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The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1996

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MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Jim Antoine, Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Hon. Samuel Gargan, Mrs.

Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Miltenberger, Hon. Don Morin, 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):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Good afternoon. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 23-13(3): Ministers Absent From The House

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Charles Dent will be absent from the House today to attend a joint venture signing ceremony with the NWT Power Corporation and the Gwich'in Development Corporation in Fort McPherson. As well, the Honourable Manitok Thompson will be absent from the House for the remainder of the week to attend the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities annual general meeting in Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 24-13(3): Leader Award Community Languages

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A part of Aboriginal Languages Month and Francophone Week in the Northwest Territories is the government's community

language leader award program that recognizes individuals who promote the use of their languages.

The program recognizes a finalist from each official language except English. From these finalists, three award winners are chosen from Inuktitut, French and Dene/Cree.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first year of the program. A panel has completed its review of the nominations for this year's awards and I'm pleased to announce their names this afternoon: Bertha Francis of Fort McPherson, Gwich'in; Mary Wilson of Yellowknife, North Slavey; Andy Norwegian of Fort Simpson, South Slavey; Johnny Eyakfwo of Rae-Edzo, Dogrib; Jonas Adams of Fort Smith, Chipewyan; Suzanne Lefebvre of Iqaluit, French; Rosemary Meyok of Kugluktuk, Inuinnaqtun; Fred Wolki of Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvialuktun; and, Mariano Aupilardjuk of Rankin Inlet and Mark Kalluak from Arviat for Inuktitut.

The panel felt the contribution of these people to be significant. As a result, they, along with all other finalists, will receive a certificate recognizing their contributions to the promotion of their languages.

Mr. Speaker, the three award winners chosen from the finalists are: Mariano Aupilardjuk of Rankin for Inuktitut; Johnny Eyakfwo from Rae-Edzo for Dene/Cree; and, Suzanne Lefebvre of Iqaluit for French. I have a tough time with those names, Mr. Speaker, and the pronunciation; so I apologize to those people if I did not pronounce their names properly.

Each of these award winners will receive a plaque and \$250. An additional \$250 will be donated on their behalf to a community organization of their choice that is involved in language development work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask Members to join me in commending these individuals for their efforts in promoting the use of their language. Mahsi, thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

Minister's Statement 25-13(3): Fort McPherson District Heating Initiative

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to make the following statement on behalf of my colleague, the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, who is in Fort McPherson today to sign an important new energy agreement with the Gwich'in Development Corporation.

This afternoon, the Minister, along with the Member for Mackenzie Delta, representatives of the Power Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council, are signing the papers which will set this in motion. It is hoped that the agreement will set the pattern for others like it across the North.

Customers on the new system will be able to buy the heat at rates competitive to what they now pay for heating fuel.

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The direct advantage will be reduced heating costs and lower expenses for maintenance.

The Power Corporation will benefit from new revenues from a valuable resource which is a by-product of electrical generation. This will help stabilize power rates for customers.

Mr. Speaker, Members will recall the fire early this year that destroyed Fort McPherson's school. This new district heating system will cut replacement costs by avoiding the need for new boilers in the new school.

Those communities that already have power plants located close to larger buildings are especially well suited to take advantage of district heating systems. There are several communities which have been using the Power Corporation's heat, free of charge, since the late 1970s. But the Power Corporation recognizes that by treating this heat as a valuable resource rather than a by-product, considerable benefits can be created for more communities and for power users across the North.

Those benefits include recapturing more of the value of the fuel, thereby offsetting the corporation's operating expense and stabilizing rates for power customers. It means significantly reducing pollutants by reducing the burning of heating fuel and will create new local business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Power Corporation and the Gwich'in on the signing of their new joint venture.

It is an excellent combination of reducing costs, taking advantage of existing resources and benefitting the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Vision Of Nunavut Leadership

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about my vision of when Nunavut comes in 1999, and about the dreams and aspirations of the people of Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, my vision of the Nunavut leadership is that it will be compassionate, whatever that means. I guess it means a leadership that is sympathetic to the concerns and suffering of others, that no one community, no one region, is excluded from programs and services by the Nunavut capital.

Mr. Speaker, the dreams and aspirations of the people of Nunavut are that every community in every region will live in harmony with one another; and, that essential programs like health care education will be delivered and decentralized to respective communities, thereby ensuring easy access to the public and to cut travel costs in the regions.

Mr. Speaker, what is a winner in leadership? A true winner in leadership, Mr. Speaker, or collective leadership is that someone is willing to share his winnings with others. I

believe that holds true for the new capital to be and the leadership. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Transfer Of Occupational Health And Safety To WCB

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since our election in mid-October, we, at the Legislative Assembly, have been

inundated with business plans, deficit reduction options and cost-cutting measures. The pace has been hurried and has not always provided an opportunity for consultation or input. A prime example of this is the proposed transfer of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board. There has been no consultation or input on this transfer from the parties most involved; no consultation with the chamber of mines, the chamber of commerce or workers in industry.

Mr. Speaker, this move will have a major impact on a number of companies currently operating in the NWT, as well as those companies thinking of setting up shop in the Territories. We talk of bolstering investment in the Northwest Territories, investment which will undoubtedly come from business and, at the same time, we're increasing the cost of doing business. This does not make sense.

The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd, has identified and I believe stated in this House that moving occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board will bring us more in line with other Canadian jurisdictions. This simply is not the case, Mr. Speaker. A few quick telephone calls identified that, in fact, only four of the other 11 jurisdictions have combined the two offices. The Minister of Finance has also stated that these plans of which this transfer is part have been developed in consultation with the standing committees. My honourable colleague from Yellowknife Centre pointed out yesterday in this House that the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development had recommended that the GNWT not proceed with the proposed transfer until further information, rationalization and justification had been provided back to the committee. This information has not yet found its way to committee Members.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Supreme Court is currently reviewing a case in which the WCB has named the mine safety inspector in a law suit. Given all these factors, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to understand why the government is pressing forward in this issue. I would strongly urge the government and the standing committees to revisit this option. The government must take the necessary steps and provide the required information so that a decision on the proposed transfer can be made in a true and consensus fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Member's Statement On Need For In-depth Review Of Occupational Health Transfer

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have received several letters concerning the amalgamation of the Northwest Territories Workers' Compensation Board and the GNWT's department of occupational health and safety. One such letter reads, "The Workers' Compensation Board is a no-fault insurance program funded by employers, in which the money is held in trust for injured workers and families. As the principal stakeholders of the Northwest Territories Workers' Compensation Board, the undersigned are on record as being totally opposed to the process of the proposed transfer of the GNWT department of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board and demand that it be stopped immediately. A thorough public review seeking input from the stakeholders, combined with an in-depth actuarial review are essential to the implementation of such a significant change in the WCB mandate." This letter is signed by the president of the NWT Federation of Labour, the president of the NWT Chamber of Commerce, first vice-president of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, regional vice-president of the Union of Northern Workers, president of the NWT Construction Association, president of the NWT Association of Municipalities, president of the NWT Chamber of Mines, vice-president of CAW Local 2304 and the president of the NWT Steelworkers Area Council.

