eight per cent consumers of wild fur, would have a direct negative impact on the trappers in the north.

As a result of that, I thought the best way to deal with it would be going directly to the source. The source is the European Parliament and that is one of the reasons I committed myself to being involved in the fur lobby in Europe.

---Applause

Some of the other Members of the Legislative Assembly had the opportunity to travel there as well. I think I can say that we have to go to the source and deal with it. This issue isn't dead yet. This resolution will be coming into force January 1, 1996, when all wild furs will be banned from any European parliamentary countries. In the Northwest Territories, this government has spent over \$2 million developing the quick kill trap, but this trap has not been approved yet. The International Standards Organization is supposed to approve these traps, but what if the ISO doesn't approve our trap that we spent \$2 million on? Where are we? We're in a tough bind if that happens. So I think the government should be aware of that scenario, that we've put ourselves out on a limb.

But the work has to go on. There's going to be a lobby again this summer by some of the Members to go to Europe, I'm

Page 1557

told, to try to deal with this issue. I support that lobbying trip. Those of you who are going, I wish you all the success and I give you all the support that you need in that area.

(Translation) I want to say a few things in my own language. There are a lot of elders in the Northwest Territories, men and women. They have been around for a long time. It's a very difficult time for them right now. The federal government has helped them out a lot with money. They get their pension: at the end of the month they get their bigger cheque, and at the middle of the month it's a smaller cheque. This is how

they support themselves. However, when you really look at it, it's really not much to support yourself on.

There are some women's groups that help out the band councils and that support a lot of organizations in the communities. So I think they should be funded. However, if their funds are going to the band councils instead of to them, maybe the government should take a look at this funding again.

There are a lot of things that were negotiated with the government, which have now been reversed. There are situations where if a person gets paid a pension and they supplement their wages by trapping, they deduct some of the money they made on trapping.

There are lot of people who have to figure out their income and stuff but they don't know how to read or write, so they depend on other people to do their paperwork for them. I think if things were made a little easier for them, they would benefit.

There are a lot of small communities in the Northwest Territories, and there are a lot of resourceful people who are living in these communities. I think if a lot of them had an idea of how the government actually works, a lot of people would benefit from a lot of programs and in the ways the government works.

If you live in a remote community, I think the information should be given to the smaller communities better so they will be more aware of what's happening around them. If people get the training they need to support themselves, I think this would be a very good start.

There is something I want to say about forest fires. Last year in Fort Simpson, there was an elder who had his cabin burn down and a person's house that caught on fire. The way they tried to put out the fire with chemical powder; however, this didn't work. They have this vehicle that they pull down to the river and they get water from there, and this is how they tried to put the fire out. But even with all their efforts, the house eventually burned down.

A lot of them are asking questions. Before this kind of thing happens again they would like to get something in place to put the fires out. If a house catches on fire again and they have the proper equipment, the proper fire trucks and stuff like that, they could put out the fire before it gets out of hand. People have been asking for things like that and I think this should be looked at closer. There is a small tank there but it doesn't hold much water, so if a house catches on fire this water

wouldn't be enough to put it out. To put out the fire manually takes a lot of time, so proper equipment is needed in that community.

If you look at government housing and schools; I think if one of those buildings ever burned down in that community, a lot of money would go down the drain with it. I think this is why the proper equipment should be given to this community.

I said I was going to talk for only a short while, but I've been talking for quite a while so I'll close for now. We've been sitting here for a long time, there are a lot of issues that we've dealt with. I would like to thank all the Members who are sitting here, and I would like to thank all the Ministers; the Clerks; all the people who do paperwork; and, the people who interpret for us. I would like to thank you all.

I like to speak my own language sometimes, but I speak in English a lot. But I prefer to speak my own language and I like to take advantage of it here because we have interpreters. Again, I would like to thank you. Sam, you're from Fort Providence. You are a former MLA and now you're our Speaker. I thank you for all the work that you've done for us. This is all I want to say and I thank you all very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Nerysoo.

Mr. Nerysoo's Reply

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to take this opportunity to reply to the opening address. I wanted to do generally what Mr. Ng did yesterday, and that is to try to show my respect for the work that has been done by many people who have worked with me during my tenure as a Member of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there is always a great deal of criticism that is often directed at Cabinet Members, and the situation during this session has been no different. But I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, despite our report cards -- and I guess they have been provided to us -- I just want to say to all my Cabinet colleagues who have served with me for the last three years or less, if nothing else, you deserve an A plus because of the time, effort and commitment that you have given to the people of the Northwest Territories. Serving in Cabinet is a very difficult task, and often, unless we

say yes to Members, we are considered as being opponents to Members.

We have other factors that we have to consider in making our decisions. So not everything we do is right in the minds of Members, but I can say, without equivocation, having served with all of you, that you have done your job -- at least in my eyes, because I have had an opportunity to work with every one of you -- with diligence, consideration of all the facts, a view to trying to be fair and an effort to do the best for all the people, including your constituents. Often times, the work we do in Cabinet is at the sacrifice of our families and at the sacrifice of our constituents. So I want to commend every one of those who have served in Cabinet for their commitment to those principles.

Mr. Speaker, to you, having served in your capacity as Speaker, to Mr. Ballantyne and to Mrs. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, it is often said that being a Speaker takes away your ability to speak in this House on behalf of your constituents, and I want

Page 1558

people to realize that your responsibility is far more than just sitting in the House and applying the rules in this House.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that your responsibility is one of representing, to the people of Canada and to the people in the north, our Assembly and all Members in this Assembly. You not only keep the rules, but you ensure that the people know about this Assembly, how it works and all those things that are good about it.

At times we think there is nothing good about an Assembly. I often listen to Mr. Lewis who articulates the importance of a forum of this nature. Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that a forum like this allows every Member an opportunity to rise and speak in opposition to those issues that some Members may feel are important, without having to feel that they are opponents. They can rise and speak their mind without having to think that someone may do things that are bad or, for that matter, at another time not support their efforts. I think that is an important consideration. I also want to say that there are other Members who have spoken about this issue in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I came to this Assembly some fifteen and a half years ago. It's interesting how many

changes have occurred in this Assembly. There are three of us who have been here since 1979, and the dean of our House, Mr. Ludy Pudluk, who has been here for almost 20 years now. I have seen a lot of changes in this Assembly. Sometimes I reflect back and realize that when I came here four years ago I thought we had a group of people who were probably the most educated of all the Members that have come to this House. After four years, I wonder if we were educated, or maybe people like Ipeelee Kilabuk, Mark Evaloarjuk or Charlie Crow could have taught some of the people here a few lessons in diplomacy and dignity. I say that not with a great deal of animosity or anything, but I think that often we fail to realize how important it is for us to treat each other with some sense of respect or at least consider the facts before we...

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

My honourable Member says tolerate, and that's probably the word that's necessary.

I must say again that whenever we come to this Assembly, it is with a lot of uncertainty and trepidation, but the success of our work doesn't always come from our ability to stand up and shout, rant and rave at each other. It comes from our ability to be practical, pragmatic; and, often from a willingness on our part to compromise our positions, because, while we have constituents to represent, we all still have a responsibility to recognize that our final responsibility in all our decisions is to all the people of the Northwest Territories, not simply our constituents. Sometimes that is misunderstood by our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something to some people who have worked for me since I became a Member. Robert Redshaw, who many of you know, worked in this Assembly long before he became my executive assistant. He worked for Members of the House, he worked for subcommittees, he worked on the plebiscite, and, in my view, is a man with great character who is now in England supporting his wife who went back to school. He also sacrificed his time to me on behalf of his family. So I want to thank him for his contribution.

