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The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1996

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MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Good afternoon, members. Before I proceed with the orders of the day, I would like to make a ruling regarding the point of privilege made by the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi.

On October the second, 1996, the member for Sahtu, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, raised a point of privilege that his right as a member would be infringed upon by another member tabling documents and petition that originate from his constituency. Mr. Kakfwi, in stating his point of privilege, indicated that tabling documents and presenting petitions from his constituency would be his duty and responsibility to do as their elected representative. In reviewing the unedited Hansard of the documents that the member from Hay River had tabled, which were the basis for the point of privilege by Mr. Kakfwi:

The first document tabled numbered 69-13(3) was a resolution of the Native Womens Association on the naming of the new western territory. The second document that was tabled by the member for Hay River, was a resolution from the Dene National Assembly of the Dene nation. The member for Hay River, Ms. Groenewegen, was in a process of tabling a third document, which according to the unedited Hansard, was a resolution from the Deh Cho First Nations Assembly. Mr. Kakfwi noted in his point of privilege that it would not be proper for another member to table a document that originated from another members constituency.

The documents in question however, were both from organizations that cross a number of members' constituency boundaries. Thus, are not specific to one

constituency. I indicated in my ruling on the point of order, which was also raised by Mr. Kakfwi, that a member has a right to table any document provided that it does not contain any improper language and meets the normal procedural rules applied to tabled documents.

Specifically under rule 43: "A member may provide to the House any document which may be in the public interest." The point before us is not an infraction of the rules or of a members privilege. I am of course, not at liberty to comment on how members decide amongst themselves to bring issues or documents to the floor of the House. In this case, I rule that Mr. Kakfwi does not have a point of privilege, and the member from Hay River can, at the appropriate time, table the document she started to table yesterday if the member wishes to do so.

Orders of the day, Ministers' Statement. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTER'S STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 85-13(3): 1996 Forest Fire Season

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Forest fires this year, concentrated in the area between Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, and Norman Wells.

In 1996, 350 fires burned 364,000 hectares of forest. This is one tenth the amount that was burned in 1995. Despite twice as many fires as last year, expenditures of fire management remained within budget. These expenditures included the number of prescribed burns near Fort Providence and Fort Resolution for habitat management purposes and the trial use of CANSO's in communities where the larger air

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tankers can not be stationed. In total, the 3 CANSO's flew about 50 missions. A cost/benefit analysis on the use CANSO's will be completed this fall.

Reducing the cost of forest fire management has been one of our priorities. After cost-saving measures were introduced in 1995 by the previous Minister, forest fire suppression expenditures dropped from \$27 million in 1994 to \$14 million in 1995, and approximately \$11 million dollars in 1996. These cost-saving measures will be evaluated this winter including the forest fire prevent program. Through this million dollar program, communities could apply for

funding to reduce the threat of forest fires around areas important to communities. In 1995, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs matched funding and 18 communities initiated work to construct new or complete old fire guards.

The work was contracted to local corporations or band councils and provided seasonal employment both before and after the peak fire season. This year, about \$750,000 in funding has been provided to projects in 11 communities. Projects include burning scrap piles, brushing areas and seeding cleared areas or planting with aspen. As well, several communities have begun developing long term plans to incorporate habitat and forest management objectives into community protection needs.

The level of compensation available to harvesters for losses due to fire was also increased to offset damages from fires that are too large to suppress. In these cases, efforts are still made to protect localized values-at-risk such as cabins or graveyards.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the forest fire management program is to protect areas prioritized by communities. Therefore, community consultation continues to be an important component of the forest fire management program. Our staff will again visit communities to discuss the 1996 forest fire season and I look forward to suggestions of further ways to increase the authority of communities in making decisions on forest fire management. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Kakfwi. Ministers' Statement, Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 86-13(3): Senior's Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, because of the fiscal climate, reform of social programs is a challenge currently facing governments across Canada. Reform is difficult because public expectations are high, and dependence on government programs is significant.

Recently, I announced a change to the Seniors Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program, which has generated considerable public discussion.

For many years, the subsidy was available to some people who really did not need it. For example, under

the old rules an individual who earned more than 50-thousand dollars a year could still claim this subsidy. Clearly, this is not the type of person the program was designed to help, and the program had to change.

The NWT Seniors Society was advised in 1995 that we planned to change the program. The Society recognises the need for change. To date, it has not indicated any objection to having a needs test incorporated into the program.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of recent discussions with representatives of the Seniors Society and Members of this House, I have made further refinements to the fuel subsidy program.

To qualify, a northerner must be 60 years of age, own their own home and pass the same income test that applies to the NWT Seniors Supplementary Benefit. In other words, the income of a single person must be no more than 12,972 dollars. A couple's income must not exceed \$30,744.

This government recognises and appreciates the valuable contribution that seniors have made and continue to make to our society. These adjustments reflect our continued goal of targeting support to those who really need it, and still meeting the budget approved by the House.

Mr. Speaker, changing social programs is not an easy task. However, given our fiscal situation, it is

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necessary. Changes must be made to ensure that our scarce resources are provided to those most in need.

Adjustments to the Seniors Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program are one step in our ongoing review of NWT social programs. The process of change will continue for the next few years. It will challenge all of us to find new and appropriate approaches to respecting the public interest in a restricted fiscal environment.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers statement. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 87-13(3): Creation of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development came into existence on August 19. This new department combines the functions formerly carried out by the departments of Renewable Resources, Economic Development and Tourism and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

Although the three departments have been merged into one, the new department is more than the sum of its parts. The amalgamation was not a takeover of two departments by another but rather a marriage of three units that had complementary and overlapping responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat the vision statement of the new department because it clearly defines the objectives of the new department:

"A prosperous, diverse economy built on the strengths of our people and the wise use and conscientious protection of our natural resources -- one which attracts investment and provides communities and individuals with opportunities to be productive and self reliant. Our children will inherit a secure future, which provides a healthy environment and which balances traditional lifestyles with a modern economy."

This vision recognizes that natural resources have always been the basis of our economy. Our future depends on natural resources. The Department promotes sustainable development of natural resources, and therefore must manage and protect the condition, the quality, diversity, and abundance of resources and the condition and the quality of environment.

However, Mr. Speaker, during the last three decades, government has been the main engine of economic growth. Fiscal realities dictate that this must change. The private sector will have to be relied upon to create the new jobs we need now and in the future. Government will encourage, promote and be supportive.

We must work together to expand our economy to create opportunities for those who are unemployed now and for those who will come after us. We need a prosperous and diverse economy that is built on the strengths of the people here and on the wise use and conscientious protection of our natural resources. We need an expanding economy which will provide communities and individuals with opportunities to be productive and self reliant - to be able to support families and a satisfactory quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, the Department is up and running. The 1997-98 Business Plan is being written. Staffing actions are underway.

Putting the department together has been a major undertaking taking many hours, week days and weekends. Extensive consultations have been carried out with stakeholders -- aboriginal groups, the mining industry, resource management boards, municipal authorities and environmental groups. Many of their recommendations and comments will result in changes to the final departmental establishing policy and departmental programs and services.

The restructuring has created some uncertainty for staff, who have in spite, carried on with their regular assignments, as well as, additional work generated by this process.

Even with this uncertainty, there is no decrease in the level of service to residents of the Northwest Territories. This reflects well on the dedication and professionalism of our staff and is indicative of the high levels of service Northerners will receive in the future.

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Thank you very much.

ITEM 3: MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Members' Statements. Ms. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule 34(5), I move, seconded by the honourable member from Iqaluit, that Ministers' Statement 86-13(3) titled Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program be moved into committee of the whole for discussion.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried and accordingly Ministers' Statement 86-13(3) will be moved into the committee of the whole for today.

Members' Statements. Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people all across the North are becoming aware that it is dangerous for women drink when they are pregnant.

They know that alcohol can cause health problems for the unborn baby. And they know that these health problems can cause hardship for the child, the family and the community.

In the past, people did not talk about these problems. Now we can see there is more knowledge and that people in communities are working together to address these issues openly.

I want to say that this problem is not just a woman's problem. People who blame women for this issue are wrong. It is a problem for all of society. Both in the north and in the south, it is a problem for the entire community including men. We all need to participate in finding solutions.

Early in September, the youth of Fort Simpson, organized the Deh Cho leadership conference. Young people from across the western Northwest Territories came together to talk about making choices and finding healthy lifestyles.

Some of the workshops focused on making...yes?

Mr. Speaker, I request consent to conclude my statement?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Nahendeh, is seeking consent to conclude his statement. Do I hear any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, early September, the youth of Fort Simpson, organized the Deh Cho Leadership Conference. Young people from across the western Northwest Territories came together to talk about choices, making choices and finding healthy lifestyles.

Some of the workshops focused on making responsible decisions to prevent the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

This was very encouraging and I think that the conference organizers and the delegates should be commended for their awareness-raising efforts.

Earlier this summer, people also gathered at the Fourth Annual Pehdzeh Ki First Nation Spiritual Healing and Gathering in Wrigley, again, there were discussions about alcohol abuse, wellness and healing.

I am very hopeful that these types of gatherings, coordinated by people at the grassroots community level are the best way to make sure the message gets out about the dangers of drinking during pregnancies.

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Through these types of gatherings, we can encourage each other to be strong and to lead kinds of lifestyles that will bring healthy babies into our communities.

Once again, I would emphasize that this is an issue that affects everyone of us, not just women. And by working together we can raise awareness and build an understanding that will lead to the elimination of these problems

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Members' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Member's Statement on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about a tragedy in our communities, in the Northwest Territories, because babies are born as fetal alcohol syndrome and this is very, very dangerous, especially for our caregivers, the grandparents and also the mothers and the fathers and the teachers, nurses, care workers who work very hard, especially fetal alcohol syndrome children and adults.

We know that this is very important because fetal alcohol syndrome brings many challenges which mean these children and adults need extra support from caregivers when they are born with alcohol syndrome and also the parents and the teachers and the nurses have to work very hard caring for these alcohol syndrome people.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a woman's problem. It is an issue that involves all members of a family and a community.

It is sad that families have to deal with the special needs and demands of fetal alcohol syndrome. These needs can test the spirit and try the soul of even the strongest and most loving parent or guardian.

It is sad that those with fetal alcohol syndrome will always struggle to cope with challenges that will make them different from their peers.