In addition to this letter, I understand that there's a legal matter between the amalgamation of the two parties in question that still needs to be resolved. Mr. Speaker, I agree we need to reduce our costs and amalgamation is one way of doing that; however, we do need to do things properly and we cannot have all the stakeholders in this process against amalgamation. As such, I am asking the Minister of Finance to do a thorough public review seeking input from the stakeholders combined with an in-depth actuarial review before implementing such a significant change. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Item 3, Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement On Solutions For Economic Change

MR. PICCO:

Thank YOU, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Ningark of Nunavut; it is also my dream and my fellow colleagues', I'm sure. Over the past few days, I have been a very vocal critic of the way this government has been implementing the deficit reduction plans. I said in this House yesterday that constructive criticism is a needed part of government. However, if you are going to criticize, you also have to offer solutions.

--- Applause

Mr. Speaker, I am announcing today in this House that I will be seeking solutions to help this government manage economic change. Economic renewal has to be first and foremost for a government that is faced with the major hurdles the 13th Assembly is faced with. Mr. Speaker, when I return to Iqaluit, I will be meeting with business, labour and the public at large to get solutions for our situation. I will hold a focus group meeting to thrash out

ideas and possible economic renewal opportunities that I will pass on to this government.

Mr. Speaker, my friend, the Honourable John Todd, as Finance Minister of this government, has been given a very thankless task. He has to manage a way out of the overspending days of the past GNWT governments. However, Mr. Todd will still need to hear Edward Picco's and other MLAs' challenges, as well as solutions to this fiscal reality.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to give constructive criticism to this government. I will also be giving constructive proposals to help Mr. Todd and this Assembly manage the change needed to take the 13th Assembly to division and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Members' Statement On Errors In Jurisdictional Survey On Occupational Health And Safety

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have obtained a copy of a research document which was apparently prepared for a Member of Cabinet entitled: "Jurisdictional Survey, Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board" in consideration of the transfer of certain government responsibilities to the Workers' Compensation Board.

May I suggest that there are some very gross errors in the information provided about the role of the WCB in other jurisdictions that could easily misinform the Minister responsible or our WCB. The information is in a table format that lists what responsibilities the WCB has in each province. Some errors are:

that mine safety inspection in BC is the responsibility of the WCB. This is totally wrong. The WCB in BC is not responsible for mine safety inspections. For Manitoba, that WCB is funded 90 per cent by premiums and 10 per cent by government. This is actually the reverse. The WCB is funded 90 per cent by government and 10 per cent by employer premiums.

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I will be tabling this letter during the sitting at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Just to caution Members regarding quoting from Cabinet documents. If Members wish to do that, they should be prepared to table the documents. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. O'Brien.

Member's Statement On Impact Of Salary And Benefits Reduction To Northern Workers

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I start my statement, I asked yesterday in the House if we could get a piece of plywood to divide myself and Mr. Picco. I would settle for a pair of blinders. Mr. Picco has stolen my thunder in the statement I was going to make today. Thank you, buddy.

--- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the pending salary and benefits reductions to northern workers. Mr. Speaker, I want to qualify the following remarks by stating that I recognize that the Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd, has, in the famous words of my honourable colleague, Mr. Miltenberger, 'a huge' task

and responsibility that must be managed; the deficit. Mr. Speaker, this is a job I would not even wish on my honourable friend, Mr. Picco.

In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I have some strong reservations regarding some of the reductions in general in the across-the-board equity on others. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult enough for the residents of Kivallivik to face these reductions, but to add to this the appearance of disparity.

Mr. Speaker, when this Assembly addressed and voted on the amendment to the Public Service Act, I spoke to this amendment. The gist of my statement was that I was not pleased with the amendment nor with the speed at which it was brought forward and processed. I also indicated that I was fearful that if we did not pass this amendment, these reductions would come on the backs of the unemployed, the poor and the less fortunate.

It was also my understanding that this move would greatly bring about an end to our embarrassing financial situation. Mr. Speaker, it is not my intent to criticize the Minister of Finance; I merely state my feelings on the mess that we find ourselves in. Mr. Speaker, a number of my honourable colleagues have spoken about the need to carry out these extreme measures in a caring, fair and compassionate way. Mr. Speaker, it is also not my intention to question the honourable Minister's definition of "caring, fair and compassionate" because I am sure it would be reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, I will add my voice to the issue of equity. Mr. Speaker, along with a number of my honourable colleagues, we have serious concerns about the reductions to the VTA, settlement allowance and ultimate removal, especially the impact that they will have in the off-road communities. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Kivallivik is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do

we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

The concern that we have on these proposals, especially the impact that they will have on the off-road communities. Mr. Speaker, having lived in some of the off-road communities like Tuktoyaktuk and

Arviat, I can tell you that it is tough enough to get along with the present benefits. The cost of living is much greater than in the larger centres. For example, in Arviat, a large bottle of Coke is \$8. In Baker Lake, it is \$12. Mr. Speaker, these are dry communities, so I am sure you can understand that people drink a lot of pop there.

Mr. Speaker, in comparing the figures that relate to the proposed cuts for our northern workforce, I find myself increasingly concerned and disillusioned regarding these cuts. To take it a step further, I find myself questioning my rationale when I supported this amendment; the rationale being to protect the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, if a review of the equity of the proposed reductions is not initiated, unfortunately, it will force me to question my judgement regarding the amendment that was passed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement On Passing Of North Slave Elder

MR. RABESCA:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement regarding my absence in the House yesterday. I had to go home because of a great-uncle's death yesterday. I had to attend a funeral of the uncle of Chief Joe Rabesca. As one of the elders in the community had put it, regarding how my great-uncle lived during his life, he happened to live to 91 years old. According to what one of the elders said about his life, he was a great teacher of how to live off the land and hunt, fish and trap. Most of my family were happy with the amount of people who attended the funeral, especially from the outlying communities and most of the people from Ndilo, Yellowknife and Dettah came out to show their respect at his funeral, including people from Meander River.

I would like to thank the people who took part and tried to comfort us as the family. I would just like to thank the people who came down for his last days and for his funeral.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 39-13(3): Income Affect Of Changes To Wages And Benefits

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several returns to oral questions, if I may. One was asked by Mr. Barnabas on March 22nd, with respect to the income effect of the changes to wages and benefits.

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The following information will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly today:

Examples of the effect in changes in wages and cost of living allowances for an excluded employee in several communities. These examples will show that the value of the total compensation for the same job under the new structure remains constant except for cost of living differences between the communities.

Comparisons of northern allowance with average VTA by constituency and community. These comparisons show that the new structure provides a better tax advantage on average than under the old system.

Comparisons of northern allowance with combined average VTA and settlement allowance by constituency and community. These comparisons show a consistent reduction in the allowance.

The information shows a simpler and fairer wage structure that no longer has a major focus on travel to the South. The wage structure with the northern allowances provides a reasonable and competitive rate of pay for the job that allows employees to meet their basic and recreational needs.