The young lady who is now my executive assistant is Jill Swann, about whom, every time I travel to the communities, everyone says is so conscientious and

considerate on the phone. I am pleased with the work she is doing, and I am pleased that people across the Northwest Territories who speak to her think so highly of her without necessarily having met her.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank Shelley Muller who is my secretary now, and to Heather Bibby and Kathy Boyd, who previously served me as secretaries.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say something to other people who have worked with me for the past several years, the leadership of the Gwich'in Nation: Willard Hagen, Robert Alexie, Jr., Dolly Carmichael, Chief Grace Blake, Chief Joe Charlie, Chief Freddie Greenland and Chief James Firth. Every one of those people knows that we have had some disagreements, but whatever happens, it always seems that we rise above our differences to support the collective will of the Gwich'in people, and, in some respects, that's an indication of the practical and pragmatic leadership that now rests within the Gwich'in.

I also want to thank other people, people like James Ross who was the former chief. I want to thank other chiefs who are from that region.

I just want to say to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, that I want to thank Hal Gerein, deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment, all the staff in the department: people like Chuck Parker who is president of Aurora College; Mr. Welch; Mark Cleveland, the former president; and, the chairs of all the boards of education in both Nunavut Arctic College and Aurora College.

Of course, there's John Quirke and the staff of Safety and Public Services, every one of whom I believe serve a very difficult role in government, because in that department, we're responsible for regulations and safety factors, much of which are legislated. It's often difficult for people to appreciate the responsibility they hold. They sometimes find them difficult to get along with, but in my view, they do the work professionally and with the commitment to ensure the safety of all people, no matter who they are.

---Applause

I wanted to say thank you to Bob Simpson, who both Mr. Koe and I know, who assumes a great deal of responsibility in the work he does as a Gwich'in member of the Aurora board of governors and as chair of the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort board of education. He does all kinds of things for the Gwich'in, I don't know sometimes how the Gwich'in

Nation would do without Bob Simpson. He does a great deal of work for us and I wanted to take this time to thank him.

There are others, Mr. Speaker. I think young people aren't recognized often, maybe because they are not often seen in public. I would just like to take this time to thank them for the support they've given me and the support they've given to my community. I would like to commend them, particularly a young lady who does a lot of work in the Gwich'in language, by the name of Eleanor Mitchell, who probably never thought

Page 1559

four or five years ago that she would be in charge of the language centre in Fort McPherson. Now she has taken it upon herself to participate in the development of that language, and this is with a great deal of support from people in the community and also support from people in this Assembly doing translation for us today, Mr. Speaker. People like William George Firth and Sue Look. Without their support in the development of languages, I think it would be very difficult.

There are many others, Mr. Speaker, who contribute to my role in this Assembly. It has not always been a very good time in this Assembly. There are days when you wonder if you're going to get through the day or even the term. Some of the reasons come from difficult family situations, like deaths in the family or family crises that you have to pay a great deal of attention to. All of us have said good things about our families and I guess it would not be right of me to not recognize the contribution of Sasha, Janine, Rena and, of course -- as his mother calls him -- Richard Liam, that young fella born not too long ago. And, of course, my partner and friend, Geraldine.

As family people, whether or not we're mothers or fathers, we realize how important it is for them to be around when we have crises and difficult times in this Assembly. I think we all, as Members, want to say how much we appreciate their support and, of course, how much we continue to love them.

I wanted also to thank, Mr. Speaker, through you, all of our translators who do a wonderful job in this Assembly. It was not so many years ago that we had no aboriginal Dene translators in this Assembly, and our only translators were Inuktitut-speaking translators. I think we ought to be proud of the things that go on now because of our Dene translators who have come a long way, but it is not without respect

and consideration for the Inuktitut translators. Often we watch the news late at night or the proceedings of this House and we see them in the Dene languages and Inuktitut. They do a wonderful job for us outside of this House and, as a result, provide more information to people in the communities. I want to say thank you, through you, Mr. Speaker, to all of them who do work on our behalf here.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute again -- as many others have -- to who I consider to be our esteemed Clerk.

---Applause

I say that with a great deal of support for the work he does. I want to recognize the assistant clerk today, Doug Schauerte, who does a great deal of work for your committees.

---Applause

I also want to thank, through you, Mr. Speaker, all of our Assembly staff. I have had a chance to work with the researchers, hopefully for the last day, through the Education Act and all the pieces of legislation I've had to pass through this House. Sometimes they have made it difficult for me but, by God, they've done good work for the committees. I think they deserve a great deal of applause.

---Applause

I want to again thank all the staff. I want to thank you and at some time, Mr. Speaker, I would like you to send a letter to all staff members on behalf of all the Members of the Assembly saying thank you. I hope you will send it individually, and not just necessarily send one letter, so it applies to all of them.

The other thing I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, is I have a few suggestions for my Cabinet colleagues. Mr. Todd, my suggestion to you is don't shout too often in Cabinet.

---Laughter

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

The fact is, we have all been fitted with hearing aids by the Premier, so we can hear you.

MR. WHITFORD:

Is this like a report card?

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Yes. And, Mr. Pollard, if necessary, you can get angry. We don't always want you to walk in like a robot.

---Laughter

Stephen, the suggestion that has been made is your sense of humour is lacking. I guess a joke a day would help improve your sense of humour. If nothing else, speak to Mr. Whitford about jokes, although my recommendation would be Mr. Tuccaro.

And, of course, my good friend Don -- at least Rena's best friend -- I think you should listen to the song, "Don't let smoke get in your eyes."

---Laughter

That would be a good one. And, I think, certainly, the summer will allow you to put a little shine back on that Teflon you are said to have.

Silas, of course, the man. You should watch your profanity in Cabinet. This guy doesn't say too much sometimes, but when he does, he's clear about what he means.

---Laughter

And, of course, Nellie, the Premier. Don't worry about John Todd being the Premier.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

---Laughter

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

I think it's just a dream, and I guess we all have dreams. His just happens to be a great big nightmare.

---Laughter

I say this in jest. As I said before, sometimes we take a great deal of criticism being on Cabinet, but to all my colleagues, I just want to say how pleased I have been. It has been my honour to serve with you. I think that every one of you on

Page 1560

Cabinet should consider all the work you have done on their behalf, and on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. If I had anything good to say it would be they have much to be proud of. You all deserve their support. That is all I wanted to say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. I will write letters to all the staff thanking them on behalf of all the Members. Is it the Legislative Assembly staff and the Executive staff, or just the Legislative Assembly staff?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Microphones turned off)

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Report On Bill 33

MR. WHITFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Legislation has reviewed Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3, and wishes to report that Bill 33 is now ready for committee of the whole; and, further, that Bill 33 not be proceeded with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I committed to the Member for Thebacha on June 15th, in response to an oral question, I am tabling Tabled

Document 149-12(7), a map of the town of Fort Smith, showing the municipal boundary. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 150-12(7), the Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories for the year ending December 31, 1994. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 151-12(7), the business incentive policy discussion paper which Cabinet has approved for release as a public discussion document. The paper includes a summary report of the initial consultation during the period of December 1994 to February 1995. It recommends options for addressing the concerns that were raised during consultations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any further tabling of documents? Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 11-12(7), Report on the Review of Bill 25 - The Education Act; and, Bill 25, Education Act. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 16-12(7), I place the House into committee of the whole until such time as the committee is prepared to report out, with Mr. Lewis in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

I will call the committee to order. Yesterday we were on Bill 25. Mr. Dent, how would you like to proceed?

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend the committee continue consideration of Committee Report 11-12(7) and Bill 25.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Committee Report 11-12(7): Report on the Review of Bill 25 - The Education Act

Bill 25: Education Act

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Yesterday we concluded the last clause, clause 164. I believe there are several motions to deal with. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, after the Minister brings in some witnesses, could I seek consent to go back to clause 4?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We are going to go back to the details of the bill again. With the consent of the committee, the Minister can bring his witnesses in and get on with it. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

While we are waiting for our witnesses to come in, I would like to recognize a former Member of this Assembly and former Deputy Speaker, Mr. Peter Fraser.