All these things are sad, but for me, they are not the worst thing, the worst tragedy. The real tragedy is that fetal alcohol syndrome does not happen by accident. The real tragedy is that fetal alcohol syndrome is 100 percent preventable.

As a government, as communities, and as individuals, we need to do what we can to stop fetal alcohol syndrome before it happens.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Thompson. Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker today you have heard from two of my colleagues on the challenge which affects people across the North. I, too, will speak about fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects.

Many groups across the North are beginning to address this problem through support to parents and those wanting to stop drinking during their pregnancies.

Some specific groups which have made contributions are: the Canadian Public Health, the FAS Project, The Status of Women and Native Womens' Associations among others.

If we are to address the problem FAS/FAE but with no new money, we must learn to work in creative ways. Early intervention is good. But if we take statistics of \$1.4 million to care for each FAS/FAE person in their

lifetime, we cannot afford to just make things better. We have to work to make things better. We have to work to prevent problems.

Government cannot fix the problem. Each community must take the responsibility for how they wish to handle it. Since FAS/FAE is 100% preventable, helping women to stay alcohol free during pregnancy is a community issue. And, remember, helping has neither male nor female gender.

When the statement, "It takes a community to raise a child", once again becomes a reality then the support will be there and our communities will begin to heal.

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Members will find in front of them, an information package about FAS/FAE and also a strip of caribou hide, which is the symbol for fetal alcohol syndrome awareness. Caribou was picked because it is available in every community in the Northwest Territories and I encourage all MLAs to wear the symbol to promote discussion.

The knot represents the problem of FAS/FAE which is choking our communities. Taking responsibility for finding solutions will loosen the knot and progress to eliminating this tragedy will start.

I encourage others to adopt this symbol and promote it within their community.

Our goal for the future has to be healthy babies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement on Issues Discussed at the Kitikmeot Leaders Meeting

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 1, 1996, I had the opportunity to attend the Kitikmeot Leadership Forum in Cambridge Bay and I attended this meeting.

Many of the issues were discussed during that meeting, in Cambridge Bay, namely community empowerment, housing, housing was the

predominant issue according to my understanding. I only had the opportunity to spend one day.

Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that came about in the Natilikmiot region, I think this is a concern of all small communities in the eastern Arctic, namely Nunavut, was that government, this government is now in the process of selling staff houses. We are moving at full speed while in the communities we do not have alternative housing for our teaching staff.

Mr. Speaker, the number of enrolment, student enrolment, is growing every year, increasing every year. Subsequently, we will need a teaching staff for the communities of Gjoa Haven, Pelly Bay, Taloyoak, other communities in our region.

Government is now in the process of getting rid of all the government houses, Mr. Speaker. While the communities are concerned that, what happens if all the government houses are sold to individuals, corporations, private sector and so on, there will be no houses left to, boarded up, for the teaching staff.

And one of the alternatives that we were told, Mr. Speaker, is that municipalities could buy houses and in turn lease them to the government employees. Will the government ensure once those houses are privatized that there will be affordable, reasonable prices for teaching staff to house them?

That is one of the questions that came from the Kitikmeot Leadership Forum. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Members' statements. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Member's Statement on Tragedies Experienced by Residents of Amittuq

MR. EVALOARJUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday at the beginning the Legislative Assembly we were welcomed back again and I take this opportunity to extend that greeting to my fellow members in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have some sad news to announce. News of the tragedies that have come upon us within my constituency of Amittuq since April 16 to September 11.

Within this timeframe there have been 13 deaths. In Pond Inlet, 7 people died, one being a suicide from an overdose, another drowned, and 5 more died from health reasons.

In Igloodik there were 3 suicides. Another person died from health reasons and a small child of 2 years old died after being seriously burned.

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In Hall Beach another small child, who just turned 5, died while under the care of a dentist on April 11, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, although I have details of each of these deaths, it would be too lengthy to speak on them within this statement.

Recently there was another death on September 16, the former MLA James Arvaluk's, Mother Apphia Awa.

These deaths have caused a great deal of sadness. There is some consolation in the fact that the relatives of the deceased were able to come together for funeral arrangements with help from family and friends, and at times, strangers who helped to help out.

At this time when there is no more financial assistance from the government for compassionate leave, it is good to see community people helping one another in need of support that results in the healing of their emotional wounds.

Mr. Speaker, I will be detailing the reports as I receive the developments concerning a burning accident of a small child that happened more recently in order to clarify the situation in the hamlet involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Concerns Regarding GNWT Preparations For Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as time passes, I am becoming more and more concerned about how prepared this government is for division in 1999. Since we came to the Assembly, my colleagues and I have been asking questions about

progress in a number of key areas such as division of assets and liabilities.

In my opinion, the government has not made substantive progress, there may be staff working on this issue, but Ministers and committees do not seem to be actively involved in moving this work forward. For example, in the two months since the two members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations were appointed to the Cabinet Division Committee, no meetings of this critical Cabinet Division Committee have been called that I am aware of.

As an Assembly we have to make division a priority, it should be reflected in everything we do, from looking at budgets to revising programs to considering legislation. Mr. Speaker, in the last year, the government has focused on the budget, and I believe the budget process is on the rails, even though there are many tough decisions yet to make, now we have to get on with preparing for division. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time I would like to recognize in the Gallery, Mr. Whit Fraser. Mr. Fraser is the chairman of the Canadian Polar Commission. Welcome to the Assembly. Members' statement, Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement on Long Weekend Boating Accident in Rae-Edzo

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker as you are aware, on September 1, 1996 long weekend, the residents of Rae suffered one of the worst boating accidents in the history of the community.

The disaster struck the hearts and souls of numerous people and organizations from across the north. The response from within our region and other regions across the North as well as southern Canada to assist the families has been tremendous. Without the support the search could not have continued. Numerous residents battled adverse and sometimes dangerous weather and lake conditions trying to find the victims, this was continued until all victims were found, which took approximately three weeks.

Unfortunately this type of search has cost the community both financially and emotionally, casting a tremendous burden. However with the numerous donations of support both spiritually and financially,

the family has been able to close this mournful event and try to cope with life and the memories their loved ones left behind. For the families, band council and my region, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your kindness and support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Member's Statement on Absence From the House

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce an information, I will not be at this House on October 7, on Saturday and, as well as, on Sunday. I will be going to Iqaluit for a meeting.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Members' statements, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Personal Priorities in the Next Few Weeks

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk today about my priorities for the coming weeks. I hope this will be of benefit to my colleagues and my constituents, the people of Yellowknife Centre.

Let me begin by saying that we live in a time of change. Our task here is to help our communities manage the changes that will come from government cut-backs, division, and community empowerment. Given the situation, I am very concerned about the future of Yellowknife. Yellowknife is generally regarded as a have community. That means it is a ripe target for cuts. Many will be necessary and we must accept our share. However, I fear this government's agenda for change may dictate that my constituents shoulder a sustained burden over a longer period than any other community.

Yellowknife faces cuts after all on three fronts, not just from the deficit, but also from the devolution of power to local governments, and from division which will hit very hard over the next three years. I fear that no other community will see such reductions in the level

of government during the countdown to 1999 and beyond, and government whether we like it or not is a fundamental component of every local economy in the North.

Mr. Speaker, let me clarify my position here. I support the need to balance our budget. I support the devolution of power to the communities, I support division of the Northwest Territories and the creation of Nunavut. However, I am going to be cautious about measures that hurt my constituency. Community empowerment, for example, is a measure that, to me, is not yet well thought out. It takes jobs out of Yellowknife, potentially, without guaranteeing benefits to other communities. I do not think it meets our goal of devolution, I will speak to this and other issues and policies as the session continues.

For now, let me conclude with this thought, our job is to ensure that the changes we make here benefit all northerners, the includes the people of Yellowknife. My job is to make sure Yellowknifers are not forgotten or taken for granted in this difficult period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Members' statement, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Relationship Between Cabinet and Ordinary Members

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wrote my Members' statement about 5 o'clock this morning, I had my lap top there and I must admit it was a lot more interesting then. I have amended it somewhat.

I was elected by and am accountable to the people of Hay River/Enterprise and the Corridor. In turn, on behalf of my constituents, along with my colleagues, elected a Premier and Cabinet who are accountable to the Ordinary Members and the people of the Northwest Territories.

Yesterday, in the Premier's Sessional Address we heard much about working together with the ordinary members, then much discussion took place in committees as a whole about the changes to the capital budget. We were told by more than one member of Cabinet that, perhaps, communication was faulty and was not what it should have been with the Ordinary MLAs, but "we are very busy, we need to let

managers manage, and they won't have their hands tied."

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that a member of this house finding out on the street, after the fact, that a significant project in their community has been deleted from the capital budget is worse than faulty communication. I would remind the members of Cabinet in FMB that each and every member of this House got here by winning the confidence and respect of their communities and constituents and is entitled to the respect of that

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position.

The new Members that were elected to this House a year ago who now constitute most of the Ordinary Members, gave up jobs, positions in their community and all the comforts of home, to come here and serve their own constituents in a meaningful way.

We may be new to this level of politics and we are on a fast learning curve, but, I assure you, we are not stupid. MLAs are not the community leaders, mayors, chiefs, that Minister Thompson referred to taking direction from yesterday. We are not the advisors to the Premier who sit on the panel on the economy and we are not a special interest group to be consulted with at the pleasure of Cabinet.

We are your peers, who respectfully chose you, the more experienced members to hold positions of departmental leadership. We are told continually that, in terms of involvement, we have far more input into decisions that we would have had in previous governments, and agreed, the capital budget is not a huge amount of this government's budget. However, I am more concerned with the fundamental principals of the role of ordinary members.

Mr. Speaker, seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for Hay River is seeking unanimous consent to conclude a statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude the statement.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

What is the point of the hours, days, weeks spent in committee meetings in the budget approval process if

cabinet/FMB has latitude to amend it? What is the value of the increased involvement? If this extensive consultation was required to arrive at a plan, should not any be required to amend it?

The issue of communication surrounding the altering of the capital plan is not an isolated situation or concern. Communication with all members of this House is the cornerstone of effective leadership. We entered into this house on the premise of working together, not wasting time taking adversarial positions for the sake of being adversarial. However, this is a two way street, and this respect must be reciprocal, it is the rule of do unto others.