Further Return To Question 23-13(3): Date Of Introduction Of New Northern Benefits Package

I have another return to a question asked by Mr. Erasmus on March 21st, with respect to the date of introduction of the new northern benefits package.

The northern allowance will be introduced on April 1, 1996, for non-unionized employees. The introduction of the northern allowance for unionized employees is the subject of negotiations with the employees'

unions. While the effective date for the elimination of the accommodation allowance is August 31, 1996 for teachers and March 31, 1996 for all other employees, the intention at this time is to delay the implementation for unionized employees if negotiations are not concluded by these dates.

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

I have a third one, Mr. Speaker, regarding rationale used in calculating northern allowance, asked by Mr. Picco on March 26th; my good friend.

The detailed description of how the northern allowance is calculated will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly later today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of my Hay River constituents, Miss Pat Thomas, president-elect of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize Lydia Bardak from Yellowknife. Also in the gallery are some family members: my sister-in-law, Renee Stevens from Huntsville; sister-in-law, Helen Zimmerman from Palm Springs; and, brother-in-law, Frank Stevens from Vancouver. I was informed my wife is in the gallery too, but I don't see her now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 88-13(3): Status Of TB In NWT

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past few months, my family and I have had some very tense moments of concern with regard to TB. Through all of this, the overworked staff of the Baffin Regional Hospital and community health have been very caring and professional, especially since I've had to spend so much time here in Yellowknife and my wife and children are alone in Iqaluit. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Can the Minister update this House on the status of TB throughout the NWT?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 88-13(3): Status Of TB In NWT

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. TB continues to be a problem throughout the Northwest Territories, but we are taking measures to address the issue. During the past year, tuberculosis programs and strategies have been reviewed and updated in all regions of the Northwest Territories. Our medical health officers of the department have provided in-service education to nurses and physicians, and have been proactive in enlisting support from other community groups and agencies. Vaccinations programs for at-risk newborns have been reinforced; school screening programs have been reinstated in the Baffin, Keewatin and Mackenzie regions; and, liaison with the Department of Justice in facilitating a review and updating of surveillance practices in correctional centres has been undertaken.

As well, medical health officers have also recently reviewed the assessment criteria of new clients being admitted to treatment centres and young offenders' facilities. Similarly, they have started initial discussions and contact with Aurora and Arctic College to ensure that students living in dormitory facilities are also being screened for tuberculosis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Question 89-13(3): Establishment Of Review Committee Re Occupational Health And Safety Transfer

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, the Honourable John Todd. In this House yesterday, the Minister stated in a response to a question asked by Mr. Ootes, "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." My question to the Minister is: Would the Minister consider elected leaders of the NWT Federation of Labour, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce the NWT Construction Association, the NWT Chamber of Mines, NWT Steelworkers Area Council, NWT Chamber of Commerce, the Union of Northern Workers, NWT Association of Municipalities and CAW Local 2304 requesting formal input and information into restructuring of an organization which, at the end of the day, belongs to the employers and employees of the NWT, to be a major reason for the Minister to set a formal committee that could receive input into this proposed transfer?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 89-13(3): Establishment Of Review Committee Re Occupational Health And Safety Transfer

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I made that comment yesterday, I was not aware of the letter with everybody's names on it. As my honourable colleague has indicated today, I would be prepared and am prepared to discuss with the concerned stakeholders some of the changes that we want to make. I'm not prepared to go with a major review across the Territories at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 90- 13(3): Review Of Wage And Benefits Reduction To Northern Workforce

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, in reference to my earlier Member's statement regarding the disparity on the noted reductions. Would the Minister agree to take a second look at this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 90-13(3): Review Of Wage And Benefits Reduction To Northern Workforce

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me try to answer the question this way. We have a \$150 million problem out there. We have a forced growth problem of \$40 million a year, primarily in the social envelope. Steps have to be taken to be fair and reasonable across the Territories as we move forward in our deficit elimination strategy. We are not going to balance the budget on the backs of the unionized and non-unionized employees, but the unionized and non-unionized employees must carry their share as

others have to. I believe, as I've said consistently in this House, that the strategy that we've taken is a caring and compassionate strategy. The reworking of the northern allowance into an income support/cost-of-living allowance is fair. We have taken into consideration the concerns that have been addressed by my honourable colleague and others out there. It has to be recognized in this House that everyone has to take -- and Mr. Henry said it on a number of occasions -- their fair burden of this strategy. I want to remind everyone in this House that the target set in the wages and benefits package was set collectively by the majority of us and we are endeavouring to do this in a way in which minimizes the pain to our employees, whether they be union or non-union. That is the way I would like to answer it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 90-13(3): Review Of Wage And Benefits Reduction To Northern Workforce

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hear what the honourable Minister is saying. I listened to his comments yesterday and on a number of occasions; I agree with what the Minister is saying. I am asking if the Minister would at least have a second look at this. I am not asking for a commitment to make a major change. I just want him to have a second look. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 90-13(3): Review Of Wage And Benefits Reduction To Northern Workforce

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, given these volatile times and a deficit we all face, we are taking a second look at everything we do and I will do the best I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Earlier, the Minister replied to an oral question I had asked a few days back. He indicated that the effective date for the elimination of the accommodation allowance is March 31, 1996, for all employees except for teachers, who have a date of August 31, 1996.

They aren't going to implement the northern allowance for these people until negotiations are finalized. Does this mean, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be deducting \$200 off of our employees' pay cheques every two weeks, but we aren't going to do it without providing them with the northern allowance?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could get further clarification, so I could respond to my colleague.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Erasmus.

Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is \$5,400 a year, divided by 26 payments is \$208 every two weeks. If we are not going to be giving our employees the housing allowance -- that means that is \$208 less on their pay cheques or their gross income -are we going to be deducting that without giving them a northern allowance come April 1st?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are attempting to roll the housing allowance into the base salary, take the 6.25 per cent from it, take the northern allowance and the VTA, roll it into a cost-of-living allowance and then put it back into the wage package. So there isn't a \$200 per pay cheque deduction taken from the employee.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has indicated that they aren't going to implement the northern allowance for these employees until negotiations are over. Now he is telling me that he is going to implement it. He can't have it both ways. He is either going to implement it or he is going to wait until negotiations are over...