---Applause

For the record, would you introduce your very well-coordinated

Page 1561

team today? Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my immediate right is Carol Whitehouse, legislative council; on my immediate left is Hal Gerein, deputy minister; on the far left is Gail Joyce, director of policy and planning; behind me on the right is Janet Grinsted, senior policy advisor; behind is Eric Colbourne, assistant deputy minister of educational development.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Dent, has asked that we return to the detail of the bill, clause 4. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Members will recall when we were on clause 4, there was a motion on the floor; an amendment to clause 4.(1). Mr. Ningark.

Committee Motion 70-12(7): To Add A New Clause 4.1 To Bill 25, Withdrawn

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I seem to be losing the support of my OMC Members. Just kidding. Mr. Chairman, after consulting with the Ordinary Members' Caucus, I would like to withdraw my motion. Thank you.

MR. WHITFORD:

Good move.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

That is in order. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

---Withdrawn

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Clause 4. Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 97-12(7): To Amend Clause 4 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that clause 4.2 of Bill 25 be amended by

(a) renumbering it as subsection 4.1(1); and

(b) adding the following after proposed clause (1):

(2) Notwithstanding anything in this Act, where there is a conflict between this Act and the aboriginal rights of the aboriginal people of the territories, which includes but are not limited to aboriginal rights in

(a) treaties;

(b) land claims agreements; and

(c) self government agreements,

those rights shall prevail to the extent of the conflict.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The motion is in order, Mr. Koe. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Clause 4, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask for consent to go to clause 10.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The Member would like to go to clause 10. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Page 10, clause 10. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 98-12(7): To Amend Clause 10 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that clause 10 of Bill 25 be repealed and the following be substituted:

10. If a senior secondary education program is not offered in the education district in which a student resides and the student registers with a school in another education district that offers a senior secondary education program, the education body for the education district in which the student resides shall, in accordance with the direction of the Minister, provide the student with accommodation in the education district in which the student registers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Your motion seems to be in order, Mr. Dent. I would like to make sure that every Member has a copy of it. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Question has been called. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD:

Just for clarification, Mr. Chairman. Senior secondary education, is this just in the Northwest Territories? Does it include anywhere that this program is offered,

or is it strictly in the territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Dent.

Page 1562

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, the intention was to be strictly with the Northwest Territories but we could, perhaps, ask legal counsel to clarify that is what would be accomplished by this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. MacPherson, give us your opinion, please.

LAW CLERK (Ms. MacPherson):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be limited to the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. It's now on the record. Question, then.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Clause 10, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Where do you want to go next, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the next clause that was deferred was clause 21 so, perhaps, we could go to that clause, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The Member has asked to go on to clause 21, which I believe has already been dealt with, but I believe we need to have unanimous consent to go to it. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay, we'll go on to clause 21. Mr. Antoine.

Committee Motion 99-12(7): To Amend Clause 21 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a motion that clause 21 of Bill 25 be amended by striking out "school," and by substituting "school, including an aboriginal school." in proposed subsection (1).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Is this a motion, Mr. Antoine?

MR. ANTOINE:

(Microphone turned off)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay. If that's the motion, Members should have a copy of it in their hands. Could we get that distributed, please?

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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, could we seek consent to deal with clause 44?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree, clause 44?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We're on clause 44 on page 27 of the act. I want to be sure that everybody has a copy of what we're talking about. When we dealt with this clause there was a motion on the floor; however, the mover of that motion is not in the House today, I don't believe, and can't withdraw it, so we have to deal with this motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Thank you. The amendments that were made by Mrs. Marie-Jewell were made to try to get some clarification or certainty in terms of defining a person who is not a teacher or is not certified to teach, to be employed to teach or assist in teaching official languages and culture. That was the intent of the proposed amendments. I guess because the mover is not here, we will have to deal with these clauses. In addressing this, I'm going to oppose this motion and bring in another amendment under clause 61, which would address the intent of this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The motion is in order. To the motion to amend clause 44.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Defeated

Mr. Dent, where would you like to go next?

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that we go next to clause 61.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Did we recommend approval of clause 44 then?

Page 1563

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Clause 44.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe.

---Applause

I appreciated that, Mr. Koe. Mr. Dent has asked to go to clause 61 and the committee has agreed. Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 100-12(7): To Amend Clause 61 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a motion. I move that Bill 25 be amended by

(a)renumbering clause 61 as clause 58; and,

(b)adding the following after clause 58:

Language and Traditional Knowledge Instructors

59. Where no teacher is available, an education body may hire a person who is not a teacher to provide the instruction, as part of the education program, of an Official Language, other than English or French, where that person

(a)is fluent in that language;

(b)successfully completes a test for that language administered by the education body; and,

(c)receives orientation in teaching methods as provided by the education body.

60.(1) An education body may hire a person who is not a teacher to instruct or to assist in the instruction of local programs, including, but not limited to, land skills, art, crafts, local customs, local spirituality or other subjects of local cultural significance.

(2) A person hired pursuant to subsection (1) must, in the opinion of the education body, have the skills, knowledge or abilities required to instruct the subject matter of the local program he or she is hired to instruct.

Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. The motion is in order. Does everybody have a copy of this motion? Everyone has one. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to seek committee consent to go to clause 71.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Mr. Dent. Just a moment. We have to go back to clause 58. Do we agree with the clause, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Clause 59, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Clause 60, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Mr. Dent, we're now back to clause 71. Mr. Koe. Who is going to deal with this one? Mr. Zoe.

Committee Motion 101-12(7): To Amend Clause 71 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to propose a motion. I move that clause 71 of Bill 25 be amended by striking out "section, determine the language" and by substituting "section and in accordance with the regulations, determine a language" in proposed subsection (1).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

I want to make sure everybody has a copy first.

The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

I hear the Minister saying "question" already but I will just note, Mr. Chairman, that we came up with this motion

because we wanted a more definitive clause and also to allow it to be put into the regulations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Does the committee agree with clause 71, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Page 1564

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis): Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Clause 71 determines the language of instruction and gives authority to district education authorities, in accordance with the regulations, to determine the language of instruction to be used in the education district. So the district education authority will determine what language of instruction will be used in that particular district.

Then it goes on to say that by determining the language of instruction in the education district, this is like a CEC, like a community, that it is an education division, so that they'll have that authority, and then

the Minister will give directions to establish standards and guidelines for selection and use of language of instruction, to assure the maintenance of the highest possible standards.

The problem I have with this is that the district education authority may choose a language of instruction, and then it lists three conditions that all have to be met before they determine whether a language will be used at the district education authority.

One of the conditions is that there is a significant demand for the language in the education district. So, after I have finished my concern here, maybe the Minister could explain what significant demand is? Who determines it? Is it the Minister, the superintendent, the principal or the district education authority that determines the condition of significant demand?

Another condition is that there be a sufficient number of teachers who are fluent in the language and able to teach in the language in the education district. So then, another condition is that you have to find enough teachers who are fluent in that language.

The third condition is that there be sufficient and suitable school program materials available in the language.

So there are three conditions before a language of instruction is chosen. That seems to me to put more barriers in front of teaching an aboriginal language. In my communities there is Slavey language in the schools. So the Minister is going to have tell me who determines all these conditions.

What if you have a principal -- and it does happen -- who is against aboriginal languages being provided in the school? Who determines that? The community is not involved in it. Let's say there's a band council, for example. It's not involved in determining if it's their language, but it's their right.

The key to culture is language, and this is one of the things that aboriginal people have been saying for years, the chiefs and councils, that the key to a culture is language and one way of preserving it is to have that right in the school system. I think the right for speaking an aboriginal language in a community is taken away by this clause, especially with the conditions imposed upon it.