If members of Cabinet should forget about when they were ordinary members and how they wanted to be involved and treated, a very vivid and life like reminder may come to pass. I suggested to one Minister yesterday, partly in jest, that if ordinary members input into decision making is not taken seriously and we are the last to find out things relative to our constituents and communities as an MLA undermining our credibility, I think that given the large number of chairs in this assembly, we should prop mannequins in all of those chairs, rename the Cabinet a benevolent dictatorship, increase their pay and pension accordingly, go home, and get on with our lives.

I know that this particular crop of ordinary members have great potential for working with this Cabinet for the benefit and betterment of our Territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement on Disadvantages of the Sale of Staff Housing

MR. PICCO:

I cannot top that, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday there were some questions regarding the sale of staff housing and leases. Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that the sale of staff housing has not been thoroughly thought out. Yet, approximately 530 staff houses that are still owned by this government have been bought and paid for, and actuality they generate an excess of \$1 million revenue net to this government. A government that needs this type of revenue. Without guaranteed staff housing in

communities, many of the people that we need, and will need, will have no place to stay if we proceed with this plan.

Forced growth alone in the Baffin Region, for example, is approximately eight percent per year. Over three years that means 24 percent increase in students in our schools, for example. Where will we house the extra teachers we will need to help educate our children? Will we have to lease these units at cost about the new Western Territory and Nunavut government? That would be asinine.

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The Finance Minister has repeatedly said the sale of staff housing is an intricate part of our deficit reduction scheme, but how do we reconcile that with the need to provide adequate housing to staff, especially in the smaller communities where there is no housing market? This has to be reviewed.

In my community the dropping of housing leases, as explained in my questions to the Minister yesterday, indicated it is still a very strong area of concern, and we have a housing market. I would ask that the Minister sit down with the MLAs and explain what process will be in place to guarantee housing for staff and cases where because of financial or other consideration or other consideration they can not or choose not to purchase their unit.

Mr. Speaker, the NIC recommended holding on to staff housing and I also asked the Minister to review again, this policy, so that when Nunavut is created, and when the new Western Territory begins anew on April 1, 1999 that those governments will not be put into position of having to build more staff housing because the 13th Assembly sold all of our houses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Picco. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Process For Negotiating a Northern Accord

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is in regards to the northern accord process and also the whole confusing circumstances that we find ourselves in the North in regards to the diamond industry and,

also, in regards to the oil and gas industry in the public and general.

In 1988 there was an agreement signed between the federal government and the government of the Northwest Territories to start negotiating the northern accord to transfer oil, gas and mineral authority to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, that has been eight years in the works, to date nothing has been concluded. There is talk about adding new initiatives to the Accord which a lot of aboriginal groups and interest groups especially in ... (inaudible) ... and environment have a say in the matter. Yet, until today, nothing has been concluded.

In June 1985 there was a negotiation session which was held in Calgary between the aboriginal groups and the Government of the Northwest Territories. At that time, there were two positions on the table. There was a draft document which was being negotiated, and to date this government has agreed that they will do a consultation process to restart the process.

The question that I will be asking later to the Honourable Premier, is that he says a lot of revenues and resources have been spent on the process, yet here we are today at deadlock between the diamond industry, the Aboriginal groups, the two governments that do not know who has jurisdiction over what, and that basically there has to be some way of resolving this issue and basically putting it to rest once and for all. It has been a long process, it has been eight years, in which nothing has been done to date. So my question will be raised later on in the house with that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Member's Statement on Concerns About Aboriginal Cultural Attitudes

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make some comments about resources and our attitudes towards them as a Member of this Legislature.

We know that the north is full of resources, but we have yet, on the national or even territorial scale, been able to commit to measuring and assessing the total richness of the resources we have at hand. We have as well, yet, to show you commitment to showing the appreciation we should have for the

richness we have for our own cultures, and our own histories, and our own language that are with us still today. And I say that because I have some concerns about certain developments recently.

For instance, what does it mean when the native women of the Northwest Territories forgo looking into their own rich cultural, aboriginal history and

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language, and choose instead, in large numbers, to go with a colonial name of Northwest Territories. I challenge our youth, our women, to look at themselves and tell me and tell the rest of us in the North who they are. Later this afternoon, I will table a motion from the Sahtu Dene Metis Assembly, that this summer passed a motion support of retiring the name Northwest Territories and committing to working on a process to come up with a new name for a new Territory that will come into existence in 1999. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Members statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement on the Need for a Diamond Evaluation and Sorting Plant in the North

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is concerning a diamond valuation and sorting plant.

However, it seems the government may be overlooking an obvious bonanza. The way it is now, our companies are going to throw our diamonds into a bag and send them to Antwerp or where ever.

We need a diamond evaluation and sorting plant in Yellowknife. That would create jobs for northerners, it would also bring the diamond industry to the north. If rough diamonds are left here, diamond purchasers would have to come here to purchase diamonds. In fact, Yellowknife could become the diamond centre of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent millions of dollars on projects that require ongoing funding. A diamond evaluation and sorting plant would not require ongoing funding, in fact, it has a potential to start an economy of it's own. If we are successful in negotiating the Northern Accord, we could get taxes in kind.

Governments of Russia and Africa now keep 10 to 15 percent of the diamonds that are harvested instead of getting taxes and royalties. Their people then add value to the rough diamonds in the form of rings, watches, and such things. And, in fact, create more jobs in subsidiary industries. This could happen here as well. Such a plan could also ensure that we know how many diamonds that come out of the ground. Maybe this is not so important now, because we do not get the royalties, but once we conclude the Northern Accord, it would be very important.

Mr. Speaker, this land is rich in resources, unfortunately we usually export our raw resources and then import finished products made from resources. This is one time we do not have to let our resources leave the north without value added. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Any nays? There are no nays, conclude your statement, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, this is one time when we do not have to let our resources leave the north without value added. This government has said it is ready to be innovative. This government has said it is ready to spend money to create jobs and business opportunities for aboriginal people and other northerners.

Building a diamond evaluation and sorting plant in Yellowknife would be a good start. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Members' statements. Members' statement. Returns to oral questions, returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the Gallery, Ms. Thompson.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like recognize NWT Status of Women Council in the gallery. Rita Arey, president; Rebecca Kudloo, vice president; Sister

Agnes Sutherland, vice president; ... (inaudible) ... ; Elizabeth Lyall; Joan Kalaserk; Sharon Hall, executive director; Adena Sumter-Freitag, community worker;

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Marsha Argue, researcher; Theresa Handley, administrative assistant. I am going to ask those ladies to stand up please, so we can recognize you.

And Dennis Bevington, president of Municipalities, He was up there. I do not know where he is, but I also recognize him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent of mine who is temporarily living in Yellowknife, attending school here, Flory Laurence.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some of the people that live in the Yellowknife North constituency, Wilma Erasmus, Randy Erasmus and Bill Erasmus. I am not sure if they are still here, but they were when we started.

MR. SPEAKER:

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to recognize the president of the NWTTA, Ms. Pat Thomason in the gallery today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Gary Bohnet and Mike Bohnet, the president and vice president of the Metis Nation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a very important person to me in the gallery, my wife Linda.

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to recognize the honourable brother of Ben McDonald, long time Yellowknife resident and union activist.

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Are there any further recognitions of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Yes, I would like recognize all of the other people that have not been recognized for being here with us today and thank them for coming out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Are there any further recognitions of visitors in the gallery? Oral questions. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Honourable Premier of this government. As I indicated in my members statement, the concern of the ... (inaudible) ... forum, which is profound concern, is housing for our government staff, and the educational staff.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated also that there is increasing enrolment of students in the area of Nunavut. Not only in the Nunavut area, I am sure across the territories.

Mr. Speaker, I also indicated there is no alternative housing available for the teaching staff in the smaller communities. Mr. Speaker, there is no guarantee to ensure once all of the staff houses are sold, that there will be housing available to all government employees within the jurisdiction.

My question to the Honourable Premier, is does the government have a strategy in place to ensure that there will be housing available for the teaching staff during the life of this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of

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Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I have got, I see we have got the president of the NWTTA, it will give me an opportunity to elaborate on the fact that we do have a plan in place to ensure that there is adequate housing, not just for teachers, though they are a distinguished group -- no question, but for others out there.

The fact of the matter is that we will provide letters of guarantee, in some cases, leases if it is necessary, for the private sector in the communities to ensure that there is adequate housing for the new teachers, or new mechanics, or new whatever, that is required in everyone of these communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same honourable Minister, Mr. Todd, the Minister of Finance. The Minister has indicated that for every sector may be providing or supplying houses to the GNWT employees.

My question is, will the honourable Minister guarantee that once the private sector is supplying houses to government staff, that they will be affordable, reasonable rent within this system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

HON. JOHN TODD:

Let me assure my Honourable colleague that the part of the plan we have in place will also to include affordability and, I think, the reality is that this government policy will continue to be when we no longer are in staff housing per se.

I want to ensure that while, some may view it as a revenue generating source, it is in fact a liability and we want to assure them in 1999 with the two new territories, that liability is decreased, and we will put the onus of responsibility for providing houses in the hands of the private sector and we will provide the appropriate paper or whatever security it should require for that private sector to go out, find the investment money, the mortgage money, et cetera to construct homes in a cost effective way and, more importantly, an affordable way to our employees in these communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary. Some communities, municipalities have indicated interest in getting into leasing the government staff houses to the employees within the system. My question is will the government ensure once the municipality is in the business of leasing homes they will be guaranteed those homes will be used by the government's employees. Thank you.

Further Return To Question 375-13(3): Housing Strategy For Education Staff

HON. JOHN TODD:

It is our intention Mr. Speaker for that to happen. Yes that is correct.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today will be directed to the Minister responsible for Finance. I have concerns Mr. Speaker when it comes to the area of the process we call the five year capital plan. I would like to know from the Minister what right does this government give that process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you. I hope this is not a repeat of yesterday but, anyway, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker. The five year capital process is a significant policy that permits this government to determine priorities and where money should be spent. I would not want to give my honourable colleague any other perception that it is anything else. I think at this time in the debate yes, that when we are talking about community empowerment et cetera, we are in a very young evolutionary stage when it comes to that, but up until this date the 5 year capital process in this Assembly and previous Assemblies has been an important tool in determining the priorities and where the money is spent at the community level and provides a mechanism, as I said yesterday, under the previous Premier and under this Premier, where we went to the communities and asked them to establish the priorities so it provides a mechanism for the constituencies to prioritize the importance of capital projects. It provides a mechanism for the MLAs to be directly involved, and it provides a mechanism for the

committees, however imperfect it is, provides a mechanism for everybody to be involved in the process.

