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The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

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Page 71

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Jim Antoine, Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Hon. Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Hon. Samuel Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Hon. Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Hon. John Todd

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Good afternoon, Members. Order of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 13-13(3): Ministers Absent From The House

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Premier will be absent from the House today to attend a meeting with the Treaty 8 Tribal Council in Edmonton. The Honourable Manikot Thompson will also be absent from the House today to attend a Pauktuutit meeting in Cambridge Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 14-13(4): Tribute To Jim Robertson

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to acknowledge an individual who has served the people and Government of the Northwest Territories with distinction, perseverance and great success, during his 40 years in the North.

I am referring to Jim Robertson and, in particular, to his contribution over the past eight years as the chairman of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, when his term expires at

the end of this month, Mr. Robertson will be able to look back at an impressive list of accomplishments.

When this government purchased the assets of the former Northern Canada Power Commission in 1988, Mr. Robertson was asked to bring the utility to its new home in the North, make it safe, reliable and cost effective and, at the same time, ensure a fair rate of return for the shareholder.

I am pleased to report that he has met these challenges. Mr. Robertson accomplished the tasks with the kind of grit and determination that has distinguished so many northerners who also began their working careers with the Hudson's Bay Company.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

HON. CHARLES DENT:

In his term as chairman, and on occasion as chief executive officer, he has built a utility that is profitable and well managed. He ensured that it operated on clearly-established business principles. The Power Corporation has revenue of more than \$100 million annually. From its allowed rate of return, it finances its own capital investment program and long-term debt, as well as the territorial power support program.

Mr. Speaker, the corporation is prepared to continue to play a significant role in the North's economic future. It can point to an excellent environmental record, as well as initiatives in alternative energy sources.

I believe that one of the most significant achievements under Mr. Robertson's chairmanship is the Snare Cascades hydro development. This partnership between the NWT Power Corporation and the Dogrib Power Corporation is an outstanding example of how the diverse aboriginal and business concerns can be forged into a project that will benefit the Yellowknife and Dogrib regions for many decades to come.

Jim Robertson's record of service extends beyond the Power Corporation into many areas of community and territorial involvement, including a term as mayor of Inuvik. He will be staying active in the North's business and, I hope, public sectors, to which he has already made impressive contributions.

The Northwest Territories, and indeed all of Canada, was built on the strength, skill and integrity of people like Jim Robertson. Mr. Speaker, I invite all Members of this Assembly to join me now in thanking him and in wishing him continued success in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 15-13(3): Interprovincial Pipeline's Tariff

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, I would like to take this opportunity to bring Members of the Legislative Assembly up to date on our efforts to encourage oil and gas development in the Mackenzie Valley.

Page 72

On October 31, 1995, the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, filed a complaint with the National Energy Board concerning the tariffs charged to ship oil on the interprovincial pipeline system from Norman Wells to Zama, Alberta. The department requested a hearing to review the tariff levels, with a view to having the board order a reduction from the current tariff of \$6 per barrel.

During November, December and January, the parties to the complaint exchanged letters outlining their positions. This exchange was followed in early February by a request from Interprovincial Pipeline Ltd. for a delay in any proceedings so that they might conclude negotiations with Imperial Oil.

The results of these negotiations were released on March 8th. The changes, if ratified, will result in a decrease in the Norman Wells pipeline tariff of between 20 and 25 per cent. This will reduce the shipping cost of a barrel of oil from \$6 to \$4.50.

We are generally pleased with the progress made to date on this issue.

As a next step, we have asked IPL to convene a settlement conference which will include all the parties to the complaint, in order to obtain clarification of the proposed changes and to provide a forum for seeking general agreement to the changes. We have offered to suspend our request for a formal hearing should a settlement conference be convened before the end of April. Should such a conference not occur, we will then aggressively pursue a hearing before the National Energy Board.

Mr. Speaker, a reduction in pipeline transportation costs will increase the value of our oil and gas resources. This should in turn lead to increased exploration and development activity and create new jobs, business opportunities and other economic benefits. The subsurface lands held by the Sahtu claimants should also attract greater industry interest as a result of these lower tariffs.

Mr. Speaker, we must finalize a package, therefore, which will provide for northern control over northern resources and thereby ensure that resource revenues which are created in the North remain in the North with the people. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

(Translation) Mahsi. I would like to say something today. I would like to point out the new Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories. She will be representing all languages; North Slavey, South Slavey, French and all the other official languages in the NWT. She is Judi Mary Tutcho. If there is anyone who has any concerns regarding the languages, they can speak to her. She is sitting in the audience today. Judi will be starting May 1, 1996. (Translation ends)

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 16-13(3): Early Childhood Programming And Early Intervention

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, the foundation for learning and for developing life skills is built during early childhood years. Research has shown that children who participate in quality preschool programs perform better in school, and later on show greater productivity in the workplace and have greater earning potential. Early childhood programming results in a notable improvement in the development of language and thinking skills, as well as reading and

mathematics. It is clear that early intervention with high-risk infants and young children is critical in the prevention of serious problems in later life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring this Assembly up to date on work my department is carrying out in early childhood programming and early intervention.

The term "early intervention" generally refers to support for children from birth to six years of age who are at risk for, or are experiencing, delays in their development caused by social, emotional and/or environmental factors. Intervention can range from family education and support services to specially-designed child development programs.

The goal of early intervention is to enable children to be born healthy and reach their full potential through a variety of wellness programs.

Early intervention services are currently offered through a number of territorial and federal departments. However, there is need for better integration of services and a closer working relationship of all partners to make our resources go as far as possible.

Mr. Speaker, quality child care plays an essential role in ensuring children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. The early childhood program supports quality child care in the NWT by licensing facilities, by offering training sessions for child care operators, supporting certificate or diploma programs at the public colleges, lending resources and providing written information to child care operators and publishing a newsletter.

One role of the early childhood program is to administer the user subsidy, which helps parents complete their education or training, and participate in the labour force. The subsidy also provides access to child development programming for children who specifically need it.