If you compare it to this current act, in here, the language of instruction for Slavey could be from K to 3. They must provide that. But now it doesn't do that. So I am concerned about this particular clause in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. So we've agreed to this clause as amended, but maybe the Minister could answer Mr. Antoine's questions.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The matter that is being considered here is the matter of language of instruction. It is the language in which all the subjects are being taught. That's what it is. It's not the language as a subject. They are two different things. You have to have teachers who speak the language who can teach all the subjects in a language; you have to have the materials with which you teach the children and you have to have the appropriate numbers of students in a class in order for you to deliver that program. This is a matter of quality assurance. It's necessary so that we can have the materials and programs responsive to ensure the success of students. So, in that sense, that's the whole purpose for which we have teaching and learning centres across the Northwest Territories. That's why we have the community teacher education program, which we are, in fact, going to be implementing this year in the Deh Cho. That's the whole purpose of trying to accomplish that, so that we can have more aboriginal teachers who teach the actual subjects in the school in their own language.

The other thing is that this decision is not made solely by the principal. The community leadership is involved. Part of that also includes, under sections 117 and 118, the requirement to consult on these issues and get the advice of the community.

The other point is that this legislation allows the potential for the very consideration that the honourable Member is raising. If he's concerned that the chief is not in charge or that the council isn't, in future, there is a potential where that leadership can assume responsibility for education. So this legislation allows that to happen.

There are two components the honourable Member is confusing, I think. One is the matter of subject and the other one is instruction, and you can't confuse the

two because they are two totally different bases on which we teach.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't ask the Minister to determine whether I am confusing people or not. I asked the Minister if he could explain to me the intention of this clause. Is it to put up more barriers than before with regard to choosing a language of instruction? One of the barriers is that there be significant demand, and I asked the Minister who determines this significant demand.

The other one is that there has to be a sufficient number of teachers fluent in the language available to teach in the language in the education district for the language of instruction.

The other one is that there are sufficient, suitable school program materials available in the language. There are more and more materials being developed in the communities with regard to providing aboriginal languages in the classroom.

But it seems there are barriers put up, so if the Minister could, would he explain to me if that is the case or not, and if so,

Page 1565

maybe he could explain these conditions that are being imposed regarding language of instruction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Minister.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Again, Mr. Chairman, if I might very clearly say, the matter of language of instruction is the language in which you teach all subjects. That's what it is. If Mr. Antoine is saying that he has teachers in his region who can teach the subject math totally -- calculus, trigonometry -- sciences, biology, chemistry, in the language, then we will deliver the program.

But based on that, though, there is a need to ensure that, if you do have the teachers, that you have enough of them. If the issue is language as a subject

-- in other words, having someone come in to teach the language so that you can teach children to learn to speak the language properly -- that's a totally different issue, and that can be done in addition to the languages of instruction. Those are two different things. That's what we are talking about when we deal with language of instruction.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay, try again, Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

I understand that it is the language of instruction, Mr. Chairman. What are the chances of now, in this system, having enough teachers fluent in the languages available to teach the language of instruction in all courses? What is this legislation doing to ensure that happens? What this does is limits it. You are putting conditions on there that will ultimately make it difficult to do that. That is my concern. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Minister.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not intended to be a barrier. This is intended to ensure that there is quality assurances for the communities. I can advise the Member that Innuqatigiit and Dene Kede allow all communities to teach aboriginal languages without any barriers. The curriculum has already been approved. So there is already a basis on which we can teach languages. On the issue of teaching the total program, all elements, we require qualified teachers in our own languages. There are two different issues. That is why I can advise the Member that the teacher education program is, in fact, to make those teachers available. The honourable Member has some of the more qualified aboriginal language educators in the Northwest Territories. Yet, he knows that we don't have enough of them and that is why, beginning this year, we are going to establish the community education program in this community. We have done it in North Slave, the Beaufort/Delta, we are going to be doing it in the Sahtu and Deh Cho this year. We have done it in the Kitikmeot, Keewatin and Baffin, south and north. We have had really great success in the Keewatin; probably, in terms of return on our investment, the highest percentages. Right now, over 50 per cent of the teachers who are hired to

teach in the schools in the Keewatin and close to 50 per cent in the Baffin. So we know the success of the community teacher education program and we are starting to see it in the Dogrib communities as well.

That is what our intention is. We are hoping that by the year 2000, as we stated here, 50 per cent of our teaching force will be aboriginal people where we can deal with question of quality assurances in teaching all subjects in the languages.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one last comment on clause 71. The Minister is talking about all these things the department is doing with regard to providing aboriginal languages in the communities. What we have now is okay, but my understanding of this act is to take what we have now and improve on it. Young people in grade 7, 8 and 9 are coming to meet me and they want to speak their language and they want that in school. High school students come to me saying they want their language in high school, but that isn't available now. My understanding of this act was the language of instruction would be developed to provide that availability for them. It is an official languages issue. That is the law of the land. That should be made available to aboriginal students in the west who want to have that opportunity offered to them in the communities. Is that what is happening in this bill?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill makes it easier for aboriginal languages to be used, both as a language of instruction and as a subject. The previous Education Act didn't allow that to happen. We are allowing that to happen, along with the district education authority, to choose the language of instruction from kindergarten to grade 12, not just kindergarten to grade 2, as it is now.

Presently, there are high school courses that have been developed and are now being offered in Deh Cho as part of the language courses. We are working on these issues and, obviously, there are two

elements to this: one, the issue of instruction; and, the issue of language classes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Next was Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been listening with interest on this section. I believe the section deals with the language of instruction in this particular bill. It sets out the language of instruction that will be taught in the school. My understanding is that the existing bill allows the students to be taught in their own language, at least in the Baffin region, from kindergarten to grade 2. I wonder if the Minister could cite, in this proposed bill, something that would give me the comfort that would guarantee that the language of instruction will be the same or even better than grade 2; that would specifically cite that the first language would be taught.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is clear, Mr. Chairman. The language of instruction must be an official language. It says it isn't a matter of a prerogative, it must be. If the official language of instruction is Inuktitut, then

Page 1566

that is the language of instruction. The DEA makes that decision. In other words, it isn't going to be the department that makes the determination. We are going to set the standards and the criteria, but they will make the choice of the language. However, it must be an official language. As a result of that, if the official language is Inuktitut, they have to make certain that as a subject, English must be taught. That is their choice.

On the other hand, if English is the language of instruction, an official language other than English must be taught as part of the educational program. It is clear that the language of instruction has to be an official language.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that the kids are taught in their first language, which is Inuktitut, from kindergarten up to grade 2. I wanted to get comfort from the Minister that specifically cites that this will continue on even further than grade 2. He didn't cite a clause which would give me comfort. He is saying it will be left up to the DEA; provided that there is significant demand, sufficient number of teachers fluent in that particular language, that they are available, that materials are available, and the Minister has to approve it. Whereas before, it was up to the local education authority if this was taught. They didn't have to go to the Minister, or cite whether there was significant demand or a sufficient number of teachers to teach that language. Now, I understand they have to. If the DEA approves it, does it go up to the Minister? Could the Minister cite a clause in this act that will give me comfort that whatever is happening in Pond Inlet, Igloolik and Hall Beach will continue, or even become better than it is today for the Inuktitut language?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's too bad people aren't reading the legislation because it says clearly in section 71, "A district education authority shall, in accordance with the requirements of this section, determine the language of instruction to be used in the education district." It doesn't say the Minister shall do it. It says the district education authority shall do it. It's section 71.

But the district education authority must recognize that there are certain requirements and considerations. There is, of course, the matter of the numbers of students, whether or not you have the teachers -- and I made mention that the Baffin, along with the Keewatin, is successful with aboriginal teachers -- and that the materials are available. The language of instruction includes all languages. If you are doing K to 12 from now on or K to 3, it depends on the material that is available. If you have teachers who can teach trigonometry in Inuktitut, or calculus or biology or chemistry, with all the formulas included, then you can teach those subjects. That's a decision left up to the community. We determine the guidelines which safeguard the quality and encourage

the use of the language. There are two elements. We don't determine this, it's the community now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Section 72(1) reads: "The Minister may give direction establishing standards and guidelines for selection and use of language of instruction to ensure the maintenance of the highest possible standards of education." Does that apply to kindergarten, grade 3 and grade 5?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Allooloo. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, and we do it now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Allooloo.