So it is an important way in which we do business. There may be some changes that are going to come about due to community empowerment et cetera which will be debated in this House and in Committee but, at this time, it is a very important process. Thank you. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral Questions, supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the question on the the weight given to the process by this government, we have heard about the possible changes that will come about. What timeline is given to the communities to have their input to develop their five year capital plan? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you. As I have said earlier and as my colleague Mr. Dent did say to me, that it is an important business planning tool, the five year plan. We try to, the Premier sends out a call letter on a yearly basis to the municipalities asking them for their continuing input into the plan for new ideas, for re-classification of priorities et cetera.

So I would suggest to my colleague that at this time until we move along to the next phase that there is a considerable amount of importance placed on the planning process that we currently have in place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that and I agree that it is an important tool but the timeline given to the communities as to their input into it on a yearly basis.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

HON. JOHN TODD:

I know that this year we did get the letters out, it was a little late, I think it would be fair to say that and there was a limited amount of time under the original letter that went out from the Premier which we drafted. But it is my understanding from talking to the Premier's office that they are not on a community by community basis, we have tried to give them a little more time to be actively involved in the planning process.

But it would be fair to say because I think that is where my honourable colleague is heading, it would be fair to say that this year there was somewhat limited time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral Questions, final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

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MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What was the normal timeline given to the communities to have input on the five year capital plan? I understand this year the changes have happened but what is the normal process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 376-13(3): Concerns With the Capital Planning Process

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to go back and check the file but we have tried to, in previous years, give communities as much time as possible depending on when the call letter went out from the Premier, the former Premier.

I am not aware right now whether that was a 30 day or a 60 day process. I would have to check into it but there was a process. I think the important issue here is if you look at this thing somewhere historically that there was a process put in place by the previous Premier, Ms. Cournoyea, and continued by the present one, Mr. Morin, which provided direct community inputs into establishing the priorities off the capital planning process and it was a genuine effort to seek community input and MLA input to make it more reflective of the needs of the communities, and then the business planning process then puts it together based on the fiscal realities that we are having to deal with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, Mr. Picco.

Question 377-13(3): Changes to the Ultimate Removal Process

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker earlier this year there were changes to the Collective Agreement between the Government and the UNW. The ultimate removal provisions were changed so employees now pay for the move themselves and then are reimbursed according to the guidelines. Can the Minister of Finance confirm this for me?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 377-13(3): Changes to the Ultimate Removal Process

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to take that question as notice and get back to my honourable colleague. I do not know the details of that at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Oral questions, Mr. Krutko.

Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is to the Premier in regards to the Northern Accord Process. As he is aware the last Northern Accord Process commenced almost a year ago in where there was a sort of a conflict between the aboriginal groups and the government in regards to the whole question about self-government and where it stood in relation to the transfer of the Northern Accord and also the question about self-government agreements.

As he is aware that there has been a policy which has been established by the federal government in regards to self-government there are self-government framework agreements presently being negotiated. There is also land claim agreements where that obligation is.

My question to the Premier is, would he seriously consider taking back to his cabinet and his colleagues the possibility of re-opening those negotiations at a point of where they commenced in June 1995 and putting that agreement back on the table and start negotiation with the aboriginal groups to conclude the Northern Accord as soon as possible?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently the process that we are using is we are consulting with aboriginal leaders at this time to, first of all find out if they are interested in pursuing the Northern Accord, or continuing to pursue the Northern Accord, with our government. My understanding from the reports I have is that they are.

At the next aboriginal summit we will be, our

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consultants will be meeting with the aboriginal peoples at that time to clarify what concerns they have and how we are going to proceed from there. And, yes, we will try to conclude it at the earliest possible time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will those negotiations be based on the 1988 Northern Accord Transfer Agreement between Ottawa and yourselves that was signed? And, also, the arrangements that are presently enacted in the lands claim agreements?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to be negotiating with the federal government on the transfer of responsibility to the Northwest Territories people. I will be doing that in conjunction with the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories, so we will be working in partnership with the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

MR. KRUTKO:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will there be any additional items added to those negotiations besides strictly oil and gas and minerals?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there will also be land and water added to those negotiations of complete transfer of those responsibilities from the federal

government to the peoples of the Northwest Territories and we will be working with our aboriginal partners in trying to conclude that negotiation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary question to the Premier is, you are changing the rules of the negotiations of the Northern Accord, there is change in regards to the commitment you have within the land claim agreements which clearly states, you are strictly talking about oil and gas and minerals. So, that obligation has to be fulfilled before you can add on anything else to the Accord.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 378-13(3): Northern Accord Negotiation Process

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the present time our facilitators are working with aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories to get an agreement and move ahead as a united group to deal with the federal government. That is on oil, gas, minerals, land and water, so we will be moving ahead on all those issues at once. Any concerns aboriginal people have on the process we are using, they will make that clear to us at the next aboriginal summit and we will try to work out the details there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Henry.

Question 379-13(3): Accommodation for NWT Teachers

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent. I would like the Minister to tell the House what

provisions his department has taken in regards to the sale of staff housing. How will teachers be accommodated or how will arrangements be made for new teachers coming in?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our department does not have the lead in providing staff housing. That is a responsibility of the FMBS. I have had no direct meetings with the Minister responsible for FMBS on the issue. I can tell you that my Department officials have worked extensively with the FMBS personnel to ensure that FMBS is aware of the issues and concerns in the small communities and I think that FMBS is reacting to those concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, supplementary Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. If I could direct the same question to Mr. Todd, FMBS. What provisions ...

MR. SPEAKER:

I am sorry Mr. Henry. This is going to be a new question if you are redirecting your question to another Minister. I have to allow other members to ask questions. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 380-13(3): Person Year Reduction Figures

MR. OOTES:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Financial Management Board. Yesterday, Mr. Todd spoke about the number of cuts that happen to the Territorial payroll, 350 person years I believe and he said that translated into roughly 180 job losses across the NWT. Can the Minister tell me if these figures are only for the Government of the NWT, or does it also include figures for boards and agencies and the Housing Corporation and Aurora College and so forth.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 380-13(3): Person Year Reduction Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I believe it was just for the GNWT that I was talking about yesterday. Just give me a moment to confirm with Mr. Goit for the GNWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Okay. Oral questions, supplementary. Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 380-13(3): Person Year Reduction Figures

MR. OOTES:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could clarify for us and give us some figures on the cuts that have taken place to date on other areas such as the boards and agencies.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 380-13(3): Person Year Reduction Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes thank you Mr. Speaker. I do not have these numbers immediately available to me and I want to ensure that given the sensitivity of the issue I provide my honourable colleague with an accurate number. I would take that question as notice and report back to him on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Henry. Mr. Ootes, your question is taken as notice. Mr. Henry, oral questions.

Question 381-13(3): Staff Housing for NWT Teachers

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Minister responsible for Financial Management

Board, Mr. Todd. Does the Minister have a plan in place for the provision of hiring teachers? My understanding is that most of the staff housing in communities or a lot of staff housing in communities are allocated to teachers. If the houses are sold, how will teachers be allocated housing? Will they have to go to the community to look for accommodation or what procedures would be in place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 381-13(3): Staff Housing for NWT Teachers

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. We are working very closely, as Mr. Dent pointed out,

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with the Department of Education and in particular with the boards. What we are endeavouring to do, first of all I will just remind everybody, we are trying to sell the units and are selling the units to the individuals who are in them. Some of these are teachers and some of them are not. Where the local resident decides not to purchase the unit, we will set a process in motion that ensures it will be purchased by somebody else. But that unit will be identified for that particular job, whether it is a teacher or whatever. There are other people in the Territories besides teachers, eh? Sorry. But anyway there are. We are going to put forward a policy, if you want, that will ensure that there is adequate housing, let me say that ... maybe it is easier to say it this way. We will put together a policy and are putting together a policy that will ensure that there is adequate housing for teachers in the communities in the Northwest Territories. We are, as I said, endeavouring to sell them on an individual basis to the people who already reside there and should we not sell them to them and sell them to some other agency, we will more than likely designate it for a particular profession. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question, supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 381-13(3): Staff Housing for NWT Teachers

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I support the sale of staff housing. I just want to ensure that there is something in place that makes sense. I do not believe we can expect, if we hire people that they can go to the community to look for accommodation. That is what I want to ensure, that there is something in place to accommodate people rather than them going to free market supposedly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 381-13(3): Staff Housing for NWT Teachers

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think we recognise that if some teacher is being hired in Halifax and is going to Whale Cove that they have not got the capacity or the knowledge to know where or how to get a house. So the responsibility will lie with the regional boards and the coordination between my Department and Mr. Dent's. I am confident that we will be able to provide adequate, affordable housing to all our clients or our staff, which teaching is one of them.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Steen.

Question 382-13(3): Process For Sale of Staff Housing

MR. STEEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister responsible for the Finance Management Board, and it is regarding housing for the teachers in the communities. I understand the Minister to say just now that he would be selling the houses to the private enterprise and leasing them back, is that correct?

MR. SPEAKER:

Okay. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 382-13(3): Process For Sale of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I will try get this once, for all loud and clear. The existing houses that we have, where there are teachers and other employees, we are going to sell to the existing teachers based upon some appraised value, etc. If there is a requirement for additional housing, over and above the current block of housing we have, we will go to the private sector and through one form or another, either through some letter of guarantee or sub-lease we will ask them to provide the housing for additional houses that are required in the particular constituency. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 382-13(3): Process For Sale of Staff Housing

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, I guess I would need some clarification from the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I understood him to say we are getting out of the housing business. Now we are, in fact, going to be leasing housing from the private sector to guarantee housing for those teachers that do not have any.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 382-13(3): Process For Sale of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

We are getting out of the ownership of housing, the current block of housing that we have. We are doing that. We are getting out of the block of housing we have. If there is a requirement for some sense of lease arrangement or guarantee to ensure the private sector could own and operate those houses with affordable rents to the tenants, we will provide that. As a government, there is still going to be, over a period of time, some role for it in providing some support to the private sector in the leasing arrangements. But, in terms of ownership, maintenance, paying power, paying fuels and fixing them up, we are out of it effective when we sell the rest of the housing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 383-13(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent, with regard to the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program. I have to agree with you, when you basically make the statement that anyone earning over \$50,000 can receive a subsidy. I do not think that should have been the intention of the program. I do have a problem when a single person is allowed \$12,000 to basically live in a unit and I do not think it is fair to areas, especially north of the Arctic Circle, who have to use a formula similar to the one you suggested.