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

Perhaps my honourable colleague could clarify who we are talking about; unionized employees, nonunionized employees or the NWT Teachers' Association. Once I get that clarified, I will be able to answer his question succinctly, clearly and concisely

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in reference to his answer to my oral question, which was in relation to the unionized workers. We are talking about unionized workers.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's our intention to go back to the table with the UNW on April 9th. We're optimistic we can conclude an arrangement very, very

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, in the meantime, until such a decision is made and negotiations are concluded, the people in the union will be receiving \$208 less on their gross pay. Is that correct?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 91-13(3): Implementation Of New Northern Allowance Package

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a hearing problem, Mr. Speaker. If my honourable colleague is enquiring whether on April 1st there is going to be a reduction of the northern allowance for unionized employees, the answer is no; until such time as we conclude the arrangements with the union, the current arrangement we have will stay in place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 92-13(3): Summary Of Legislative Assembly Decision-Making Processes

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. I believe there is some confusion as to the understanding of the process in the Assembly by possibly some of the people in the Northwest Territories and the role that MLAs have played and Cabinet has played. I was wondering if the Premier could give a brief summary of the decision-making processes that have been used in terms of the business plans and setting targets and the role we have played as MLAs and as Cabinet. Would he give us the benefit of his long experience; possibly a brief comparative analysis of previous assemblies and the changes that have been made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 92-13(3): Summary Of Legislative Assembly Decision-Making Processes

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me start off by talking briefly on how previous assemblies worked. We did have standing committees of this House. Previously, regarding the process of developing budgets, it was Cabinet and FMB that developed the budget and then we put it forward to the Finance committee and then it came to the House. So the Members only saw the budgets and any amalgamation or business plans once they were completed. Then they had the opportunity or the ability to remove things, cut from any capital or O and M budget that we did present to this House. They did not have the ability to put anything in their budgets.

In the 13th Legislative Assembly, which we all sit in today, we all agreed that all Members of this Legislative Assembly would have input in developing those budgets. So we have adopted some of the principles of the previous government and we have presented draft budgets and draft business plans of the departments to ordinary Members' committees. Members have had the opportunity to have input into not only taking things out of that budget, but putting things in. So now this time when we come up with a budget and we come up with business plans for this government for the direction we are going, it is going to be the first time in history of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories that all Members have had the opportunity to have input into the development of that budget.

So in the new way of doing business, Members have had the opportunity to have input, as well as to remove things and put things in. So I feel it is a better way to operate and I look forward to continuing to operate like that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 93-13(3):Response To Committee On Occupational Health and Safety Transfer

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Safety and Public Services. As a Member of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, we were advised in that committee that the issue of the transfer of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board and justification for that would be referred back to the committee. Could the Minister tell me when that referral will be made back to the committee?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Safety and Public Services, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 93-13(3): Response To Committee On Occupational Health And Safety Transfer

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development was briefed on the transfer during the meetings to review departmental business plans on a

number of occasions; on January 19th, January 26th and again on February 24th. Mr. Speaker, at the January 26th meeting, the deputy minister provided quite a lengthy summary of the justification and rationale for transferring these programs and services. In addition, I wrote to the committee chairman on February 29th to forward a three-page summary of key elements in the transfer strategy. I also indicated that the department would be pleased to provide another briefing. Although this was referenced in the standing committee's recommendation, no one has contacted my office or the department to follow this up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 93-13(3): Response To Committee On Occupational Health And Safety Transfer

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could assure me that, when the request comes, we will have the opportunity to review this matter. What's the time frame being considered for the transfer of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Two questions, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 93-13(3): Response To Committee On Occupational Health And Safety Transfer

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I indicated earlier, I did send a letter to the chairman of the respective standing committee and offered that a complete briefing is available to the Members of the standing committee. For the second question, Mr. Speaker, the schedule of transfer to take place is April 1, 1996. This is for the transfer of the program. The staff will be completely transferred by June or July. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the talk in this House over the past few days, centring on our fiscal situation, I still note that many GNWT employees continue to be brought into Yellowknife for meetings. Mr. Speaker, several of my constituents have called me to voice their concern about this. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance direct departments to ensure that all travel be a priority and, where possible, when meetings are to be held, be it conference call or other means, to send the signal that this government is taking our deficit reduction plan seriously, not only on wage reductions, but on all aspects of the government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a nice answer. Mr. Speaker, when will and how will the Minister direct this most important message?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I was just asked ... (Microphone turned off) ... honourable Member, since he has given me this direction, when would he like me to send the direction out to the government on the question he asked?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd, there was a question directed to you by the Member for Iqaluit. The Minister is supposed to respond, not ask questions. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for my flippant response to the very serious question asked by Mr. Picco. I will endeavour to communicate Mr. Picco's concerns to the staff and to the GNWT employees across the Territories, posthaste. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

MR. PICCO:

I enjoy question period, but I didn't think it would be 20 questions. I appreciate the fact that the Minister will do that posthaste; but how will the Minister do that? Will it be a directive of the government? What happened before, Mr. Speaker, and my reason for saying this is that when the deficit reduction came about at Christmas, and when I went back to my constituency, I heard the talk, as did other people from their constituencies, that people didn't take seriously the letter that we had sent out earlier. So my question to the Minister of Finance is how will he direct this message. Will it be a directive of this government to put this in place at the most opportune time? He said, posthaste, but I want to know how he will do this. Will it be a directive from him?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 94-13(3): Priorization Of GNWT Business Travel

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will advise the deputies through a directive that we would like this course of action taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 95-13(3): Completion Of Eastern Arctic Access Roads

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the honourable Minister of Transportation. The previous government was committed to construct access roads in the Eastern Arctic to facilitate hunting, fishing, tourism and recreation. The access roads, in this case, are a very essential part of the economy in the Eastern Arctic communities. Will the honourable Minister honour the previous commitment of this government to complete those roads that are already under construction? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 95-13(3): Completion Of Eastern Arctic Access Roads

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community access road program within the Department of Transportation has become a very popular program. As I have travelled in the central Baffin and in the Keewatin recently, this was always a topic that came up, so I'm aware of what the honourable Member is talking about. The honourable Member knows that we're still going through our budgeting process. We won't have the complete budget done until May. But if everything works out okay, at the end of the day, in May, we hope to maintain the budget that is in place for the community access road. If that's the case, I'll honour the commitments made by the previous government towards the community access roads. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, just to remind the ordinary Members, I realize that a lot of Members like to get a second turn at asking questions, but I also would like the other Members who haven't asked questions to have an opportunity to ask. So just be patient with me, for the Members who wish to ask a second question. I like to give all the Members the same opportunity. Mr. Steen.

Question 96-13(3): Public Tendering Of POL Contracts

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I asked the honourable Minister, Mr. Arlooktoo, a question with regard to tendering of POL contracts. I did not get a clear response as to when Mr. Arlooktoo would be able to get back to the communities on this request. Mr. Speaker, in one particular community I referred to, the POL contract expires April 1st and the people in the community are wondering whether this contract is going to be publicly tendered as of April 1st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 96-13(3): Public Tendering Of POL Contracts

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I've asked the Department of Public Works to look into this matter. Two days ago, I did ask the Member to provide me with a contact name; however, when I did not get that, I asked the department to conduct an investigation to see what we could do. At this point in time, I do not have any information to pass on.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 97-13(3): Voluntary Alternatives To Lay-offs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, many of our civil servants are facing lay-offs similar to those in other governments across Canada. The federal government, in particular, has set a target of reducing their workforce by 45,000 positions over a three-year period. As part of these reductions, the federal government has offered employees an

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early retirement and an early departure package. Eligible employees are able to retire earlier than planned with no penalties for early retirement. Similarly, some employees would be able to voluntarily terminate their positions. There were a number of incentives offered for each of these

programs. The result, Mr. Speaker, is that positions were freed up for other employees who would otherwise have to be laid off. Can the Minister advise this House whether this government would give the same consideration to our employees in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 97-13(3): Voluntary Alternatives To Lay-offs