MR. ALLOOLOO:

My understanding is that the community of Pond Inlet teaches in Inuktitut from kindergarten at least up to grade 2 and as a subject for the rest of the grades. Does the community council have to get the Minister's approval under the current act so the students can be taught from kindergarten to grade 2?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the current act, from kindergarten to grade 2, no there isn't the requirement to get approval. But they do require that the Minister set standards and criteria for the quality of the program. The clause that is now before you, clause 71, allows the district education authority to provide programming from kindergarten from grade 12. In other words, we've expanded the ability of the district education authority to have control of the language of instruction from K-12. That's what we're doing here. But the same quality assurances still remain. There are policies, policy directions, standards and guidelines. We have that authority now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Does anyone else want to speak to this issue? Ms. Mike.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated earlier in his response to Mr. Allooloo's question that instruction shall be provided in schools only if the materials are available. Is that what he said?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Chairman, the materials have to, obviously, be available. But this clause deals with the teaching of every subject from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm in that language. It is for teaching math and biology without English; in other words, all in the aboriginal language or whatever official language you wish to use, like English. It is the teaching of those subjects in that language. That's what language of instruction means.

If, for instance, in the Gwich'in communities, we wanted to include Gwich'in as a subject -- in other words, we hire a language instructor for the development of students in that language -- that's a subject, it's not considered a language of instruction. They have to teach all the subjects in the language, as is the case in most of the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Ms. Mike.

Page 1567

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I used to work with the Department of Education, doing evaluations of aboriginal languages, including all the dialects. What is the department doing now to assist in producing relevant materials in aboriginal languages?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We fund the teaching and learning centres, the agents really responsible for

developing a lot of the materials. In the matter of curriculum, Innuqatigiit is the basis on which we're going to be delivering Inuktitut programming in the communities. In the west, the base curriculum is Dene Kede. That is what has occurred so far, but we continue to fund the teaching and learning centres. We are also responsible, of course, for teacher training and we have been successful, I think, in the Baffin with the teacher education program.

From a community development perspective, I think we've done a good job. We still need to continue to work towards our goal of having at least 50 per cent aboriginal educators across the north. We have been very successful in the Inuit communities and we hope, by using the same community teacher education program, we can also be successful in the Dene communities. We now have instructors that can actually teach these subjects.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Ms. Mike, are you done? Ms. Mike.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Nunavut communities, from kindergarten to grade 3, instruction is all in Inuktitut, but I'm not sure whether that is the case in western communities, especially in aboriginal communities. That's why I asked if the department still assists in program development by providing learning materials, and if they still do evaluations on production of materials in aboriginal languages. To my understanding, some of the Dene languages, some of the Dene learning materials, are not as progressed as ones in Nunavut. I'm wondering what kind of protection they have under this act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. I will advise the honourable Member that we do have, again, our teaching and learning centres that we fund on an ongoing basis. I believe every language is serviced right now in the Dene, with the exception of pre...The language of instruction, for instance, in Dogrib is from K to 2; and Fort Franklin, North Slavey, I believe it's the same. Those are generally the two. One community in Sahtu and all the communities in the Dogrib region, I believe.

That's in terms of language of instruction for Dene communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Ms. Mike.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I have some concerns about this is because the Minister's staff, especially the one sitting behind him, were in the Baffin when the Baffin Divisional Board of Education was established. They were told the importance of -- by the professors from universities in, I think, Montreal -- teaching the Inuktitut language, which is the language most spoken in the homes of Nunavut communities. The importance of it was that if the children whose first language is Inuktitut develop their Inuktitut language first, then they have a better chance of learning English as a second language, as opposed to introducing English right away from kindergarten to grade 3.

I'm wondering if, for the Dene communities in the west, whether that is being considered in schools.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That same message, Mr. Chairman, is being given in the Dene communities, as well. What you must understand is that we are now implementing in some regions now -- the Sahtu and the Deh Cho particularly -- the community teacher education program. We are now working in the Beaufort. We've been working in the Dogrib community. We've done some work in the South Slave, I believe, and so we are now covering, I think, all regions with our community teacher education program.

Like everything else, you have to have the people to be able to deliver the programs in those languages. It's not simply a matter of teaching it as a subject. Those teachers have to be knowledgeable about the concepts that they're teaching and must be able to deliver it in their language. That's where we're at right now.

The same comments you made are reflected in our view and we're trying to do it with all the Dene communities, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe it's this section that I can make general comments on. With regard to the language of instruction, generally, Mr. Chairman, I note that through a number of sections related to language and instruction there's reference made to, particularly, the French; that they have a right to teach their kids the French language, language of instruction. It's a right. Well, I note -- and I've been reading this section 71 with regard to language of instruction, aboriginal language of instruction -- there's no specific reference similar to the other section that relates to the French people. There's no specific right for the aboriginal parent to teach their child in the aboriginal language.

I want to ask the Minister why wasn't the same type of language used in this particular section pertaining to the aboriginal languages? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this legislation does not establish the rights of the French or the rights of the English. This legislation recognizes the existence of a right in the Canadian Charter of Rights. Based on that, we have an obligation to recognize that particular minority language education right that exists. Aboriginal rights, in this particular context, have been recognized in the preamble and in 4.(2).

Page 1568

The problem, Mr. Chairman, and I've been trying to say this in my introduction and in my comments, is that it is very unclear, to date, what those specific rights of aboriginal people really are for education, for that matter because there's no specific definition and interpretation that has been given to those rights. We recognize -- and I've said this all along -- and certainly this government's intention is to recognize that there are existing rights. What they are has not been defined. It makes it very difficult for us to say, yes, certain rights exist and these are the rights. That's what makes it difficult.

What we're trying to do is take it in a broader context and say that whatever rights might exist, we will recognize them. How they are defined, in some cases, will be through self-government agreements or treaty rights definitions or interpretations between the aboriginal people and the federal government. However, as a territorial government, we cannot define what those rights are because the relationship is not between the aboriginal people and the territorial government; the relationship is between the aboriginal people and the federal government, the Crown, you might say. That's why it's difficult for us to say these are the rights.

The other thing is that we're recognizing and encouraging rights of aboriginal languages, as a result of our official languages legislation. As a result of that, we are putting in place the appropriate recognition to allow the communities to respect and to instruct in the official languages within that Official Languages Act.

That's how we're getting into the recognition that they have a right to make these decisions and a right to be educated in those languages.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what the Minister is saying but even with, for instance, the French right to have their children educated in the French language, I don't think it's what you call a "right" right. I'm not a legal person, but isn't there a provisional right because they're not really defined as all, certain rights; if I'm right. If I'm right, that's the legal definition. But there is, I think, something called a provisional right, not as a right right for these French speaking parents.

It appears, when you read these sections, Mr. Chairman, that the French parents can have their children taught, it is their right, but there is no reference saying aboriginal people have a right to teach their kids. It doesn't read well. The same language isn't used in these two sections. That is the point I was trying to get across. I understand the rationale for what the Minister is saying, but even with the French...I think it is

what they call provisional rights. In the Charter of Rights, they have to meet certain qualifications. Am I correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, right, Mr. Zoe.

---Laughter

Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Right, Mr. Chairman.

---Laughter

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the honourable Member has pointed out the basis on which the rights of the French are recognized under section 23. It is clear under section 23 of the Charter. "Where numbers warrant" are the words that are incumbent upon the interpretation to be given to that. The courts have ruled quite clearly in its interpretation and based on section 23. You might say the right isn't absolute. You can't just extend more and interpret it to be more than what it really is. I think some of the recommendations that have been made and suggestions here have been that we were trying to extend rights beyond what had been interpreted in the courts. Some suggestions would have gone further than what the courts had ruled.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Clause 71, as amended. Do you agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Alloo, is right; we hadn't agreed to the amended clause, but now we have agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Ballantyne.