Page 73

I am pleased to inform this Assembly that over the past fiscal year, the administration of the user subsidy has been decentralized to Education, Culture and Employment's regional offices. Each regional office has identified how to administer the subsidy in a way that best suits the needs of people in the region. The decentralization has resulted in a number of benefits, including better client service and better

communication with clients. It has also improved controls and the accountability of the program.

Mr. Speaker, quality early childhood services play an important role in helping children develop the skills they need to succeed in school, in advanced education and in the workplace. I am pleased that the decentralization of the user subsidy has resulted in better service to parents. I look forward to improvements in early intervention services as the work of the social envelope progresses. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 17-13(3): Meeting Of Arctic Environment Ministers

--- Applause

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, last week, I represented this government at the third Arctic Ministers' Conference on the protection of the Arctic environment in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, I spoke on the importance of responsible trade in renewable resource products; in particular, fur and on the concerns of northerners about the increasing levels of contaminants in country food and in the Arctic environment. I was pleased to hear very strong messages of support on fur and on contaminants from federal Ministers, Honourable Sergio Marchi and Honourable Ron Irwin.

Mr. Speaker, our message was heard very clearly by the Environment Ministers from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Russia and the United States. Each of these Ministers will take home Canada's views for review within their respective governments.

The Arctic environmental protection strategy began in 1989 and the first ministerial conference took place in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 1991. The whole initiative started as a result of growing national and international appreciation of the importance of Arctic ecosystems and an increasing knowledge of global pollution and resulting threats to the environment and to the people who depend on country foods in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic. The second conference of the Ministers took place in Nuuk, Greenland, in 1993. The Ministers signed a declaration on environment and development in the Arctic. Canada was represented at this third conference by the Honourable Ron Irwin, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs; the

Honourable Sergio Marchi, Minister of the Environment; and, Members of Parliament, Ethel Blondin, Audrey McLaughlin and John Finlay. For the first time, the Government of the Northwest Territories was recognized as a full partner in the Canadian delegation and given opportunity to speak at this conference. As well, I had the honour of hosting a lunch serving northern foods for 60 Ministers, ambassadors and senior officials from participating countries. As host, I used this occasion to speak about the importance of a healthy environment and how important our renewable resources economy is to our people.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Environment Ministers signed the Inuvik declaration on environmental protection and sustainable development that includes the full commitment of all eight Arctic countries to establish an Arctic council as early as the summer of 1996. The Canadian delegation to future meetings of the Arctic council will include representatives of governments and indigenous people from Nunavut and from the Western Arctic. The Arctic council will be a forum for international cooperation in environmental, economic, cultural and social concerns of northern people.

Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to do everything it can on both trade and contaminant issues and will continue to urge the Government of Canada to do the same. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Cuts To Benefits For Non-Unionized Employees

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today refers to the cuts to benefits for nonunionized employees. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue of concern for many GNWT employees, especially in Arviat and Baker Lake.

Last week, the government announced a new wage and benefits package for senior management and other nonunionized employees of this government. It also announced that it had presented a similar proposal to the negotiating team representing unionized employees. Mr. Speaker, the people of Arviat and Baker Lake recognize the need for

government to become more efficient and to bring the amount of money we spend in line with the revenues that are available. More importantly, it is recognized that to accomplish this, government workers will have to take their share of the cuts. Although I do not personally agree with a number of the cuts, unfortunately, our poor financial situation is driving this agenda.

Mr. Speaker, the concern being expressed by my constituents and the issue I raise in this House today is the equity of these cuts to employees in the small communities. Unlike government employees in Yellowknife and other communities on the road system, the cost of living for people in smaller communities, especially Nunavut, is dramatically higher.

Mr. Speaker, the government has stated a new northern allowance introduced for non-unionized employees and being proposed for the unionized employees using Yellowknife as the base rate and is indexed to allow for the cost of living in all of the communities.

Page 74

Mr. Speaker, I am not convinced at this time that the northern allowance rates set by the government adequately allow the cost of living in all of our communities.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

MR. O'BRIEN:

Later today, I will ask the Minister of Finance for further details on the northern allowance, so we can gain a clear picture of the entire issue.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Speaker, the work that employees of this government perform is very valuable, and during these times of fiscal restraint, there is increasing pressure on the employees to deliver services and programs, especially on the front line. Mr. Speaker, in my view, we have to pay our employees accordingly for the excellent work that they do. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Pangnirtung Fisheries

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate the new Commissioner of Official Languages. She is going to have a very big responsibility. Because it's my right to use my own language, I wanted to start off like that. (Translation ends)

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Pangnirtung Fisheries is the largest private employer in Pangnirtung. When the fishing season is open, welfare payouts are cut by as much as 70 per cent. Unfortunately, this hasn't been a good year for the fishery in Pangnirtung, due to very unusual weather. First, there was a lot of snow early in the season. This meant that the ice on Cumberland Sound did not thicken up as it usually does. Then, between February 17th and 19th, a very strong windstorm came up. The ice, which was only about nine inches thick, was torn apart by the very strong winds. Sixteen of my constituents were on the ice, fishing, when the storm came up. They lost a lot of fishing gear. Even people whose fishing shacks had been hauled up on the land had losses when their shacks blew away. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the ice has never stabilized since this storm.

There have been a series of smaller storms, which were just enough to keep the ice from freezing properly again.

The ice on Cumberland Sound is now very loose. The mix of tides and wind produces a rafting effect where two edges of ice come together. The end result, Mr. Speaker, is that with the season almost over, my constituents have only been able to catch about 40,000 pounds of fish this year...

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Mahsi. Mr. Enuaraq is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. ...compared to about 230,000 pounds in total this time last year. As well, many fishermen have lost critical gear which they will need to work again next year. I am working with Honourable Stephen Kakfwi and Pangnirtung Fisheries to see whether our government has a program which will assist these hardy fishermen to recover their equipment so they can work again and be self-sufficient next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Effects Of New Northern Benefits Package

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday in the House that I would give some examples of the effect of having the settlement allowance and VTA combined into one allowance. I've also added in the housing allowance, a list of newly-announced reductions.

