



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day *

13th Assembly

HANSARD

K 98B9G85M, MARCH 2+, 1996

Pages , -!%\$*
Pagination reflects print edition

The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1996

Page 89

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. Don Morin, Hon. Kelvin Ng, Mr.

Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Hon. Manik Thompson, Hon. John Todd

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson.

Minister's Statement 18-13(3): NWT Association Of Municipalities Annual General Meeting

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Beginning this Thursday, March 28, 1996, and running through to Sunday, March 31, 1996, Inuvik will play host to the 30th annual general meeting of the NWT Association of Municipalities.

This year's theme for the meeting is "community empowerment" in keeping with our own government's priorities and agenda for action. A series of workshops are planned on Friday, March 29, 1996, to draw out community government views and positions on this important topic.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to attending the association's meetings and plan to participate in various sessions scheduled throughout the four days. Senior staff of the department will also be available to contribute and participate in the meetings. Also registered to attend these meetings are our colleagues, Mr. Henry and Mr. Roland.

I went to extend to the association my wish for a successful meeting. I am confident that Members of this Legislative Assembly will support me in saying that we look forward to working with the association and its member community governments towards our

common goals, including community empowerment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 19-13(3): National Wildlife Week April 7 - 14

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, on April 7th to 14th, the Northwest Territories will join the rest of Canada in

celebrating National Wildlife Week. Throughout the week, the Department of Renewable Resources, schools and communities will take part in activities that recognize the public's role in protecting and managing this valuable resource. In Yellowknife, on April 14th, departmental staff will host a special "Amazing Sundays" wildlife event at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. In other communities, students can ask our wildlife experts questions through a special electronic bulletin board.

Harvesting wildlife has sustained northern cultures for thousands of years. Today, wildlife provides us with healthy foods, seasonal employment for trappers, guides and outfitters, clothing and material for arts and crafts, and the skills needed to harvest wildlife and make products remain valuable and connect us to our heritage. Through land claims agreements, the public role in managing wildlife has been formalized and is taken very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, we are fortunate to have productive wildlife populations that are managed on a sustainable basis to provide the maximum benefits to people. We owe a great deal to wildlife and, as a sign of honour and respect, I would like to invite all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join in activities that celebrate National Wildlife Week. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 20-13(3): Model National Native Youth Role

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, role models are important for all of us, but they are particularly important for our aboriginal youth because they show how a healthy lifestyle is essential in helping youth achieve their dreams.

Someone our young people can look up to is Brenda Kanayuk of Pond Inlet who is one of only nine people across the country named as a national native youth role model. Over the next two years, Ms. Kanayuk will travel to aboriginal communities to speak to youth about adopting healthier lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Kanayuk has clearly made positive choices in her life and she spends a great deal of time helping others. She holds a number of leadership positions in the Baffin region. She credits her parents, grandparents and elders

Page 90

with helping her understand traditional values and approach life in a positive way.

Ms. Kanayuk and the others who have been recognized as national native youth role models will volunteer their time and take part in workshops, discussion groups or give presentations, depending on the wishes of the communities that invite them to speak.

Ms. Kanayuk celebrated the beginning of her term with the other role models during a gala evening hosted by the Governor General at Rideau Hall on February 23rd.

Mr. Speaker, the future will bring many challenges, particularly for our young people as they work to establish careers and families in a world that is changing very rapidly. Youth will have to work together to find their own solutions, but they will need the support of their families, their communities, aboriginal organizations and government.

Mr. Speaker, northerners can take pride in Brenda Kanayuk and the national recognition she has received. I am sure she will make a difference in the lives of the aboriginal youth she will meet in the coming years and help them learn to deal with change in a positive and healthy way. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 21-13(3): Partners In Development

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, this government has made a commitment to seek partnerships with aboriginal groups. I am pleased to report that progress is being made with respect to the delivery of economic development programs.

Sakku Investments Incorporated, the business arm of the Keewatin Inuit Association, the Community Futures Society in the Keewatin, and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in the region have established the Kivalliq Partners in Development to improve business services to clients.

The partners have hired three cost-shared staff, all young people from the Keewatin who will work with departmental staff and employees of the Community Futures Society to provide one-stop shopping for the business community. This one-stop shop will improve the coordination of economic development services in the region, duplication of efforts and programs will be reduced, efficiency increased and access to programs improved. To increase efficiency and effectiveness even further, the partners plan to have Internet services available to every economic development officer in the smaller communities in the Keewatin by this summer, improving electronic access to business information and communications from around the world.

Sakku, NTI and the department have recently decided to pool their grant programs for small businesses in the region. The funds will be managed by the partners and allocated by communities. Decisions will be made at the community level which will give communities meaningful participation in their own economic development.

During this next year, the partners intend to research and develop an aftercare program, a youth entrepreneur program and amalgamate the management of Sakku, Business Credit Corporation and community futures loan portfolios.

To ensure increased business success, the partners have established a business training and resource centre in Arviat. The centre has a library of business

training material and offers training courses in two languages at the community level. I am pleased to inform the House that the training centre has successfully delivered its first entrepreneur training module: an introduction to business bookkeeping.

Mr. Speaker, the results of this cooperative effort are very positive. The partners have invested \$1.5 million to assist 30 small businesses expand their operations. This investment has generated 26 new full-time jobs and 31 new part-time jobs, with a payroll value of \$1.2 million in the first year. By working together, the partners were able to achieve what they would not have been able to do alone: support this many applications to create badly-needed jobs in the Keewatin.

We have to do more with less in these financially-troubled times. The projected cost of departmental program delivery in the Keewatin will decrease from 41 cents on the dollar, to 30 cents. Mr. Speaker, this translates into an actual operational saving of over \$150,000 per year. The other participants in the partnership are also realizing cost-savings with improved service.

Mr. Speaker, the Kivalliq Partners in Development is a great example of aboriginal groups and government working together to better serve the public. The results are very encouraging. I would like to congratulate the participating organizations, the leadership and staff for their efforts and vision. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 22-13(3): Student Art Council Aboriginal Languages Month

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Quyannimik, Ohaqte.

