



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 11

13th Assembly

HANSARD

MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 1996

Pages 1-230
Pagination reflects print edition

The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

MONDAY, MAY 6, 1996

Page 199

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Good afternoon, Members. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 33-13(3): Board Reductions And Process

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, health and hospital boards face tremendous challenges to identify ways to save this government money. A reduction of \$9.25 million in funding to the eight health and hospital boards is projected over the next two years. This is slightly less than a 10 per cent reduction in the funding provided to the boards through the territorial health insured services activity over the next year.

Mr. Speaker, I met with representatives from the health and hospital boards in February to discuss their reduction targets and ask them to develop submissions to the department to identify proposed reductions using broad guidelines. These guidelines required that impact on programs and services be minimized; access to health care services be maintained; government policy was complied with; reductions did not simply shift the burden to others; and, plans were consistent with community wellness, prevention and health promotion strategies.

The department has reviewed all submissions from boards to ensure they meet the guidelines. Mr. Speaker, in mid-April, the department provided the

feedback to the boards, advising which of the proposed reductions were consistent with this government's directions and priorities and which reductions either required further explanation or simply could not be supported.

Departmental officials have been working with the boards to resolve issues surrounding reductions that have not been supported or to assist in identifying others.

In the meantime, boards have been encouraged to begin implementing reduction initiatives that are consistent with this government's direction. Mr. Speaker, this process will take more than one year; next year boards will face further challenges.

This will mean changes in the way some services are provided. However, residents will continue to have access to the health care services they require. I ask that all MLAs support the boards as partners in the government's effort to meet the current fiscal demands.

Mr. Speaker, only through collaboration and partnerships do we have an opportunity to meet these challenges creatively and improve client care as we move towards operating more efficiently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 34-13(3): Western Arctic Fuel Resupply

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Public Works and Services has always been a major contributor to business development in the Northwest Territories as it carries out its responsibilities for capital project management and government purchasing. However, it has even greater potential for promoting business development through the continuing devolution of responsibilities to the private sector for providing petroleum products to communities. This will be one of the government's continuing priorities with a goal of privatizing as much as possible in time for the 1997-98 transportation season.

Over the years, the GNWT has made a conscious effort to increase private sector involvement in

community fuel supply and delivery. The next step in the move towards fully privatizing this service across the Northwest Territories is to restore health to the petroleum products revolving fund. At the moment, the \$50 million business is in financial difficulty. The accumulated deficit for the petroleum products revolving fund has increased to \$2.7 million this year. Obviously, the first step in promoting this as a viable economic opportunity is to balance the budget.

Two recent initiatives by the department should help us to achieve that objective by the end of 1996-97. The first was an award in early April to the Northern Transportation Company Ltd. for the Eastern Arctic fuel resupply. For the first time, a northern carrier will be responsible for obtaining petroleum products and delivering them to all the communities of the Eastern Arctic. This award is expected to save \$1.5 million over the three years of the contract. Negotiations are under way separately for the Iqaluit fuel resupply which is expected to achieve additional cost

Page 200

savings. I will report to the Members of this House when the award is finalized.

The second initiative on the road to fiscal health for this important program was the award on April 24, 1996, of the Western Arctic fuel resupply. A contract was awarded to Imperial Oil Ltd. to supply fuel to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation in the Kitikmeot and Inuvik regions for three years and to the Government of the Northwest Territories which, in turn, sells the fuel to customers in the communities, including businesses, private consumers, municipal governments and housing associations.

This is the first time the western fuel resupply contract has been awarded as a result of the competitive process. Previously, all Western Arctic fuel was purchased from Imperial Oil's refinery at Norman Wells through a negotiated agreement. While we were not able to negotiate a contract with Imperial Oil out of its Norman Wells refinery, the government decided to proceed with a call for proposals to get the best possible deal on the fuel resupply. Imperial Oil's proposal to deliver fuel to Hay River by rail achieved those objectives. This arrangement will save \$2.8 million over three years through a contract with Imperial Oil Ltd. for the provision of the fuel products and a contract with the Northern Transportation Company Ltd. for delivery. The Northern Transportation Company Ltd. contract will strengthen

the marine transportation option in the Western Arctic and stabilize freight rates for all cargo in 1996.

An unfortunate outcome of this award is that it might be necessary for Imperial Oil Ltd. to close down their refinery portion of their Norman Wells operation. However, in view of the obvious benefits to all Western Arctic residents of stabilized fuel prices, it is clear that the economic benefits offset the negative impacts on the community of Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, these awards should allow us to deal with some long-standing financial problems and promote this privatization initiative as a solid economic opportunity that could have considerable benefits to our business sector. I will be approaching the Standing Committee on Infrastructure to provide them with the privatization plan for the petroleum products division within the next two months. In the meantime, I am confident that these recent awards will result in a stable supply of petroleum products at a price which northerners can afford.

The next step in the department's efforts to enhance private sector capability, is the proposed privatization of the systems and communications division in Yellowknife. I will be coming forward in the near future, Mr. Speaker, to provide more details on that initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 35-13(3): Emergency Preparedness Week

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wanted to talk about Emergency Preparedness Week. I am pleased to advise this House that I have proclaimed the week of May 6th to 12th as Emergency Preparedness Week in the Northwest Territories. This proclamation coincides with a national initiative announced by the Honourable David Collenette, Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Emergency Preparedness.

The federal government has joined with the provincial and territorial emergency measure organizations, to encourage all individuals, families and community organizations, to prepare themselves for emergencies which may affect them. Everyone in the Northwest Territories must take responsibility for their own well-being, and join with their community government and

the Government of the Northwest Territories, to minimize the risk to people, property and the environment when emergency situations occur.

Mr. Speaker, it is timely this week has been proclaimed Emergency Preparedness Week. The annual spring break-up of our rivers has commenced in the Western Arctic. Several of our western communities face an annual alert at this time of year, as there is always a risk of flooding that accompanies break-up.

Last year's forest fires taught us the value of planning for quick response. The forest fire season is fast approaching, and Emergency Preparedness Week is our opportunity to prepare for such threats again this summer. In the East, the warm weather and long days see more people travelling on the land and the weather can change very quickly, increasing the risks of people becoming stranded. Again, planning and preparations allow quick and effective responses to be mounted to rescue stranded parties.

Mr. Speaker, the foundation of effective emergency preparedness is proper planning, our emphasis must continue to be on prevention. In the Eastern Arctic, as I mentioned, search and rescue is one of the emergencies most likely to occur. Individuals can take steps to minimize risk and, at the same time, aid searches in finding them quickly. Using proper care and caution, being adequately equipped and telling someone your travel plans will help to reduce the number of searches and the length of time required to find a missing person.

We all have important roles to play when our personal safety and property are at risk. We must not forget that responsibility for emergency preparedness begins with each individual and household.

As Minister responsible for civil emergency measures, I join the federal government in encouraging all northerners to mark Emergency Preparedness Week by taking the time to inform themselves on how they can help safeguard themselves, their families and their communities before, during and after a disaster strikes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have another Minister's statement, if that's okay.

Page 201

Minister's Statement 36-13(3): Recognition Of Achievements Of Northern Athletes

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate three northern athletes on their recent achievements in competitions at the national level.

Jeremy Jaud is a competitive swimmer from Yellowknife who has just completed his first year at the University of Victoria. A former member of the Yellowknife Polar Bear Swim Club, Jeremy received a swimming scholarship to Manitoba in 1994-95. This past year, he moved to the University of Victoria where he has been training six days a week for a chance to become a member of the national swim team and to qualify for the Canadian Olympic swim team.

At the Canadian Olympic swimming trials held in Montreal, March 30th to April 4th, Jeremy reached the finals and placed seventh in the 200-metre individual medley and 10th in the 100-metre breast-stroke. Joining the finals in the 200-metre breast-stroke means that he has three other chances to reach the Olympic qualifying time, in meets coming up in Phoenix, Vancouver and North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time an NWT athlete has qualified for a final in an Olympic trial in nearly 20 years. Our last Olympic athletes were, of course, Shirley and Sharon Firth in cross-country skiing.

The second of our northern athletes is Justin Brown, a 16-year-old wrestler who attends St. Patrick's High School here in Yellowknife. After earning three silver medals at the Arctic Winter Games in March, Justin won a bronze medal in the 46-kilogram division at the national junior wrestling championships held in Regina in April.

Justin is described by his coaches as a mature athlete, who is dedicated to his sport and has a strong work ethic. His coaches believe that Justin has the potential to make the national team some day.

A final athlete, David McCann, is a short-track speedskater and a grade 12 student from Yellowknife. He attends school at the National Sport School in Calgary, and trains at the Olympic oval. David skated previously for the Yellowknife Speedskating Club and had impressive performances competing for the NWT at the 1994 and 1996 Arctic Winter Games.

In the Canadian short-track speedskating championships in Red Deer, March 29th to 31st, David placed first overall in the intermediate men's category. A week later, he received a bronze medal in the 1,500 metre finals and the 777-metre event at the

North American championships held in Calgary. He was also fourth in the 1,000 metre and fifth in the 3,000 metre at this competition.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often that athletes from the Northwest Territories achieve such significant results in the sporting world. While our aim should always be to promote a broad base of participation in sport, we should recognize the dedication and hard work of these three athletes in pursuing their goals in sport; to be the best they can at national and international levels.

Mr. Speaker, all NWT residents can be proud of the accomplishments of Jeremy Jaud, Justin Brown and David McCann. I am sure Members will join me in congratulating them on their success, and wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavours. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 37-13(3): Seniors' Independent Housing Strategy

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that communities across the Northwest Territories need more adequate, suitable and affordable housing. The housing shortage affects people of all ages, but elders require our special attention.

Mr. Speaker, seniors want to stay in their own communities and live on their own for as long as possible. For this reason, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation have signed off the seniors' independent housing strategy.

The NWT Seniors' Advisory Council has provided valuable advice in the development of the strategy. This helped ensure that expressed needs of seniors were heard and given proper consideration.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would like to recognize the president of the NWT Seniors' Advisory Council, Mrs. Esther Braden, who has joined us in the gallery today. Also with her is Mr. Pete Fraser, a former Member of this House and the NWT/Yukon

representative of the National Advisory Council on Aging; and, Ms. Barb Bond, the executive director of the Seniors' Advisory Council recognize them.

--- Applause

I would ask you to the strategy includes the following elements: The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has committed \$3 million in funding for this program in the 1996-97 fiscal year; once seniors' independent housing units are built, they become part of the community's overall social housing portfolio, but will be reserved for seniors only; the local housing organization will handle the allocation, administration, operation and maintenance of seniors' independent housing units in their community.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of this strategy is to help seniors keep their independence. The Department of Health and Social Services will ensure that links exist with other programs such as home care and homemakers' services.

Even with this commitment, it will take a number of years to address the shortage of housing for seniors. To ensure communities in the greatest need are served first, the Department of Health and Social Services has developed criteria to allocate seniors' independent housing units by community. Mr. Speaker, this strategy is a major component

Page 202

of a comprehensive program intended to provide a continuum of care for seniors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Super Soccer Tournament

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate all participants of the super soccer tournament that was held here in Yellowknife this weekend. The tournament was very well attended, with 1,400 students participating. I would especially like to congratulate teams from my constituency: the 20-and- under boys from the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School for the championship. The tournament was

hard fought, but they were able to hold out and win. Other teams from my constituency also did very well and were able to place first, second, third in all age groups.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the organizing committee for the job well done. I hope this type of event can continue for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Need For Review Of Seniors' Supplement To Old Age Pension

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on behalf of senior citizens of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, these valued members of our society are having a very difficult time financially, especially in the more remote communities. I am told by Mrs. Esther Braden, president of the Northwest Territories Seniors' Society, that the subject of high cost of living for seniors is discussed at every meeting of the Northwest Territories Seniors' Advisory Council, and that representatives of my constituency -- Mr. Abe Okpik of Iqaluit; Mr. Mariano Aupilardjuk of Rankin Inlet; and, Mr. George Porter of Gjoa Haven -- all have spoken eloquently of the difficult situation being faced by the seniors in their communities, where often they are expected to try to support members of their extended families as well.