The first example, Mr. Speaker, is Pond Inlet; an employee with less than five years' service, with a wife and two children under the age of 12. This person's base salary is \$30,000. With one VTA, current housing allowance and settlement allowance, this employee's gross income would be \$49,615.28. Mr. Speaker, under the announced system, this employee's gross income would now be \$41,951.50, or a decrease, Mr. Speaker, of 15.45 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, is this the fair reduction that this government has talked about?

My second example, Mr. Speaker, is an employee in Iqaluit like myself. This employee has a family of five and has worked for the government for five years. Under the current system, if my salary was \$50,000, with two VTAs based on the advanced booking fare to Montreal, plus the current housing allowance and settlement allowance, my gross income would be as follows: \$50,000 salary, \$5,400 housing allowance, \$4,484 for the settlement allowance, \$11,058.52 for the two VTAs, for a total of \$70,942.52. The new package proposed, Mr. Speaker, would see my total salary package shrink by 17 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, is this equity? Is this fair? I will be asking further questions today to the honourable Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Increase In Muskoxen Population

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. The hunters' and trappers' organization in Taloyoak firmly believes in wildlife conservation in and around Taloyoak as well as in the NWT. The organization is aware of the survey that indicates an increase in population of both caribou and muskoxen around Boothia Peninsula. The survey which was

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...

Page 75

done in July 1995, also indicates an increase in muskoxen in Prince of Wales Island and in Somerset Island. The people in that area believe very strongly in conservation of wildlife. They have always been part of conservation. We have never taken anything more than what is required of any wildlife, any game, within our area.

Mr. Speaker, one of the ways to ensure healthy populations of both caribou and muskoxen is to harvest them. Later on, during the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the appropriate Minister some questions about muskoxen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Effects Of New Northern Benefits Package

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. (Translation ends) Today I'd like to share some heartfelt advice I received from a long-term professional working as a government employee in

my constituency. This person is originally from the South. Her concern about the recent cuts to wages and benefits is not for herself. She said, "we professionals can find work in other places, but many of the supporting staff depend on their jobs for food, shelter and clothing. There is already so much hurt and distress that people are trying to deal with, that the added stress of losing their livelihood of benefits adds to increased mental health problems." My constituent went on to point out that our small Communities are often already underserved in these areas. She asked, how can the government expect our hard-pressed front-line staff in the community to deal with all the pressures of their jobs when they are overwhelmed with personal concerns or whether they will have jobs or more rent increases?

Many people are supporting large extended families and already have very little left over after recent increasing rents and decreasing wages will force those people to move into overcrowded conditions, she predicts. Mental and physical health is sure to suffer, my constituent says. It isn't the southern professionals who will be hurt, it is the aboriginal people, many of whom see their community jobs as a stepping stone to participate in the Nunavut government. My constituent tells me that they are now getting angry that no one seems to care about them. It also seems that in the midst of these pressures, now it will be almost impossible for these community workers ... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Qujannamiik. ...especially those with big families, to afford to take vacations. My constituent believes that the chance to travel beyond our isolated communities helps our children to start thinking about making lifestyle choices such as going on to school or working outside their home community. My constituent tells me that the front line workers see the recent changes as being targeted against workers in isolated communities with big families. On top of that, my constituent says the government wants to go ahead with all kinds of community initiatives. Communities want to do more, but it seems to my constituent that the government has just come along

and banged each employee hard on the head and said, we're going to make this hard and hurtful for you, so when we give you something, you can then appreciate how good we are. With no wage increases in the last four years and huge housing increases, the government still seems to blame the government workers for their troubles.

We government workers care about one another. My constituent says that she would not leave because of money issues and most are not working just for the pay and benefits. But they are now feeling that their pride and self esteem has been taken away as well. That, she says, is unforgivable. I hope I make some sense, she told me. This is how my constituents are feeling these days, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is part of my job to convey their fears and confusion and anger to all Members of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Concerns Re Amalgamation Of Renewable Resources, ED&T And EM&PR

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to address the proposed combining of the Department of Renewable Resources with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. As a Member of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, I was informed by the Minister and departmental officials that a report would be issued back to the standing committee outlining the purpose and implications of combining these departments.

Yesterday, the Minister responsible for Renewable Resources, ED&T, EM&PR, stated that a report would be forthcoming this Friday. Concern about this issue has been expressed to me by a number of constituents. I have also received a letter from the NWT Enviro Watch about this. While it may be true that practically every government department has something in common with every other department, it may be that perhaps the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources has, in some instances, fundamentally different priorities than Renewable Resources. One promotes industry while

the other protects the environment in which that industry operates.

Consequently, without prejudging the positiveness or the negative impact of such a move, I think we should carefully review the combining of these various departments and that Members of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development should have proper time to review the amalgamation proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Page 76

Member's Statement On Implementing Community Wellness In NWT Communities

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members of the 13th Assembly, we have all made a strong commitment to community wellness. On establishing our priorities, we stressed the importance of giving communities the tools to improve the quality of life for community residents. As a Member of the Social Programs committee, I have supported the initiatives of the government related to community wellness in the upcoming budget. Mr. Speaker, it is easy to discuss community wellness as a good idea. However, it becomes more difficult to make it work in practice. This was reflected in the reaction to the community action fund available to communities last year as part of the community wellness strategy.

In Yellowknife, the funding was given to the city. Criteria were established. Based on these criteria, funds were given to different groups for specific projects. While these projects were worthwhile and should have a positive impact for some residents, there have been concerns voiced about the use of the community action fund. Some groups were unhappy with the criteria that were used. Others felt that this was a piecemeal approach rather than a plan for addressing the broad social problems within the community.

The people in my riding are very interested in community wellness, the developing of a community justice plan and addressing issues of violence and addressing problems of substance abuse and helping families become healthier. Right now, there are many different agencies and organizations providing

services in Yellowknife that relate to community wellness. Some of these groups provide similar or complementary services. They all have good ideas and suggestions for making community wellness a reality. The problem comes in trying to coordinate all these different ideas and agencies. I believe that government funding and support for community wellness is crucial in all our communities, large and small. When the government provides support to a community, it must ensure that community residents gain the maximum benefit from the limited resources that we have.