--- Applause

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a recent initiative of the office of the Languages Commissioner. The office has organized an exhibit of student artwork to mark Aboriginal Languages Month and French Week. The exhibit is based on the theme "the importance of language in our lives" and is on display now in the great hall. Je suis tres impressionne

par la qualite des oeuvres d'art et la reflexion que les etudiants ont accordee A ce theme si important.

Language, culture and heritage shape how people understand the world and how they learn. Language and culture form

Page 91

the basis of the NWT school system, and are further supported through a variety of programs offered by my department, including the language bureau, support to museums and funding for community-based language and culture projects.

Be De Har Nah Tee, all efforts to emphasize the importance of understanding your own language are very important, particularly for young people, because the future of our official languages lies with them.

I would like to recognize the work of the Uqau-Silir-inir-mut Karni-sin-ayuyq Nuna-ttiar-mi to draw attention to the importance of the NWT's official languages generally, and this poster contest in particular. Cela a evidemment encourage plusieurs jeunes de partout aux Territoires due Nord-Ouest 6 reflechir sur l'importance de garder leur langue et leur culture. Quyannimik, mahsi, merci, quana, merci, thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Impact Of Loss Of Telecommunications Services In Nunavut

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Yesterday, Tuesday, March 26, 1996, we were advised by NorthwesTel that they have lost all communication with those communities served by the satellite Anik E2 in the Nunavut area.

Mr. Speaker, the question that remains to be answered is what is the alternative solution in the event that we lose communication again within the Territories. Mr. Speaker, Isaac Newton once said, "Anything that can go wrong, will eventually go

wrong." I am sure that we live on the edge in the Nunavut area.

Mr. Speaker, what would happen if something tragic happened in the Nunavut area during the time when the communication system was out? Is there any alternative solution that the government can offer for our area in Nunavut?

During the appropriate time, I will be asking the Premier about the alternative solutions in the event this occurs again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Impact Of Wage And Benefits Reductions On Large Families

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Minister of Finance say that he is going to be fair and equitable in the cuts to wages and benefits. I know that he has a very difficult job. We all know that there will be reductions in wages and benefits to government employees. Mr. Speaker, I could accept these cuts if I felt that my constituents in Clyde River, Broughton Island and Pangnirtung were being treated the same as people with the same size families in other communities in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, according to my calculations, that is not the case, especially for people with big families. For example, Mr. Speaker, I have considered the case of government employees with six children with a basic salary of \$38,216 who live in Broughton Island. The end result of the new northern allowance is that my constituents with large families face a reduction of take-home pay and benefits of a whopping 37 per cent. This will happen in one year, Mr. Speaker. This is a big drop in wages and benefits.

If every government employee in the Northwest Territories with a family of six was having their wages and benefits cut by that much, it would be easier to explain to my constituents. That would be fair and equitable. However, Mr. Speaker, I understand that in some communities in the Northwest Territories that are on the road system, that same employee making \$38,216, with a family of six, is only losing 11 per cent of their wages and benefits. Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is fair. What concerns me the most about this new

system, Mr. Speaker, is that it is usually the longterm residents in my constituency who have large families.

Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement, please.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These long-term northern residents are the people I would hope we would encourage to stay working for our government. According to the figures I have, a single person making the same salary in Broughton Island would only lose seven per cent under the new system of northern allowances. This also seems unfair to me, Mr. Speaker. Two employees making the same salary in Broughton Island lose seven per cent or 37 per cent, depending on whether or not they have a big family.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister of Finance wants to treat everyone with fairness. I would respectfully suggest to him that if he wants to be fair to people with large families who live in remote communities, he should review the proposed new wages and benefits to make sure that those large families and those who live off the highway system are not hit harder than those with small families and those who live closer to Yellowknife. Since there must be cuts, I would like to see everyone treated equally; whether they have a large family or not, whether they live on Baffin Island or on the highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Page 92

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Rationale For Opposition To Wage And Benefits Reductions

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past few days in this House, I have talked about the newly

announced package for employees. I have said that it isn't fair because reductions in Nunavut will be greater than in other locations. Mr. Speaker, I also note that there is a deficit problem. Instead of attacking this government on its plans, like the elimination of the Executive and Personnel offices, which I think are short-sighted and detrimental to this government, I should also be prepared to offer constructive ways to help this government overcome the deficit. Mr. Speaker, I have tried to do this in and out of committee. The role of the ordinary MLA is to provide the checks and balances for constructive criticism, as well as to congratulate this government when the opportunity arises. Mr. Speaker, that is why I have asked the questions that I have. I represent the constituency of Iqaluit; their concerns are my concerns. I have not forgotten that. I will continue to bring up matters that are important to my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, in a consensus type of government, where the boundaries between Cabinet and ordinary Members are not well defined, sometimes it is difficult to be critical without the feeling of being personal. I find this every day, Mr. Speaker. However, Mr. Speaker, questions must be asked, questions must be raised, questions must be spoken, or this government would be a sham. Mr. Speaker, as a rookie MLA, I have learned many things over the past few months. However, Mr. Speaker, I have not forgotten how and why I came here. I thank my fellow MLAs for their support, their constructive criticism of me and their camaraderie. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Parks Canada Grants Awarded To Community Groups

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not often that an MLA receives good news; therefore, I'm very pleased to announce that two communities in my constituency have been awarded funds from the Parks Canada supplement to the Canada/ Northwest Territories languages agreement. The hamlet of Arctic Bay has been awarded \$78,805 for activities associated with the construction of the traditional qarmaq. The Resolute Bay Hunters' and Trappers' Association has been awarded \$7,500 to hold a

workshop on oral history and the traditional knowledge of polar bears.

The Arctic Bay project is a tribute to the elders of Arctic Bay, who are specialists in the Inuktitut language and culture, who have successfully participated in community-based projects in the past by collecting traditional place names and who instruct cultural classes in Inuujaq School at all grade levels in Resolute Bay. The project ensures that Inuit traditional environmental knowledge and practical experience with polar bears and land-based cultural activities will be available for use in the cooperative management of the proposed Bathurst Island National Park. The Resolute Bay Community Lands and Resources Committee and the Resolute Bay Hunters' and Trappers' Association will carry out this work. I would like to congratulate my communities on this achievement and thank the Honourable Charles Dent and his department for their support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on the proposal by the government to transfer occupational health and safety from the Department of Safety and Public Services to the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories. The proposed transfer includes mine safety and, I understand, may include the Labour Standards Board.