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I can go back to an earlier statement, when we looked at the lay-offs that were prepared by the departments and the Ministers, we took the time to try and manage our way, as I've said consistently, out of this fiscal mess that we're in. I believe that we were able to save a number of jobs by careful management of the lay-offs. We are looking at, and do have in place, a variety of options, as my honourable colleague says; whether it's early retirement, retraining and some other options. In short, Mr. Speaker, we're doing some of the things that my honourable colleague is talking about. I think we demonstrated clearly -- I hope we did anyway -- to this House in the previous discussions that we're trying to manage as carefully as possible the job loss. We'll continue to do that and we'll certainly look at other options that have been suggested by my honourable colleague from Arviat. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 98-13(3): Employee Involvement In Privatization Initiatives

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier. During the business plan sessions and earlier in the House, you've made statements about privatization. I've asked earlier but I would like to get more clarification on the question of privatization. Would the Premier allow the employees who would be affected by privatization, when it does happen, to have an opportunity to put forward a proposal so that they may remain gainfully employed or attempt to remain gainfully employed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Premier, two questions.

Return To Question 98-13(3): Employee Involvement In Privatization Initiatives

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me assure the Member that we'll look at any proposal that is presented to this government on privatization. We do, as far as I'm concerned, have to look at our present employees and, as my honourable colleague, Mr. Todd, has said, we have to look at all our employees and try to minimize any lay-offs that we have to do. Then, through privatization, if the employees can continue to work and continue to gain

meaningful employment in the Northwest Territories, then we should try our best to accommodate them because they are the ones who have worked for many years for this government and we do, I believe, owe them something.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 99-13(3): Evaluation Of Child Welfare Information Systems In H&SS

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. He looks a little lonely sitting there at the end all by himself. Could the Minister briefly describe to us and give his evaluation of the information systems that currently exist in the Department of Health and Social Services and, in particular, relating to child welfare? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know the answer to that question. I'll take it as notice and get the information back to the honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 100-13(3): Membership Of Proposed Advisory Panel On The Economy

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier in reference to his proposal to establish a committee of business people in the Territories. When the Premier spoke about this, he mentioned that he had had a meeting with Premier Klein in Alberta and an idea came from that in which Premier Klein, apparently, has an extensive group of business people. When the Premier announced his committee, he stated that he would have 12 individuals. I wonder if the Premier could commit to us that he will ensure that a number of organizations in the Territories that are business oriented will be included in his representation: the Chamber of Mines; the Chamber of Commerce; the transportation organization; and, the construction association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 100-13(3): Membership Of Proposed Advisory Panel On The Economy

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I previously made a public commitment through this House that we will look to make sure that we do have regional representation on an independent advisory group of independent business people. I've asked all Members of this Legislative Assembly to forward names to myself and I've given them, I believe it was two weeks, to do that. That time is coming up. From that we will decide and make sure that all areas of the Northwest Territories are represented. I also know that the renewable resource business sector, the mining business sector, the construction business sector all have very

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capable individual business people that may be able to sit and advise myself on economic activity in the North. I will look at the names that come forward but I will not put somebody on that represents the Chamber of Mines. I will not put somebody on that represents the construction association. They will be independent business people, Mr. Speaker, and that's who they will represent: independent business. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 101-13(3): Update On GNWT Ottawa Office

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier update this House on the restructuring and the status of the GNWT Ottawa office?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 101-13(3): Update On GNWT Ottawa Office

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By reviewing the business plans of the Executive through the committees that we work with now in this Legislative Assembly, and through the recommendations of those committees, it was recommended to us to review the function of the Ottawa office to make it more efficient and perhaps more productive in a different role. We have committed to do that. We will be getting back to the committee in a very short period of time. We fully agree with your committee that the review of the Ottawa office has to be completed. We will do that and present it back through the business plan at that time. Thank you,

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 101-13(3): Update On GNWT Ottawa Office

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to hear that. Has the Premier looked at possible reductions to PYs and their O and M costs for the operations of said office, keeping in mind the fiscal realities facing this government, especially long-term contracts and so on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 101-13(3): Update On GNWT Ottawa Office

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In all business plans of all departments, including the Department of Executive, we are looking at long-term contracts, O and M costs, and the function; whether it's efficient and effective. We are doing that with the Ottawa office the same as the rest. I fully agree with those Members who have said that in the past we have not done enough as a government to go out and sell the Northwest Territories. We have not done enough as a government to make our presence known in Canada. Let me assure the Member and all Members of this House that when we're finished restructuring the Ottawa

office, we will go out and make sure everybody knows where the Northwest Territories is and knows who we are and what we're capable of doing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 102-13(3): Funding For Youth Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. We've mentioned in this House many times that our youth are the future. I would like to know if the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services has funding set aside or put into the new budget coming up for working with the youth in the solvent abuse area and drug and alcohol abuse? Is there money put aside for training of our existing staff and facilities that we have in place to deal with youth? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 102-13(3): Funding For Youth Programs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there would be components within the alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs to address youth treatment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a commitment was made by the 12th Assembly to commit funds to spousal assault homes to increase the wages of the workers there. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, they're under a lot of stress. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Has he looked at any type of plan to remunerate these people, Mr. Speaker, in the current budget?

MR. SPEAKER:

Just to remind the Member that this is the 13th Assembly and what was committed during the 12th Assembly doesn't necessarily apply to this Assembly. I would like to ask the honourable Member if he would rephrase his question to the Minister.

Question 103-13(3): Remuneration For Front-Line Workers

MR. PICCO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the honourable Member. It's true, that was a black hole period.

--- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services. Has the Minister looked at increasing the remuneration for our front-line workers in spousal assault homes who have not had a raise in several years; and I know because my wife works there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Laughter

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 103-13(3): Remuneration For Front-Line Workers

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department funds various organizations who carry out those types of initiatives. It is up to the local groups who are operating those violence shelters or those treatment facilities to determine what they pay their employees. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you.

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 103-13(3):
Remuneration For Front-Line Workers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I should qualify my last statement by saying my wife has been on maternity leave for several months and isn't currently working.

--- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I know that a lot of these organizations haven't had any increases in their core funding for several years. They haven't kept up with the rate of inflation. Mr. Speaker, it's a very serious matter because those homes have a hard time getting people to work there because of the remuneration rates. My question to the Minister, **MR. SPEAKER:** Can he give a commitment to this House that he will look at this personally and see if there's something that we can do for these very valuable people who are working at the front lines in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 103-13(3): Remuneration For Front-Line Workers

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concerns that the honourable Member has brought forward, particularly related to funding for non-government organizations. It is apparent that they may not have been funded to the levels that they wanted and in these fiscal times, of course, the possibility of significant increases or even any increases is probably, I would say, remote and not likely. However, I will take a look at the matter because the honourable Member has brought it up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. I would like to remind the Members that today is

Tommy Enuaraq's birthday. Happy birthday. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents that I would like to table this afternoon. Firstly,

I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 14-13(3), the detailed description of how the northern allowance is calculated.