In my riding, where we do have a lot of elders who own their own homes, they cannot afford to basically continue to pay the high cost of operating and maintaining homes, especially north of the Arctic Circle. I do not believe you took that into consideration when you made your decision. I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would consider changing your decision and looking at the overall cost of subsidies and take into account that there is a difference in cost of living in the larger centres and south of the Arctic Circle versus between these that are north of the Arctic Circle where they do have a higher operating cost to maintain their units and keep them heated during long winters. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider looking at changing his decision and allowing those communities north of the Arctic Circle to be excluded from this decision.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 383-13(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I expected with this issue going before committee of the whole that we would be discussing this sort of detailed question at that time. I guess I can say to the Member that the program was changed to match another program that was offered to assist seniors across the Northwest

Territories, largely as a result of the need to meet fiscal targets.

If there are individuals in the North who are having difficulty in meeting their needs for fuel, they can address themselves to the income support office in their region and qualify for support for all of their fuel, if need be, through that method. Our income support program is adjusted to community costs so, therefore, I think that seniors are protected through that manner in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 383-13(3): Senior's Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If that is the case, then everything sounds pretty rosy. But, in the case of one instance I had in my riding, an individual lady who has been widowed for a number of years and who receives a widow's subsidy which is classified as part of the income, does not qualify her based on these arrangements. Yet you are saying to just to go the income support office and you fit the criteria, but you guys are throwing everything but the kitchen sink into this one when you add up people's income. You look at widows' subsidies and you look at their old age pension, but I think we have to look at it in the context of talking about widows who are living in their own units who do not want to have to go to

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welfare or social services. These people have paid for 20-25 years to own their own units and to live in their own houses. The problem we see in our smaller communities especially with increases in regards to old people in the old folks home, but we are losing a lot of these people who are going back to live with their families who are presently in social housing. I think we are trying to get out of the whole idea that it costs the social envelope of keeping people in houses, but my question to the Minister is, has he considered also the other costs that they are throwing into here such as widow's subsidies with regard to that also?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 383-13(3): Senior's Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an income support program. As such, all of our programs which are income support related need to be better coordinated. Yes, we consider all forms of income when considering providing income support. In fact, we have recognized as a social envelope, that we need to find some way to tie the social housing aspect of our programs better together with the income support program. I think, in the future, Mr. Speaker, all of these programs will be much better integrated. The answer is, yes, all forms of income will be considered where determining what level of support will be provided to individuals and families.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I understand that the issue regarding fuel subsidy is also brought into Committee of the Whole for discussions. So just to remind Members, when you ask questions that could be asked in committee, you allow some unfairness on other Members to ask questions that are not in Committee of the Whole. Mr. Krutko, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 383-13(3): Senior's Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO:

With regards to savings to the department, Mr. Minister, I believe it costs this government something like \$80,000 a year to house a person in the institute with regard to jails. Yet you are talking about a savings of \$200,000 here. I mean, we are talking two people in YCI. Do you not think you should look at everything, and we are talking about cutting the people that need it the most being the last place that we go.

It seems like the first decision you made as a Minister is let us cut the old people's subsidies, the old people's subsidies. I mean, get a heart here, Mr. Minister.

---Applause

Further Return To Question 383-13(3): Senior's Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think I am quite as heartless as the Member would like to present me, but I can tell the member that this decision was under consideration for some time, it was not something that was done all of a sudden. It certainly was not the first decision that I made as a minister. I can also tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I raised this issue specifically with the Standing Committee when we were considering it during Standing Committee consideration of the business plans for the department. I warned the committee at that time that this would be a politically sensitive issue. I received no advice at that time to make changes, so it went forward as part of the budget, and this reduction was in fact included in the budget that was approved by this house. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Questions, Mr. Picco.

Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say Mr. Todd is in fine form again today. I have a question for him, the Minister of FMBS, update this house and the people of the Northwest Territories, on the status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation, that I have so much problem with. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, very much Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the plaudits that I do occasionally get from my colleague from Iqaluit. Indeed, we are in form today.

The Mortgage Investment Corporation, is currently under review, I would like to publicly applaud my

colleague for bringing forward in the last assembly the need for me to take a hard look at what the banks were doing. I would be prepared to say publicly that it was because of my colleague that we are reconsidering the Mortgage Investment Corporation, I think he should be commended for advising me that we should move forward in discussing the issues with the banks, I just hope at the end of the day he is correct, and that the current banks will provide mortgages to our staff as we move forward on this well thought out housing purchasing policy, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, supplementary. Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr Speaker, it is one of those things, you do not want to look a gift horse in the mouth and I will take compliments where I can get them. I just would like to know, can Mr. Todd again say; is the Mortgage Investment Corporation deferred, is it on hold, the five million dollars that we had allocated to the Mortgage Investment Corporation is it sitting in a little pot somewhere, is it money that we could use to fight the deficit, could we help the elders for example, so maybe Mr. Todd can clarify that. Where is the five million dollars that was allocated in the main estimates of the budget of the Mortgage Investment Corporation?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The five million dollars that is involved with the Mortgage Investment Corporation should it not proceed will be part of the deficit elimination strategy or part of rebasing in some needs that have been identified in this government. That decision has been made at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Your oral question, supplementary. Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the need for re-basing is of course a very serious concern of the Government, and the financial situation that we are in. When does Mr. Todd think that this five million dollars that is sitting somewhere, hopefully gaining interest, will be finally reconciled, and we will know what the status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation will be. That was in May, that is five months, and we see the hearth and heartache has been passed on to the people. My question to Mr. Todd is when does he think this Mortgage Investment Corporation will be finally solved, so that we can use the five million dollars for the betterment of the people of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. It is not some five million dollar pot that is sitting on the side, that we are collecting interest on. I am a little dismayed, given the fact that Mr. Picco has indicated that he is so learned in financial issues, that he would even imply that.

I am suggesting to this House in a serious way, that if the banks, as I have said, publicly, and I will say again, are prepared to demonstrate to me and to all of us, that they will provide mortgages for our people, our teachers, in Level 2 and Level 3 communities, that we will reconsider the Mortgage Investment Corporation.

But it is early in the process right now, as we are moving forward with this aggressive strategy, a sound one, to sell our staff housing. When I am convinced and provided with significant evidence that the banks are prepared to do it, then I will reconsider at that time whether we will continue with the Mortgage Investment Corporation. I will repeat for clarity sake, if I do so, then that money

would be put to good use. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I guess we do not know when. What does the Finance Minister need for the banks to demonstrate that they are actually active in the communities, when CMHC has already shown that, of the mortgages that they do, because the people of the Northwest Territories do not own land, but you had a collateral chattel mortgage, and therefore it has been insured by CMHC. I understand that the banks have demonstrated to the Finance Minister and to the Government of the Northwest Territories, in actuality they are being aggressive.

So my question again is what does it take Mr. Todd, to be convinced by the bank. Maybe I should get the executive of the Royal Bank to come up from Bay Street, or knock on his door, maybe that would convince him. What kind of convincing do you need, Mr. Todd?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes. If I took Mr. Picco's advice, and his knee-jerk management, we would not be anywhere. The fact of the matter is that September 30th was the last day in which we asked our employees if they wanted to purchase their houses. It is the 5th of October, and if he wants to be serious about the issue, I am telling you right now, we have to give our employees ample time and the banks ample time to determine the appropriate mortgage for the balance of the houses we have in place. I do not need any manager, or any vice-president of any bank to give me advice on that. And I am not going to respond to a knee-jerk approach that this Member is trying to push down our throats.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Sorry if I raised the ire of the Minister. As we all know, the Investment Corporation would take maybe nine-ten months. This strategy has been in place by this government for approximately a year, since we started. So therefore, I would expect that the demonstration, the need, would have been there. If the people in those houses, cannot get a mortgage from a commercial bank, I do not know why we would be lending them money. So again, my question to the Minister is, what does he need to demonstrate the need? That was not answered.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 384-13(3): Status of the Mortgage Investment Corporation

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker. At the risk of sounding a little aggravated, maybe what I need is a flip chart and Magic Marker. Let me explain again to my honourable colleague, so he understands.

We drafted a letter to all our employees. We asked them to let us know by September 30th if they were interested in purchasing their houses. It is only October the 3rd, you have got me so confused, I do not know what day it is. I am suggesting to you that it is going to take a little more time to demonstrate that they are prepared to lend the moneys. I hope he is right. I have already publicly applauded him for the advice that he gave me. I took his advice. I would hope now he would have the tolerance and the patience to wait and see if the advice that he gave me, and the banks will co-operate to lend the money to the staff that we have out here.