During the review of the business plan of the Department of Safety and Public Services by the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, a recommendation went forward that the transfer of occupational health and safety not proceed until further information, rationalization and justification could be provided back to the standing committee. To date, this has not been provided.

During the review, committee Members were advised by departmental officials and the Minister that in most other jurisdictions, namely the provinces, the workers' compensation boards have responsibility for occupational health and safety, including mine safety. In the last several days, a number of organizations

have expressed concern to me about the government's plans. These organizations are: the NWT Chamber of Mines; the NWT Chamber of Commerce; the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; the NWT Construction Association; and, the NWT Association of Municipalities.

In the standing committee meetings, I was told that boards in all other jurisdictions in Canada have responsibility for occupational health and safety. Now I am told by some of the stakeholders that only four other boards in Canada have responsibility for occupational health and safety: Quebec;

Page 93

BC; Yukon; and, New Brunswick. The level of powers differ in each case.

I am also told that the levels of power and responsibility vary with each jurisdiction. None of them administer labour standards. Mine safety is the responsibility held by some WCBs but, again, the level of power and responsibility varies. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

With regard to the NWT transfer, I understand that no actuarial review has been done to enable employers and workers, the stakeholders, to determine what the financial impact will be nor has a benefit analysis been done. My concerns are as follows: That I am misinformed on the information supplied to me; that stakeholders are paying for this; that stakeholders have not been made aware of this; that stakeholders have no say in this. Later today, I will be asking several questions with regard to the proposed transfer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Need To Take Action On Items That Matter Most To Our Constituents

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will save the greetings until the end. Mr. Speaker, we have been busy since the swearing-in ceremony. The budget process has consumed a lot of our time, so much so that the paperwork tends to pile up on our desks. We have run from one meeting to another and it seems that, at times, our focus is narrow and quite specific. Let us not forget the reason we first put our names to paper during the fall election. Many of us stated that it was time to change the way government did business. We believed we could make a difference and that we could represent the people in a fair and honest way.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that from time to time we have to get out from the paper that seems to surround us to, once again, look around to the people who put us here and the reasons why they put us here. Some voted for us because they believed we could represent their concerns and push to change the things that did not make any sense. They wanted us to bring common sense to the process that we call the Legislative Assembly. It is for those very people that we make decisions.

Mr. Speaker, during my campaign, I compared the process of government to a big wheel. It goes around and around. From time to time, it stops in your community. The people have a chance to voice their concerns. Something seems to have gone wrong. Nothing seems to change. It seems to be business as usual. Mr. Speaker, I put my name to paper to try to change this process, as I believe many of us did.

I think it is time to put meaning to our words; it is time to take action instead of just talk. I refer to the things we have been dealing with in the budget for the people of the Territories, as well as ourselves. I think it is time to take action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Brent Beck's Attendance At International Junior Sled Dog Competition

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas, I too have some good news to bring; it concerns a young man from the Yellowknife North constituency, Mr. Brent Beck. Brent left this morning to the Second Trofeo Topolino Sled Dog

Competition. This is an international sled dog competition for juniors. The 1996 edition will take place at the ski resort community of Passo, Tonale, and the valley high above, Ponte di Legno. This event is an opportunity for children from different parts of the world to meet in the Italian Alps and celebrate together the snow, the mountains and sled dogs.

The race is open to all junior mushers who can show proof of appropriate experience in driving sled dogs, such as a recommendation from their mushing club, mushing school, national organization or a recognized musher. Brent will be representing the Yellowknife, the NWT and Canada as the only Canadian going. He will be representing us in the 13-to16-year age group with one to four dogs. I would like to congratulate Brent on his trip and he is being assisted by the new champion who won the dog derby here, Tim White. Tim donated \$2,000 of his winnings so that Brent could attend this event. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 42-13(3): Breakdown Of New Northern Allowance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Picco on March 22nd, with respect to the breakdown of the new northern allowance.

The new northern allowance will be paid to employees in regular instalments as part of their bi-weekly pay. The full amount of the northern allowance paid each calendar year will be reported on the employee's T-4 in the section entitled, "travel in prescribed area." This will enable employees to take maximum advantage of the tax deduction for travel. Employees determine the amount of tax to be withheld from their bi-weekly pay on their TD1 form, which must be completed when an employee commences employment and which may be updated periodically as circumstances change.

I have another one, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Go ahead.

Return To Question 4-13(3): Status Of Arbitration Awards

HON. JOHN TODD:

I was asked a question on March 21st by Mr. Henry, with respect to the status of arbitration awards.

There were no findings by the arbitrator that the government was guilty of wrongdoing over a 10-year span from 1985 to 1995. Instead, there were rulings on procedural matters and decisions on which jobs were appropriately excluded against the criteria and which jobs, in the opinion of the arbitrator, did not meet the criteria.

Several rulings have been received and there are rulings still outstanding. It would be very expensive to produce 75 copies of the rulings for tabling in the House. Instead, I will have a binder of the rulings in my office that I will be pleased to make available to any Member who wishes to review this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 36-13(3): Contamination Of Fort McPherson Water Supply

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Krutko on March 22nd, regarding contamination of the Fort McPherson water supply.

The Member for Mackenzie Delta asked if the Department of Transportation was taking measures to alleviate the hamlet of Fort McPherson's concerns about the possible accidental contamination of its water supply from the Dempster Highway.

The department has no record of an accident ever occurring on the highway in the vicinity of the water source. Nonetheless, the department plans to widen the highway this year from 7.5 metres to 10.5 metres which will improve traffic safety and reduce the likelihood of an accident near the water source. The department also plans to install guardrails along the

highway beside the lake to reduce further the possibility of a vehicle leaving the road and contaminating the water source.

The Member's question also raises the possibility of contamination from the calcium chloride the department applies on the highway to control dust. Dust control improves visibility on the highway and helps to maintain safe driving conditions. The water source is tested regularly, and the department has no evidence that calcium chloride from the highway is contaminating the water supply.