Secondly, I wish to table Tabled Document 15-13(3), the information on the income effect on changes to the wages and benefits. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 16-13(3), Government of the Northwest Territories, 1994-95 Annual Report on Official Languages.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 17-13(3), Canada/NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT, the Final Activity Report for 1994-95. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 18-13(3), The Northwest Territories Liquor Commission, 41st Annual Report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

Item 13, tabling of documents.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Tabled Document 19-13(3), 23 letters from the NWT businesses requesting that a public review and an actuarial review be made prior to the consideration of the proposed transfer of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Ng.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two constituents from Kugluktuk, Stanley Anablak, one of the hamlet councillors, and his spouse, Ms. Annie Jane Kamingoak.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Linda Henry, Mr. Henry's wife, and wish her a happy belated birthday.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. That message will be conveyed. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Back to item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with section 183(4) of the Elections Act, I wish to table Tabled Document 20-13(3), the returns and declarations for election contributions and expenses for the following candidates: the electoral district of Mackenzie Delta, Charles Furlong; the electoral district of Baffin Central, Charlie Kalluk and Sakiasie Sowdloopik.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Tabled Document 21-13(3), a letter sent to all Members of the Legislature with regard to the transfer of occupational health and safety to the Workers' Compensation Board demanding that the transfer be stopped immediately and that a thorough public review be conducted seeking input from stakeholders, combined with an in-depth actuarial review. They are essential to the implementation of such a significant change to the Workers' Compensation Board and this letter is signed by Members from the NWT Federation of Labour; the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; the NWT Construction Association; NWT Chamber of Mines; NWT Steelworkers Area Council; NWT Chamber of Commerce; Union of Northern Workers; NWT Association of Municipalities; and, the CAW Local 2304.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 3-13(3): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, April 1, 1996, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

Motion 4-13(3): Extended Adjournment

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, April 1, 1996, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 28, 1996, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, May 1, 1996; And further, that any time prior to May 1, 1996, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Natilikmiot is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 3-13(3): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker, Carried

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours as the Speaker, after consultation,

deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Your 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 16, motions. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Thebacha is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Miltenberger.

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Motion 4-13(3): Extended Adjournment, Carried

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that notwithstanding Rule 4, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 28, 1996, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, May 1, 1996.

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 1, 1996, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your 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 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

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

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have second reading of a bill for my colleague, Mr. Dent, who is out of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Education Act, S.N.W.T., 1995, c. 28, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Education Act, S.N.W.T., 1995, c. 28, to correct minor errors and inconsistencies in the act. The bill also makes several amendments to respond to comments received as a result of consultation on the regulations. The bill makes numerous amendments to deal with issues raised with the drafting up of regulations, which brought to light inconsistencies or problems within sections of the act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 6 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands ordered to a standing committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

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

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by my honourable colleague for Nahendeh, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to increase the amount of the year's maximum insurance remuneration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 7 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands ordered to a standing committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my honourable colleague for Nahendeh, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Income Tax Act to provide that refundable income tax credit for individuals is not available to trusts, estates or individuals who earn business income in the Territories, but reside outside the Territories, on the last day of the taxation year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 8 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands ordered to a standing committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Erasmus.

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, 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 second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill requires the headlights or daytime running lights of a motor vehicle being driven on a highway to be on at all times. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 5 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands ordered to a standing committee.

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; Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96; and, Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96, with Mr. Steen in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will call the committee to order. On the agenda today is Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation; Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96; and, Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96. How do you wish to proceed? Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if we can proceed with Bill 2, Bill 3 and then proceed with Tabled Document 1-13(3), which is the compensation report. I would like to get consent to proceed with Bill 2 and then Bill 3.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Would you like a little break at this time? The committee will recess for five minutes.

--- SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will call the committee back to order. We're dealing with Bill 2. I will ask the Minister of the Department of Finance, Mr. Todd, to introduce the bill.

Bill 2: Write-off Of Debts Act, 1995-96

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few short opening comments for Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96. The purpose of the Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 1995-96, is to authorize the write-off of certain debts listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to section 24 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of government assets or debts exceeding \$20,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

Pursuant to section 82 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of debts owed to a public agency

exceeding \$20,000, must receive Legislative Assembly approval. The write-off of debts owed to the Workers' Compensation Board exceeding \$50,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-offs being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. The write-offs will be charged against allowances for bad debts which were established in previous departmental budgets at the time it was determined that collection of the debts would be unlikely.

I wish to emphasize that the write-off of a debt does not relieve a debtor of the liability for repayment or mean that the government will not continue to attempt to collect the outstanding amount. Through continued reviews by my staff, future recovery of the debts may still be achieved, Mr. Chairman. In addition, we track the principals of each firm for future credit references. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. I now ask the chairman of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for comments to the bill.

Standing Committee On Government Operations
Comments

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96. Committee Members discussed the bill. After considering the detailed information provided on the debts proposed for write-off, Members agreed that there were no major concerns and the bill should be moved into Committee of the Whole for further discussion and action. The total number and amount of debts to be written off is quite small compared to amounts written off in previous years.

This was the first time this committee has reviewed bills relating to forgiveness and write-off. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Finance for providing background information on the purpose of the two bills and the processes and policies which lead to write-off and forgiveness of debts.

Members may take this opportunity in Committee of the Whole to raise any specific questions they may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. I now ask the Minister if he has any witnesses and, if so, could you introduce them, please?

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree that the Minister may bring in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Todd, could you introduce your witnesses?

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me is Mr. Voytilla who is in charge of FMBS. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Welcome, Mr. Voytilla. I now open the floor to general comments on the bill by Members, if this is agreeable. Are there any general comments on the bill? If there are no general comments on the bill, should we then go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96. Clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Page 3, total, \$61,359.28. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree that Bill 2 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Bill 2 is now ready for third reading.

Bill 3: Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96

We will now deal with Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1996-96. I will ask the Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd, again to introduce the bill.

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few short comments. The purpose of the Forgiveness of Debts

Act, 1995-96, is to authorize the forgiveness of certain debts listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to section 25(1) of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of a debt or obligation to the government exceeding \$1,000, must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

Pursuant to section 83 of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of any debt or obligation to a public agency, regardless of dollar amount, must also receive Legislative Assembly approval. The only exception would be if the act of that agency addresses forgiveness of debts and the section of the act operates notwithstanding the Financial Administration Act.

When a debt is forgiven, no further collection action shall be pursued.

The forgiveness being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. Allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation at the time it was determined that collection of the debts was considered unlikely.

The Financial Management Board Secretariat, government accounting, pursues collection action against the debtor on all outstanding accounts, including accounts which have been previously written off. In the files that have been identified for forgiveness, it has been determined that collection of the debt is no longer possible.