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I seek unanimous consent to return to clause 77. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Dent is now back. Do we have consent to go back to clause 77?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We are on clause 77. Mr. Ballantyne.

Committee Motion 102-12(7): To Amend Clause 77 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 77 of Bill 25 be amended by repealing proposed subsection (3) and by substituting the following:

(3) A public denominational school may provide religious instruction and

(a) may conduct religious exercises

(i) in a manner that reflects the religious values of the majority of the ratepayers who petitioned the Minister in accordance with section 97 for the establishment of the public denominational school,

(ii) in accordance with the directions of the Minister; and

Page 1569

(b) that religious instruction shall be provided or conducted in a manner that is respectful of the spiritual and religious values of all the students.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Your motion is in order, Mr. Ballantyne. Does everyone have a copy of this motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The 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

The motion is carried. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek consent to go back to clause 79.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Antoine, I have done the same thing again. We have not got committee agreement that 77 has been approved as amendment. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Mr. Chairman, I have to correct myself. Mr. Ballantyne went to clause 77 and I did say 79, but I would like to ask unanimous consent to go back to clause 73. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We need unanimous consent to go back to clause 73. Any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Antoine.

Committee Motion 103-12(7): To Amend Clause 73 Of Bill 25, Defeated

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this clause, with regard to Bill 25, I move that clause 73 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed subsection (3):

(4) Where English is the language of instruction determined under subsection 71(3) but is not the first language of the majority of students in the school, the first language of the majority of students, where that language is an official language, must be taught as part of the education program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Your motion is being distributed. This is to add a section to clause 73. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Nerysoo, to the motion.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Could I take a few minutes to review the recommendation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We will take a four-and-a-half minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

I would like to recognize a former constituent of mine and a former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Mr. John Parker.

---Applause

We have a motion on the floor to amend clause 73 of Bill 25. To the motion. Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you. I just want to speak to the motion. It's up for a vote right now, but what is proposed here is in the current legislation. It's mandatory to teach the aboriginal language and what the department will probably say is that it will lose the flexibility for the community to decide but, on the other hand, there's a

price for flexibility. Let's say there's a community where English is the language of instruction, people on the board may decide to use the French language even though the majority is Slavey, for example. What happens is you lose the language. If you make it mandatory, it's for the survival of the language. Studies have shown that by the year 2000, we're going to lose a lot of the languages. If we leave this in, the way I see it, it's for the survival of the language. If you vote against it, you're voting against the language.

If you put in law that it's mandatory to put an aboriginal language in there...That's why I put it forward. That's the way it is currently in the act now, I just took it and revised it to make sure it's in there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does anybody else want to speak to the motion? Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that this clause will legislate the use of a particular language as a subject in a program. The whole clause, as it is in the legislation, is to permit decision-making in the communities. This amendment would take away the ability of the communities to make their choice. In other words, they're obligated to do it. So, in that sense, we're legislating a decision prior to the communities deciding what is in the interest of the community. A vote against is not a vote against a language. We're trying to support that the communities make the choice first, rather than us forcing them to make that choice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

To the motion. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because the mover has categorized those in favour of the vote and those against, I think it's important to speak to it. The way

Page 1570

the motion is drafted, it is not something that is clear or thought out. I must say that I would have been much more comfortable if it had come from the work of a committee. I don't know where this comes from, but it does not reflect...The Education Act, in the first

instance, is intended to give as much control, flexibility and choice to parents and communities as possible.

It is true, I would say, for the majority of aboriginal children, at least in the western Arctic, that their first language is now English, and not an aboriginal language. The way this motion is drafted doesn't reflect that and I think it's important to know that if some of us choose to vote against this, it's not because we're against aboriginal languages. That's a bit simplistic and dismissive of our requirement to give careful thought to the drafting of legislation. I'm going to be voting against it, but it's not because I'm against the use of aboriginal languages or that I'm trying to be derogatory towards aboriginal languages at all.

I think this is too rigid and I don't think it's worded the way it is intended by the mover. I think it takes away the choice we're trying to achieve for parents and communities in the Education Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Defeated

Where would you like to go next, Mr. Dent?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

(Microphone turned off)...the way it is then?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to seek consent of the committee to go to clause 126.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Dent, I believe it's clause 79 that you want to go to next. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does everybody have a copy of the motion regarding clause 79? Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 104-12(7): To Amend Clause 79 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after clause 79:

79.1 Residents of the territories may, in accordance with the regulations, petition the Minister to establish an education district or alter the limits of one or more education districts to meet the needs of those residents.

Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. The motion is in order. I'll just wait while it's being distributed.

Everyone has a copy. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Clause 79, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Dent, where would you like to go next?

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to see consent to move to clause 118.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Okay, clause 118 is on page 64 of the bill. Mr. Ballantyne.

Committee Motion 105-12(7): To Amend Clause 118 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. BALLANTYNE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 118 of Bill 25 be amended by adding "including parents' advisory committees," after "committees," in proposed paragraph (1)(g).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne. The motion is in order. I'll make sure everyone has a copy of it. Just wait a second while it's being distributed, please.

To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

Page 1571

---Carried

Do you agree that 118, as amended, is agreed to?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Nerysoo.

Committee Motion 106-12(7): To Amend Clause 118 Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 118 of Bill 25 be amended by

(a) adding "powers and" after "assign" in proposed paragraph (1)(f);

(b) repealing proposed paragraph (1)(k) and by substituting the following:

(k) in addition to the school program, develop and deliver early childhood development, adult education, cultural, religious or other programs to enhance learning and charge fees for the programs;

(k.1) hire and employ teachers or persons who are not

teachers for the instruction of local programs;

and

(c) adding the following after proposed paragraph (2)(b):

(b. 1) enter into agreements regarding aboriginal schools;

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Further amendment then to clause 118. Does everyone have a copy of this motion? The 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Do you agree, then, to clause 118, as amended? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Yes, I just want to state for the record under sections 118(1)(d), 118(1)(e), 118(1)(1) and 118(2)(b) where it refers to fees and tuition fees, that the rights of treaty rights and aboriginal rights are respected.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. I believe there is a clause elsewhere in the act that covers that issue, as a matter of record. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Under section 118(2)(a), where there is reference to the delivery of a teacher education program, I would just like to know who will have the ultimate authority or the responsibility for the teacher education program? Is it the district education council or Arctic College?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. I can advise the honourable Member that the delivery agent is Aurora College or Nunavut Arctic College, and the initiators of the program are the Minister and the appropriate divisional board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

Just to clarify that. So the responsibility for the program is with the Minister? Who is responsible for the education program? Not who delivers it, but who makes the decisions on the type of program that is delivered? Who makes the decisions on who is hired to deliver it? Who makes the decisions on which students are picked to go into the program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

The responsibility rests with the Aurora College. The Aurora College is involved in the determination of the students, along with the board, because there are certain standard entrance requirements that have to be met. But generally that is the approach and the method by which it is operated.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Okay, clause 118, as amended. Agreed? Ms. Mike, I'm sorry.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On 118(k), in addition to the school program, develop and deliver early childhood development, adult education, cultural, religious or other programs to enhance learning and charge fees for the programs; Mr. Chairman, I don't understand, because this government took over education from the federal government that was geared towards aboriginal education. I want to know why we would want to charge fees to teach cultural programs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a power, and it enables the divisions or the education authority to exercise the power if they so choose. There may be some limitations on the exercising of that power, but that power is defined based on the regulatory authority that is defined.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you very much. Ms. Mike.