The Department of Transportation would prefer to continue applying calcium chloride on the highway. It makes a positive contribution to highway safety and reduces the amount of dust that would otherwise settle in the reservoir. However, should the hamlet of Fort McPherson so request, the department will promptly discontinue its dust control program near the water source. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 70-13(3): Vacant Positions Advertised In Keewatin Region

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, I have stated many times in this House, my concern for the extremely high unemployment levels that exist in my communities of Arviat and Baker Lake. Mr. Speaker, the pending lay-offs and overall government downsizing only adds to this already desperate situation. Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the number of positions that my constituents see advertised for your department. Mr. Speaker, out of fairness and sensitivity to the unemployed in the Kivallivik region, would the honourable Minister please consider locating some of the jobs that have been advertised in Arviat and Baker Laker as opposed to locating all these jobs in Rankin Inlet? Thank you. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 70-13(3): Vacant Positions Advertised In Keewatin Region

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware of the concern raised by the honourable Member, The situation of filling the positions in Rankin Inlet is ongoing, it's part of the Arctic A transfer initiative that is under way. I've asked the department to look at the situation. As we examine the request of this honourable Member, I will get back to him at a later time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 71-13(3): Alternatives Available During Communications Breakdowns

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated to this House in my Member's statement regarding the Northwest communication outage in the Nunavut area, the former information indicated, Mr. Speaker, that those communities in the Western Arctic served by the microwave were not affected. The former information indicates that there is no indication at this time when the service will be restored. Mr. Speaker, this statement causes me some concern. When the communication links are out, there is no way of knowing how long it will be out for in the Nunavut area. Mr. Speaker, in this day and age, with advanced technology, surely this should not happen within our jurisdiction. In the event this happens again, what alternative do we have to communicate with the Eastern Arctic communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier, Mr. Morin.

Page 95

Return To Question 71-13(3): Alternatives Available During Communications Breakdowns

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member raised a very valid concern: communication is very important. The safety that people feel by being able to communicate from any remote Community in the Northwest

Territories is very important. I will have discussions with NorthwesTel to find out if they have any back-up plans should this happen again, or what they will put in place to ensure that we always have some sort of communication line open to our remote, small communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 72-13(3): Business Incentive Policy Review Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Public Works and Services. I've received several phone calls from constituents in the last 24 hours, as a result of the public consultation on the business incentive policy meeting that was held in Hay River this week. The constituents who called were business people and they were very concerned with the proposed changes to the business incentive policy. I was wondering if the Minister could outline for me the remainder of this process. I understand that there was originally consultation, and now there's a second round of consultation going on; but, I'm concerned with the process because I want to know what input this House is going to have in the final changes that are recommended. So, as I said, an outline of the remaining process would be appreciated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 72-13(3): Business Incentive Policy Review Process

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank You, Mr. Speaker. The NWT-wide public consultation of the business incentive policy will be completed next week, on April 2nd. The drafting of a revised policy is continuing. As I mentioned before in this House, the responsibility for administering the policy and maintaining the policy will be turned over to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in the very near future. So, although the Department of Public Works will continue to have a role in the business incentive policy, the responsibility will be moved to another department quite soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 72-13(3): Business Incentive Policy Review Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What provision is there, or is there any provision in the process, for Members in this House to be involved before the new percentages of preference are implemented?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 72-13(3): Business Incentive Policy Review Process

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, several days ago, the Department of Public Works had a briefing and consultation meeting with Members of the Legislative Assembly, and we received some good comments and suggestions at that meeting. I would think that until the day the new policy is approved, we would continue to take suggestions and comments from Members.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 73-13(3): Benefit To GNWT From WCB Wage And Benefits Cuts

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the honourable Minister of Finance. Yesterday in the House, I asked the Minister what method he proposed to attain any of the wage and benefits savings from excluded employees back to general revenue. An example I was given was the WCB. The honourable Minister responded that the savings are not coming back to the GNWT with respect to the Workers' Compensation Board. Can the Minister explain how this reduction to the example of WCB employees will contribute to a saving to the government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 73-13(3): Benefit To GNWT From WCB Wage And Benefits Cuts

HON. JOHN TODD:

Any reductions in the overhead of the WCB would, hopefully, be passed back on the assessments to the employers. This would ultimately make employers more profitable, which would ultimately make their taxes greater, so ultimately would, even though it's further down the line, have an impact on this government. That's what I meant yesterday and perhaps I didn't explain it as properly as I should have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 73-13(3): Benefit To GNWT From WCB Wage And Benefits Cuts

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister was not aware until March 15th that these funds were not coming back to the government, my question is how much does the lack of these funds not coming back to GNWT coffer alter his budget projections.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 73-13(3): Benefit To GNWT From WCB Wage And Benefits Cuts

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to point out that the WCB is funded by employers' contributions and there is no direct fiscal relationship in terms of the government base funding to the WCB. The point I was trying to make yesterday is that there is an

Page 96

impact if there's a reduction in the cost to the WCB because it impacts upon employers which will ultimately impact on their ability to create employment, pay taxes and deliver

services to the Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the announced reductions to pay and benefits. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Finance explain why a six-year employee with a family of four in Iqaluit will be reduced by 19.53 per cent and the same family in Fort Smith will be cut by 6.84 per cent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps it's important that we try to deal with and try to respond to this question. The principle of the strategy, which we've been trying to accomplish here and has been discussed at length with this Legislative Assembly through the standing committees, is this: The government can no longer afford to maintain the same benefits package that was originally designed to attract public servants from southern Canada. It's time to recognize the fact that increasing numbers of northerners do have the education and do have the job opportunities within the GNWT. The change to the northern allowance is intended to de-emphasize the recreational travel and provide a fair compensation package to the people who we've all grown up with to enable our employees to meet the basic needs in the community, whether it's mortgage payments, feeding the family, et cetera.