The accounts being recommended for forgiveness are the result of bankruptcies, negotiated settlements and public interest. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. I will now ask for comments from Mr. Erasmus, chairman of the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

Standing Committee On Government Operations
Comments

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96. Members discussed the bill and agreed that it should be moved into Committee of the Whole for further discussion and action. The total amount of the debts being forgiven by this bill is almost \$500,000. The standing

committee Members understand that many of these losses were the result of bankruptcy or negotiated settlements with debtors, and that the amounts are unrecoverable. However, Members did have a number of questions regarding some of the items in the bill, and will take this opportunity today to raise them with the Minister.

Members also had a number of concerns about the policies, procedures and processes used by the government in collecting from debtors. In reviewing the debts listed in the schedule to the bill, the committee noticed some of the businesses listed are either still in operation or their principals are involved in other operating ventures or employment. There were concerns raised about whether there should have been more effort into recovering the outstanding debt from these businesses and/or the principals, rather than coming to negotiated settlements or simply forgiving the debts. In other cases, the committee felt there were additional opportunities to collect the remaining debt and that these opportunities should have been pursued.

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Finally, Members were concerned about the role of the committee in reviewing the bill. This included questions about the stage at which elected officials become part of the process when a debt is being forgiven or a settlement is being negotiated. The standing committee will be examining this issue more closely in the near future.

After Members have an opportunity to make general comments on the bill, I will be making a motion regarding the existing processes and policies for collection and forgiveness of debt owing to this government, its boards, agencies and commissions.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes the comments of the Standing Committee on Government Operations regarding Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Todd, do you have the same witness as previously?

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like your permission to proceed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Is this agreeable with the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

If the committee is prepared, we will now have general comments to the bill by Members. Mr. Ningark.

General Comments

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, having been advised of the total amount of the debts that are about to be forgiven by this government, this causes me some concern. However, I realize that the government made every conceivable effort in this case to collect money and then decided that perhaps these figures should be forgiven. Once they are forgiven, there is no way that government can collect the money from the creditors, from the businesses.

I also understand that the Minister has stated that in some cases when a company declares bankruptcy, then the debts are forgiven. But I'm wondering, Mr. Chairman, sometimes when a company declares bankruptcy, then most of the assets are liquidated. I'm wondering if, in some cases, the government collects money through the liquidation of the property of the said company. When I look at the receivables, it is almost \$500,000; \$452,282.30, in this case. Has the government collected some of the money that was owed to the government from the companies that we are about to forgive? Has there been some success in collecting a portion of what is owed from the companies to the government? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Chairman, yes, the honourable Member is correct. There is a negotiated settlement. Even in some of the bankruptcy cases, we've managed to acquire

some settlements and financial recovery for this government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Ningark, supplementary.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you. Supplementary to the same Minister. I think I heard Mr. Erasmus indicating -- correct me if I'm wrong -- that some of those companies that we are about to forgive are in fact still active in the business community. That is my question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, I think some of these businesses are still active in other fields, that's correct. My honourable colleague is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Ningark, supplementary.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Having been informed that some of these businesses are still running and operating, my question is how did the government determine to forgive these companies that are still active? Perhaps there is a possibility of collecting the money that rightfully belongs to the government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to point out that in some cases the forgiveness or the negotiated settlement may have come about because of restructuring of the companies, for example. I think that in other cases it's a variety of reasons, depending on the condition of the loan and condition of the settlement. Because one has negotiated a settlement with respect to a loan, it is normal corporate practice, for example, that in some cases where you can actually keep the company alive by restructuring the debt, by making changes in the management, et cetera. So there are a variety of settlements that have been reached here by the different organizations, whether it's the Business Credit Corporation or others.

That's the reason some of these companies are still around, even though they may have been forgiven some debt.

In most cases, I think it would be fair to say that we've restructured with these companies their debt and the reorganization of the companies so they can continue to survive, deliver services, employ northerners and pay corporate income tax. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you. My final question to the same Minister. Before we forgive the companies, there is, in fact, a channel to go through; that is, to write off the debts. Were these companies, in the numbers, written off for a period of time before they were actually deemed to be forgiven? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Todd.

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every effort is made to try to recover any loans that are outstanding to this government by the different organizations. This forgiveness really comes about as the final chapter in writing off the debt, because we fundamentally believe that we can't recover it and we've done it through a variety of processes. One is through a negotiated settlement, two is bankruptcy and three is what we believe is in the public interest. So this is the last bell that we'll toll with respect to the collection of this debt, and this is a means in which to clean it off the books, Mr. Chairman, and to ensure that there's transparency in the exercise. That's why it comes before the Assembly, so the public at large can see it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if I could get an answer to my question about whether the government uses a collection agency.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Voytilla advises me that we do use a northern collection agency that I believe is residing in Mrs. Groenewegen's constituency of Hay River. We also use our own legal people and our own financial people to try to recover the debt. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Have these particular ones that we're writing off today been pursued by the collection agency?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes. I think if you look at the reason for forgiveness ... As I said to an earlier question asked by Mr. Ningark, this is the last bell of trying to write these loans off. There are a variety of reasons for the arrangements that we've made. Some are negotiated settlements that are done by the department or the credit corporation, some are bankruptcies and that just gets handled through the bankruptcy procedure, and some are decided on the public interest. Most of these are dealt with through the different agencies of government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I just heard Mr. Todd say that most of these are dealt with through the different agencies in the government. Does that mean each particular department is responsible for its collection?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

BCC has the responsibility to collect their loans and other government departments come through FMBS.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. --- Agreed

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Does that mean that FMBS is the ultimate one that does the chasing on these accounts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

That's correct, Mr. Chairman, either directly through Justice or through the collection agency. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Are there any more comments from Members on the bill? Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 1-13(3): Review Credit Granting Procedures Carried

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Financial Management Board conduct a review of all Government of the Northwest Territories operational procedures relating to credit granting and control;

And further, that the Financial Management Board prepare an analysis of the operational procedures of the Business Credit Corporation and the Northwest Territories Development Corporation relating to credit granting and control;

And further, that these reviews include proposals to improve the procedures for the write-off or forgiveness of loans made with public funds;

And further, that these reviews be provided to the Standing Committee on Government Operations on or before April 26, 1996.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

--- Carried

Are there any further comments from Members? If the Members agree there are no more further comments, we will go clause by clause. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We are on Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96. Clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Clause 2. Agreed?

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Schedule.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We're on page 5, total, \$452,282.39. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree that Bill 3 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Bill 3 is now ready for third reading. I thank Mr. Voytilla for his attendance.

Tabled Document 1-13(3): Report Of The Commission On MLA Compensation

The committee will now deal with Tabled Document 1-13(3). Up to now, we've had general comments. I wonder if there are any further general comments on the document. Mr. Miltenberger.

General Comments

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it's agreeable to Committee of the Whole, I would like to make some comments and a motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For some time now, we've been looking at the document before us, the Report of

the Commission on MLA Compensation. This is part of an overall package that affects not only ourselves individually in our wallets but also, as politicians and MLAs, it has an impact on our overall strategy in the Northwest Territories dealing with the unions and dealing with our fiscal policy. The report that we've been examining has, to my mind, given us valuable food for thought, has given us a vehicle to bring concerns into the open and the public input into the process in terms of what MLAs should be compensated. I think at this point, even though we may not have finished all the fine detail of our review, to me, it's very important that we send a clear message; not only to the people in the North, but to the unions and to everybody we're doing business with that we, in fact, do intend to lead by example, that we take our role very seriously and were not just mouthing empty platitudes when we said we were going to share the pain.