I am pleased that Mrs. Braden is in the Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories pays a monthly supplement on the monthly old-age pension cheque which comes from the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories seniors' supplement amounts to \$135 per month today. That amount was last increased from \$125 in November 1992. Since November 1992, Mr. Speaker, the consumer price index for Yellowknife has gone up by seven per cent. Although it is not measured in my riding, I believe that the cost of living has gone up much higher than seven per cent in the last three and a half years in Pangnirtung, Broughton Island and Clyde River. We do know that the isolated post

allowance paid to federal employees working in Pangnirtung, Broughton Island or Clyde River, which is based on the cost of living differences between Yellowknife and those communities, is 27 per cent higher in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I was very encouraged when the Minister of Finance, Honourable John Todd, stated in this Assembly on December 14, 1995 ... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. ... "We cannot abandon support to those most in need." The monthly supplement from the NWT government is paid to people on the old-age pension who get the guaranteed income supplement or whose husband or wife has died. These are the less well off of our senior citizens in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we should carefully review the adequacy of the territorial seniors' supplement. By my calculations, if we were to keep up with the cost of living increases in Yellowknife alone, which have been seven per cent since the supplement was last reviewed, the monthly supplement should be increased by about \$10 a month, to \$145.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are facing reductions in our spending in the coming year; however, as the Premier stated in his address on the Agenda for Change last week in this Assembly: "poor social conditions mean hardship for a lot of people in the Northwest Territories." Although it will not be easy for us to do, Mr. Speaker, as I well know, as our Premier said in his address last week: "We must improve social conditions." Mr. Speaker, I suggest we start by looking at the monthly pension supplement for the most valued and respected members of our society: our senior citizens, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Congratulating Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum Society In Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Society for the recent opening of the expansion to the museum. which I had the pleasure of attending.

Iqaluit is more fortunate than most communities in the Northwest Territories. We have had an active museum society in our community for over 25 years, which has been driven by the strong efforts of volunteers.

Page 203

The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum Society was formed in 1969 by a group of local residents, including Joanase Salamonie, Anne Mikijuk Hanson, Gordon Rennie and Tom and Helen Webster, who were committed to the preservation and enhancement of Inuit cultural artifacts. The society was formed in direct response to a donation of Inuit sculptures and artifacts from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The collection was initially kept in storage for lack of facility and funds.

However, in 1970, when Queen Elizabeth visited Iqaluit, the society installed an exhibition in the new library building, which was then still empty. That was a great success and from that point on, volunteers made continuing efforts to secure a building and, in the meantime, exhibits were displayed in spaces around town.

In 1976, the Northern Heritage Centre was being built. Arguing that a secure storage space was required to protect the collection, some government personnel threatened to take the collection to an exhibit in the new facility in Yellowknife.

The Iqaluit museum society's collection remained in Iqaluit, however, due to fortuitous circumstances. In 1976, the Iqaluit liquor store was closed to over-the-counter sales by public petition. As a result, the liquor store space became available to house and protect the collection.

At this time, with help from the Northern Heritage Centre's professional staff, the museum's collection was catalogued by volunteers, as the exhibits were

installed in the new facility. Visits from school children and tourists were also arranged by volunteers from the community.

Mr. Speaker, the collection has always received proper care from the staff at the museum. Standard museum practices are maintained. The local society has worked extremely hard for over 25 years to ensure that the operation of the museum is funded and the exhibits, programs and research is always continuing.

I would like to congratulate the many volunteers in Iqaluit who have made the museum a success over the years. I congratulate long-time employee, Jimmy Ekho, and Iqaluit elders who continue the tradition of active participation with the museum society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Supplementary Payment To Harvesters For Wolf Pelts

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the hunters and trappers in the Kivallik region were very disappointed that the government had eliminated the subsidy previously paid for wolf pelts.

As we all know, wolf harvesting is hardly a multi-million dollar industry in our region at the best of times. This decision caused great concern for my communities. As a result, I have had several subsequent discussions with Minister Kakfwi concerning this matter on behalf of my constituents.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to confirm that Minister Kakfwi advised me that his department will be providing a supplementary payment to wolf harvesters for the 1995-96 season.

MR. PICCO:

Hear! Hear!

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Picco.

--- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Renewable Resources will also be conducting a full review and evaluation of the industry when the trapping season ends this year.

In addition, the Minister's department is planning a series of community workshops on wolf-pelt preparation in the Keewatin region this fall. Mr. Speaker, during these days when cutbacks and limited resources are foremost in everyone's mind, it is refreshing to my constituents in Arviat and Baker Lake to hear such encouraging news.

Minister Kakfwi is to be congratulated, first, for listening to the very real concerns expressed by the hunters and, second, for approaching this matter with a degree of optimism. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's approach to this matter reminded me of the definition of an optimist. An optimist is a person who is treed by a bear and enjoys the view.

So on behalf of the harvesters, I would like to thank the honourable Minister for being able to keep the relatively little guys like hunters and trappers in his range of vision as he views the general direction of his departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Matna. Mahsi cho.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Inadequacy Of Federal Government Funding For Nunavut Infrastructure

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to voice my concern with regard to the recent announcements made by the Minister of DIAND applicable to the funding identified for the creation of future Nunavut government infrastructure and the impact his decisions will have on the capital expenditures of this government over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, my first concern is with regard to the representation this government had at the negotiating table at the time the decisions were made. I understand this government was represented by three persons appointed by the past Legislative Assembly

to represent us on the Nunavut Implementation Commission.

Page 204

At the present time, I am unaware of who these people report to. Have they reported to anyone in the past six months? What are the costs associated these appointments? Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Premier to clarify who these people are and what their terms of reference might be.

My second concern is with regard to the disposition of the \$150 million identified by the feds for implementation of a Nunavut territory. Mr. Speaker, a large amount of these dollars appears to be identified for the construction of water and sewage systems, as well as for community roads and land development in the Nunavut area.

Currently, this government, through the five-year capital planning process, has also identified amounts totalling \$14 million for land development and \$17 million for water and sewage facilities applicable to the Nunavut communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that some of these community infrastructure programs that these two levels of government expect to create are, in fact, duplicates of each other. Therefore, I believe this Assembly must take this into consideration as we review the main estimates for this fiscal year. I will be asking the Minister of Finance questions in this regard at the appropriate time. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to finish my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Nunakput is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Steen, conclude your statement.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the decision the federal Minister made to allow DPW Canada and the four birthright groups to be responsible for the creation of the future Nunavut government infrastructure, I do not believe it is appropriate for the GNWT to be entering into long-term contracts applicable to the future Nunavut territory. I strongly believe this government body does not have any right to commit the future Nunavut government to expenditures that they might not be able to meet.

Furthermore, the Nunavut government, once established, may feel under no obligation to honour these financial commitments. I am of the opinion that this government must limit contract terms to the proposed division date of April 1, 1999, or shortly thereafter as possible. Mr. Speaker, I am referring, in particular, to the long-term fuel delivery contract that the Department of Public Works and Services has entered into with the Nunasi Corporation for the supply of fuel to the Baffin region.

Mr. Speaker, I will be addressing questions to the Minister of Public Works and Services in this regard at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Community Empowerment

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is about community empowerment. This is a phrase which is used repeatedly by this government and I know it raises questions in the minds of some people.

First of all, I will explain, according to my understanding, what community empowerment is not. It is not the colonial approach to government that has existed for so long in the North. Colonial, by definition, means control by one power over a dependent area of people. This conjures up an image of an out-of-touch, top-heavy bureaucracy which dictates the choices, priorities and agenda of communities; communities which may be vastly different in terms of size, demographics and culture.

Community empowerment is not a central government which sets global policies which apply across the board regardless of these vast differences. Community empowerment is and encompasses such things as multi-year block funding, community transfer of programs and services, training, ownership of infrastructure and assets, community justice and wellness. This major change in focus in the way the government does business raises many questions in the minds of the people who know how the government works now. Even with the shortfalls of the present system, some may find it more comfortable to maintain the status quo. Questions about community empowerment; big answers. I will only raise a couple

of these questions today as they relate to things that are being asked in my riding.

For example, in communities where a local government may consist of a hamlet council and a band council, which is the recognized body for transfer purposes? In my particular riding, I have a First Nations Dene council, I have a town council and I also have a Metis Nation council. As another example, a well-established shed business community, primarily centralized in larger communities has been built on the premise of the policies now in place. These businesses service and supply surrounding communities. With capital and O and M dollars in the hands of communities, are the current policies of purchasing and tendering applicable anymore? Who pays when the money runs out before the project does?

Minister Todd, in his Budget Address, indicates that he wants the private sector to take up the challenge of creating jobs. It's a statistical fact that 70 per cent of investment for economic expansion in the small business sector comes from within...

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

I seek unanimous consent to continue with my statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Hay River is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Page 205

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a statistical fact that 70 per cent of investment for expansion in the small business sector comes from within the established business community. I don't think we can expect this investment should confidently take place when northerners cannot see clearly how community empowerment affects them.

In the end, community empowerment is the only alternative. Not only is colonialism detrimental to the development of the people, it is no longer affordable.

The expertise and knowledge is there at the community level; it needs to be developed. There will be growing pains and mistakes made. That will be the role of this central government: to keep the checks and balances in place that will create confidence as we proceed in this new direction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Federal Funding Allocated For Creation Of Nunavut

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also, like Mr. Steen, speak about the funding that was announced for the creation of Nunavut. Let me say to start with that, in summary, the federal government is providing \$150 million for the transition costs which we all know about, but \$31 million of this is for the federal government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame. Shame.

MR. OOTES:

Right. Now, officials and representatives from the Nunavut area spent 20 plus years negotiating their agreements with the federal government to settle land claims, but also to talk about self-government for the people of Nunavut. This was achieved in concert with the federal government and it involved extensive agreements. In my mind, those agreements imply that there would be adequate funds to run the infrastructure and incremental costs of the two territories. It's disappointing that we only have \$150 million -let me correct that -- \$120 million to do the transition work, and there is no commitment on the part of the federal government to provide incremental funding. What was stated, and the only comment made on the future, was that funding post-1 999 will be negotiated by the federal Department of Finance.

To me, there is a fundamental issue here. The feds have arbitrarily decided a figure of \$150 million -- let me correct that again -- \$120 million for the transition costs. I am, of course, concerned about that fact, that there is only \$120 million, but I'm more concerned about the long term. How much will be available to run two territories for incremental costs? That is a big question and we should devote our attention to that.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that we have incremental costs of adequate funds when the time comes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

MR. OOTES:

I would urge my fellow MLAs from Nunavut, when they meet with Mr. Irwin at the Nunavut Leaders' Conference in Arviat -- the home of my colleague, Mr. O'Brien -- at the end of the week, to tell Mr. Irwin that there are Members upset over this and we are determined that we get adequate funds. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 150-13(3): Responsibility For Education Tax Increase

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Roland on May 3rd, with respect to the responsibility for tax increases for education.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned last week in the House, the Financial Management Board approved a 10 per cent increase in education taxes in all tax-based municipalities except Yellowknife. In addition, the board approved an increase in general property and education tax rates of 10 per cent in the general taxation area, which consists of those areas outside tax-based municipalities.

GNWT property tax rates are set through an establishment order. Each year, they are reviewed by the Department of Finance and recommendations are made to the Minister of Finance and to the Financial Management Board. This year, the Financial Management Board decided to increase GNWT property taxes because they have not kept pace with inflation over the last 30 years. In fact, even after this change, mill rates will have only increased by 33 per cent since 1967 when property rates were instituted.

During the same period, the Canadian consumer price index increased by 390 per cent.