In the process of restructuring the northern allowance package based on the principle that we can no longer afford the current package and the fact that the old package was designed primarily for a southern employee component that took place 20 or 30 years ago, we redesigned it. It's an oversimplification to use the vacation travel component and to exaggerate the percentage changes when we're talking about a cost of living allowance and not a recreational bonus. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enjoyed that history lesson on the northern allowance package. However, the point is that these cuts are affecting the long-term northern residents who have been here 10, 15 or 20 years working for this government. That's the point. Mr. Speaker, the majority of our workers who are working at the entry level are aboriginal, at the \$30,000 to \$40,000 rate. My point is that these people are going to be affected. I'm prepared today to table in this House a document showing that. I'm

still waiting for a document from the Minister of Finance that was asked for last week.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the Minister is will he commit to reviewing the proposed reductions based on these inequities. That's all I'm asking for.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

HON. JOHN TODD:

I obviously have a fundamental difference with my honourable colleague. We've got to deal with the principle of the strategy. I'm going to say it again: The principle of the strategy is for us to provide the wages and benefits to a northern employee base that addresses the basic cost of living in the country. That's what we've tried to accomplish. If you look at it from the vacation travel perspective, yes, there is disparity. If you take that out of the component and look at it from a cost of living component, which is what we're trying to accomplish here ... Let's not forget that there are others out there who are less fortunate -- the unemployed, the people who can't find jobs -- we've also got a responsibility to them in the overall deficit elimination strategy. When are some of the Members in this House going to recognize that? Everybody has to take the cut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that everyone has to take a cut. And I also realize people are unemployed and are on welfare; I know, they are in my family. I also realize that a lot of the northern workers who we're talking about support extended families. For example, I support an extended family so, by cutting my salary, you're hurting my extended family who isn't working. That's the point. The VTA component is part of that package. It has been for X number of years. So when you look at the total package and you cut that, you're affecting these workers. That's all I'm saying. When I look at the cuts, I know, that they're not equal. I don't want to sound uncompassionate to the Minister of Finance. I know the Minister is grappling with this. I know the Minister of Finance is compassionate. However, I also see that when I look at reductions, for example, a family of four in Aklavik being cut 19.82 per cent and the same family being cut 8.5 per cent in Hay River, that's not equity. That's what I'm saying here. I'm asking, will the Minister address this.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

HON. JOHN TODD:

In my opinion, it is equitable. The honourable colleague, with all due respect, is not paying attention to the principle of the strategy. The principle of the strategy is to ensure that we provide a wage and benefits

Page 97

package for northern employees that meets their needs. It is not designed and will not be designed in this government if we are to meet the targets that this Assembly and the standing committees worked with us on to address the VTA recreational bonus that was originally designed for southern employees. It's an unfortunate situation that over the years people have viewed that as part of their overall income. It was and is vacation travel assistance for people to go south, nothing more, nothing less. The principle of what

we're trying to accomplish here is a benefits package that addresses northerners and their cost of living. I can't address it any other way. I don't know how else to explain it to the honourable Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not rocket science. I understand the principle of the bill. However, what I'm saying is I've been in the North for 15 years, so I guess I'm not a long-term person. It would affect me. I can only use myself as an example. Mr. Speaker, I know that there is a deficit problem with the government. We've spoken about it. I've talked about it. I'm doing what I can. That's the reason I brought up the bigger hit in MACA for the capital cuts the other day. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister looked at a cut across the board of perhaps five or 10 per cent of all employees? So if you cut Ed Picco 10 per cent in Iqaluit on \$60,000, that's a reduction of \$6,000. It would be the same amount in Hay River. To me, that's more equitable. That's my supplementary question to the Minister. Has he looked at across-the-board cuts of five or 10 per cent?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 74-13(3): Reason For Variations In Wage Cuts Between Communities

HON. JOHN TODD:

I'm sure we're going to debate this in the coming weeks. There is no one who has received more phone calls than I have on this issue and I've lived in Nunavut for 30 years. I'm still learning what's going on. Let me try again. Perhaps my honourable colleague will understand it this way: We are moving away from a benefit that sent people south on vacation and we're repackaging the benefits to provide an economy and a wage package to meet the basic needs of the constituency. I can't say it any other way. We're doing this in trying to meet the targets that we all set, and the majority of us agreed to, in committee. I'm trying the best I can, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how else to explain it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 75-13(3): Review Of Downsizing Arviat Housing Corporation Office

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that, with the downsizing of

the Housing Corporation, my home community of Arviat will be losing two PYs. Mr. Speaker, for the record, may I remind this Assembly, once again, that this community faces a 70 to 75 per cent unemployment rate. Mr. Speaker, to further compound the situation, it is my further understanding that one of these positions will be transferred to the Rankin Inlet suboffice. Will the Minister review this pending transfer so as to retain this position in this level 11 community where jobs are so desperately needed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 75-13(3): Review Of Downsizing Arviat Housing Corporation Office

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member can appreciate, this is my third day as the Minister of Housing and I am still in the first phase of briefing with the department. I am aware of the Member's concern about downsizing the district office in Arviat. I can only say that I will review the situation and talk to the Member about it and see how we can come to an understanding.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 76-13(3): Analysis Of Impact Of New Northern Benefits Package

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question directed to the Minister of Finance. (Translation ends) I was told by the Minister of Finance that his officials have already done an

analysis on the effect of take-home pay of the new wage and benefits. I asked the Minister to give us the information on Monday. To date, we are still waiting. When will the Minister give us the information on this analysis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 76-13(3): Analysis Of Impact Of New Northern Benefits Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

(Microphone turned off) ... my honourable colleague asked me the question on Monday. It is Wednesday; 48 hours later. We are making every effort to provide them with the information. I want to ensure that it is accurate and reflective of what the concerns are. I want to assure him that this Minister is transparent and will table these documents in the House and will defend the position this government has taken. There is no attempt here, as has been implied, to not provide this information. We want to ensure the information is accurate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 76-13(3): Analysis Of Impact Of New Northern Benefits Package

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This again is directed to the Minister of Finance. When the analysis has been completed, could he present this to the House, please?

Page 98

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 76-13(3): Analysis Of Impact Of New Northern Benefits Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

Let me assure my colleague that I am equally concerned as he is on the overall fiscal impact that these changes are going to have on our constituency, particularly the people in remote areas where it appears the greatest impact will be because of the

removal of the VTA. It is our intention to provide that information as quickly and as accurately as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 77-13-(3): Status Of Request For Gjoa Haven Health Centre And Elders' Facility

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, I have lived in Nunavut for about 50 years.