During question period, I will be asking the Minister responsible for coordinating the community wellness strategy how he plans to address the unique challenges of implementing community wellness in our larger centres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Meeting Of NWT Association Of Municipalities In Inuvik

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say hi to my wife and children back home.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hi!

--- Laughter

MR. ROLAND:

I rise at this time to make mention of the NWT Association of Municipalities meetings that will be going on in Inuvik March 28th to 31st. It is an important event that this government should take note of and participate in.

We count on the municipalities to deliver a lot of the programs that we put in place as a government. It is important that we do show that we are interested in how they are delivering that, especially when they are going to address the community empowerment idea. That is the theme they are using this year. It is important that this government makes a show there. We believe that all communities in the Northwest Territories need as much help as we do in organizing the way we do business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Issues Raised At Constituency Meeting

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity last evening to meet with a number of my constituents. I would like to thank those people who took the time to come out and express their concerns and give me some direction and, in some cases, suggestions of approaches that I should have taken. I will share with the Members of this House some of the issues brought forth. I have little doubt that there are many common threads which each of us hears from our respective constituents.

First, on fees and licences, there was not an objection as much as a concern expressed as to the speed at which some increases to fees and charges are being implemented by this government. Examples are the increase in the rent at the Aven Seniors' Centre and annual increases in licensing fees. Another item that was brought up was school taxes; questions were raised as to why Yellowknife is the only community in the NWT paying school taxes, representing approximately 30 per cent of the total cost. While I was not able to answer that question directly, I gave assurances to my constituents that I would address their concerns later.

On the question of MLA compensation, I gave my constituents assurances that we are in the process of reviewing MLAs' salaries and benefits and that this review will hopefully reflect the government's financial situation. With regard to representation, my comments in the House were noted by constituents regarding suggestions that we put the business incentive program on hold for a year as this would clearly be a cost-saving measure for this government when faced with the deficit proposed. On departmental consultations, it was understood that while deputy ministers meet on a regular basis, it was suggested that a stronger relationship be created between departments to discuss cost-saving measures, which some departments may be undertaking, and share these ideas with the others.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the ideas that came forth last night and I wish to, again, express my gratitude to

Page 77

those constituents who came out to the meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 46-13(3): Non-Unionized Reductions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Henry on March 25, 1996, with respect to non-unionized reductions.

The reductions to wages and benefits announced on March 14, 1996, apply to managers and excluded employees with the Workers' Compensation Board. I am writing to the Ministers responsible for the other boards primarily funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories, including the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, on this issue suggesting that we take a consistent approach to wage and benefits reductions.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize in the gallery today the chairman of the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Jim Robertson. With him is the incoming chairman of the NWT Power Corporation, as of April 1st, and no stranger to some Members of this House, Mr. Pierre Alvarez.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly.

Item 5,

recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my new constituency assistant who's up from Hay River assisting me with my workload, Carmen Schauerte.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't see him but I'm assured that Dave McCann is in the gallery. I'd like to recognize Dave McCann, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize some constituents of mine: Mr. Bert Dean and his son, Cody, who are in the gallery today. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 53-13(3): Status Of UNW Application To Represent Non-Unionized Employees

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a statement made earlier this week by the Minister of Finance outlined significant changes to the salary and benefits

package of the excluded GNWT employees. Amongst these changes was a 6.25 per cent cut in pay, the elimination of the current settlement allowance and a new northern allowance. In response to this, the Union of Northern Workers applied to act as the bargaining agent for these excluded employees. It is my understanding that under the Canada Labour Code, such a move freezes terms of employment until the application can be dealt with. Can the Minister identify when this application will be reviewed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 53-13(3): Status Of UNW Application To Represent Non-Unionized Employees

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to, first of all, correct my honourable colleague: it does not freeze the terms of the conditions of the wages and benefits for the non-unionized employees; and, secondly, we are taking an appropriate and expeditious course of action to determine whether or not these people would become part of the bargaining unit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral question. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 54-13(3): Request For Funding By Aulajut Society Of Pond Inlet To H&SS

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. In Pond Inlet, there is a society called the Aulajut Society. It is a newly-formed organization that has requested funding from the department. To date, they have not received a response to their request. When can a response be expected from the Minister's department for the operation expenses of the Aulajut Society? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 54-13(3): Request For Funding By Aulajut Society Of Pond Inlet To H&SS

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have to find out what the organization is involved in and what kind of proposal went forward to the department. At this time, I'm unaware of the proposal but I will check with my department to see what is before us and deal with the

Page 78

matter as quickly as possible and get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've already tabled some examples of the unfairness of the new allowance. Yesterday I asked the Minister how these northern allowances were calculated. Mr. Speaker, his answer was based on criteria set, escalator and the cost of living allowance. That was good to hear. However, Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, then what cost-of-living figures did the department use to base their decision on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This gives me an opportunity to clear up my response yesterday to the honourable Member. The northern allowance combines the resources of the former benefits, the vacation travel and the settlement allowance. A base rate of \$1,760 was used in Yellowknife and a cost of living index was used to set the remaining rates for all employees in all the other northern communities. I'm prepared to provide my colleague with the details of the index either by tabling it in this House or providing them to him by letter form. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would really appreciate seeing that and look forward to it. Mr. Speaker, it would seem that this proposal was not well thought out. Will the Minister review the amounts based on the diversity factor of individual communities and, where there is inequity, change it either up or down?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposal was well thought out. We are -- and have indicated this many times in this House -- trying to deal with this thing in a caring and compassionate way. We recognize, and I certainly recognize after spending 30 years in Arctic communities, what the cost of living is to live in Pond Inlet, I've lived there; what the cost of living is to live in Cambridge Bay, I've lived there; and what the cost of living is to live in Rankin Inlet, I've lived there. This government is trying its best to, one, meet a deficit elimination strategy that this House is supposed to have supported; and, two, to ensure that we keep as many jobs as possible for the people who we all represent.