Letters notifying tax-based municipalities of the new education mill rates will be sent out shortly. It is projected that the combination of the general property tax and education tax increases will raise \$575,000 in 1996-97. The additional revenues are included in the main estimates. However, property tax revenues are projected to be only \$79,000 higher than in 1995-96, because 1995-96 revenues were abnormally high. This was as a result of the effort by our government which resulted in the federal government paying about \$550,000 in grants-in-lieu of taxes that were owed from previous years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Don Ellis in the gallery today. Don has returned to Yellowknife as the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Health and Social Services. Don, his wife and family used to live in Yellowknife, and we are glad he has returned to his senses and returned home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Page 206

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a former Member of this House, a respected elder from my riding of Tu Nedhe, from Fort Resolution, Pete Fraser. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Mr. Pete Frazer who is also, as I indicated earlier, the NWT/Yukon representative of the National Advisory Council on Aging. Of course, as I indicated, Mrs. Esther Braden, president; and Ms. Barb Bond, executive director of the NWT's advisory council. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 154-13(3): Status Of Article 24 Of Nunavut Final Agreement

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in article 24 of the Nunavut final agreement ... Mr. Speaker, I'll start again. Article 24 of the Nunavut final agreement is of critical importance to all residents of Nunavut. I understood that an announcement was to be made today on this topic. I am disappointed that one was not presented by the government. Can the Deputy Premier advise me when this government will finally announce its response to article 24 and how it plans to implement the spirit and intent of the article? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 154-13(3): Status Of Article 24 Of Nunavut Final Agreement

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I informed the House last week that we would be announcing the policy this week, but I had also made a commitment to Nunavut Caucus that I would brief them fully before I proceeded. The briefing to Nunavut Caucus will be this evening and the government will be making its announcement on article 24.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 1996, I asked the Premier if he would consider publishing a list of contracts which are sole-source. The Premier replied, and I quote from the unedited Hansard: "We already have and we do table all sole-source contracts and negotiated contracts." I have had the opportunity to review the list of tabled documents since 1991 and have been unable to find this document which lists all sole-source contracts. Would the Premier please inform this House as to whether or not the government does, in fact, regularly table all sole-source contracts and negotiated contracts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Premier, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that we have always tabled all negotiated contracts as well as sole-source contracts in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't find them. The accountability of government to the public when spending funds must be visible. Publishing a list of sole-source/negotiated contracts would provide accountability and ensure that the public money is being spent in a manner that is in the public interest. Would the Premier be willing to publish a list of contracts and ensure that this document is indeed tabled in the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to hear that it will be tabled and the public will be able to see. Can I ask the Minister when he expects this to happen?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my understanding we had done it previously on an annual basis and we will continue to do that on an annual basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Page 207

Supplementary To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

MR. PICCO:

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I have spent quite a few hours in the library looking for the documents, and I went back to 1991 and I couldn't find this annual report. Maybe the Minister could tell me what the report is called so I can find it and look for it. It hasn't been tabled as far as I could see.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 155-13(3): Tabling Of All GNWT Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will be a pleasure for me to help Mr. Picco find those documents, and we will table them in the future on an annual basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Ng, with regard to the Tl'oondih Healing Camp, south of Fort McPherson. To date, I have not received any information back with regard to the costs for operating other institutions such as in southern Canada, Bellwood, the program out of Hay River and Yellowknife, and the costs of operating these facilities. To date, the Government of the Northwest Territories has agreed to contribute \$300,000 to the Tl'oondih Healing Society which is not core funding. I would like to state that this is not core funding. These funds are an advance against future clients.

In the last year, the program has run five programs which have consisted of 220 clients. To date, they have a waiting list of over 250 individuals who want to get into this program, yet, for some reason or another -- I'm not too sure if it's political or it's based on the emphasis that because this program been established with funds from the Gwich'in land claims -- they feel that the obligation of this government is not there. If we can afford to pay somewhere in the range of \$400 a day to send someone to Bellwood in southern Canada for three months, yet are willing to pay a measly \$100 a day for an individual to run a program which costs in the neighbourhood of almost \$150 a day to house someone and maintain the individual in this camp, will the Minister consider relooking at this issue and consider us as any other healing program or alcohol program in the Northwest Territories which has been funded fully for the last number of years in the neighbourhood of \$1 million a year?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng

Return To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Tl'oondih operation has developed very recently. As I believe I had indicated earlier in this House, there was a meeting of all operators, executive directors and board directors of the alcohol and drug treatment facilities from throughout the Northwest Territories a few weeks ago to discuss the very issue of how they would be funded in the future, how they would determine their programs to not compete directly with each other if at all possible, how to stop the leakage of dollars going to southern treatment centres so we can expand the services and facilities we have in the North to better accommodate our residents. What I would like to do is a get a detailed briefing on what took place during those discussions -- in which the operators of Tl'oondih were also present -- before I advise the Member on the direction that we're heading. But, generally, I can say that, within a few years, we're heading towards a per them payment to all treatment facilities. That was something that was, to my understanding, agreed upon at that meeting by all operators. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was with regard to core funding. The other operations are presently funded with core funding to operate and maintain these facilities, but in this case, the \$300,000 that you're talking about, is the pay for individual beds for individuals to go through the program. Is this facility going to be receiving core funding for operational funds like any other facility?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as it stands now, I don't believe so because there is no significant capital investment on the part of this government in the Tl'oondih operation. The other alcohol and drug

treatment centres have had significant contributions from this government, so we have a responsibility to provide some core funding to them to provide services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding for TI'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's the point I'm trying to hit on: the whole question about fairness. You were saying that you were willing to contribute to facilities that you have developed infrastructure for -- Delta House, programs in Hay River and also alcohol treatment programs in the Baffin and within the Yellowknife region -yet they do not have to pay the costs of operating and maintaining these buildings because this government pays for that. My point is that I don't think this facility should be treated any differently than any facility, regardless of whether it's a private facility or built in the Northwest Territories by this government. In order to be fair to this program as suggested, it's a new program which is in its

Page 208

second year, but in order for us to continue this program, we have to have the adequate resources to maintain and operate this facility. At this point in time, the Gwich'in have contributed in the range of \$3 million to this program; it cost \$1.3 million to build this facility out of land claims funding.

Did you get the question?

--- Laughter

The question was, will this government agree to treat the TI'oondih Healing Society similar to any other program you have running in the North, when it comes to core funding.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For TI'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we believe we've treated them fairly and we have negotiated a per them rate based on the projected clients who would go through the system to assist in covering off some of their costs. You have to determine what costs you are trying to cover off. We can't expect, as a government, to return all their capital investment of that operation in a relatively short time period when they have made a significant investment in that facility. We can expect to give them some form of return, but it is a matter of what is seen as satisfactory. As it stands now, we think there is a fair rate that has been put forward and negotiated. It continues to be discussed with their operators. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For TI'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question has been raised time and time again in trying to resolve this process in a speedy and quick manner, as well as in a fair manner. The more I raise this issue, the more I come to the understanding that it seems like something isn't fair. Because an individual group has settled a land claim agreement doesn't make us any less than anyone else in the Northwest Territories. Under our land claim agreement, it is clearly stated that we are not to be treated any less than any individual Canadian, whether it is program services or establishing facilities. This is the only facility in Canada that offers the potential to families to be treated in one facility. It is the only family program that has been established. Presently, we have individuals operating that facility from Bellwood; the same facility we are sending people to from here. They are now working on behalf of the Gwich'in Health Society to run that program.

I don't see how we can be any worse off than a southern institution that has the same individuals running it. I strongly feel that there is some question of fairness here, especially with regard to groups that have settled land claim agreements and are starting to use their resources to do something that this government is presently responsible for when it comes to programs and services.

MR. SPEAKER:

There was no question there. I would like to remind the Members that they have a preamble and their questions follow that. Members have a preamble and four questions. There shouldn't be continuous preamble, clarification of preamble, followed by preamble and then questions following that. We only have one hour and I would like to give every Member an opportunity. If Members keep repeating their preambles, there will be less questions asked by Members. There was no question there. Mr. Krutko.

Point Of Order

MR. KRUTKO:

Point of order, Mr. Speaker. There was a question in my statement. It was a question of fairness. I want him to answer the question with regard to being fair to an aboriginal group because of comprehensive claims versus programs being delivered and other arrangements where there are no land claim agreements.

MR. SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question. I don't know how the Minister can respond. Would you like to respond, Mr. Ng?

Further Return To Question 156-13(3): Core Funding For Tl'oondih Healing Camp

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would respond by saying that we have tried to accommodate the Tl'oondih operation by negotiating a fair per them that would assist them towards their operational costs and there continues to be ongoing negotiations to further expand some of the services they may be able to offer, so we can hopefully increase the clients and the funding that would go towards their operation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in relation to the upcoming forest fire season and will be addressed to the Minister of Renewable Resources. I understand

that Renewable Resources is in the process of developing guidelines to give communities increased authority to make decisions on fire management and control this summer.

I also understand that there is a predetermined spending limit to conduct an initial attack using local resources and that the Minister has advised community leaders of this initiative if they wish to participate. How much will this spending limit be?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Renewable Resources, Minister Kakfwi.

Return To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the spending limit will be \$20,000.

Page 209

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Kakfwi.

Supplementary To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

MR. OOTES:

Could the Minister tell me, if the communities do not wish to participate in this, what are the alternatives for the communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, if the community does not wish to exercise this option, the Department of Renewable Resources, through its firefighting staff, will carry on with that responsibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, I am also aware that three CANSOs are to be under contract for the firefighting season. I wonder if the Minister could tell me where those CANSOs will be based.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, tentatively, they are going to be located at Lutsel K'e, Deline and Wha Ti. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could tell us how long the contract on the CANSOs that have been contracted to do this work is.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 157-13(3): Communities' Spending Limit For Forest Fire Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the contract for the provision of three CANSOs is for one year, with the option for an additional two years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Premier with regard to my Member's statement. I wonder if the Premier could inform us as to who the three representatives are for the territorial government on the Nunavut Implementation Commission.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Joe Ohokannoak, Guy Alikut and Kenn Harper.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier advise us when the last time these people reported to the territorial government was and to whom did they report?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NIC reports as a collective group, but they don't report as individuals. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 158-13(3):GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, are there any costs associated with these appointments, to this government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that all the costs are associated with the federal government and they pick up the cost.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 158-13(3):GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, considering the unfavourable decisions made recently by the federal government, apparently on the advice of NIC, should we not be reconsidering these appointments?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 158-13(3): GNWT Representatives On Nunavut Implementation Commission

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These appointments are up for consideration in December of this

Page 210

year. I guarantee that we will reconsider who will be sitting on this commission. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier and it is in relation to the statement that Mr. Ootes made earlier concerning the money that will be spent in implementing Nunavut. Considering the fact that NTI had felt they needed \$300 million to implement Nunavut and are only going to be receiving \$150 million, \$30 million of which the feds will use for themselves, is that enough to implement Nunavut?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after hearing the federal government's numbers and listening to Mr. Irwin last week when I met with him, we, too, as a government have some concerns about the numbers. We have some concerns about what Nunavut would look like April 1, 1999. This week, we will be coming out with a position as a government on what we see these numbers meaning. We will be meeting with NTI, as well as the federal government, in Arviat this weekend and hopefully we will get some clarification on the numbers and we will definitely be getting clarification on the role of the GNWT in the whole process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of this government to implement Nunavut at all costs, even if this money is not enough?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In previous assemblies and also in this Assembly, we have supported Nunavut. This Assembly has supported the people's right to govern themselves and will continue to do that. We will also look at the fiscal reality. We will meet with our partners on this whole issue, NTI and the federal government, to discuss it this weekend and hopefully we can come out with a very concrete proposal and direction we are going in.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, support Nunavut, as I am sure all the MLAs in this House do. However, if there isn't enough money to implement Nunavut coming from the federal government, that probably means that some of the money might have to come from the GNWT's budget. If this happens, how will it affect the territory that is left over here in the West? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 159-13(3): Federal Funding For Nunavut Implementation

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We haven't got to that level of detail yet. We have just gotten these numbers from the federal government on transition costs. I believe it is \$117 million, after you subtract the federal government's presence in the North and what that costs. We will consider that. We are concerned, as well as Members of this Assembly, about the numbers and what type of territories we will have. We are going to have two new territories April 1, 1999. We do want two territories that are financially viable and we don't want layers upon layers of government and our community people getting hit or taking the brunt of the blow and not receiving adequate programs and services because of the cost of too much government.

We are going to take a serious look at that and we will report back to the Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 160-13(3): Status Of Training For Community Empowerment

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to my Member's statement today, one of the key elements of community empowerment is training. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for community empowerment; the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. There has been a lot of concern raised about the ability of the leaders at the community level to deal with the transfer initiatives. In our community particularly, it was raised with respect to seeing their budgets out of a deficit situation. If there is a program, we should all take that one. I wonder if she could update the House on the status and nature of any proposed or currently under way training to prepare community leaders and work this further transfer of responsibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mrs. Thompson.

Return To Question 160-13(3): Status Of Training For Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concern from the riding of Hay River. I think all of these concerns are the same in all areas of the NWT because leaders need to be trained to take over

Page 211

responsibilities and training is a very important part of this objective.

Also, our officials in the department are working towards this end to ensure that communities get trained. Our officials are working to train the community leaders, so they can take over the transfers in an orderly fashion. Transfers are still going ahead and more and more communities are

coming up with proposals to take over programs that this government currently runs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 160-13(3): Status Of Training For Community Empowerment

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would it be possible for the Minister to provide to the House prototypes of the training packages and the types of training that will be available to the communities? It will be interesting to see what is included.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 160-13(3): Status Of Training For Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can provide you with this information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 161-13(3): Breakdown Of Incremental Funding For Nunavut

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance, Minister Todd. Can you explain to this House why we have been hearing figures of \$150 million, \$120 million, \$117 million, for Nunavut's incremental funding, as it relates to Minister Irwin's press release of last week? Can we have a breakdown of exactly how this money is going to be divided? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 161-13(3): Breakdown Of Incremental Funding For Nunavut

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a good question and it is a very important one. Earlier, Mr. Ootes asked the same question. My understanding of the \$150 million is \$30 million plus will go into what we call a federal government expenditure base that they require to set up their offices in Nunavut in your colleague, Mr. Picco's, riding of Iqaluit, which makes it \$120 million. Within that \$120 million, there is also somewhere in the region of \$1 million to \$2 million with respect to the operation of the Nunavut Implementation Commission which, while important, has no direct bearing on the services and the infrastructure of Nunavut.