--- Applause

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, my colleague from the Kitikmeot region. Gjoa Haven has been requesting, Mr. Speaker, for many years, an elders' centre and a health facility for that community. What is the status of the request for the health centre and the elders' centre in Gjoa Haven? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 77-13-(3): Status Of Request For Gjoa Haven Health Centre And Elders' Facility

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the health centre, the department recently received an evaluation from Public Works and Services on the condition of the existing health centre to see whether or not it would be feasible to renovate versus a new facility. We have that report and we are reviewing it at the present time.

With respect to the elders' facility that was proposed for Gjoa Haven, it has tentatively been put on hold. There is a capital program through the Housing Corporation to deal with the seniors' independent housing strategy and the Department of Health and Social Services will be working with the Housing Corporation to try to identify the needs of the community of Gjoa Haven under the terms of that strategy and see what we can come up with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Safety and Public Services with regard to the transfer of occupational health and safety and mine safety from the Department of Safety and Public Services to the Workers' Compensation Board. Would the Minister of that department please advise me as follows:

Has an actuarial cost and benefit analysis been done with regard to the proposed transfer?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The actuarial costs that the honourable Member is asking about is the responsibility of the Workers' Compensation Board. I think they have done that analysis, so I would refer that question to the honourable Member responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Ootes, could you readdress your question to the Minister of the WCB?

Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will address my question to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. With regard to the transfer of occupational health and safety and mine safety from Safety and Public Services department to the Workers' Compensation Board, could the Minister please advise me as follows: Has an actuarial cost and benefit analysis been done with regard to the transfer?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The actuarial work is currently under way between the Department of Safety and Public Services and the WCB. The WCB, of course, has a long history of dealing with actuaries, so they are enacting that right now to try to determine a variety of options as to how they will end up paying the long-term obligations for this responsibility when it is transferred. The current agreement, as I am sure my colleague knows, is that we have phased this transfer in over three years and the fiscal cost of it being phased in over three years is being paid for by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will address my question to the Minister of the Workers' Compensation Board again in this instance. Will the government give assurance that they will consult the stakeholders with regard to the implications, the benefits and the reasons for the transfer?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. We do recognize, both the government and the Workers' Compensation Board,

Page 99

the need to be fair. The strategy we have taken is to try to phase this in over a three-year period and this government will continue some fiscal commitment. I think it is fair to say the objective is to ensure -- and I can't speak for the board - a fiscal package is in place that will reassure the contributors to the fund -- that is, the employers -- and no increases in the assessments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

I have a further question on that to the Minister of the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Speaker. When will their consultations with the stakeholders take place?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be meeting with the chairman of the board, the general manager of the board and Mr. Voytilla, tomorrow at noon, I believe. They're supposed to provide me with an updated report on what steps they're going to be taking with respect to meeting their fiscal obligations, how we're going to go about that, reassuring and ensuring both groups of stakeholders -employers and employees -- that it won't have an impact on them, et cetera. I will be in a better position probably tomorrow afternoon to respond to my honourable colleague about the timing of these consultations and discussions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Considering that this came before the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, I wonder if the Minister can give us assurance that it will also be referred, with justification, implications and so forth, back to the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 78-13(3): Proposed Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety

HON. JOHN TODD:

I will give my colleague my assurance that I will report back what steps have been taken with respect to the transfer, the overall fiscal implications, and try to answer a number of the questions that have been raised today; and I believe they've been made by stakeholder groups, whether it has been the Chamber of Commerce or the Chamber of Mines. I want to say, in all fairness to my colleague, that I am moving forward on this important initiative and I intend, unless there is some major reason not to, to proceed with the transfer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 79-13(3): Tabling Of Comprehensive Overview Of Job Cuts

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. There are a number of cuts that have been proposed over the last few days and weeks in different areas; not only to pay and benefits, but to actual lay-offs and positions being lost in communities. Some communities have taken, for instance, significant cuts in positions; whereas, there is a whole raft of communities that didn't, for obvious reasons. As we go further down this path and things become clear, would the Minister be able to table in the House a comprehensive overview of how the cuts do balance out so that we're not just looking at one particular part when we want to see where the balance is; that we end up looking at the whole picture to see where the fairness is? When we do this process next year, the issues will be there again and we have to ensure, as everybody has said, that there is fairness and equity. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 79-13(3): Tabling Of Comprehensive Overview Of Job Cuts

HON. JOHN TODD:

Let me try to answer the question, Mr. Speaker. I'm confident, based upon what I've seen in the short time I've been in this House with the 15 new Members and the fact that the new committee system we've put in place provides direct input into developing initiatives in this government; whether it's in deficit elimination or

whether, hopefully at some point, we'll come to the investment side and make life better for everybody.

I think the process is set. The learning curve for those of us who are new to the Finance portfolio and those of you who are new to the House, I think has been a fast-tracked learning process for all of us. I think the future development of changes and fair distribution of the dollars will be transparent to everybody. If there is some method in which I can table it in the House, I'm sure I can work it out with the standing committees and I would only be too happy to do so. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 80-13(3): Transfer Of Staff Housing To NWT HC

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that all staff housing now owned by this government has been or will be transferred to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Can the Minister confirm this?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Housing, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 80-13(3): Transfer Of Staff Housing To NWT HC

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, there is a movement of responsibility for staff housing to the Housing Corporation

Page 100

which is occurring at this very moment. The other point is that the GNWT has another initiative to get totally out of staff housing. In answer to that question, yes, the staff housing component is being transferred to the Housing Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 80-13(3): Transfer Of Staff Housing To NWT HC

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if this is the case, does that mean local housing associations will now manage these properties under their by-laws and ordinances, et cetera? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am very new to this portfolio and I don't have that information. I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Social Services with regard to treatment facilities in the Northwest Territories such as the Baffin Regional Treatment Centre, the treatment centre in Hay River, Northern Addictions Services program in Yellowknife and Delta House, which are presently all funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories. There has been a program established in my riding called the Tl'oondih Healing Camp which is 18 miles south of Fort McPherson. At the present time, it is the only program in the Northwest Territories which is not funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories on the same basis as the other treatment facilities. Will the Minister assure me that this program will be funded on the same basis as the other programs in the North?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I can't give assurances that it will be funded at the same levels as other treatment centres, as it stands now, because some of the other treatment centres this government owns and has a significant investment in. However, Mr.