MS. MIKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am confused here, because my understanding was that this territorial government took over education dollars from the federal government to enhance learning, especially for the aboriginals. Most of our people in our communities would not be able to afford to pay fees charged even if they wanted their children to enter any of these programs identified in (k). My concern is that, although this is well intended, I don't believe the majority of parents will be able to afford whatever fees are set for their children to enter into programs identified in (k). How are we going to do that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Ms. Mike. Mr. Minister.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Mr. Chairman, I just advised that this is to allow the boards to enter these agreements. These also must be considered as outside school programs. In other

Page 1572

words, they are not school programs. I will give you an example where there are certain agreements that have been reached. I can maybe speak for the early childhood program in Inuvik, as an example, where we are using space in the school for the delivery of child day care. We sign an agreement with the division and the CEC on the use of the building. They are then able to charge us money, and we utilize our child care money to pay for that space. That's the kind of stuff we are talking about, so they can enter into these agreements.

Adult education would be the same kind of arrangement where you are entering into an arrangement with outside programs. That's what we are talking about. This is a permissive clause to allow them to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Clause 118, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. What do you want to do next, Mr. Dent?

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we go to clause 126.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members agree that we do 126? Whose motion is this? Mr. Nerysoo.

Committee Motion 107-12(7): To Amend Clause 126 Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed subsection 126(2):

(3)for the purposes of this section, "hours of instruction" means the time during which a student receives instruction in the education program.

(4)The Minister shall, in accordance with this section, prescribe the hours of instruction for the academic year to be, where the student attends

(a)kindergarten, no more than 570 hours;

(b)grades one through six, no less than 997 hours; and

(c)grades seven through 12, no less than 1045 hours.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Has everyone got 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 126 is amended, then. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

What would the committee like to do now? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to recommend that we go to clause 136.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Seek consent to go to clause 136. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

We're on page 75, clause 136. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 108-12(7): To Amend Clause 136 of Bill 25, Carried

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 136 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed subsection (4):

(5) Where a District Education Authority acquires funds for education purposes through taxation of property, the District Education Authority does not require the approval of the Minister for that portion of its annual estimate of revenue and expenditures for operation and maintenance and capital which relates directly to the funds acquired by the District Education Authority through the taxation of property.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Everybody has a copy of this 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 136, as amended. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that committee now move to clause 151.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree with Mr. Dent's suggestion? Clause 151.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Page 1573

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis): Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 109-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed paragraph (1)(g):

(g.1)governing the requirements for consultation for the selection of a language of instruction;

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Your motion is in order. The motion is being distributed to Members. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

To the same clause, then, Mr. Nerysoo.

Committee Motion 110-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by

(a)striking out "honorifiques;" in the French version of the proposed paragraph (2)(b) and by substituting "honorifiques";

(b)adding "and" at the end of proposed paragraph (2)(1);

(c)striking out "dismissal to a board of reference;" in proposed paragraph (2)(m) and by substituting "dismissal."; and

(d)repealing proposed paragraphs (n), (o), (p) and (q) of proposed subsection (2).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 111-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed paragraph (3)(a);

(a.1)prescribing the manner in which residents of the Territories may petition the Minister under section 79.1;

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The motion is in order. It's being distributed. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

Mr. Nerysoo.

Committee Motion 112-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by striking out "paragraph 131(2)(b) and 133(1)(b)" in proposed paragraph (4)(d) and by substituting "subsection 131(2) and paragraph 133(1)(b)".

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Question has been called. All those in favour? If you're in favour of the motion, you have to signify. All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 113-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed paragraph (4)(g):

(g.1)respecting the establishment and maintenance of a register pursuant to subsection 151(6);

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. We're still on clause 151. The motion is in order. Everybody has a copy of the motion. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

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

---Carried

To the same clause, Mr. Koe.

Committee Motion 114-12(7): To Amend Clause 151 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. KOE:

I move that clause 151 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed subsection (5):

Page 1574

(6) The Minister shall, in accordance with the regulations, establish and maintain a register of organizations and the Minister shall consult with those organizations regarding

(a) the proposed contents of the regulations, and

(b) a draft of the regulations.

(7) An organization may request that the Minister place its name, address, phone number and telecopier number in the register and, in accordance with the regulations, the Minister shall place that information in the register.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Koe. The 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

Now if there are no more amendments, do Members agree that we have now moved clause 151, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

As amended, agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Do Members now agree that we can go back to clause 100, which was deferred yesterday?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Clause 100. Do Members agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Agreed. Thank you very much. Mr. Dent, where would you like to go next?

MR. DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I seek the committee's consent to go to clause 117.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Mr. Dent, clause 117.

Committee Motion 115-12(7): To Amend Clause 117 Of Bill 25, Carried

MR. DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that clause 117 of Bill 25 be amended by repealing proposed paragraphs (2)(k) and (2)(1) and by substituting the following:

(k) subject to subsection 136(5), prepare for the approval of the Minister, in accordance with the regulations, an annual estimate of revenue and expenditures for the operation and maintenance of the education program in the area within its jurisdiction for the next school year;

(l) subject to subsection 136(6), prepare, for the approval of the Minister and in accordance with the directions of the Minister, an annual estimate of revenue and expenditures for all capital items for the education program in the area within its jurisdiction for the next school year; and

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Your motion is in order. The motion is being distributed. 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. Minister, on the same clause.

Committee Motion 116-12(7): To Amend Clause 117 Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 117 of Bill 25 be amended by adding the following after proposed paragraph (1)(l);

(m) employ a superintendent;

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

A nice short amendment. The 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

Are there any more amendments on clause 117, Mr. Nerysoo?

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree that clause 117 is amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Agreed. Does the committee agree that we have dealt with all the clauses in this bill and you are now ready to go to the preamble?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

Page 1575

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis): Thank you. So we go to the preamble in the bill. Mr. Minister.

Committee Motion 117-12(7): To Amend Preamble Of Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the preamble to Bill 25 be amended by adding "and" after "achievement" in proposed paragraph 4. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Your motion is being distributed and it 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

Are there any further amendments to the preamble, Mr. Nerysoo?

Committee Motion 118-12(7): To Amend Preamble To Bill 25, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the preamble to Bill 25 be amended by

(a)striking out "sections 15, 23 and 25" and by substituting "sections 15 and 23" in proposed paragraph 7; and

(b)striking out "section 35" and by substituting "sections 25 and 35" in proposed paragraph 8.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. The 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

Do the Members agree that the preamble carries? Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE:

I just want to make a few comments that with the changes to the preamble and all the amendments to the act, a lot of the concerns that my colleagues, especially Mrs. Marie-Jewell, Mr. Antoine and myself had raised, and other comments regarding aboriginal rights and languages, et cetera, we are satisfied with the new proposed bill. I would like to thank the Minister, his staff, our legal counsel and everyone else who assisted in working out the amendments

over the last few days. It was quite a task and I think everyone is fairly satisfied with the results. Thank you to everyone.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Once again, does the committee agree that the preamble should carry? Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say that we have put a lot of work into the Education Act over the last few days. We worked on it for quite a bit here. In the last few days when we were actually going clause by clause and it wasn't strong enough regarding treaty rights and aboriginal issues, we were able to strengthen that and I would like to thank the Members of this House for that. I think it will go a long way in satisfying people with treaty concerns, and who have been raising this issue for many years. Finally, it is in here and, hopefully, it does something better.

I wanted to get bigger and better clauses in here, but we were able to compromise. I still would like to see those amendments in there, especially for languages. Unfortunately, we were unable to put in that it is mandatory to teach the aboriginal languages. Now it is the choice of the communities, and perhaps that's a good thing. But I was thinking that the flexibility that is there, while it may be good, could be bad too. A mandatory clause to teach aboriginal languages, in the long run...We're a majority here, but in the future, aboriginal people may become a minority. It's the choice of the communities now, but we're going to sit with this thing for the next ten years or more.