So, in fact, out of \$149.859 million, we believe the actual money spent in the development of training and infrastructure, is somewhere in the region of \$117 million over a four-year period; 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 162-13(3): Education Tax Increases

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to do with the education tax increase and will be directed to the Minister of Finance. I would like to thank him for responding to my question last week. Seeing that it's the direction of this government for this increase, why weren't we, as ordinary Members or through the standing committees, given notice of this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 162-13(3): Education Tax Increases

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that there were education tax increases under the previous government. The latest one of 10 per cent was done through the Financial Management Board. I would have to check with my department as to the reason for not advising my honourable colleague in the committees. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 162-13(3): Education Tax Increases

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the answer of the 10 per cent increase to education taxes in all tax-based and general taxation areas, can the Minister inform us of what does a 10 per cent increase in a general taxation area amount to and also of a tax-based municipality? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a somewhat technical question. I don't have it at my fingertips, the individual tax increases. I did say in my statement earlier today, in my response to a question raised by my honourable colleague, that the yield in total was \$575,000 for the year 1996-97, but I will take the question as notice so I can give my honourable colleague an accurate reflection of the question he has asked. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Finance. Bearing in mind the announcements made by Mr. Irwin that a portion of the infrastructure money would be used for water, sewer and roads in Nunavut, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering how that is

Page 212

going to reflect on this Assembly's budget for this year and for the next two years because we seem to be duplicating each other's programs. Could the Finance Minister give me some idea of how we're going to clear this up with the federal government, as to who's responsible for what facilities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to point out that this \$117 million or \$118 million is for additional transition costs to set up the Nunavut government. They're not costs that relate to the present government. However, that is a reasonable and fair question that my colleague asked. At this stage of the game, we only got these numbers last Monday or Tuesday, I believe. We need to take a hard look at them and break down where they're going. We need to spend some time with our partners in this -- NTI -- and we need to get a more detailed question to the federal government as to where this infrastructure money is going to go and what it relates to. It's not that I'm trying to avoid the question, I just think it's early in the discussion. I think the important thing to separate here is that the current capital budget of the territorial government is for the current operations of the territorial government, East or West. The dollars that the federal government has identified, no matter how inadequate some of us may view them, are for incremental costs associated with any additional government or infrastructure required when Nunavut moves in 1999. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, this government's five-year capital plan is supposed to identify all the needs of the communities for the next five years. The Finance Minister suggested that these are over and above these needs of these communities, because of division. However, if these water and sewage facilities are not identified in the five-year capital plan as needs, how can the federal government be then saying that these are community needs and that they will fund them?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you what we're at. One of the frustrations of this whole exercise was - at least in my opinion, as the Minister of Finance -- that we were left out of, early in the debate, the development of this budget. We said that to Mr. Irwin last week. We haven't yet analyzed in any detail where the federal government intends to put this infrastructure in place. There is also a debate, I believe, in this House and in other places about who, in fact, should be developing this infrastructure. I'm of the mind, and I think that the Cabinet and Assembly is of the mind, that this should be done to the GNWT so there would be some cost-effective way to move forward on this. But I don't have sufficient detail right now to answer my honourable colleague's legitimate question about is there a duplication of effort, how does it integrate into our five-year capital plan but, hopefully, after this weekend in Arviat at the officials' meeting where discussions are under way, we will be able to get a clear picture of that and I'll be able to respond to my colleague prior to the closure of this session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, bearing in mind the shortage of dollars this government has, I wonder if it's appropriate for this Assembly to be considering expenditures in this present year towards water and sewage facilities, roads, whatever, in Nunavut until we first clarify with the federal government who is going to be paying for what.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 163-13(3): Impact Of Nunavut Funding On GNWT Budget

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, our five-year plan, whether it be for Nunavut or for the West, is based upon the current

level of service and the requirements of the communities and the requirements of municipalities across Nunavut. The incremental costs and transitional costs related to a new Nunavut government is based upon an increase in activity, in PYs, in infrastructure, that may require water and sewer or roads, at cetera. So I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that until we get the full detail of this, which we don't have, we need to proceed with the budget as laid out. At the end of the day, once we have the detail, we can have a lengthy debate on whether there is a duplication of services, whether it's required or not.

For example -- hypothetically, if I may -- if in the new Nunavut government, there are going to be 150 PYs in my honourable colleague's riding -- which there appears to be -- in Iqaluit, there would be additional costs related to housing, water and sewer, et cetera, over and above the level that he currently requires. That cost would be picked up by the federal government through this transition and incremental cost. That doesn't take away from the need he has right now -- or others, for that matter -- in the current budget cycle. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance regarding division, as well. On Friday, I voiced a concern that while the incremental costs that we just heard about are important, the more fundamental, long-term issue is the question of the formula arrangements in each new territory. I believe Mr. Ootes

Page 213

raised the same issue. I was wondering if the Minister of Finance could give us his learned opinion on this issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that whole issue of how you're going to determine a gross expenditure base of two new territories is absolutely critical. After all, it is the ongoing base funding to provide the essential services to two new territories. Mr. Irwin, in his comments both at dinner and to the press later on the following day, had indicated that it would probably be finance to finance. We're seeking clarification on that issue and trying to get a clearer understanding of what exactly that means. My staff tell me that we are very close to arranging a meeting with Mr. Martin, the Finance Minister of Canada, to speak with him and try to determine an appropriate process for calculating the gross expenditure base for both new territories, and who should be involved in this process.

It's a very, very important question, there's no doubt about that. I don't have enough valid information at this time as to the federal government's position on this important issue and the method or the process in which we would determine two gross expenditure bases. But I want to assure my colleague that it's a priority of all of us, and that we're going to moving quickly to try and get a clearer interpretation of it from the Finance Minister of Canada, the Honourable Paul Martin. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to confirm the speed in which you intend to approach this issue, the information we saw last week indicated 1998-99 is when they plan on dealing with this issue. Could the Minister confirm in his definition, "priority" means we want to start this right away so we have a clear understanding before we reach the date of division? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure my honourable colleague that priority for me on this issue was yesterday or the day before yesterday. In fact, we have to move quickly to discuss it, finance to finance, and just see what appropriate process we can put in place to make sure there's a comfortable level by all in this Legislature and the other parties to this issue; whether it's NTI or the commission that's providing this government and the federal government with some advice. So we're taking expeditious steps to move quickly and see if, in fact, Mr. Martin will agree to determine a process for this important exercise in determining the gross expenditure base of the two territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see the Minister of Finance will be acting with such alacrity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Ohh!

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Could the Minister also reassure us that this Legislature will remain fully involved in any kind of negotiations for formulas and the splitting east and west of current resources? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 164-13(3): Formula Financing In Two New Territories

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take this issue very seriously of the gross expenditure base. I said earlier in my comments that I was concerned, and I believe the Premier also was, with respect to how involved we were on the front end on the incremental and transitional costs. I think it's fair to say that we weren't as involved as we would like to be. I want to assure my honourable colleague that we had better be involved in the development of the two gross

expenditure bases, and that's the message we intend to give both Mr. Irwin and Mr. Martin very shortly, and work with them to determine an appropriate process. I would absolutely agree that the honourable colleagues in this House have to be intimately involved in determining the appropriate gross expenditure base for the two new territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 165-13(3): Effect Of Block Funding On Procurement Policies

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone agrees that economic growth and community development go hand in hand, and if the government is going to lessen the people's dependence on government through our social programs, our economy must grow. The incentives that this government has developed to create economic growth are administered by this government. Are the same procurement policies of the GNWT going to be adhered to by communities when they assume responsibility via block funding? I would imagine that question would go to Mr. Kakkwi, being responsible for Economic Development and Tourism.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is a question of procurement policy. Mr. Premier, would you like to respond?

Page 214

Return To Question 165-13(3): Effect Of Block Funding On Procurement Policies

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for raising this issue, and it has been raised to our government quite a bit during the previous week to two weeks from manufacturers in the North, as well as contractors in the North, as well as suppliers from the Northwest Territories. It is one issue that has to be discussed, and Cabinet will be discussing it very shortly. When we do block funding, when we do community empowerment, does that

mean just turn the cheque over with no conditions attached, or does that mean there will be conditions attached to it? We will make that decision very shortly and when we do, I'm sure the Ministers responsible will be making a statement in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education with regard to the whole incident in Fort McPherson where we had a crisis with the school burning down. Does this government have in place any sort of emergency measures for an incident such as a school burning down or a bus crash? Do they have a plan in place to be able to react to incidents such as this? It's my understanding that this must be the third school that has been destroyed by fire in the last number of years. Does the government have a plan like that in place?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have plans in place for all of the 58 communities in which we have schools, for such eventualities as a school burning down. The department always is prepared to react very quickly to a situation that requires attention. For instance, the Member mentions the situation in Fort McPherson. Within hours of finding out that the school had burned down, the department had put in place a team to respond to the situation and had set up linkages between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Public Works, the divisional board and the CEC in Fort McPherson. I think that Members will find that the department is prepared to move very quickly in those situations where a response is required immediately.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the department not having a plan in place, I think it may be helpful that we do have some sort of a planning process implemented so when any incidents like this happen, we are not reacting; we're more in a role of being prepared.

If it doesn't happen again, great; but it may happen again in the near future. I think this may be the opportunity to seriously look at what happened in Fort McPherson and also see what the implications are on the impacts of the community having to use other facilities, and also the impact on the students because they are in an out-of-school facility where they are basically housed in small rooms. I would like to ask the Minister if he would seriously consider looking at developing such a policy or plan to deal with an incident like that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can commit to the Member that the department will examine our response in this issue and make sure that we learn from the incident anything we can. I can't promise that we will develop an emergency measures policy for each and every school. I think it's much better to have an overall policy which guarantees that the government works very quickly to deal with the problems that come up. It would be impossible for us to perceive what might happen to any one of the more than 60 schools we have in the Northwest Territories. My experience in this situation indicates that the department is really quite prepared to put together a response. I think between the FMB response, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Public Works, that they've demonstrated that we can deal with emergency situations. Yes, we will take a look at the specifics of this instance and make sure we learn any lessons that are there for us to learn.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that from the Minister. Could he use the incident in Fort McPherson as the basis of this study? We are presently in the process of building a school, but it will probably be a few months before we are able to house these students in a new facility. So I would like to ask the Minister, at this time, if he can seriously look at using McPherson as the example and as the stage for developing this plan at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 166-13(3): Departmental Emergency Procedures

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that is what I had committed to in my previous answer to the Member; that we would look closely at how this situation had developed, the government's response to it and make sure that if there were improvements needed to our response, that we would put them in place for any future situations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 215

Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go back to the subject of Nunavut funding. I think it is an interesting note for us to take into consideration that the federal government cut this government by \$150 million in funding. Then they announced that they are going to give us \$150 million, which is really \$120 million, to set up Nunavut. That should be remembered by Members. I have a question with regard to that to the Premier. Do we have a Cabinet committee that is looking at and coordinating the Nunavut set-up?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

MR. OOTES:

Do we have a resource committee made up of the public service that does investigative work to tell us how much it is going to cost incrementally in 1999? Is that in existence?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do; the Division Secretariat.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

MR. OOTES:

Is there a planning process? In that regard, I wonder if documents and reports are being prepared that this House could receive, so we would also know what the projected costs might be.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Division committee was struck a month ago. We are going to work on a

process of how we can work with the committees of the Legislative Assembly. As Members know, we have been a very open government. We have an open-door policy. We have shared all information. Our staff has briefed Caucus on the issue of division to date. You have all the information we do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Premier could tell us -- I can't remember what you called the name of the committee of public servants that is working on this -- if there is a process by which reports are being issued. I know we have been briefed in Caucus and our committees as we have gone through our departmental reviews, but I am curious as to whether reports are being prepared specifically identifying incremental costs and implications,

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 167-13(3): Cabinet Committee On Nunavut

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would be pleased to work out a process of how we can share that information more directly with committees of this House and whatever committee is responsible for that. We would be happy to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, with the advent of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 and the announced funding by the federal Minister, has the Minister of Education directed his department to review said dollar amounts for post-secondary,

academic and vocational training in Nunavut, based on the released dollar amounts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, the more questions we ask, the shorter answers we get. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister has reviewed that as he has just said, can the Minister then inform this House today what the implications of the dollar amounts are. Are we looking at trades programs? Has the department revised a strategy because the amount tendered by the Finance Minister seems to be lacking according to the reports that we have seen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Page 216

Further Return To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we previously indicated this afternoon, this government is planning to take some time to examine the implications in some detail and try to come forward with a coordinated response later this week. At this point in time, I can't say that I have the information the Member is requesting because we are still examining what the implications might be.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, with these dollar amounts, as I have said in the past, Nunavut doesn't have any basic on occupational trades training, for example, electrical and plumbing courses, With this federal funding that has been announced, will the Minister direct his department to investigate the possibility of delivery of said programs in Nunavut before April 1, 1999, so that the Nunavut residents will be able to be trained to fully take part in the creation of Nunavut, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is still unclear, at this point in time, whether or not those funds will be coming to this government to provide training. That is one of the issues that needs to be addressed. I am hopeful that the Nunavut Arctic College will be seen as the lead agency in providing that training in the Nunavut region. Again, it isn't something that I can speak about today.