Every effort is being made by this Department of Finance in the overall deficit elimination strategy to ensure we meet these objectives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we all realize the financial situation in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it would seem the further east, west, north or south of Yellowknife an employee lives, the more adversely they will be affected. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister keep this in mind when

bargaining with our NWTTA and other groups next month, for fairness and equity?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to say once and for all, we are endeavouring to be fair and to be equitable. But nothing's equitable when you're trying to deal with a \$150 million deficit. What's equitable if we end up with a \$300 million deficit in 1999 as we divide the Territories? Everybody has to make concessions in this deficit elimination strategy. Yes, when we sit down with the union, as we will on April 9th, we will make a sincere effort to be equitable and fair to everybody across the Territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that. I agree that we have to look at the deficit reductions. All I'm saying is that we should also build into that deficit reduction an availability of allowance. For example, if the reduction for an employee with a family of four in Iqaluit is nine per cent, 10 per cent or 12 per cent, and in Yellowknife is three per cent, then I don't see the fairness in that. That is what I'm trying to say here, Mr. Speaker. I understand the deficit problems just as much as anyone else and I'm trying to help it, but I think there should be some fairness in that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 55-13(3): Rationale Used In Calculating Northern Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

I have told this House consistently that we're going to be fair. We are going to be fair. We're trying to be

equitable in difficult times. Yes, we will take into consideration when we develop and have developed a cost-of-living component to the new package. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Page 79

Question 56-13(3): Additional Muskox Tags Requested For Taloyoak

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier in my Member's statement that I was going to ask the appropriate Minister about the muskoxen in the Taloyoak area, my question is directed to the honourable Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the Department of Renewable Resources. Last year, we were able to receive five muskoxen tags for Taloyoak. Taloyoak is now requesting five more. In my Member's statement, I indicated to this House that the population of muskoxen in and around Taloyoak has increased, according to the survey. Will the honourable Minister of this government give five more muskoxen tags to the Taloyoak Hunters' and Trappers' Association this year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 56-13(3): Additional Muskox Tags Requested For Taloyoak

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be able to do that if I am given assurances from the department and the local HTA that the muskox herd that is in that particular area can sustain such a number. I realize it is only a total of 10 muskox tags that are being requested; still, I would like to have this confirmed by the department, that it is possible without harming the herd, before I meet the request. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 56-13(3): Additional Muskox Tags Requested For Taloyoak

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister. Although my colleague to my right, Mr. Steen, offered to me 5,000 muskoxen from the Sachs Harbour area, I'm not at liberty to request from that island. Mr. Speaker, since I received a letter from the hunters' and trappers' organization in Taloyoak that the July 1995 survey has in fact indicated that the population has increased on two of the islands; one on the Prince of Wales Island and the other on Somerset Island. In fact, with increases, there is a danger to the caribou population grazing in that area. One of the ways to ensure the conservation is to get an additional five tags for harvest, a limited number from that area. Will the honourable Minister get back to me as soon as possible about his decision on the quota? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 56-13(3): Additional Muskox Tags Requested For Taloyoak

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we should make it clear that the government's policy is the best way to manage wildlife is allowing proper use of those resources; that is, the best way to keep muskox, caribou, moose and other wildlife healthy and manageable is by allowing harvesting of those on a regular well-managed basis. So I

will be able to respond to the Member in the next day or so. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. ENUARAQ:

Mr. Speaker, thank you. I am seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER:

Just to mention to the Members that it is quite unusual to seek unanimous consent while we are still in the middle of a process; in this case, oral questions. But if it is the will of the House, if we have unanimous consent, then you have it. Do we have any nays?

There are no nays. Mr. Enuaraq, you have unanimous consent.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, my wife is gone...

--- Laughter

...from the gallery because our baby was impatient. But, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to recognize and I am honoured to recognize my beautiful daughter, six years old, Pia Enuaraq. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) I would like to recognize, from Pond Inlet, Mayor Paniloo Sangoya.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. We'll go back to oral questions with the clock still running. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the community wellness strategy and how it will be implemented in Yellowknife. There are a large number of agencies in Yellowknife that provide services related to community wellness. Does the Minister have a plan to determine how funds under the community wellness strategy will be allocated to those agencies?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Page 80

Return To Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't say that the funds would be allocated to the agencies. What I would envision is that the funding would be available to the agencies to allow them to provide the resources that they need to get together to collaborate, to work out the mechanism and their own plans on how they would see community programs being delivered within the community. Our department would provide the resources through funding sources or the resources from staff to assist the community municipal government and the community organizations to get together and try to reach agreement on that mechanism. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister saying that the city of Yellowknife will be distributing these funds to the agencies?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not saying that definitively, Mr. Speaker. As it stands now, an arrangement would have to be agreed upon and worked out. As I stated earlier, if we could get the groups together to discuss what they want to do and some of their initiatives, that could all fall out within the discussions that take place between the municipal government groups and other organizations that are involved in the delivery of health and social services within the city. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time funds were distributed in Yellowknife, criteria were developed by the city of Yellowknife. As I indicated earlier, there were several people who were displeased with those criteria and how the funding was allocated. So I would like to know if the government will be providing guidelines within which the funds will be distributed, when his ministry is assisting these agencies. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 57-13(3): Allocation Of Funds Under Community Wellness Strategy

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the guidelines for the community action fund that is currently administered by the department, we have recognized that perhaps some of the guidelines were too general. We will, before we reinitiate the program, be looking at maybe being a bit more specific in some of the guidelines and some of the activities where groups can access the funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 58-13(3): Status Of Implementation Plans For Regional Executive Responsibilities

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier and it's about the Executive functions in the regions now that the regional directors are going to no longer be with us. Can the Deputy Premier tell us, will each region be developing a clear, specific plan of how the regional function will be implemented so that, for instance, when I as MLA go back to the Fort Smith, I'll know the process? In the past this was very clear; there was somebody deemed to be in charge. Could the Deputy Premier indicate whether they will

be doing those kinds of specific plans so that we will be fully covered in that area? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 58-13(3): Status Of Implementation Plans For Regional Executive Responsibilities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that the Premier has been intimately involved in and working on. As I told the House earlier, he is in Edmonton attending meetings. What I will do is pass along the question to the Premier and have him respond to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 58-13(3):Status Of Implementation Plans For Regional Executive Responsibilities