Speaker, the department is aware of the Tl'oondih Healing Camp. Department officials have been negotiating with representatives of the Gwich'in, the owners of that facility, to try to reach an agreement on a per them rate for referrals of patients who the department refers to that treatment centre. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're saying that there's a difference between government facilities and private facilities, yet you do have a per them rate for private facilities, don't you?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure if we have a separate rate for private facilities. I understand that we core fund some facilities and we operate others on a per them basis, based on the clientele who are referred to those facilities. In that respect, as I indicated earlier, the department is trying to work on an arrangement with the Tl'oondih operators to try to support them in their initiatives. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I have the Minister allow me access to information which pertains to rates which are being paid to the other facilities and also what the different rates are for? Are they for a contribution or a per them rate? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 81-13(3): Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be willing to provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 82-13(3): Impact Of Wage And Benefits Reductions On Inuvik Residents

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I received a fax today from a concerned constituent. During the election process, I said I would represent everyone fairly. I want to make sure that this individual realizes that I am representing everyone fairly, not just by ethnic background. To the Finance Minister, there is a lot of concern, as you have heard around the table, about the equity of the proposed reductions. I have a concern here of an individual receiving a four per cent reduction compared to a co-worker receiving over a 15 per cent reduction. Is the shift of the government changing from providing a benefit for the family to providing it for the individual? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Page 101

Return To Question 82-13(3): Impact Of Wage And Benefits Reductions On Inuvik Residents

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure my honourable colleague, and all colleagues in this House, that we aren't trying to shift benefits. I am always accused of wearing my emotions on my sleeve, but I think we are trying to establish a new approach to the benefits package. It ensures that the people we represent, families and extended families, who work for this government get a reasonable compensation package to meet the basic needs; that is, the ability to feed their family, the ability to house

their family and to have a reasonable recreational lifestyle. That is certainly the intent and the basic principle of the strategy here. At the same time, I have said it before and I will say it again, we are trying to accomplish the targets set by the Legislative Assembly and agreed to by most of the Legislative Assembly with respect to the overall fiscal reduction that is required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 83-13(3): Transfer Of Mine Safety Section To WCB

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Does a proposal of the transfer of occupational health and safety also include the office of the mine safety section?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 83-13(3): Transfer Of Mine Safety Section To WCB

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, the transfer of occupational health and safety does include the mine safety component. There are some minor problems with that right now which we are working on, but it is our intention for the mine safety component to be transferred as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 83-13(3): Transfer Of Mine Safety Section To WCB

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could we get assurances from the Minister that no further consideration of this transfer continue, pending the results of a court case which is presently taking place between WCB and the mine inspection office?

MR. SPEAKER:

I want to caution the Member. When there are cases in court, we don't influence the court with regard to the speed in which they deal with it or the eventual decision. I am not sure whether the question is in order because you are asking the Minister if and when this is over, could you get the assurance from the Minister after the court has dealt with it. If the court hears that, they may feel under pressure to make a decision so that we can deal with it in the House. I don't know if there is a direct link or whether this question should be raised. I will ask the Minister if he

might be able to give assurance, if he feels comfortable in doing so.

Further Return To Question 83-13(3): Transfer Of Mine Safety Section To WCB

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me try to answer the question this way: I am as equally concerned as my honourable colleague is about the current situation in the courts. I don't think I would be in a position to make any comment or response to that question at this time because of the current situation. It isn't an attempt to be evasive. I certainly wouldn't want to influence it one way or the other.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 84-13(3): Status Of Cost Analysis Re Arctic College Programs Transfer

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today a colleague will be presenting a petition concerning the program transfers at the Nunavut Arctic College. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance and it concerns the cost analysis that was mentioned in the House in the previous session. Has that analysis been done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, to remind Members, the Member started off by making reference to a petition that isn't in the possession of the Members. He did make it separate from the question though. Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 84-13(3): Status Of Cost Analysis Re Arctic College Programs Transfer

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that my honourable colleague, Mr. Dent, had indicated to the Member earlier that he was prepared to provide him with that information at the end of April. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier with regard to being the former Minister of Public Works of the previous government. This is regarding an outstanding bill for \$200,000 with the Gwich'in Tribal Council for work they have done on pilings of the old Chief Julius School. A memorandum was signed by his department in 1994 and the bill for the project is still outstanding. What is going to be done about that?

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to ask the Member to redirect his question to the appropriate Minister and, in this case, it would be Mr. Arlooktoo. I would also ask Members not to make reference to what the previous portfolios were. Mr. Krutko.

Page 102

Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll redirect my question to the Minister of Public Works, with regard to the outstanding bill that is presently ... I was going to say hopefully dealt with, but nothing has been done to date with regard to the amounts in which there has been a memorandum in place since 1994 for this project; yet, to date, it's costing the Gwich'in Tribal Council somewhere in the area of \$230,000 which they've paid to date to do this work, yet they have not received any funds. How soon can they expect payment on these outstanding invoices?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the situation, mostly because the Member has been in my office every day for the last 10 days speaking to me on this issue.

--- Applause

I was on a teleconference earlier this morning with senior officials of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and with senior officials of the Department of Public Works. I understand that, as we speak, there are talks going on between the Department of Public Works and the Gwich'in Tribal Council to try to resolve the issue. I've instructed the department to resolve it as soon as possible, within the next few days, if possible; and also to ensure that the government lives up to any contractual or any obligations under any agreements that it has previously signed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

MR. KRUTKO:

Would that also include interest on those outstanding amounts, dating back to 1994?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the source of the dispute is on the amount, as the Member mentioned. The group in his constituency is claiming an invoice in the area of \$230,000; whereas, the government is saying that our obligation is less than that. That's where the negotiations are going on right now, in coming up with a settlement in the next few days which would hopefully be satisfactory to the two parties.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

My last question is regarding interest. I was looking at the memorandum, in subsection 12, where it

clearly states that payments later than 20 days after the scheduled date of submission, interest charges will be added to those bills.