I would certainly hope that we will be able to provide as much of the training as possible in the period leading up to division on April 1, 1999. One complicating factor will be that I understand the federal funds are offered over a four year period. We need to get as much of that training done in three years, if we want to achieve a representative workforce by April 1, 1999.

So there are a number of issues, Mr. Speaker, that still have to be examined. I cannot give the Member the clear answer he is looking for today, but I do hope to be able to do that very soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, this government has been formulating a group called the Nunavut Training Implementation Commission. Last month, we had a briefing on this training group looking at the vocational as

well as the academic needs of the residents of Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, the government has spent a lot of money on the training needs and occupations that will be available in Nunavut. I don't understand the Minister when he says he isn't able to give me time lines. The actual delivery of these programs has been formulated within the Nunavut training group, which we have received a copy from the Minister on. If that is the case and we have that in place, when will these programs be delivered?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent

Further Return To Question 168-13(3): Post-Secondary Education In Nunavut

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the Nunavut final agreement, by July 9th of this year, this government must have in place plans to demonstrate how it will achieve a representative workforce. In order to do that, we have to have training programs lined up. So the programs are not, as the Member has indicated, done yet. They are scheduled to be publicly posted by July 9th, as required by the NFA. I understand that we are on time and on target to achieve that. The draft training plans will be circulated to groups such as NIC and NTI to get their comments before it is finalized. I should point out that the department has had some estimates as to what it might cost to achieve the training that was being considered and we will have to examine just how close the federal funding comes to that estimate before I can answer the Member's question in the detail in which he is asking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. Mr. Henry.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Mr. Henry's Reply

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the Finance Minister introduced his 1996-97 budget. For the most part, the document presented was positive and a very good start to the job ahead. Much more has to be done.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to reminisce for a few moments. We all came to this House as a new elected body. Each of us came with their spirits high; good reason to have high spirits, we just finished a popularity contest of sorts. Sufficient numbers of the community members where we live had faith in our ability to come to this Legislature and represent them and protect their rights and interests.

We all knew that the job was going to be easy. I certainly did. I have talked to enough people in my constituency over the previous year and have gotten such a good response to my ideas that I knew I must be right. Now, all I had to do was to go to the Legislature and bring the good news to the other 23, never once thinking that their solutions to the problems would be different than mine. Come to think of it, there aren't too many ways to stop spending more than you

Page 217

bring in. I thought it is that simple. We will have a happy group of campers and the public of the NWT will be so pleased with our efforts and everyone will live happily ever after.

Mr. Speaker, I was dreaming in colour. During my election campaign, I had made three commitments to my constituents. They were effective representation, I would speak up for them in the Legislature; economic fairness, a fair distribution of government dollars for all communities; and fiscal responsibility, which is not spending beyond one's means to pay.

We came to our first Caucus meeting and the process of orientation began. We were educated as to what Hansard was, how many copies we were entitled to and could we get more copies. I am not sure why anyone would want extra copies of Hansard, maybe their friends need some stimulating reading or perhaps they have a woodstove that needed extra fuel. We were taught how to speak in the House, how to answer questions or not to answer questions from the media, as the case may be; what can be said in

the House and what can't; how to ask a question of the Minister in the House; and, the rules around the overused term ..supplementary questions."

Later on, when we got the important information out of the way, we got down to some real work; that of filling out forms for pension plans, dental plans, insurance plans, medical plans and, most important, how to read our pay slip and the number of times we would be getting them. Oh yes, there were the answers to those important questions: If we stayed for an extra committee meeting, did we get paid for an extra day? If we worked at the Assembly for more than a minimum of two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, we would get paid for that too?

I recall the evening meeting where it seemed to go for hours discussing the use of alcohol in the Northwest Territories and whether we should allow alcohol to be used at Legislative Assembly functions. We went as far as sharing how each of us, as Members, dealt with alcohol in our own personal life. It was after that long, drawn-out meeting, that Mr. Todd came up to me and asked me how it was going. I advised him that it was a lot slower than I had expected and been used to in the business community, at which he replied, you will have to take it easy, lad, I nearly went nuts for the first six months.

--- Applause

I have a few more days to go to complete my six months and I am not sure I am going to get used to it in that time.

Getting back to the part about coming to this Legislature as one of 15 new Members, it was not long into the Caucus meetings that our new-found approach of working together seemed to take a turn for the worse. New Members felt they wanted to look at installing a Cabinet of new, unseasoned MLAs. It was a great exercise, but that is all. The present Cabinet should be congratulated on their posture as they did not panic, but listened and responded favourably to concerns that were expressed by new Members. As it turned out, most of the old seasoned MLAs got elected to Cabinet. Let's hope we can continue to say at the end of their term that all's well that ends well.

I think it is important to remember that we are also employees who have been hired for a four-year contract, with an option to renew at the employers' pleasure. All the more reason to be prudent with how we dispose of their money. Mr. Speaker, I have to

give credit to the Finance Minister, who was consistent in communicating to our committees that he did not think that balancing the budget in one year was possible. As time went on and at the present time, the Members who think or want the Finance Minister to balance the budget are in a minority.

This situation is no reason for Members such as myself, who feel that we should be putting more urgency into balancing the budget sooner, bringing this position to the court of higher opinion, which is the general public of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I had the NWT Council for the Disabled conduct a telephone survey for me in my Yellowknife South riding in the two-week period between March 4th and 28th of this year. I surveyed 140 people, selected at random, from my constituency. I had them answer nine questions, one of which was do you believe the GNWT should balance this 1996-97 budget; 82 per cent said yes. Another question asked was do you feel that the GNWT can balance the budget in the 1996-97 year; 76 per cent said no. There are many ways to interpret these results. I would offer one potential way of looking at them. To the first question, a large number of constituents want the budget balanced. In response to the second question, there is a feeling that this government cannot get a handle on its finances. Of my constituents surveyed, 76 per cent do not believe that the Government of the Northwest Territories has the ability to balance the budget in the coming year. I know and accept that I have not been able so far to convince this government of the importance of balancing the budget each year.

I do not know of one MLA who does not want to balance the budget. I would suggest that that is a unanimous position. Everyone wants and knows how necessary it is to balance the budget; what we disagree on is when we are going to do it.

Page 218

My analogy to the GNWT not balancing its budget is like a patient after being diagnosed with flesh-eating disease in his leg, saying to the doctor, okay, doctor, I realize the leg has to come off. Can you take the foot off this year? Next year, you can take off the part below the knee, and the following year you can take off the balance of the leg. Mr. Speaker, the patient had a sick leg so it had to be removed. The GNWT has a sick habit: spending too much, so it has to get rid of that sickness.

This government should inflict only one round of pain, rather than dishing out pain each year. It is not going to be any easier next year; we have to pay the piper, we have to fix the patient, we have to balance this budget, we have to take the pain now. This government does not have to cut more employees to balance its budget this year. This government does not have to make more reductions to education, social services or health care this year to balance the budget. We can reduce spending in many areas such as postponing the mortgage investment program which would be a saving of \$5 million, postpone the construction of access roads which would save an additional \$1.5 million, delete such items as spray painting equipment being purchased for airports -what I suggest: purchasing one piece of equipment and transporting it on to the next airport to paint the stripes on the runways. The proposed moorings and infrastructure to an already-deleted tank farm in Rankin Inlet would produce an additional savings of \$2.5 million. If we balanced our budget, we would not pay out \$3.5 million in interest the next year.

Mr. Speaker, if these initiatives were taken for starters, it would generate a saving to this government in this fiscal year of approximately \$12.6 million. This is just a start to the numerous projects that we could postpone, rather than going into a deficit situation in this fiscal year. If we do not make the necessary cuts this year, we will have to cut even more next year to pay for the interest costs in the following year. We should not, as a government, inflict more pain than we have to; but, more importantly, we should inflict the pain only once.

Our government in the NWT is not like the ones in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario or Quebec in that we don't have the luxury of spreading cuts out over a number of years. These provinces have an economy that they can project for and promote growth and development. They have manufacturing, they have control of their resources, something we do not have in the Territories. Even if things went exceptionally well with the northern accord, we would not have in the life of this government agreement that would help us in our financial situation. Now that diamonds have been found in Lac de Gras and copper in Voisey Bay, Labrador, I am not so optimistic that the federal government, with its \$600 billion debt, will be so willing to give up the rewards of this new-found treasure.

This government is projecting in this fiscal year a \$43 million operating deficit. Added to this, we have an

accumulated deficit as of March 31, 1996, of \$41 million, for a total accumulated debt as of March 31, 1997, of \$84 million. We still have clouds hanging over our head in the form of unknown cuts which we do not have any control over, such as further cutbacks to transfer payments by the federal government, a large, unresolved pay equity liability. What does this mean? It means that instead of making the necessary cuts this year to balance this budget, we will pay the banks \$7 million in interest payments next year.

I think that money we will spend on interest payments could be better spent. As an example: \$7 million that we will pay in interest to the banks would provide salaries for 100 employees, and that's calculating \$70,000 per employee which I realize is high; to teach our children in school; to provide health care for our elderly; counsel our youth against the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse; provide police officers to protect those who can't protect themselves; assist in providing housing and food for those who can least afford to go without.

Mr. Speaker, 150 employees -- 75 in Yellowknife alone -- have been laid off. The workers have paid the price in job losses and wage rollbacks. It's time to show them in this next few weeks as we go through the budget debate exercise, that they are not the only sector that is being asked to carry the brunt of this financial exercise. I beg all Members of this House to keep an open mind for the residents of the NWT -- our employer -- to advise us, your MLAs, to do all things necessary to balance this 1996-97 budget.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I would suggest that we should not put off until tomorrow what we can and should do today. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 14: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Tabled Document 32-13(3),

Nunavut Arctic College Program Relocation Impact Report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I have three documents that I wish to table, Tabled Document 33-13(3) is a press release from Nunatsiaq News dated Monday, May

Page 219

6, 1996, titled, "Urgent! Correction of Nunatsiaq News Story, Reporter Erred, Not Deputy Premier Goo Arlooktoo or NTI's Tagak Curley."

Tabled Document 34-13(3) is a letter from Tagak Curley, director of business development for NTI, regarding a Nunatsiaq News story in last Friday's newspaper.

Tabled Document 35-13(3) is a press release from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated regarding a Nunatsiaq News story in their newspaper of last Friday, making reference to my point of privilege of the same day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS

Motion 5-13(3): Referral Of Tabled Document 30-13(3), Report Of The Chief Electoral Officer To A Standing Committee, Carried

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the report of the Chief Electoral Officer titled "Looking to the Future" has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the report covers the administration of the Northwest Territories general election of October 16, 1995, as well as administration of the Kitikmeot 1993 and Aivilik 1995 by-elections;

AND WHEREAS the report contains recommendations for amendments to the Elections Act and actions in preparation for the first elections of the two new Legislative Assemblies after division;

AND WHEREAS this report requires detailed consideration by a standing committee;

THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Tabled Document 30-13(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer titled "Looking to the Future," be referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for detailed consideration;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Government Operations report its findings with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly during the fall sitting.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your seconder is not here. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Henry has agreed to be the seconder.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger, your 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

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other matters: Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97; Committee Report 1-13(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 2-13(3), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 3-

13(3), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; and, Committee Report 4-13(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates, with Mr. Steen in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will call the committee to order. For consideration, we have Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97; Committee Report 1-13(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 2-13(3), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 3-13(3), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; and Committee Report 4-13(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates. How does the committee wish to proceed? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to suggest that we deal with Bill 11, and start with the committee reports dealing with the main estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Is it agreed with the committee that we deal with Bill 11 at this time?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Would the committee like to take a short break at this time?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

The committee will recess for 15 minutes.