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm assuming that wasn't taken as notice, but was a response that he would pass on the request. I would also ask the Deputy Premier that when he is passing on that concern that he would pass on the request that those regional plans, should there be a plan for them to exist, be shared with this House as soon as possible so that when we go back to our respective constituencies we have a very clear idea of how the government is going to be providing that very critical function. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 58-13(3):Status Of Implementation Plans For Regional Executive Responsibilities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I will pass on those additional questions along to the Premier. As I said, the Premier will be back tomorrow and hopefully he'll be able to answer the Member as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Page 81

Question 59-13(3): Difficulties Marketing NWT Arts And Crafts

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism with regard to marketing of products which are presently run and operated by the government, especially with regard to the Fort McPherson Canvas Shop where the bags that they produce and other items are pretty well-known; also, the Aklavik Fur Shop which presently produces fur items such as fur hats, coats and other things. I've been hounded by an individual from southern Canada, who is looking at the possibility of marketing a lot of these products in the United States to large companies such as Wal-Mart and other companies which deal with the marketing of products. He seems to be having a real problem with the department's staff here in Yellowknife, especially in the area of marketing. Could the Minister assist me in this area, to see exactly what the problem is with marketing? Do they have a strategy in place for how they market these products today? It is a Government of the Northwest Territories product which is produced through the different corporations or established under the government.

Also with regard to an article I read by Cece McCauley on the selling of crafts in which the government seemed to have a real problem with running a craft shop. Also, marketing of handicrafts such as this coat which was made in Mr. Kakfwi's riding by Judy Lafferty, and other ladies up and down the valley who make an effort to sew in their own time and sell these products; what the possibility of generating employment would be by marketing this stuff in the Northwest Territories, southern Canada and wherever the market is. I see that there has been a real initiative made by the department to look into that. If the Minister can respond to my question of do they have a marketing strategy in place and how are they implementing it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 59-13(3): Difficulties Marketing NWT Arts And Crafts

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the individual who is in contact with the MLA should be advised to contact my office and we can assist the MLA by directing that particular individual to the proper people if he is serious about providing a market for those products that come out of Fort McPherson and Aklavik. A particular reference to a noted columnist I cannot respond to, but I do know that the NWT Development Corporation apparently has some marketing strategy for some of the products that we have in production in the Northwest Territories and I would be pleased to provide copies of that strategy to the Members in the next day or so. I understand they are available, so I will be pleased to provide that to the Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 60-13(3): Contents Of Report Re Amalgamating Renewable Resources, ED&T And EM&PR

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister of Renewable Resources in reference to my earlier statement about the amalgamation of the departments. I wonder if the Minister could tell me if the report that he will be releasing on Friday to the Members outlines the benefits and directions of amalgamation.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 60-13(3): Contents Of Report Re Amalgamating Renewable Resources, ED&T And EM&PR

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, as I understood, in taking on this new responsibility, the Standing Committee on Government Operations had requested a draft consolidation plan for the three departments to be submitted to the committee. Initially it was March 15th; the date was then moved to the end of March. It's my understanding, from talking to Andrew Gamble, the deputy minister responsible for

consolidation of these departments, that we will have a draft consolidation plan to the committee by Friday of this week. The draft consolidation plan will give indications to the committee of what the objectives of the consolidation will be and will give some preliminary indications of what the benefits of the consolidation and other implications will be. It's my understanding that this was going to be a preliminary view by this government on the pros and cons of the consolidation. Hopefully, we will have some rough target dates within that draft consolidation plan about how and when we will be going about the business of consolidation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 60-13(3): Contents Of Report Re Amalgamating Renewable Resources, ED&T And EM&PR

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the target dates, can the Minister assure us that adequate time will be given to the standing committee to review the report, especially considering that in all likelihood, some of the Members will be in their constituencies for the next several weeks? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 60-13(3): Contents Of Report Re Amalgamating Renewable Resources, ED&T And EM&PR

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Members of this Legislature, particularly the relevant committees, expect and will have full opportunity to have input, to review and comment on the draft consolidation plan that we will produce and provide whatever direction they feel is in the best interest of the public and this government. And that the Cabinet itself will also be fully involved in the move toward consolidation of these departments. There is absolutely zero possibility that

I, as a Minister, will play the lone ranger on this particular activity. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 61-13(3): Method To Place Wage And Benefits Savings In GNWT General Revenue Fund

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. I'd like to thank the Minister for his return to oral question today where he states as examples that the Workers' Compensation Board and Northwest Territories Power Corporation, their excluded employees and managers would be part of the package. My question to the Minister is what method is proposed by the government to obtain any of these wage and benefits savings back to general revenue. As an example, the Workers' Compensation Board is a separate employer/employee program; how are these savings, that are proposed by the government to be implemented on April 1 st, coming back to GNWT coffers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 61-13(3): Method To Place Wage And Benefits Savings In GNWT General Revenue Fund

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They are not coming back to the GNWT with respect to the WCB. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 62-13(3): Status Of Communities Qualifying For Settlement Allowance

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. I recently received a letter from the Union of Northern Workers which indicates that several years ago Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith were designated as being qualified to benefit from a settlement allowance in the amount of \$1,500 per year, I would like to know if this is true.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of whether that took place several years ago as I wasn't in this portfolio at the time. I'm not trying to be evasive, I'm just not aware of it. I will look into it and report back to the honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the response because the honourable Member here coughed just at the same time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 62-13(3): Status Of Communities Qualifying For Settlement Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of it because I wasn't the Finance Minister at the time. I'm not aware of whether there was or wasn't the settlement allowance of \$1,500. I will look into it and get back to my honourable colleague. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 63-13(3): Minister's Knowledge Of Eviction Notices In Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I raised the question of eviction notices being given to long-term, dedicated employees of this government in Iqaluit. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, more questions have come up on this policy of this government. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that more leases held by this government will be dropped. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation: Is he aware of the situation in Iqaluit?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 63-13(3): Minister's Knowledge Of Eviction Notices In Iqaluit