If it happens in the next short while, we will then reconsider what we are doing in the Mortgage Investment Corporation. If it does not, we will bring it in place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

MR. HENRY:

My question is to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Ng. I would like to know from the Minister, I had heard on the radio, his comments about not proceeding with a challenge to the gun

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law. I would like to ask the Minister where he got his opinion, which told him he should not proceed with that challenge. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a legal opinion drafted from the department. There was also some outside, independent advice that was sought on the matter, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. So the Minister is telling me that his own staff, plus outside of the department give him advice as to the success which turned out from his comments, that he should not proceed with a challenge. My question supplementary to that is, did his department tell him how much this was going to cost, this challenge to the gun law? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. No, Mr. Speaker, costs were not a factor. I did not request that information. The information was based on the legal grounds that we might have had to proceed or not to proceed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

MR. HENRY:

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ng had confirmed that he will not proceed with the court challenge. Can he tell me now why the government has changed its mind, or what input his ministry or department had in that?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was subsequent opinions that came forward from other jurisdictions that compelled me to take another look at the situation, and subsequently decide to proceed to join the other jurisdictions in going forward with the possibility of a constitutional challenge to the Bill C-68, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, final supplementary. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. So the Minister had consultations with his department, and some exterior opinions on this. Then he went and got some opinions from other jurisdictions. Would the Minister consider going for two out of three? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 385-13(3): Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that was a serious question or not. I will not answer at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you. My question is to the Minister Responsible for the Power Corporation. On the news a number of days ago there was a report that a decision had been made that NTPC would remain as one corporation after Division, with shares being sold to the east. I would just like the Minister to confirm or clarify that process and elaborate whether it is in fact a final decision or whether there will be an

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opportunity for some input by this Legislature as to the fate of NTPC.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first off I would like to compliment the Member on his sartorial excellence today, in particular the tie.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm or deny something that has been reported in the media. What can do is I can advise the Member that I understand the board of directors of the Power Corporation has considered the future of the corporation after division I am expecting to hear from them they they are recommending that the Power Corporation be kept as one entity. The final decision, of course, rests with this body. It is the Legislative Assembly that will have the final say as to how any of the assets or liabilities of this government

are divided or kept whole or in what matter they are disposed of.

So I think that, as I understand it, the Board has taken the first step in assessing the information that they have available to them, in terms of what the possibilities might be for division of company, or for keeping the company whole. They will be making a recommendation to me, which I will take to the Division Committee, that the company be maintained as one entity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral Questions, Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would be more than happy share some of my satorial tips with the Minister after session is out, if he cares to.

Could the Minister indicate when he anticipates when this will be coming forward from the Board of Directors to the Division Committee and then the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have a final timetable. I am expecting to hear, by letter, from the Board of Directors, in the next week or so, their recommendation.

I believe an initial consideration by the Division Committee would be within the next month or so. The initial information would probably come to that community soon. But I think it will be a process that will take some time, perhaps over the course of this winter before things come back to this Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral Questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to claify, as well, that we will be bringing forward a possible recommendation that in fact this Assembly will have the latitude of looking all or any options in regards to the structure of the Power Corporation after division? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 386-13(3): Future of the Power Corporation Post Division

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I said that in my first response. That, in fact, any decision about division of assets or liabilities is finally the pervue of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, Mr. Steen.

Question 387-13(3): Revised Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

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my question is directed towards the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Mr. Speaker, on May 22, 1996 Mr. Antoine made a Minister's Statement in regards to Transportation Agenda Update 1996 in which he refers to a Resource Access Road Policy.

And I quote: "At the same time and in cooperation with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, I will be working on a Resource Access Road Policy. The policy will be aimed at encouraging economic development."

I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister can give us an update on where the policy is. What is the present status of this policy?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the strategy that the honourable Member is making..is referring to is in the hands of the departmental officials and we are working in the department to develop a strategy. This is something new that we are working at and we are pretty close to completing this strategy. As we move along we will share it with the MLAs and get their concerns and their input into developing the strategy. This strategy will include not only the GNWT funding as well as we are looking at other sources of funding. Perhaps the federal government, the private sector and so forth, so it is kind of a very broad approach so we need to work on the strategy. And then take some time to come up with and we need all these different partners involved so, there is ongoing discussions with my department officials and these other counterparts at this point in time and it is not going to be a very speedy kind of process. Like we would like to develop it as we go along and at the present time, we are still in the development stage of this strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

MR. STEEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr Speaker I am concerned with the response that the Minister gave. It seems to suggest that our terms will be up by the time this policy is put into place.

I wonder if there is any way to speed this..the end result of the policy, so that we can have some benefit before 1999 in regards to economic development.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I know that the honourable Member's concern is that to come out with the strategy on how to build roads in the North. That is the objective, to build roads in the north.

As you know, in the last session, I was asked to build roads in the north but Mr. Hartman does not have the type of resources and the funding to do so and we are putting the onus on the federal government, and they do not have the funding either so we are going to have to come up with innovative way to build roads in the north. And that is what I am trying to do here, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Transportation, the department is working on developing a strategy on how we can do that and if the honourable member has some suggestions and some ideas perhaps we should find a way of sitting down and sharing what we have got so far with the honourable member and maybe we could get some movement. By working together on this strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member does have some suggestions and ideas, but he does not seem to get them across.

One of the suggestions and ideas, and I believe one of the purposes for the creation of the

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Premier's economic development advisory panel was for this specific purpose. I believe there is a fair number on them to advise the government already.

Mr. Speaker, I have another question with regard to this statement. That is, all the reference in the statement seems to be towards mineral development. I wonder if it has been overlooked that we have a fair amount of hydrocarbon development in the Territories as well that requires road infrastructure.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what the honourable Member is referring to is also in the strategy. Perhaps it is in the document. It may not spell out that we are talking about oil and gas exploration. We are looking at all types of different exploration. I know that if we have a good infrastructure like the highway in the western NWT down the Mackenzie Valley, it will open up the country for all kinds of different activity, including oil and gas exploration, mineral exploration, perhaps logging, and tourism. This is a good opportunity to do that. I agree that we should do something like that and that it will help the economy in the long-run. This department is working with the new Department of Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development which is a newly formed department that we have to work together, cooperate and see how we could work together to develop some sort of a strategy on how to build roads in the north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, would it be possible for the Minister to come forward with a suggested time as to when this policy might be in place? This year, next year, six months?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 387-13(3): Revised
Transportation Infrastructure Strategy

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to work together in trying to develop this strategy. I do not want to be too long in trying to get it together as soon as we can. I know the department is working hard at working on strategies, along with all the other

budgeting exercises that we have to do in terms of developing our business plans and trying to respond to the different standing committee requests. It has taken a lot of our departmental time. The sooner we get it done, the better for all of us, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 388-13(3): Legal Advice on the Court
Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, I, too, had the privilege of hearing the Minister say on the radio that the Department of Justice felt it was a waste of money to challenge the new gun law. Since we our government now feels that they should pursue, is this an indication that the Minister and the Cabinet has lost faith in the competency of our lawyers in the Department of Justice?

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 388-13(3): Legal Advice on the
Court Challenge to the Federal Gun Legislation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has nothing to do with the relevancy of the competency of the opinions that might have come forward. There is a various amount of different opinions that are out there, and we have to weigh the different opinions and judge which ones we think are relevant and have the most chance of success, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Question period is over. Item 7,
written questions. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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Question 7-13(3): New Ultimate Removal Assistance
Guidelines

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, the Honourable John Todd. My concern is the ultimate removal assistance guidelines that I tried to ask about earlier.

These questions are in regard to the changes to the Collective Agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Union of Northern Workers and how this agreement deals with ultimate removal of employees. Earlier this year, there were changes to the Collective Agreement between this government and the Union of Northern Workers. The ultimate removal provisions were changed so employees now pay for the move themselves and then are reimbursed according to the guidelines. I understand that the Minister's staff are currently interpreting the ultimate removal guidelines as saying employees are reimbursed for the lesser of the amount set for the community or the actual cost of their actual move. However, asking people to pay for removal upfront should encourage them to find the most economical way to move and to be thoughtful about what they take with them. This interpretation provides no incentive, Mr. Speaker, for the parting employees to be economical in their departure arrangements. My questions to the Minister are:

1. Can the Minister of Finance confirm that the ultimate removal provisions of the Collective Agreement between this government and the Union of Northern Workers were changed so employees now pay for the move themselves and then are reimbursed?
2. Can the Minister indicate whether this will cost this government more money?
3. Can the Minister confirm that his staff's interpretation of the ultimate removal guidelines is what the government intended when it negotiated this provision?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, report of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Review of Bill 17

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 17, Business Corporations Act, and wishes to report that Bill 17 is now ready for Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 12, Reports of Committee on the Review of Bills. Items 13, Tabling of documents. Tabling of documents, Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to table Tabled Document 75-13(3) a letter and attachments I received today from the Dene Nation. This letter confirms the Dene Nation's strong support for the name Denendeh as the new name for the western territory.

The attachments are: a motion from the 1996 National Assembly, a motion from the December 1984 Leadership Meeting, a motion from April 1994 Dene National Leadership Meeting, and a motion from the September 1987 Dene Nation Leadership Meeting.

Each of these motions support the name Denendeh. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Tabling of a document, Tabled Document 76-13(3) from the Hamlet of Aklavik. It is in regards to their five-year capital forecast.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents, Mr. Kakfwi.

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HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you. I would like to table, Tabled Document 77-13(3), a motion from the Sahtu Assembly, 1996.

It reads:

Whereas Division of the Northwest Territories will take place in 1999, whereas with Division the Northwest Territories as we know it, will no longer exist, and whereas the Eastern Arctic will be known as Nunavut after Division, and whereas we in the west have an opportunity to create a new name for the western arctic after Division.

Therefore be it resolved that the Sahtu Dene and Metis agree that the name "Northwest Territories" should be retired with dignity and respect, after Division. That the Dene and Metis agree that there should be a new name for the western arctic after Division.

Third, the Sahtu Dene and Metis support the efforts of their MLA to have a new name selected for the western arctic after Division.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Tabling of documents, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Mahsi Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Tabled Document 78-13(3), a motion from the Deh Cho First Nations, Resolution Number 3, at the Fourth Annual General Assembly at Kakisa Lake, in Denendeh, July 8-13, 1996.

It states that whereas on April 1st, 1999, the Northwest Territories will be divided to establish a western arctic territory and Nunavut.

Therefore be it resolved that the western arctic territory be named Denendeh.