--- SHORT RECESS

Bill 11: Appropriation Act, 1996-97

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will call the committee to order. The first thing we will have is general comments by

Page 220

Members on Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97. I will remind the Members that there's a 10-minute time limit on general comments. Have we any general comments by Members on the Appropriation Act? If there are no general comments by Members, we will then move to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and I will ask Mr. Dent to provide opening comments on his department's estimates.

Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, committee Members. We all know that northerners have high expectations for education, culture and employment programs. The expectations of and the direction provided by the public have shaped the budget that is before you today. The objectives outlined in my department's strategic plan will continue to influence how we reshape our programs in the face of declining resources.

Strengthening local decision-making and improvements to the quality and coordination of programs are priorities of this government. They're reflected in a lot of what we've achieved already; achievements such as: the new Education Act; improved access to information networks for schools, public libraries and community learning centres; and, the work done to reform income support, to name a few.

Achieving a lower budget target has not been easy. We've had to accommodate forced growth and base deficiencies of more than \$17 million.

When we looked at where to spend our money, we ranked programs according to the importance of their key outcomes and our ability to meet the objectives and priorities of the territorial government.

So, yes, there are reductions, but let's look at the positive side. There are more than \$7 million in new initiatives in this budget. I want to make sure we do all we can to strengthen early childhood and early intervention programming. I want to make sure students do better in school. I want to make sure there are more high school graduates and I want to make sure northerners are ready to take a job, particularly in mining and as Nunavut public servants.

Mr. Chairman, if we don't help out high-risk children early on, we know that they'll develop more serious problems later in life. We can make government dollars go further and help more kids if departments cooperate and we start earlier. That's why you'll see we're spending \$1 million on early intervention work in the communities, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services.

Helping students excel and, ultimately, graduate, can be challenging in remote communities. Access to learning resources are limited. We want to change that. There is soon going to be a digital communications network linking every community in the Territories.

Better technology means lower costs to this government. Better technology lets students learn more. Smarter students mean more graduates. More graduates means a better northern workforce and healthier communities.

This department has already done quite a bit to strengthen the northern workforce. Because of the community teacher education programs, we are moving toward the goal of having 50 per cent aboriginal educators in our schools. This year, the first graduates of Aurora College's nursing program will take up positions in the North.

We want northerners to get into careers that build upon their interests and skills, so we are proposing that \$100,000 be used to train community career counsellors and a significant investment be made in a labour force development plan.

Mr. Chairman, mining is a big key to our future, it's an industry that could provide jobs to hundreds of northerners in the next few years. I want to make sure we don't miss the opportunity that exists here. Department representatives, Aurora College and BHP have been collaborating on skills training programs for the mining industry. These three partners can point to the success of a workplace literacy project in Lutsel K'e, which will serve as a model for similar projects.

Preparing Inuit for positions in the Nunavut government is another priority. We will continue to plan and implement training which will prepare Nunavut residents for opportunities stemming from division.

You may have heard about Investing in People. It's an initiative that's helped adults improve their education and receive valuable work experience. Investing in People was a cost-shared program with Ottawa. It has been a success. Unfortunately, the federal government has ended its participation. As a result, the \$2 million which will be spent on this program this year comes entirely from our budget and it's only one-third of last year's total.

Mr. Chairman, this department's main estimates have been developed in consultation with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. It's been a useful way to develop a budget. I think the process has resulted in a budget that better reflects the needs and interests of northerners.

When I met with the committee, we talked about how to save money in administration. The committee wanted us to look at ways to develop more economic and integrated governing structures. We've done that. We're supporting the development of the Dogrib Community Services Board. It's an example of how to increase regional efficiencies in administration. We're exploring similar options in Nunavut communities.

We will soon be presenting a plan to the standing committee on how we're going to change our income support program. We've been looking at what other jurisdictions are doing, refining the funding formula, developing community framework agreements and revising the regulations to enable this.

Improving programs and services in some areas means there must be reductions in others. When we set priorities for this budget, we were determined to protect programs and

Page 221

services at the regional and community levels as much as possible. In line with that, we are proposing greater reductions in headquarters and administration support; reductions of approximately 15 per cent. A significant reduction in staff positions at headquarters will be required to meet this goal.

However, because most of our money is in programs, you will have noted significant reductions in schools,

colleges and continuing education contributions, as well as income support and student financial assistance. School boards and the public colleges are making tough choices to accommodate these reductions.

We are also proposing to reduce the capital program from \$35 million last year to about \$25 million in 1996-97. This will be done mostly by delaying many planned projects for a year. The delays won't compromise health and safety standards and there's still going to be enough room for all the students.

Mr. Chairman, I'm confident my department's budget has met the challenge of balancing the need to reduce expenditures with the need to deliver high-quality programs. I welcome your committee's questions and comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. I would now like to call on Mr. Roland to make comments on behalf of the Social Programs committee. Mr. Roland.

Standing Committee On Social Programs Comments

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to give the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the review of the business plan and budget of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The standing committee recognized that implementing all of the department's proposed reductions in a single year would have a significant impact on the education system. Members also acknowledge the complications that arise from the difference between the government's fiscal year and the education boards' and colleges' financial year. However, Members are concerned that next year there may be additional reductions necessary. Spreading cuts over an extended period may mean reductions on top of prior year reductions. While the standing committee supports Investing in People to reduce their dependence on social assistance, Members believe that investment must be within the limitations of our financial situation.

At this time, the standing committee reluctantly accepts the department's three-year phase-in plan for the reductions to schools, colleges and income reform. However, the standing committee expects the Minister to be aggressive in encouraging changes which may allow the 1997-98 business plans and

budgets to reflect a shorter implementation period for these reductions.

The standing committee agrees with the Minister that we need a new and more innovative approach to income reform. As program reductions are made, there must be corresponding changes which open the boundaries of the

program and blend with other resources at the community level. There seems to be many pools of funding which should be brought together, so they can be used more effectively in the community. The standing committee asked the Minister to consider a variety of options under income reform including work for pay to provide much needed services in the community. The standing committee is not proposing regular 9:00 to 5:00 work, but suggests people could assist with jobs that need to be done such as assisting elders or helping with snow removal.

The standing committee Members believe strongly that people need the opportunity to contribute to their community and have pride in work done, rather than just receiving a handout from the government. There also needs to be consideration for creating an income support system which encourages individuals to try to earn as much of their own way as possible, rather than penalizing people. The standing committee also believes that income reform should include a review of those other programs which impacts on its effectiveness. In particular, the standing committee is concerned about the relationship between income support and the rent scale for social housing. The Minister has committed to bringing forward a potential model for income reform to the standing committee by June 1, 1996. The standing committee looks forward to reviewing the model.

The standing committee feels the student services process needs to be improved and service provided closer to the community level where possible. There should also be closer contact with social assistance to ensure people are receiving support from the appropriate program. The department is currently reviewing the student financial assistance program. The standing committee looks forward to the results of this review.

The standing committee believes that offering the first two years of an education degree through the teacher education program has been very valuable. However, it is often difficult for those mature students who have completed the two-year program to leave the North to complete their degrees. The standing committee

encourages the government to offer the third year of a bachelor of education and begin work to offer the fourth year as well.

The department is currently reviewing how it provides language services. The standing committee has concerns in the way services are provided by the language bureau and looks forward to reviewing the results of this review.

The standing committee thinks schools and education boards should determine for themselves how to meet the budget targets. The standing committee requested that the department provide general guidelines to the boards which would include suggestions to:

- reduce administration before programs; pursue other avenues for reducing costs by combining resources with other boards in the region; and,

- exhaust all other possible areas for reductions before cuts are considered in the formula areas, territorial schools, inclusive schooling, aboriginal languages and cultural programs.

Page 222

With fewer dollars and an ever-increasing number of students, space in schools will continue to be a concern for the government. In the past, the department reviewed the need for classroom space on a school-by-school basis. However, in order to make more efficient use of our limited resources, the department is now approaching the need for space from a community-wide perspective. The standing committee is very supportive of this approach. If a community has one school which is underutilized and another which is overutilized, the standing committee agrees that better ways of sharing the space available should be the solution rather than new schools.

The standing committee reviewed the new initiatives the department proposed. Members believe that these initiatives are examples of the philosophy of investing now for greater rewards and possible savings later. The standing committee supports the philosophy and, therefore, supports the proposed new initiatives.

One of the new initiatives -- alternative government structures -- caused the standing committee some concern. When the standing committee recommended that boards and departments need to explore options for combined administrations and

other efficiencies at the community and regional level, it was assumed that this would be driven from the local level. In discussing the initiative, the department indicated that they were going to phase this in and try to develop a model which might work. The standing committee believes that solutions may be different in every region. Members would like to see the initiative take place in one year rather than spread over two or more years.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on this department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. I will ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Whitford, bring in the witnesses.

I would like to ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is the acting deputy minister for the department, Mr. Eric Colbourne; and, on my right, the director of financial and management services for the department, Mr. Paul Devitt.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Welcome to the committee. I will open the floor to general comments. Are there any general comments? Mr. Picco.

General Comments

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this department is a key plank in the growth of the NWT. Our future relies on having trained youth in both academic and vocational training areas granting us capable of taking on careers of the 21st century. However, the department should be moving more aggressively in amalgamating the board structures, as well as eliminating duplication of programs and services regionally and at headquarters level. With the current deficit reduction strategy, the Minister should not only be delaying certain capital projects, but cancelling and finding alternatives to the capital expenditures like accessing other facilities in the communities. The Minister should also aggressively look at the design of CLCs and schools to eliminate the architectural opulence that has been the norm in the past. Taking the deficit seriously with program cuts and eliminating opulence will go a long way by putting these dollars at the delivery level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Are there any other general comments? Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for his opening remarks. We all know that, at this point in time, we have to do with less and everyone has to sacrifice because the things we used to have are no longer there, but we also know that education is a priority of this government.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to talk to three chairpersons of the boards from Keewatin, Kitikmeot and Baffin during the 12th Assembly. During a few discussions I had, the impression I got from the discussion was that the three chairpersons don't want to see amalgamation or have one board in the Nunavut area, once Nunavut becomes a reality. One of the concerns I got from the chairman of the Kitikmeot region was what happened to the smallest region in the jurisdiction of Nunavut. With the smallest board becoming the member of one large divisional board, would they have fair representation? I do not speak for the three chairpersons of the Nunavut area. I only know what I heard from the talk I had with the chairperson of the Kitikmeot Divisional Board of Education. I share the same concern. It is my understanding that the NIC was the body that recommended to have one divisional board for the Nunavut area. As I mentioned, I share the same concern as the chairperson of the Kitikmeot

educational board -- that it should be separate -- and I'll tell you why, Mr. Chairman. In some cases, when a small community is part of a larger entity, there are times when the voice from the smaller body or community is not heard. That was one of the concerns that came from the chairperson of the Kitikmeot divisional board.

I agree with the idea of having to do with less. We may not have all the money that we thought we would have once 1999 comes. We hear from the honourable Minister, Ron Irwin, that we're going to have to do with less than what we anticipated to begin with. Mr. Chairman, going back to the reduction that we have been talking about since we got elected during the 13th Assembly, as education is a priority and divisional boards in the jurisdictions will have to be

Page 223

consulted about how much this government has cut from their budget, realizing that the young people's future is at stake here, realizing that everyone has to prepare for the future, I'm wondering if the honourable Minister of Education has had a chance to talk to the divisional boards, namely in the Kitikmeot region, about what they should expect from this government; doing with less yet maintaining essential programs and services of this government, given that one area that must be considered, Mr. Chairman, is forced growth within the community of the NWT. Has the honourable Minister had a meeting with the Nunavut Divisional Board about what they should expect from this government's reductions so that they can prepare for the education of people for 1999?

Everyone in the Nunavut area talks about us needing jobs for the people of Nunavut, especially beneficiaries. However, if they don't have the required education, we may have to import from our southern neighbourhood. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent, would you like to respond to the comments?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I could respond to Mr. Picco's comments first. The Member from Iqaluit sounded like he was recommending that the Minister move to force the amalgamation of boards very quickly. We have to recognize that, having granted a level of autonomy to the regions and

the regional structures, we have to work through what the future changes might be. As Mr. Ningark has alluded to, there is a concern in the regions about forcing that amalgamation. I know that the NIC report recommended that there be one board but the NTI response to that was very critical of the one-board approach. I understand that the NIC is subsequently re considering their approach.