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the situation in Iqaluit. If the Member is talking in particular about staff housing, that falls under the responsibility of Mr. Todd, of FMBS.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 64-13(3): Concern Re Severe Housing Shortage In Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the authority does rest with the Minister of Finance, if that's the case, because it is staff housing. My question now will be asked of the Minister of Finance, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, or whoever wants to answer it over there. The local housing authority in Iqaluit, Mr. Speaker, can hardly keep up with the demand now for housing. We have a severe shortage of housing in Iqaluit. How does the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation expect to handle the flood, now, of long-term northern workers living in Iqaluit, some of them who've been there for 15 or 20 years, over the next couple of months after they've been evicted, to find housing when the local housing authority is under so much pressure to find housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 64-13(3): Concern Re Severe Housing Shortage In Iqaluit

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If my honourable colleague is alluding to staff housing, I want to

Page 83

assure him that there is a surplus of staff housing in Iqaluit and not a shortage. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 64-13(3): Concern Re Severe Housing Shortage In Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like Mr. Todd to come and find those staff housing units. What I'm talking about are the private leases that I brought up in the House last week: two high-rise apartments, specifically the Ivavik, which I mentioned last week. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister, then, commit to coming to Iqaluit to address the concerns of these evicted employees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 64-13(3): Concern Re Severe Housing Shortage In Iqaluit

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe in my previous response to the Member's question, that he was specific about the fact that it was leased housing. Maybe I can address his question about lease housing. The point is that there are arrangements under way at the present time for the current leased housing to continue on a month-to-month basis until such time as we've completely evaluated our overall needs of staff housing in the community of Iqaluit. And, yes, I would only be too happy to visit the future capital of Nunavut and meet with my honourable colleague's concerned constituents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 65-13(3): Criteria For Use Of Community Action Fund

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to the community action fund that my colleague for Yellowknife North just made reference to. I met last Thursday evening with the board of the Metis Nation in Fort Smith and they indicated that they, as well, had a concern about the disbursement of the funds that were given to the community through the town council to disburse. My suggestion to them is that

they should, in fact, sit down with the other groups in the community -- the Metis Nation, the town and the band, as the three main political groups -- and if they're not happy with the criteria, to definitely take the steps to straighten it out so that it does meet their needs for the coming year.

My question to the Minister: Has he attempted to address the concern of the Member for Yellowknife North about more direction in terms of conditions for use of these funds? I suggest that he not make it too stringent and that he allow as much latitude as possible for the community and the groups in the community to, in fact, make those decisions so that we can have both our concerns addressed -- which, I think, are the same -- and help promote the whole initiative of community wellness and community empowerment. I think this is one step along that path. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 65-13(3): Criteria For Use Of Community Action Fund

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the Member's concerns and we will try to not make it too stringent given that we would like to make sure that it meets the needs of all organizations who are trying to access the funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 66-13(3): Regional Counselling For Laid-off Employees

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've said in this House that I was opposed to the elimination of the regional Personnel offices. With the regional Personnel offices being eliminated, my question is who will be in place in the regions to counsel the laid-off employees, including the people in Personnel who will be laid off themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 66-13(3): Regional Counselling For Laid-off Employees

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm informed that the Financial Management Board Secretariat will be dealing with these issues and conducting the counselling that the Member refers to.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 66-13(3): Regional Counselling For Laid-off Employees

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to me, it's farcical to believe that by eliminating, for example, four positions in Personnel in the Baffin region that this government will save money when now the GNWT will have to hire personnel or staffing people for those other departments. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question for the Minister responsible for the Personnel Secretariat, in this case, Mr. Arlooktoo: How many new employees will this government have to hire by eliminating regional Personnel offices to staff similar positions within the department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 66-13(3): Regional Counselling For Laid-off Employees

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the Member can appreciate that this portfolio is normally handled by the Premier and I'm not as well-versed as he is in the followings of department. However, I am informed that there will be no new employees hired because of this initiative. Any

Page 84

personnel functions will be dealt with within the departments with existing resources.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 67-13(3): Status Of Ministers' Attendance At NWTAM In Inuvik

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Deputy Premier. The NWT Association of Municipalities is holding its annual general meeting in Inuvik this weekend. The theme is community empowerment. Since the initiative for this concept originated in the Legislative Assembly, I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, are there any Members of Cabinet who will be attending this important meeting?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 67-13(3): Status Of Ministers' Attendance At NWTAM In Inuvik

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the honourable Manik Thompson, will be attending the meeting in Inuvik, along with some senior officials from the Department of MACA and from the Premier's office.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 67-13(3): Status Of Ministers' Attendance At NWTAM In Inuvik

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The association has noted that upcoming changes in the NWT compel municipal governments to address certain issues. I would ask the Deputy Premier, will our representatives be addressing the membership of the association on the subjects of transfer of powers to communities, impact of aboriginal self-government on municipalities, and the impact of division on municipalities.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 67-13(3): Status Of Ministers' Attendance At NWTAM In Inuvik

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm informed that, as usual, the NWT Association of Municipalities will be discussing a very wide range of issues, including the theme of their conference, which is empowerment of communities. I do have a copy of their agenda, which I would be more than pleased to pass on to the Member for his information.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain the recently announced tender call for all medical travel, referral and medevac travel, including ticketing functions?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't an actual proposal call at this time; it was advance notice to the industry to advise them that in the future the department may be looking at actually going to proposal calls for some of those areas of medical travel, ticketing for the travel, et cetera. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing that. Mr. Speaker, this type of tender will probably squeeze out a lot of the smaller travel agents who will not have the financial resources to carry these types of commitments. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question, then: Will the Minister review the tender call proposal to see if there could be more equity for smaller agents, for example, in Iqaluit or Rankin Inlet,

so they can compete on this proposal or tender?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've given specific instructions today to the department to bring forward any of the proposal calls before they go out for the very same reason that the honourable Member has mentioned: I want to ensure that regionally-based air carriers, regionally-based travel agents, et cetera, have the opportunity to compete on a competitive basis for these contracts. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to hear that, also. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question for the Minister: When does he think this proposal or tender call would actually be coming out? When will it be in place? Is it six weeks, eight weeks, 10 weeks, 12 weeks? The reason, of course, for my question would be to give these smaller agents the opportunity to compete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Page 85