MR. SPEAKER:

What's your question, Mr. Krutko?

Supplementary To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was, being the Minister seemed to have overlooked the last question about interest, and I just wanted to make him aware that there is a commitment within the memorandum they have signed with the party, that there will be interest charges, 20 days after submission of this invoice.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am not personally involved in the particulars of the talks going on at this moment, but there are disputes on several interpretations of the memorandum of understanding he is speaking about. I could sit down with the Member once again and talk over what some of the issues are, but I would rather wait and see what happens in the talks going on right now between the Department of Public Works and the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the future, hopefully we won't run into this sort of instance again where an issue takes two years to proceed, with regard to a financial obligation in which there's hardship

generated to the opposite party, especially with large amounts of funds in the \$200,000 range which could probably be used better elsewhere by the other party. Hopefully the department can somehow streamline its procedures on how it conducts itself through these negotiations and make sure that those avenues are clarified, and not be allowed to run its course of almost a two-year process.

MR. SPEAKER:

I didn't hear a question there. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

My question is that I hope this does not happen again to any party, so you don't have to allow the process to be carried out for a long period of time, such as two years.

MR. SPEAKER:

I still didn't hear your question. Just to remind the Members, we are in question period. There have been several statements made with no question being asked. I would like to remind the Members to ask questions and not make statements.

Supplementary To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

MR. KRUTKO:

To shorten my statement so it will become a question, my question is that hopefully this process will not

Page 103

be drawn out to that period of time. Will the Minister assure me that this will not happen again?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 85-13(3): Payment For Outstanding Invoices On School Project

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as I understand the situation, part of the dispute revolves around the fact that it is the government's view that the Gwich'in Tribal Council went out and did some work that was not authorized. The Department of Public Works has looked at the work and has tried to come to an agreement on what the value of that work is. I do agree with the Member

that some of these issues should not be long and drawn out, but it isn't just a matter of the government dragging its heels. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 86-13(3): Community Impact From Cuts To Colleges

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In the information provided by the Minister of Finance with regard to employee lay-offs by community, we're aware that it doesn't allow for the cuts in divisional boards, health boards, colleges East and West and the Housing Corporation. When does the Minister expect to have the information on the cuts from Arctic College, both East and West, and the impact they have will in the communities where they are currently located? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 86-13(3): Community Impact From Cuts To Colleges

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the detailed answer to that question will be part of the budget discussions, because everything is tied into the budget. Much of that information is available in draft form and could probably be shared with the committee in the next couple of weeks.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question Rationale For Using Yellowknife As Base For Allowance Calculations

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Would the Minister of Finance tell me why Yellowknife is used as a base for all other communities to be based on when it comes to the costs or...

--- Interjection

MR. ROLAND:

Why is it that Yellowknife is used as a basis to judge the rest of the communities as to how much they receive for a certain allowance? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 87-13(3): Rationale For Using Yellowknife As Base For Allowance Calculations

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the honourable colleague said, it is the centre of the universe, according to our colleagues from Yellowknife who represent this House. We use Yellowknife because it is a base on which to determine the cost of living. We then provide an incremental addition to the base for Inuvik, for Iqaluit, and elsewhere. Yellowknife was picked because it has one of the lowest cost-of-living levels across the Territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The petition that I'm going to read out here is the one that my honourable colleague, Mr. Picco, was alluding to. Mr. Speaker, maybe we can afford a small piece of plywood that I can put here between Mr. Picco and I so he will keep away from my documents.

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition concerning support for distribution of Nunavut Arctic College programs between the three Nunavut regions. Mr. Speaker, Petition No. 6-13(3) has been signed by 550 people.

--- Applause

The petitioners request that as students and staff of Nunavut Arctic College and other Community members, they support the board of governors' decision to distribute base-funded programs between the three regions in Nunavut.

--- Applause

They believe in fair and equal treatment for all...

--- Applause

--- Laughter

... and that programs should be available to students closer to their own home communities.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that has been signed by 129 people to move Kevin O'Brien away from me.

--- Laughter

Page 104

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of public service layoffs and reductions. The petitioners request that MLAs oppose the government's initiatives to cut positions and roll back wages of the UNW members. Mr. Speaker, Petition No. 7-13(3) has been signed by 22 people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 10, petitions. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition signed by employees from Grise Fiord. This petition states that the members of the Union of Northern Workers are not the cause of the deficit. Cutting positions and wage rollbacks are not the solution. Cutbacks will bring widespread hardship to each northern community. Private enterprise works for profit, and privatization will cost more. The petitioners believe it's your duty to oppose the cut-and-slash policy adopted by the Government of the Northwest Territories in contract negotiations with the Union of Northern Workers. Petition No. 8-13(3) has been signed by 16 people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two notices of motion. I give notice that on Friday, March 29, 1996, I shall move that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Continue, Mr. Todd.

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 29, 1996, I shall move that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Education Act, S.N.W.T., 1995, c.28

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 29, 1996, I shall move that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Education Act, Statutes of the Northwest Territories, 1995, Chapter 28, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 6.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with Bill 6. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 6: An Act To Amend The Education Act, S.N.W.T., 1995, c.28

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Education Act, S.N.W.T., 1995, c. 28, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 6 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 7.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with Bill 7. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Todd.

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 7 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 8.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with Bill 8. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed. Mr. Todd.

Page 105

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 8 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Erasmus.

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 5 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 1-13(3), with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The committee will come back to order. The item to be considered in this committee is Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a motion that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Barnabas, it isn't necessary for you to stand up, if you don't want to.

There is a motion to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--- Carried

I shall rise and report progress to the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 10-13(1) and would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I report that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Is there a seconder? Mr. Antoine. 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. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Management and Services Board this afternoon at 4:00 p.m. There is a meeting with the western MLAs of the Constitutional Development Steering Committee at 6:00 p.m. this evening. Meetings tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. of the Caucus; at 11:00 a.m. of the Government Operations, ordinary Members; and, at 12:00 noon of the Management and Services Board.

Orders of the day for Thursday, March 28, 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

Page 106

15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation
 - Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96

- Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96

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 Thursday, March 28, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

--- ADJOURNMENT