If it had been mandatory that we have to teach aboriginal languages, it would have gone a long way to save the languages. It was the survival of the languages that I was concerned about. I was thinking for the future but, unfortunately, didn't get it. I would have liked to have seen it in there, but it's not. That's the way it goes. We were outvoted. We'll see, in time, how this is going to have an effect on our languages.

Overall, there was give and take and compromises. I would like to thank all the Members for the supporting the clauses that we were able to put in here. Thank you. Mahsi.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine, for your words. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you. If you could give me just a couple of minutes, I know this process has not always been one that has been exciting and my colleagues probably want to get out of here, but I just want to say a couple of things.

I recognize and appreciate the amount of work that has been done. My colleague indicated that we have done a lot of hard work over the past couple of weeks, but that was only concerning some of the issues. This matter has been dealt with since approximately 1998. Other Ministers have tried to get this issue resolved, and I want to give recognition to people like Gail Joyce, Janet Grinstead, Carol Whitehouse, people from Justice, the staff from Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Colbourne, Mr. Gerein, and I think I have to thank again the staff of the Assembly and, of course the Standing Committee on Legislation for the work they did.

---Applause

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

Page 1576

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

No, actually, I did mention him too.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Microphone turned off)

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Well, I didn't want to toot his horn too loudly so that he would want a raise or something.

There were also a lot of people in the public who paid a great deal of attention to this. Let's not forget that the boards have been working on this matter for almost five years now. I think they have done a lot of work. Nothing is perfect in this world, they say, but I think what you have to be proud of is that, as Members, you were able to complete, in your term, work that has been going on for four years. You've

done it in about three years, and I think you should be proud of that.

And I thank my Cabinet colleagues for their support, and I know the staff also thank you. Thank you, very much.

---Applause

We also have a musical presentation to make to you in the grand hall later.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Ohh.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. The preamble has already been carried, so we thank you for your words. Does the committee agree that we have now agreed to the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Does the committee agree that Bill 25 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Bill 25 is now ready for third reading, as amended.

---Applause

Does the committee agree that we've also completed Committee Report 11-12(7)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

Thank you, Members. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT:

I hear people saying that they would like to go back to question period, but we'll decide that afterwards, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lewis):

The Member has moved that we report progress. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I shall rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We're on 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 Bill 25 and Committee Report 11-12(7), and would like to report progress with 21 motions being adopted, that Committee Report 11-12(7) is concluded, and that Bill 25 is ready for third reading, as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. It is seconded by Mr. Pudluk.

---Applause

The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE:

Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to return to item 3, Members' statements.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for North Slave is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 3, Members' statements. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Zoe. Go ahead.

REVERT TO ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Appreciation To Family And Constituents

MR. ZOE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I gave my reply to the opening address this afternoon, I commented and gave thanks to many people and organizations. Some of you may have noticed that I didn't mention my family. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to send a special message of thanks to my wife, Dolly, and my children, Andrea and Murray.

Mr. Speaker, the work of a Member of the Legislative Assembly takes over your life. There are great demands on your time, you're away from home a lot and work can be very stressful. You can only be successful in representing your constituents if you are free to focus fully on their issues and concerns. Without the tremendous support of my wife Dolly and my

Page 1577

children, I would be unable to work as hard as I do for the people of my region.

I thank my family for their patience and understanding through these last four years. As I, again, go to the people of North Slave to ask for their support this fall, I will do so knowing that my family will be there for me, encouraging me every step of the way. To my family and all the people in my region who have supported me during the 12th Assembly and will continue to support me, my sincere thanks. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. We'll go back to item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to seek unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 25.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 25. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Nerysoo.

Bill 25: Education Act

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 25, Education Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question has been called. All those in favour? A recorded vote is requested. All those in favour, please stand. Mr. Clerk.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Nerysoo, Mr. Whitford, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Thompson, Mr. Dent, Mr. Ballantyne, Mr. Zoe, Mr. Koe, Mr. Antoine, Ms. Mike, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Allooloo, Mr. Arngna'naaq, Mr. Ng, Mr. Pollard, Ms. Cournoyea, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Morin, Mr. Todd.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The motion is 20 yes, zero nays, no abstentions. This motion is carried unanimously.

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 25 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Pollard

Bill 34: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1995-96

HON. JOHN POLLARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1995-96, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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 34 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills.

Speaker's Closing Remarks

Prior to Her Honour, the Commissioner, attending this House, I would like to make a few comments which, in all likelihood, will be the last during the 12th Legislative Assembly.

It was with great honour that I took the Speaker's chair over five months ago. I appreciate your consideration to me as I have endeavoured to serve as your Speaker. I can say that the view from the chair is a little different than from the previous chair in the Assembly and my cowboy boots felt quite at home under the desk.

I would like to offer my thanks to the people of the Northwest Territories and to those of you, my colleagues of the 12th Assembly, who have decided not to offer yourselves for re-election. In particular, my dear friend, Mr. Pudluk, who has served the people of his constituency for over 20 years. I wish Mr. Pudluk, his wife Dora and their family all the very best.

---Applause

To all Members who will make the decision to seek re-election in October, I hope that the envelope you receive, like me, on October 16th, is not one with a layoff notice; only time will tell. I wish you all good luck.

I would like to acknowledge the support and love of my spouse and family who have suffered through the hardships of my continuous absence from home. Without their support, I am sure many of us would not have been able to continue to serve.

As Speaker and coach of the Legislative Assembly as a team, I would like to announce the first term awards for the first term Members. Rookie of the year goes to Mr. Dent.

---Applause

Most sportsman-like person, Mr. Antoine.

---Applause

The Commissioner's cup, Mr. Koe.

---Applause

Most improved, Mr. Pudlat.

---Applause

Page 1578

Best defence, Ms. Mike.

---Applause

The best forward, Mr. Arngna'naaq.

---Applause

And, the most valuable player, Mr. Todd.

---Applause

---Laughter

I am still considering drafting Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Ng.

---Laughter

Let's hope the 13th Assembly team has a lot of oldtimers and old faces on it. However, we all know

there are a lot of farm players out there waiting to be drafted into the major leagues.

I would also like to compliment and express the feeling of all Members of the House, our gratitude and appreciation for the endless commitment and support given by all Legislative Assembly staff under the direction of Mr. Clerk.

---Applause

We are well served by those individuals, although I know we sometimes don't seem to show it and we take them for granted. I have found our staff are like an emergency service, they are always available, morning, noon and night. Our thanks.

We also appreciate the professional service provided by the interpreter/translators, the Hansard staff, all the Pages for the past four years, the various Sergeants-at-Arm and, lastly, the kitchen staff for their excellent food they have been providing.

---Applause

I would also like to thank the technicians and the camera people who provide this service to our communities.

---Applause

Members, as we leave here today, may the spirit of love and the well-being of our fellow human beings be in our minds and our hearts.

Mr. Clerk, it is my understanding that Her Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to assent to bills. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if Her Honour, the Commissioner is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills and prorogue this session?

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER MAKSAGAK:

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, it gives me pleasure to assent to the following bills: Bill 25, Education Act; Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2; and, Bill 34, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1995-96.

I would like to thank David Hamilton and all of the Legislative Assembly staff for their generous support.

A word of thanks must also go to the interpreters for their invaluable service to the Legislature.

I would like to express gratitude to my aides-de-camp, Major Bob Boettger and Inspector Reg Woods, for their kind assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Daniel Marion on his appointment as Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. I know he will make a fine addition to our team.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude, on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, to the elected Members of this Assembly.

I know that you are all anxious to be home and to those of you who will be soon be travelling, I wish you a safe journey. To those of you who plan to contest the upcoming general election, I wish you the best of luck. To those of you who do not plan to contest your ridings, I would like to express my gratitude and to wish you the very best in whatever endeavours you may choose.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue this Seventh Session of the 12th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

God bless you all. Qujannamiik, mahsi cho, merci, thank you.

---Applause

---PROROGATION