Further Return To Question 68-13(3): Tender Call For Medical Travel Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't, at this time, give a date because of the fact that the terms of reference for the proposal calls are being developed by the department as it stands now. However, I will

find out and advise the honourable Member on the expected time frames. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 69-13(3): Assistance For Communities Seeking GST-Exempt Status

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. It has come to my attention that people in remote communities should not be paying the GST. The problem is that the community has to apply for some sort of status in order to achieve this. In times of financial difficulties and restraint that we're in, I believe that it is our responsibility -- if this is true -- to help these communities achieve this status. Will the Minister of Finance commit to assisting these communities in attaining GST-exempt status if it is possible to attain?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 69-13(3): Assistance For Communities Seeking GST-Exempt Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Nobody likes paying taxes. If in fact there is a provision within the legislation where remote communities can apply for exemption, I would be only too happy to have my department assist those communities. We will definitely look into this matter for the honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 69-13(3): Assistance For Communities Seeking GST-Exempt Status

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister inform this House if such a plan is able to be put in place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 69-13(3): Assistance For Communities Seeking GST-Exempt Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I written question addressed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Is it okay if I proceed?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes.

Written Question 1-13(3): Regional Director's Position

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Baffin regional director presently chairs the regional wellness committee which is composed of the department of the Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and also the Baffin Regional Inuit Association and the Baffin Regional Health Board.

If the regional director is being removed, who will provide this coordinating function?

If one department of our government is going to be taking over this coordinating role, how will the total government perspective be maintained by one individual department?

Mr. Speaker, since the chair of the regional wellness committee has been assuming a coordinating role encouraging and even demanding other departments and the boards of this government to cooperate with one another, how will that monitoring, coordinating and leadership role be carried out by one department of many from within the region?

Compared to the advantages of coordination by a regional director who is independent of all

departments and also is a senior government official in the region, wouldn't it be easier for coordinating and a monitoring role to be carried out at the regional level amongst departments by the most senior employee in the region, rather than by an employee with equal status to all other departmental superintendents in the regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Written Question 2-13(3): Elimination Of Regional Director's Position

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This a written question to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs regarding the elimination of the regional director's position.

The regional director in the Baffin has provided very good support to the Baffin Regional Council and now the Baffin Leaders' Summit. How is it intended that the Baffin Leaders' Summit will be provided with this support in future if the regional director's position is to be eliminated?

If the regional director's position is to be removed and one department in the region will take over his responsibilities with regard to the Baffin Leaders' Summit, how will the total government's perspective be maintained for the Baffin Leaders' Summit?

At present, funding for the Baffin Leaders' Summit is provided by the Department of Executive, through the regional director's office. If the regional director's position is to be eliminated, how will the funding to the Baffin Leaders' Summit be provided?

Page 86

Mr. Speaker, will the Baffin Leaders' Summit continue to be provided with funding for its meetings in the coming year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Written Question 3-13(3): Regional Director And Community Transfer

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is also directed to the Minister of MACA regarding regional director and community transfer.

The Baffin regional director has been chairing the senior management committee which meets monthly and includes all superintendents and director-level managers in the region. Does the government believe that the Baffin senior management committee has been active in dealing with issues of current concern in the region in a cooperative manner?

Does the Minister believe that the senior management committee has been effective? Who will chair the Baffin senior management committee if the regional director's position is eliminated? If the chair is to be replaced by a departmental superintendent, how will that person represent the government-wide perspectives? How will the regional superintendent chairing the Baffin senior management committee, as an equal, have the authority to monitor and coordinate lead initiatives within the region?

The Baffin regional director has been chairing the Baffin regional transfer committee, the regional director has been actively involved in community transfer in the Baffin which seems to be welcomed by virtually every Baffin community.

If the Baffin regional director is removed, who will replace the regional director in coordinating the role? If the coordinating/monitoring role is to be assumed by one of the regional superintendents, how will that superintendent have clout with other superintendents when each superintendent has the same status in the government hierarchy?

Since the Baffin community transfer initiative represents a new approach to CTI being tried out on a trial basis, why change the rules before the new approach has been concluded?

Isn't the change of the coordinating role from the regional director being seen to communities and the general public as a change from the Executive and Cabinet program and priority to that of a major departmental program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition regarding public service lay-offs and wage reductions that was sent to me by the Cape Dorset UNW members and hamlet employees. Petition No. 4-13(3) contains 55 signatures and the petitions request that MLAs oppose the government's initiative to cut positions and roll back wages of the UNW members, with a covering letter from Anne Freda, shop steward, Cape Dorset.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of public service lay-offs and wage reductions. Mr. Speaker, Petition No. 5-13(3) contains 62 signatures and the petitioners request that MLAs oppose the government's initiative to cut positions and roll back wages of UNW members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Report On Bills 2 And 3

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bills 2 and 3 and wishes to report that Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96, and Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96, are now ready for Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 12-13(3), a letter from the mayor of Clyde River, dated March 25, 1996. Mr. James Qillaq is asking the Premier to reconsider the decision to close the Executive office in the Baffin region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Tabled Document 13-13(3), a letter written to me from the hunters' and trappers' organization in Taloyoak regarding muskox tags. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 13, 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: Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Page 87

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. The item before us today is Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Committee on MLA Compensation. What is the wish of the Members with respect to this? Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I would like to make a motion. I move to report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

--- Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 1-13(3), and I would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Secunder? Mr. Picco. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Interim Appropriation Act, April 1 To June 30, 1996

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by my honourable colleague for Baffin South, that Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, April 1 to June 30, 1996, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 1 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

Bill 4: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1995-96

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by my honourable colleague for Baffin South, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1995-96, be read for the third time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 4 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Before we adjourn, I would like to mention to the Members that there are 17 teenagers who are going to be in the great hall to do a performance. The Members are invited to attend. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, please note that the Western Caucus meeting will be at 4:00 this afternoon; at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow of the Management and Services Board and at 11:00 a.m. of the Government Operations/Ordinary Members' Caucus. Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 27, 1996:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions

Page 88

17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 27, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

--- ADJOURNMENT