Mr. Speaker, this motion has two names on it. However, it represents a lot of people in the communities that these First Nations represent. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Notice of motion for reading of first bill. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in committee of

the whole of bills and other matters. Tabled Document 1-13(3), Tabled Document 68-13(3), Minister's Statement 82-13(3), and Minister's Statement 86-13(3) with Mr. Steen in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I call the committee to order. We have four items on the agenda for today, for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation. Tabled Document 68-13(3), Changes to the 1996/97 Capital Plan. Minister's Statement 82-139-3, Premier's Sessional Speech and Minister's Statement, 86-13(3) Seniors' Fuel Program. I would like direction as to how Subsidy which topic we would like to proceed with. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes. We would like to proceed Tabled Document 68-13(3), Changes to the 1996/97 Capital Plan, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Ootes. Is that agreeable with the Members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

If the members agree, we will take a fifteen minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We are on Tabled Document 68-13(3), Changes to the 1996/97 Capital Plan. Some Members already have had opportunity to speak yesterday to this item, and may still wish to make comments or speak towards the item. However, if the committee agrees, Mr. Morin wishes to respond to some of the concerns expressed yesterday before anybody else brings up more questions or concerns. Is that agreed with the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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Yesterday there was a considerable discussion around the changes made to the 1996/97 budget. Members expressed concern with several specific projects. In particular, the paving of the Fort Simpson access road, and funding for the support of the Fort Simpson recreation project. Since yesterday's discussions, I have reviewed the Hansard and the circumstances surrounding both of these projects.

Based on my review, I am confident that the Financial Management Board decision regarding the paving of the Fort Simpson Access Road was a correct decision to make, because of the safety considerations involved. This paving need has been a long standing issue that had reached a critical stage. The community itself, at first flagged the safety concerns about this stretch of road through a June 1993 petition. In 1995, the government provided \$525,000 for the first phase of that project, and made its commitment to prioritize finding funding to complete the job they started.

For the Member's information, this project is one of the highest traffic areas in any gravel road in the Northwest Territories. I believe it has over 200 vehicles per day, and it is to a residential area. It was a high priority for the department, and moved ahead. Savings were achieved from a down-grading of another project, a bridge in the same riding. A portion of that money was moved outside of that riding as well. As far as I am concerned, FMB made the proper decision when it moved ahead on that paving project.

In reviewing the Fort Simpson recreation centre project, I would like to note that this initiative came in direct response to community priorities. The community itself identified this as a need, and the village band and Metis locals were also contributing dollars, funding to this project. As we move forward with community empowerment, we are trying to be more and more responsive to community priorities.

However, I now realize that at the Legislative Assembly, we have not yet come to terms with all the implications of what exactly that will mean to us as a government. After that discussion yesterday, I now realize that we must not get ahead of ourselves, in our eagerness to bring about the necessary changes associated with this kind of initiative. Because we may not fully understand what is meant by community empowerment, Members have a legitimate concern.

Community empowerment and that whole initiative we are working on, Members have expressed a concern of the five year capital plan. They have expressed concern about how that capital plan will weigh on the decisions that we make as a government. Let me assure Members that the five year capital plan is what drives the capital budget of this government. And we look, and we consider what the communities are recommending to us on a yearly basis, and update on their capital plan yearly. We try to accommodate and take in their priorities as much as we can.

Later on, as we move down to community empowerment, where communities are going to be allowed to make the decisions of not only capital spending in their communities, but O & M dollars. Less and less decisions will be made in this Legislative Assembly. We will be voting on money specifically for communities at a later date. But, that is what community empowerment is all about. And that is the direction we all agreed to move into. But, I guess, we, as a government, and as FMB, moved a little bit too quick on the community empowerment initiative. With our want to respond to community initiatives and priorities, we may have pulled the trigger a little bit too quick. For that reason, I am suggesting that the funding for the Fort Simpson recreation centre project be put on hold and that we submit the request back through the budgeting process to allow Members to have input into the project, and to form their own conclusions, as to whether community priorities should prevail.

So basically, what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that the Fort Simpson recreation centre project be put back through the loop of the committees, and be taken a second look at.

In general, I would like to add that there was any misunderstanding in this area. I am glad that this discussion came up and the issue was raised by Members. Beyond the specifics of this particular project, is a much broader issue. What yesterday's discussion told me is that we cannot start adopting and practising new initiatives, outlining our agenda for

change, without taking the time to ensure Members understand all of the implications of what we are doing.

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It stresses to me, yet again, the importance of communication between all Members of this House, especially at a time when we are introducing change and new ways of operating as a government. Yesterday's discussion was healthy, and is a sign of an effective government. It offered a lesson for all of us, that, as we move ahead with our agenda for change, we must take the time to ensure that full implications of our discussions are understood.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add also that when changes are made in a capital budget, and when changes are made that affect Member's riding, including my own, when those type of changes are made, I will make sure that Minister's communicate to Members. Members should not hear of changes or things in their riding on the street. Members should hear it from Ministers, so that they can respond to their constituents. With that, Mr. Chairman, that is our point of view on this whole issue, and I think the discussion is good, and I look forward to any other concerns that you may have, or advice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Morin. I have Mr. Barnabas, MLA for High Arctic.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a comment and ask questions. It is my understanding that the Resolute Bay airport has transferred from the Government of Canada to the GNWT. It was and is a Class A airport, and includes a flight service station. I have also been told that the new private company, NAV Canada will take over the operation of the FSS at Resolute Bay, on or about November 1st, of this year. As of that date, they will operate the FSS, and they have no immediate plans to change their operations to CARS. My question is, does the Minister's department have to downgrade the FSS to CARS, in their plan for the new terminal building, when this government will not even be operating the FSS?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Barnabas. To whom are you directing the question, to the Premier?

MR. BARNABAS:

Mr. Antoine, Minister of Transportation.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on the Resolute Bay air terminal building. Just for the information of the Members in the House, when the Arctic A airport was transferred last summer, there was quite a bit of dollars that were transferred. There was a \$2,500,000 that was transferred from the federal government for the replacement of the Resolute Bay air terminal building. This was a one-time funding, rather than base funding, and was added to the grant from Canada, to the Department's budget over two years, for 1996/97, and 1997/98. An additional 1.6 million dollars would be recovered from the federal government, if it was decided to incorporate a flight service station into the air terminal building.

This is the 1.6, it is an additional one. If the federal government decided to go with the flight service station. In the 1996/97 to the year 2001 capital plan, the department assumed that the project would include the flight service station. We put it in our plans at first, and profiled the project over four years to a total project of \$4,520,000. This was in our original plan, when we thought the flight service station would be in it.

When we were implementing the project for 1996/97, there was a delay. Because of the inability to get confirmation of the requirement of the flight service station from the federal government, we do not know if the federal government is going to go with the flight service station or not. They have not said yes or no. So it is hard to determine at this point in time. If they said no, and we build it, the big one, then it will be difficult for us to recover the 1.6 million dollars. Because of the need to undertake the planning for the site of the entire airport property, as a result less work will be done this year, than was originally planned.

In addition, the department has decided to proceed without the inclusion of the flight service station, thereby reducing the overall cost of the project. This is what went into the decision, whether to have the flight service station in, or not. The honourable Member is right, the federal government is responsible for the flight service station. They have not told us whether they want it in there or not. If they say yes, they want to have it in there, then we will have an opportunity to

recover the 1.6 million dollars that was in the budget. But at this point in time, this new

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corporation is going to take over, and they have not determined whether they want a flight service station or not. So we cannot put in our plan at this point in time. I am told by the department that the flight service station, if it is determined at a later date, that they would require that, then the federal government and this new corporation would have to plan and build it on their own. When the original plan was to put the airport terminal building, and to have provision in there to have a flight service station, we thought this was going to go ahead, and the federal government was going to approve it. But at this point in time, this has not happened. So we had to change our plans to accommodate for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. Do you have a further question, Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(translation) Mr. Chairman. Has the Minister's department discussed this downsizing with the air carriers that use the Resolute Bay airport?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

The Department has a section that deals with airports. I cannot really answer the Ordinary Member's question, whether they sat down with the air carriers. I will ask the department what specifically they did in terms of their consultation in regards to the flight service station. I am assuming that they have done a considerable amount of consultation, to come to this decision. I will get a clear, definite answer for the honourable Member, as soon as I can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you. ...discuss this downsizing with NAV Canada, and obtain their agreement?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Yes. The Department has had consultation and discussions with NAV Canada, and this is one of the concerns that we have with NAV Canada, is the whole question of flight service stations in the north. There is ongoing discussion with them. At this point in time, it is not really determined, whether they are going to go that route. We still have to get further consultation with them to determine that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) As of August 8th, there was no change to this capital project. Would the Minister please explain how the decision was made to change the plan to include CARS, instead of FSS?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you again Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this decision to include CARS in this air terminal building happened towards this fall, because we had to make some decisions. If we did not find out up to this point in time, we did not know whether the flight service station is called for, I think the federal government was doing away with all the flight service stations in the north, and a few of them still have it. This one in Resolute Bay is one of them that they are wondering whether they are going to keep it or not.

There is no confirmation, there is no decision at this time, whether the federal government requires it or not. The longer we wait for that decision, the longer this project is going to delay. So we had to make a decision. We decided that we should start with the airport terminal building. We do not know whether the flight service station is going to be in there or not. It is a big price, 1.6 million dollars, additional to the 2.5 that was transferred for it. So the decision was made that instead of going for the larger flight service station, we had to settle and design the building again for a CARS operation. As a result of that the decision was made. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Would the Minister agree that funds were received from the Government of Canada to replace the terminal building, starting this year? It appears that federal

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funds were available, but the Department of Transportation was unable to get moving fast enough to start work in this sea lift season. It was then decided to use this money elsewhere, and it was only at the last minute, that the decision to change from FSS status to CARS status was made, to justify the movement of the money to other projects. Would the Minister agree that this is how things have happened?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

No, I do not agree with the interpretation of what happened here, Mr. Chairman. As I was trying to explain earlier, the longer we delay in doing any work this year, if we wait any longer then this whole project will have to be deferred until next year. So we are doing some work this year, and then we are doing the majority of the work next year, and finishing off in 1998/99.

I just want to also say that in the proposed plan, in this current plan, we were going to do a million dollars worth of work this year, two and a half million dollars next year, that is 1997/98, and one million dollars worth of work in 1998/99. But in this new proposed plan, we are planning to reduce \$502,000 of work this year, and in 1997/98 we will do 1.1 million dollars work, and in 1998/99, we will do 1.2 million dollars. In our original plan, the plan was to complete the whole project by 1998/99.

With this newer plan, we are going to complete it at the same time. We are just moving some of the funds around in this first year. If we could have found out earlier this year that the federal government, whether they are going to have a flight service station or not, we could have started the work earlier. But we waited for the federal government to make a decision. They

have not made a decision. We needed to get some work done. So we had to make a decision.