We have to allow the people in the Nunavut region to get a handle on what they see as being the best approach and to work with them to make sure that that happens. The Member may not know that the three boards have, in fact, jointly commissioned a study to see if there are ways in which they can effectively work together while maintaining their own independent representation. The boards themselves have taken this on. I think that it's a good planning exercise but we have to let that sort of thing take its course. I think I heard in the committee report that it's essential that communities drive how they take control of the agenda. This is one way in which I would be reluctant, as Minister, to jump in and remove the level of autonomy that we have achieved with boards and force a solution. The boards have demonstrated that they are looking for solutions to cut down their costs and we have to let them have some time to do that.

In terms of consolidation at headquarters, as recommended by Mr. Picco; if you take a look at the budget, you'll see that the biggest cut was, in fact, taken at headquarters. The biggest cuts were taken there. The goal has been to keep as much money as possible in programs and to cut the administration as much as is possible along the way. In terms of cancelling capital projects; in fact, the cut from \$35 million a year in capital projects to \$25 million a year is an ongoing one. We are going to have less money to deliver the projects than what we had when previous five-year plans were out there. We are going to have to take a look at cancelling capital projects, I guess, but at this point in time, the projects are being deferred because it was the feeling that those projects, if they had got into the five-year capital plan in the first place, were justified. We are going to have to, given the magnitude of the reduction to our capital plan, re-examine every single project. The Member can be assured that, as the department comes forward with capital projects, each one of them will have to pass new standards as to whether or not they should proceed, based on the amount of funding that we have.

The Member has my assurance that if we have built opulence into our projects that shouldn't be there, we

will be taking that out. The construction of projects has changed in the past few years; the way that schools are constructed. At one point in time, it was felt that schools without windows would be the best way to go. Our thinking has changed significantly on that and the effect that natural light may have on the ability to learn in certain circumstances. I'm not sure that adding windows necessarily adds to the cost of the buildings, but the Member can be assured that if we can find examples of what he would call opulence -- in other words, I'm taking from that, frivolous design features that may increase the cost of the project without increasing the functional ability of the school or learning centre to perform its job -- we'll certainly look at taking them out.

Mr. Chairman, I think I addressed Mr. Ningark's concern about amalgamation. In response to his question about talking to the Kitikmeot board, I have, in fact, met with the Kitikmeot board. It was before the budget was issued so the discussion was somewhat general. They were given a clear understanding that we are no longer conducting business as we were before, the fiscal game has changed significantly and that, by and large, over the next three years, all boards are going to have to cover forced growth from within the dollars they are being given this year. They have been given a clear indication of what our expectation of funding is over the course of the next three years and given a chance to plan for that. All boards have received that sort of information, although it had to be in a general sense because the budget had not been tabled in this Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. My apologies, Mr. Picco, for not letting the Minister reply to you before I called Mr. Ningark. Did you have any further comments on the review?

MR. PICCO:

Are you giving me the opportunity to reply to Mr. Dent's comments?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Yes, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

I'll keep them brief. Mr. Chairman, I know the amalgamation thing is a major area. What I am trying to say is that the community control or community

empowerment that you spoke about comes directly from the community itself with each individual community education council. Having an overseeing board is an antiquated way of running education systems. As we know, in other jurisdictions in the

Page 224

country, those are being eliminated and downsized. Putting money into the board level, as pointed out in the original NIC report, takes money out of program delivery.

On the opulent side of things, Mr. Chairman, my point is not that we're building schools without windows. My point is that when you go into a school or any institution of the government that we are building and see knotty pine furniture, skylights and so on and so forth, I don't think we can afford those in these fiscal times, and that's the opulence that I'm talking about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Any further comments on that, Mr. Dent?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to agree with the Member that community control is the essential and most important item that we need to see in the future of education. I think that the new Education Act will move us significantly along the road towards that increased community control.

However, not every community is going to be able to have the resources to hire a superintendent or to hire perhaps the financial expertise. There will always be a need for some of these functions to be performed at a regional level in order to keep the costs economic. I think the new act, in fact, means that the boards are not going to be, as the Member put it, in control of what happens at the local level. The new act allows local education authorities to have significant control over education in the community. We will still need to provide some services at a regional level and I think the boards are perhaps the best way of doing that in at least the foreseeable future.

In terms of the opulence question, Mr. Chairman, I think that I will welcome the Member's comments if he sees plans that he feels are opulent. I would certainly enjoy an opportunity to discuss that with him on a case-by-case basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ningark, do you have further comments to make under general comments?

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems that the Nunavut government is initially supposed to be a highly decentralized model and I agree with that model, Mr. Chairman.

I also agree with the honourable Minister's intent to relocate Arctic College from one area to other regions. For one thing, Mr. Chairman, I believe, as my colleagues here, community empowerment giving more easy access to education; bringing education closer to the communities as opposed to having to have the residents of one region going to another region to get an education. So I agree with the intent of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and of this government to have Arctic College relocated to two other regions, for the record. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Would you like to respond to that, Mr. Dent?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Chairman, I believe the Member's comment was a statement rather than a question. I should perhaps point out, though, that it's not a question of moving the college from one location to another but a question of trying to provide a better balance of the distribution of courses throughout Nunavut that we are trying to achieve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does anyone else want to make general comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. OOTES:

During the overall review of the budget, I noted that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment had an area of forced growth of \$17 million and then new initiatives of \$8.7 million. I was concerned with new initiatives and forced growth because of the budget predicament. At the time, I had asked if we could get some explanation of what that is and I wonder if the Minister might be able to answer that for me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the \$17 million in forced growth, \$6.8 million was in a base deficiency in social assistance. When social assistance was transferred to Education, Culture and Employment from the Department of Health and Social Services, it was known to be deficient in the amount of funding that was provided; that is, in the budget that was approved in the previous year, it was already known that there would be a shortage of about \$6.8 million.

The next largest part of forced growth would be in education board contributions. Were the formula not to have changed for this current fiscal year, education board contributions would have increased by \$5.15 million and that is to take into account the growth in the number of students in the school system in one year.

The next largest part of growth was student financial assistance, \$2.772 million; that is, to reflect again, the growth in the numbers of students who are qualified to receive student financial assistance.

As well, there is somewhat of an increase in the numbers of northerners who are qualifying for student financial assistance and they tend to have more families, so the cost per student is going up as we go along in the program.

Next was \$2.126 million in forced growth in what was projected to be an increase in the number of clients accessing social assistance. So this is apart from the base deficiency which was to make up for an historical deficient situation with the budget. It was projected that there would be over \$2 million in increased need in the Northwest Territories from people for the program.

The early childhood program was projected to be at an increase of \$391,000 and this is a simple estimate in the increase in the number of young people who would be in early childhood spaces which this government, by a formula, helps provide funding assistance for.

Page 225

The next area of forced growth was one that Mr. Enuaraq was talking about earlier today. That is the seniors' supplementary benefit. That's projected to

grow by \$73,000 in this fiscal year, not because of any increase to the formula but just in an increase in the numbers of seniors who will be accessing the program.

And, in the college funding allocation system, we are projecting growth of \$29,000 and I'm advised that is for new facilities.

Mr. Chairman, on the initiatives that the Member is talking about that the department has proposed, does the Member want to go through those, too, on a case-by-case basis. If you would like, I can read them into the record, too, Mr. Chairman, but perhaps we can find out if we want to go through them on an individual basis, as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Are they extensive? Can I refer to them quickly?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Chairman, there are approximately nine or 10 items that I could run through, if the Member would like. There is \$6.7 million that is proposed in O and M new initiatives and \$2 million proposed in capital. I will list the capital items first. There is \$300,000 in our budget for the building and learning strategy. In the past, the building and learning strategy has always been funded through supplementary requests to the Legislature. So this is a first in that it is shown in the main estimates. I don't think it is a new initiative; it is just because it isn't usually in here that we are showing it now.

We have \$1.2 million for technology infrastructure development, which is a combination of both hard and soft infrastructure needs to make sure that all of our schools across the Northwest Territories are prepared to take advantage of the new technology, so we can improve our ability to provide distance education. This is one of the things we need to be able to improve in order to assure smaller communities that the programs being offered in their communities are of an equal calibre to the programs offered in the larger communities. There are fewer resources in terms of teachers in the smaller communities, so distance

education is very important for us to be able to improve as we get into grade extensions in the smaller communities.

The next item is \$500,000 for small-school senior-secondary schooling. This is just a small allocation of funds to try to assist those schools where grade extensions are scheduled to take place with minor changes that may be required to help them provide the education to high school students. In most communities, schools were built for up to grade 8 or 9. As you can understand, bringing in older students does sometimes require that there be some small physical changes made to the schools to accommodate the teaching of the programs in the schools.

Moving to the O and M side, we, as a department, have allowed \$1.5 million for workforce adjustment, which may be required for downsizing initiatives within the department. As I mentioned in my opening comments, we have \$2 million for investing in people. This \$2 million is all coming from this government. For the past two years, there was an \$8 million cost-shared program with the federal government. So there was \$4 million from this government and \$4 million from the federal government to provide this program. It was only a two-year program that the federal government got started on, so we knew it would end. I have been unsuccessful in getting the federal government to reconsider continuing the program, so all we have to put in is this \$2 million.

As mentioned in my opening comments, we have \$1 million in here for an early intervention program in which Education, Culture and Employment is playing the lead role. We are working at coordinating early intervention across the Northwest Territories with Health and Social Services and tying together the federal programs which are being offered across the Territories. With that \$1 million, we are hoping to wind up with a much bigger program than we otherwise could if we can get both GNWT departments and the federal government to work together on how the programs are offered.

We have \$800,000 for a labour force planning and development program. This is a combination of programs. That is broken down further into four different programs. We will be offering a pilot project on pre-engineering technology. There has been a shortage of Northwest Territories residents who we have seen taking postsecondary education in the fields of technology. So the college will be offering a pilot project this year to try to encourage more

students to get involved in the technology field. We have \$100,000 identified for that project.

We have \$300,000 identified for mining training. This should offer programs in four different communities in the Northwest Territories. This is the sort of program I mentioned in my opening comments with Lutsel K'e. As well, it may include heavy equipment operator training, et cetera. There are a number of mining courses that the college offers. The intent is to offer these courses in Dogrib communities and in areas where the potential is best for northerners to get jobs in the mining field.

We have \$200,000 identified for a labour force plan and survey. This is to ensure that the department is prepared to put its initiatives or its training dollars into those areas where we can see development taking place; in other words, making sure we are getting best bang for our buck. We need to have a planning exercise to make sure that we aren't just flying off the handle and saying we need mining training here or there. We need to make sure we have a coordinated approach. To do that we need to spend some money and time developing a plan. That is what that is intended to do.

The last \$200,000 of the \$800,000 is for a workplace literacy project. That is a program to ensure that we can get more people into the workforce. As the Member will know, we have a lot of unemployed people in the Northwest Territories. Their numbers tend to be disproportionately representative of those who are very poorly educated. This is an attempt to try to improve our ability to get more of

Page 226

those people into the workforce.

The next item we have, Mr. Chairman, is 900,000 in support for community programs, training and development. That is made up of three different subgroups. This could get to be quite long if I start breaking down all of these initiatives, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I will just give the totals and if the Member wants more detail on them, he can ask me specifically.

So the \$900,000 goes to support for community programs, training and development. We have \$100,000 for technology infrastructure development. We have \$250,000 in O and M for the small-school senior-secondary schooling requirements. We have

\$150,000 for improving student achievement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Any further questions, Mr. Ootes?

MR. OOTES:

No, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would still like to make a comment on -- excuse me, Mr. Picco -- the Arctic College programs regarding the distribution to Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. I really don't have a problem with this and I know my good friend, Mr. Picco, does and if I were in his shoes, I would too. Will the Minister give some consideration to moving future programs to some of the have-not communities, like Arviat and Baker Lake, with a 60 per cent unemployment rate? Would the Minister give some consideration in the future to moving some of these programs, whether they be from Mr. Picco's campus or from the Western campus, to Arviat or Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The college board of governors has a responsibility for recommending where the programs would be offered. Both the College East and West have a responsibility to try and ensure that as many programs as possible are offered in the communities. I can't, at this point in time, commit to the Member that the college will move base-funded programs into Arviat or Baker Lake. However, I do think that the college board of governors will continue to take a look at the demands for training that the residents of Nunavut place on the college and will do their best, given the fiscal resources available to them, to make sure that training opportunities are made available as broadly across Nunavut as possible. For me to predict that they will be able to move programs within the next couple of years, I can't promise that. I can promise

that the board will certainly consider the Member's request. I think all Members of this House would hope that we would be able to see adult training courses throughout the Territories in all of the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, all I was asking for was consideration. I realize that the Minister can't make a commitment here today. He may want to give some consideration to the old adage: "Build it and they will come." All I'm asking for is consideration in the future. Whether the programs come from the East or the West, it's immaterial to us in Arviat and Baker Lake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Dent, would you like to respond? Was that a statement or a question?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will pass the Member's advice on to the board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Picco, you have further general comments?