--- Applause

I hope our bankers and creditors will be as equally cheerful when they hear the news of the cuts we are taking.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move the following motion.

Committee Motion 2-13(3): Seven Per Cent Reduction to MLAs' Indemnities, Carried

I move that, effective April 1, 1996, all indemnities that are provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly under the authority of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act be reduced by seven per cent;

And further, effective immediately, that there be no automatic increase in indemnities during the life of the 1 3th Assembly living;

--- Applause

And further that the legislative changes to implement this decision be introduced immediately.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

--- Carried

Further comments, Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we began this session, I indicated that it was my expectation that before we completed this sitting, we would address the issue of restructuring the salary and benefits package available to Members of the Legislative Assembly and to Members of Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the reduction of salary and benefits entitlements by seven per cent, and in addition to making the decision that there will be no increases during the life of this Assembly, we have also accepted, and collectively agreed, that radical surgery is necessary to rationalize the pension plan which has been available to Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, we've said many, many times that we, as elected leaders of the Legislative Assembly and as elected leaders of the Northwest Territories, must lead by example.

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We fully intend to lead by example and we will lead by example, as of April 1, 1996.

In this regard, we have come to agreement that, effective April 1, 1996, the existing five per cent pension plan available to MLAs will be terminated.

--- Applause

Let me repeat that: It will be terminated and it will mean a big amount of reduction to some Members. At this time, Mr. Chairman, if allowed, I would like to move the following motion:

Committee Motion 3-13(3): Termination of the Three Per Cent Supplementary Pension Plan, Carried

I move that the current three per cent supplementary pension plan arrangement be terminated on March 31, 1996;

And further that the legislative changes to implement this decision be introduced during the current session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

--- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This motion will reduce the post-April 1996 access to benefits by more than 50 per cent. In real dollar terms this means an annual saving on pension liabilities of approximately \$750,000; and, a savings of more than \$2 million over the life of the 13th Assembly.

--- Applause

The public told us in clear terms during the election that changes to pension entitlements were necessary. They were right. Public expectation, assisted by the report on the MLA compensation, has guided us through this process of change.

I am satisfied that these are reasonable, responsible and substantive changes which again demonstrate our collective commitment to making difficult decisions which affect all of

Mr. Chairman, it's a very, very difficult time in the Northwest Territories. It's difficult not only for our employees, but it's a difficult time for those who are unemployed and those who are in business and it is also going to be a difficult time for us, as elected people. But we're on this boat together and if we continue to sail it together, we'll get to the end of the ocean together and we will see brighter times in the future. We will see it with a reduced pension, my friends, but we will see some brighter times.

With that, I would just like to let the people of the Northwest Territories know that we said from the beginning, all 24 of us have said it, we will lead by example. With this motion and with Members of this Assembly supporting this motion, we will have done that.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

--- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Any further comments to the motion? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of weeks ago there was an article in the newspaper about the fact that I was very chagrined by the fact that we might be reducing our benefits. I would like to state, since the press is here today and they weren't last time I spoke, that I've always been in support of reducing the overall benefits of the Members of this Assembly.

We are moving today to save this Assembly over 18 per cent of the costs that have been put into our wages, benefits and salaries. I support this overall savings, although I am not totally in support of the way it is being done. I feel that we still have some work to do to make things simpler so people will know how much they're taking home every two weeks and how much they're going to be getting every month, so we can deal with our creditors, plan for our holidays and what not.

I guess I just wanted to indicate that I intend to continue moving in this aspect in the future to make things more simple and to be more transparent. Thank you.

--- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Question is being called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Morin, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Ng, Mr. Henry, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Picco, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Barnabas, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Mr. Ningark, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Arlooktoo, Mr. Todd.

--- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

All those opposed? All those abstaining? The results of the vote are 19 for the motion; zero against the motion; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

--- Carried

--- Applause

Does the committee agree that the discussion on Tabled Document 1-13(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree we report progress?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back order. We're on item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering bills 2 and 3, and Tabled Document 1-13(3), and would like to report progress with three motions being adopted, that Tabled Document 1-13(3) is concluded and that bills 2 and 3 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Seconder, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Steen, 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

By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 3-13(3), the House will recess until 6:00 p.m.

--- SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

We're on item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 15. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Todd, proceed.

REVERT TO ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 9: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, April 1, 1996, I shall move that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 17, first reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 17, first reading of bills. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 9.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 9. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

REVERT TO ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 9: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Bill 9 has had first reading. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 18, second reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 18, second reading of bills. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

REVERT TO ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 9.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with Bill 9. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

Bill 9: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to decrease the amount of indemnities payable to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to

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eliminate the cost-of-living increase with respect to indemnities.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Your motion is order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 9 has had second reading. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 9 be placed on the orders for Committee of the Whole for today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to have the bill go into Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Therefore, we will resolve to Committee of the Whole, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

Bill 9: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. I'll call Committee of the Whole to order. We are considering Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Would the Minister like to introduce the bill?

Minister's Introductory

Remarks

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The bill in front of you today deals with the motions that we dealt with earlier on this afternoon and adopted earlier today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Are there any comments from the Members on the bill? If it is agreed there are no general comments, we will go clause by clause.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Does the committee agree that Bill 9 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Bill 9 is now ready for third reading. There being no further business before Committee of the Whole, I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We're on item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

REVERT TO ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 9, and would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Picco. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

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

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 9.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 9. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

REVERT TO ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 9: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

--- Carried

Bill 9 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 2.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 2. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

Bill 2: Write-off Of Debts Act, 1995-96

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your 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 2 has had third reading. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 3.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 3. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Todd.

Bill 3: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 1995-96

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96, be read for the third 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 3 has had third reading. Point of order, Mr. Todd.

Point Of Order

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to raise a point of order on a statement made by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre. I'm concerned that during Mr. Ootes's Member's statement, he made a number of comments that could lead members of the public to believe that a research document that was

prepared for a Member of Cabinet was flawed, and that Cabinet may make decisions based on this flawed document. I would like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that I have reviewed the document and I would like to advise all Members that this document was not requested by or prepared for Cabinet and that Cabinet will not be basing any decision on the information contained in that document. Mr. Speaker, I felt it was important to correct the record on this matter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. That wasn't a point of order but ... Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if Her Honour, the Commissioner, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills?

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER MAKSAGAK:

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, it gives me pleasure to assent to the following bills: Bill 1, Interim Appropriation Act, April 1 to June 30, 1996; Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 1995-96; Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 1995-96; Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1995-96; Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The House will come back to order. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

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ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Wednesday, May 1, 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
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I have received a note here that says Robert Slaven will be going to Los Angeles in early April to be an alternate on the show "Jeopardy." This is his fourth time that he will be going to participate on this show.

--- Applause

This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 1, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

--- ADJOURNMENT