MR. PICCO:

I didn't want to get into the Arctic College program transfers so I didn't bring them up. I just wanted to say that I agree with the Minister about trying to maintain a balance in Arctic College program delivery. However, after reviewing the main estimates, nowhere in the main estimates did I see the Minister or his department trying to achieve this balance by fair distribution of all the trades programs that are currently not offered in Nunavut. I agree with Mr. Ningark that programs that are not now offered in Nunavut should be transferred by the Minister. I'm sure that the Minister, in his conscientious way, will be moving very expeditiously on this matter. As the Minister, the Arctic College boards answer to him. Ultimately, it is the Minister who will decide, with consultation from the boards, when/where/what will be transferred. I know that the Minister will be looking at that in his fairness so that, as he just said, and I

quote: "...fairness throughout the Territories." I'm sure that the Minister will be very fair in making sure that there is equitable distribution of programs that are not currently available anywhere in the Nunavut settlement area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take the Member's comments as advice to me and see what we can do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is along the same lines as the last two presenters and it's with regard to the possibility of reallocating certain programs from the larger centres, especially with the question about empowering communities and regions. We have to start looking at exactly where these programs can be better served. In the past, it might have been a good idea to establish them in one location, but I think the tendency in a lot of regions ... Especially where I come from, the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in and the Sahtu are in the process of amalgamating their pathways funding programs so that they can get more mileage out of their resources.

The same emphasis should be put on this government, where possible -- where new Arctic College facilities have been established, such as Inuvik -- to consider looking at allowing

Page 227

certain programs that have been carried out in other facilities such as Fort Smith. An example is the renewable resources program; I believe that in the last couple of years there has been a request, that went up to the board of governors for Arctic College, to look at the possibility of implementing the renewable resource program in Inuvik because of the land claim agreements that have been settled in that area, especially with the Inuvialuit claim, the Gwich'in and also the Sahtu. There is a component of the agreement that consists of the renewable resources section that calls for a biologist, researchers, and

people to carry out the duties of the boards. There is an arrangement between the aboriginal groups, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government to implement those claims and there's something like \$10 million to do it over a period of time. With those resources, to try to get as much mileage, and also benefit the people in those regions by having them trained. There's also the geographical costs of sending people south and the question of having people close to home because of the drop-out rate.

My question is would the Minister seriously consider looking at the request of the previous board of governors to look at the possibility of moving some of these programs to regions that could benefit more in the sense of land claims settlements and a closer working relationship between the aboriginal groups in those regions; to establish more of a regional centre than a territorial centre so we could train and educate more people in a regional geographic sense rather than just a territorial facility? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, right now, the colleges make a tremendous effort to provide programs in as many communities as possible across the Northwest Territories. Given the fact that this budget that's before this House right now significantly reduces the funding to the colleges in the next year, it puts them under some pressure already. I think it's going to take them some time to respond. I will certainly pass on the Member's suggestions to the western board. I've made the commitment to pass the suggestion on to the eastern college board. I hope Members will recognize that, in these times of fiscal restraint, the organizations are having trouble right now reacting just to the budget that they're faced with and coming up with new initiatives is probably going to be problematic here in the next little while. I believe the colleges will do their best to ensure equitable access across both eastern and western territories to the programs that they offer. I'll certainly reinforce that with the boards; that that should be one of their prime goals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. General comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Right now, there are certain programs being carried out in southern institutions where those resources could have been spent in the North through northern facilities, such as the land administration program presently being delivered in Olds, Alberta, on behalf of the Sahtu claims process.

I mentioned earlier about trying to use other resources that are out there with regard to Pathways funding and training dollars which come with the claims settlements. There are resources out there, but I think by pooling these resources together, we can possibly get a better program overall and be able to deliver it in the North which will be beneficial to everybody, not just the claimant groups or the groups that have access to other dollars such as Pathways or training dollars through comprehensive claims agreements.

So that was my point and hopefully we can seriously look at that as one of the avenues to getting as much mileage out of the resources we do have. We know there have been cutbacks and I think that in this day and age, we have to look at other alternatives to how we do business, especially in delivering programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Would you like to respond?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is absolutely right. We have to be very creative and aggressive in how we do business from now on. I think that third-party purchase of programs such as the Member mentioned, perhaps a lands administrator program that is being purchased in the South, is something that we should take a look at in the North. I do know that Nunavut Arctic College does offer a community lands administration program and I would hope that in future, if organizations are looking at purchasing courses down South, whether it's through Pathways dollars or land claim dollars, they'll come and talk to the college, I think you'll find that the colleges are both very interested in putting programs together where there is third-party funding available. We, too, would like to see as many programs offered in the North as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Henry, do you want to make general comments?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you. I have more questions I wanted answers for, Mr. Chairman.

I am not sure we have a quorum for an important item such as this, a large percentage of the budget. We do have a quorum now. Good.

I have some questions and they are mainly coming out of the Minister's program overview as regards schools. Is it the intent of the ministry to have schools in every community to grade 12? Is that the ultimate intention?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer to that is yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have heard another Member talk about some of the large unemployment rates that we have in some of the communities. What is the department's strategy if we can achieve grade 12 in every community? What is the strategy for these people? What's

Page 228

the future outlook for them in a community that has 60 per cent unemployment? Is there a strategy for providing some gainful employment if we have these people educated in the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what we are trying to do is ensure people are prepared to make productive choices in their lives, and they can do that better if they are better educated. Those productive choices could range from being better prepared to

make a living off the land to being able to move to a different community and participate in the wage economy if that is their choice. If people are not well-educated though, they are not in a position to make productive choices.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Do you have further questions or comments, Mr. Henry?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's fair to say that a common complaint that young people levy now is: I've gone, I've got an education, I went to university and there are still no jobs. I am just wondering what the Minister's response would be in that situation, if that's down south where these comments are made. I've heard it in my own community. Is there any way to deal with that particular situation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have better statistics for Nunavut, right off the top of my head, than I do for the West. For instance, as far as we know, there is not a single Inuit person who has postsecondary education who is unemployed at this point in time. There are almost none who have completed high school who are unemployed. The problem tends to be at the lower levels.

In the East, there is a significant opportunity for growth in the numbers of people who could be employed in the Nunavut government as it is set up. As things stand right now, we don't have enough people trained to take all those positions, so rather than bringing in people from the South, our goal should be to train as many people as possible to make sure that northerners can take the jobs.

In the West, I believe we have a significant opportunity coming up in terms of the non-renewable resource sector. I think there will be hundreds of jobs available in mining in the West in the next few years and, as things stand right now, we don't have enough people in the North trained to take all of those jobs.

So there are opportunities, and I believe that if we get to work and train people that we can help our residents take advantage of those opportunities. I

think that there are other opportunities in the course of the next few years my honourable colleague responsible for Economic Development and Tourism will be presenting to northerners. I want to make sure that we have as many northerners as possible prepared to take advantage of those opportunities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Do you have further questions or comments, Mr. Henry?

MR. HENRY:

Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. The Minister made an interesting comment I would like to follow up on. I'm not trying to do it verbatim, but the gist of the comment was it would provide an opportunity for students if they were better educated to move to other communities to take up employment. I think it's fair to say that most parents would like to see their children educated in their home community and I think it's fair to say that in the wage economy in which we find ourselves in the Northwest Territories, one of the basic principles of operating within a wage economic is exactly what you said, moving to where the jobs are. Would it not help and would it not be an educational experience if we could have up to, say, grade 10 in communities where students would have to move a community that was maybe a little larger to take their grades 11 and 12 to also help them to ease into that transition of the wage economy where they may have to move to where jobs are? Would that not help facilitate that? I would suggest that I have heard comments many times from students in my own community going on to further education and a large number of them drop out because going to a larger community is extremely difficult to deal with. Would it not be part of the educational process encouraging some of these students to go to larger communities and put the dollars into helping most students get used to being in a different community and moving in the wage economy to where the jobs are at.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Considering the time, does the committee agree that we are through with general comments and could we possibly report progress? Mr. Dent, would you like to respond to Mr. Henry?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, five years ago, we had a terrible graduation rate in the

Northwest Territories. It was absolutely embarrassing. We tried the residential school solution in terms of bringing students into larger communities for high school and found it to be a dismal failure. It is early in the process of providing grade extensions to the communities to point to conclusive and resounding success, but I can tell you that the participation rate in high school has gone from about 40 per cent in 1991-92 to over 85 per cent this year. That, alone, indicates a significant promise in getting students to graduate. We have, in the last five years, doubled the numbers of aboriginal students who have graduated in the Northwest Territories. I am not as proud of that because the number is still dismally low, but it does represent a start. I would submit that the start has happened at the same time as the policy of extending grades to smaller communities was put in place.

The Member may also be interested to know that we have demonstrated that it is more cost-effective to extend grades in communities than it is to move students around. It actually costs this government less money to provide the education in their home community than it does to move students around. I would say that, given the lack of success we have had with a residential system in the past, we need to take some time to see whether or not this change in policy has some long-term benefits and effects.

Page 229

The early indications were very positive, so I think we must continue down the road that we have started and give it a chance. Much in education will change as technology changes, as we become more users of distance technology and we can provide improved education to all communities in the Northwest Territories, including the smallest of communities.

So it looks like we are on the right track. We need to spend the time and the effort to follow through with the process that has been undertaken. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ningark, do you have further general comments?

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few years ago, Mr. Chairman, it was common knowledge that the product we were producing at the high school level in the Eastern Arctic was very low, as Mr. Dent responded

earlier in his response to Mr. Henry, Mr. Chairman. I take it that philosophy still remains in the Eastern Arctic. Despite the fact that there are tremendous opportunities in the area of jobs in the Eastern Arctic, we have a very low graduation rate, as I understand it, Mr. Chairman. If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, would it not be right to presume that perhaps this is where we should be focusing, putting out more resources to the Eastern Arctic.

As Mr. Henry stated earlier, it is very difficult for young people to move to a larger centre to obtain the level of education that we at least anticipated because they are in a strange environment, they get homesick, they are picked on in some cases -- I am not saying that this is happening all the time, but it's happened in some cases. Would it not be possible, Mr. Chairman, that perhaps we should be putting more resources in more communities, as I think Mr. Krutko alluded to earlier?

Mr. Chairman, my second question is whether the lowest graduation rate within the jurisdiction of this government is in the Nunavut area. Thank you

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent, would you like to respond?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the first Member was recommending that we invest more in providing grade extensions in the Nunavut region. I think that our policy is to provide grade extensions across the Northwest Territories, and we are putting as much effort into it as we can. The problem we face is that in the difficult financial times we have right now, it is impossible to come up with any more money than what we are proposing for schools. But I think the Member can be assured that we are working as diligently as possible in the department to encourage grade extensions across the Northwest Territories, and will continue to do that.

The Member asked about graduation rates, and I have some numbers available by board that I could provide. I don't have the total for the Nunavut region, but I can provide it by board in the Nunavut region. For instance, in the Baffin region in 1991-92, there were 21 graduates; in 1994-95, there were 39 graduates. In the Keewatin region in 1991-92, we had 20 graduates; in 1994-95, we had 14. In the Kitikmeot in 1991-92, we had six graduates; and, in 1994-95,

we had seven. So, as Members can see, we certainly don't have significant numbers of graduates up till now, and I think that there needs to be a continued emphasis on getting students to stay in high school and to complete their educations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Are there any further general comments from the Members? Mr. Picco

MR. PICCO:

I move that we report progress of Committee of the Whole.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have a motion on the floor to report progress. Do we have a quorum? We have a motion on the floor to report progress. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--- Carried

I shall now rise and report progress to the Speaker. I thank the witnesses.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 11 and Committee Report 4-13(3) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Ningark. 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

Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk. Orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Nunavut Caucus at 5:45 p.m. this evening. There are meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and also at 9:00 of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, May 7, 1996:

1. Prayer
 2. Ministers' Statements
 3. Members' Statements
- Page 230
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. Replies to Budget Address
 11. Petitions
 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 14. Tabling of Documents
 15. Notices of Motion
 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
 17. Motions
 18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 13, Loan Authorization Act, 1996-97

19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97
 - Committee Report 1-13(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-13(3), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-13(3), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 4-13(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 7, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

--- ADJOURNMENT