If you are concerned that if we move money around, then, we could have left the money in there, and the money would not have been put to work. It would have had to get lapsed next year anyways. Instead of doing that, we put some of that money to work in other places. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. Mr. Barnabas, do you have a final question?

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister provide copies of the correspondence with the Resolute Bay air terminal from the federal government for me to review?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Yes. I will get that information that the honourable Member is requesting from the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Antoine. I would like to know what process we are going to take here. I hope we are not going to go through item by item on this list, as to clarification for each project. Perhaps if I could ask Mr. Barnabas, are you satisfied with the answer, the explanation you received for the movement of your capital dollars in your riding.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation). No. I will get back to him. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

If I may ask, can you summarize now, what you think, so that we can get some kind of results to this whole discussion, so that we do not go home in limbo. Can you summarize what you think, is that agreeable with the committee? We need some kind of process here as to whether or not we are getting satisfactory answers. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Right now I am not prepared for it. I will get back to you. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

In that case, I will move on to Mr. Roland, MLA for Inuvik.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I liked some of the things the Premier had to say in his statement, as he started off. My concern comes from the principle of what has happened here. The whole talk of community empowerment is very good. We do have processes in place. It is called block funding, that has been developed, not just recently.

But my concerns come from statements, for

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example, yesterday, the Minister of Transportation mentioned, and I quote from the unedited Hansard, "Yes, it is new, it looks new on the new project, but it has been in the plans for some time, but it was not on the five-year capital plan."

My question would come out, then, it looks new, it was not on the five-year capital plan, but it was on some plan. Is there another list that we do not know about, is what it comes down to? Because of the statement here, is there another list out there of plans that are around? I grow concerned, there are some generalities, but unless we get down to the specifics of it, was this on the five-year capital plan, when the changes were made? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. I believe the question is directed to Mr. Antoine, the Minister of Transportation.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just for clarification. I am not going to make any excuses for using my second language, but it is a factor some times. The need for clarification here is that, when I am talking about the plan, is that, some of you that are new to this House, in the previous government, which I regard ourselves, as a continuation of. We did not just cut off at some point and totally start anew. This is an ongoing process.

In 1993, when I was the ordinary MLA, I tabled a petition regarding paving of the highway around the Fort Liard-Fort Simpson area. There was some response from the department noting that funding could not be found on short notice, and so forth. When I am talking about "it is in the plans", I am referring to it by saying that, yes, this has been in discussion, and the community has been involved in it with this department on this issue for quite a few years now. That is what I was referring to when I was saying "in the plan". No, there is no second list of anything like that. When I was making reference yesterday, in the unedited Hansard, that is what I was making reference to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Further on this area, we have heard now a number of times, that the community and the MLA were involved in a planning process with the community, from 1993, and again 1995 this was brought up. But earlier today, when I questioned the Minister of Finance on the weight they gave the five-year capital plan process, we were told that it is very important. It is an important tool that we use as a government to do our work. And I agree with that. As in committees, we went through the capital plan, and we deferred a number of projects in different regions and areas, on the order of importance.

Now we know this capital plan process has been in since the previous government. My question is then, if this was in the planning works, and important to the community, why then, was it not on the five-year capital plan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I said yesterday that it is new, and it was not on the capital plan. The question is why was it not on the capital plan? It was not on the capital plan because it never got there, although the community has been very concerned about it for many years. There were petitions put out, there were letters put out in the past, and when this plan was drawn up, I guess it was not

put into the plan. As a result, it was not in the plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the community felt this was important, so they put petitions forward. Were those petitions tabled in the House?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the petition was put into the House. There was a petition that was tabled in the House on April 1st, 1993. So it is a record of this Legislative Assembly. On this petition there were 239 signatures from the residents of Fort Simpson, as well as Jean Marie River, Fort Liard, proposing that the Department of Transportation take advantage of the paving in the Fort Simpson airport area and

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pave the highway between the Fort Liard ferry crossing and Fort Simpson. This was put out in 1993. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have heard of the factors involved in this decision made in FMB. A lot had to do with the safety concerns. I have to raise the point that there are many communities in the Northwest Territories that drive on dirt, gravel roads that I guess can be considered now for putting hard tar down because there is a safety concern in a lot of those communities when it comes to driving on the roads with matters of dust control and visibility. Again, it comes down to the fact that I take it from the Premier's statement that the decision made here, according to FMB, and correct me if I am wrong, was the right decision in your minds for all the conditions that applied to it. I will ask the chairman of FMB if he feels this was the right decision with all the factors involved in putting the five year capital plan process

together and the weight that this government holds on it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Todd, chairman of the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Under the rules of the Financial Administration Act, the FMB can re-assign money, et cetera, and that is what was done with respect to this project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will end with this question here, well, two questions actually. The weight we give this five year capital plan process, as said earlier, it is a very important planning tool, but is this actually a policy? What form does this lie within the government? Is this a planning paper? Is there any substance that would hold this government to the plan, or is this just a policy and, if that is the case, can it just be erased by saying no more? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. I guess the question is, how much weight does the five year capital plan have? Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I think we have to put it into perspective. I mean, we have, up until last year, \$185 million in the capital budget. That is roughly about 6,000 projects. Out of 6,000 projects, occasionally adjustments have to be made. As in any corporate entity, in that even though you have a plan, it is like building a house. You have a plan and your spouse decides they want to change the one toilet to two toilets, it is no different in the capital plan. The changes get made as a fluid document. I said yesterday and I will say again today that the concern seems to be in three areas -- certainly in two that we have heard -- one is in the road that Mr. Antoine has been alluding to, two is in the community empowerment component with respect to the community hall, and I believe the Premier has addressed that by saying we are prepared to pull that back and go back through the process, and of course

the third one, I believe, and it has not been articulated yet, but was the concern with respect to the nursing station in Gjoa Haven versus Arviat.

When you are dealing with 6,000 projects, there are going to be some things where we have to make adjustments. I think that is one of these adjustments that was made. We followed the Financial Administration Act correctly. That is not to suggest for one minute that the five year capital plan is not an important business planning tool because it is.

What I am saying is that it is not unusual, if you are dealing with -- and my colleague here tells me it is 14,000 contracts actually, between big and small ones -- contracts of that magnitude and that nature and those numbers, there will be some adjustments made and they have to be made by the management team as such. Provided there is substantive justification for it, FMB votes on it and moves forward on this. I understand the concern out there, but I am suggesting that it is not unusual, when you are dealing with a budget of this magnitude, that adjustments will be made as the exception rather than the rule. I think it is important to say that. I know my colleague's concern and he addressed it to me privately, and I think it is a legitimate one. There are occasions where there is the exception rather than the rule. I think that is an important distinction here in this debate. I would suggest to you that as we move along, when we look at these exceptions to the

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rules, we try to look at it within the overall budget and if there are some projects under budget and over budget, you adjust things on a regular basis. That is just the way you manage government and the way you manage projects and the way you manage money.

I would want to be very clear to my friend and colleague, Mr. Roland, that in this particular case and in other cases, because this is not an isolated one, there have been other cases, it is the exception rather than the rule. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Todd, I believe the question was in relation to the Financial Management Board to amend outside of the capital plan. I believe the question was whether it is policy to stay within the capital plan or do you have the ability to go outside of the capital plan?

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Chairman, I believe I tried to answer that. I am saying that under the Financial Administration Act, FMB can move money within the overall vote that has taken place within the Legislature. I am saying that is the exception rather than the rule. You are managing a billion dollars here, and you are managing roughly somewhere in the region of about 180 to 185, historically anyway, capital project of which my colleague here tells me is close to 13,000 contracts. So there has to be some flexibility and I believe that we followed the FAA rules, and as I said, again, these situations are the exception rather than the rule. I want to assure my honourable colleague that without the five year capital plan, I do not know where we would be. It is an important tool in determining the priorities of this government. It is an important tool for the communities to be actively involved, the MLAs and also the Minister. I do not know whether I have satisfied my colleague or not, but that is the best way I can answer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just using the example that the honourable Finance Minister used on building a house and changing the plans. I agree but, usually when you change the toilet, both parties are involved in what is put back.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Is there a question there, Mr. Roland?

MR. ROLAND:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. Did the Minister of Transportation, when he went through his committee, pose this potential situation to the committee when the possible change could occur?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Resource Management just had a meeting a couple of weeks ago. That is the first time I shared this information with the standing committee. Before that, it was last spring when we were all in session together. That is the last time that we met and I never had an opportunity to meet with the standing committee until just a couple of weeks ago. That is the first opportunity I had to provide that information. Between the meeting in the spring and the meeting this fall, the decision was made in the summer so I never had an opportunity to share this information with the standing committee until just about two weeks ago.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. In all fairness to all the Members here, could I get agreement that we ask five or six questions and then we move on to the next guy?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Todd. Those are very nice words that the Premier stated earlier concerning community empowerment, community consultation and community priorities. I had a problem with that because my community last year had put as a priority the community hall. As most people know, we do not have a community hall in our community, and our community has grown a lot. I addressed that concern and it was deferred out of the capital plan and supposedly went into the plan this year. I asked a question to the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs and I was told that my community had decided that the

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community hall was not needed and now we would do modifications to the gymnasium. Then when I went back to consult with my community because I believe we have to consult, we have community empowerment, and so on and so forth, they told me they did not know what I was talking about. My

question then is on the recreation centre complex in the Minister's riding that we talked about earlier. One of the main thrusts of that as Mr. Morin just said was community empowerment and how we consulted with community, and that was a priority of that community. In my case, it was a priority of my community. Arbitrarily, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has changed our capital budget and we have gone from one million dollars down to \$250,000 to change the scope of the project.

I will read a letter, just a couple of lines, to give you an idea of where I am coming from. It says here, "At no time has our council or administration been party to any agreement to defer or alter the above-referenced project, the community hall. In fact, all modifications have been made without consultation with the community. Although disappointed, the council continue to plan for our community hall for the construction of 1997/98 only to discover last month and subsequent five year capital plans that arbitrarily changes were made again without consultation. The amount allocated now in 1997/98 has been reduced to \$250,000 and the project scope to gym modifications."

My questions, of course, is the nice words the Premier has just said about community empowerment does not mean a hill of beans unless it is something that is going to be put down and actually acted on. My question is, what does he mean when he says community empowerment, when he says community consultation? Because, in this case, a major project has not had any type of community consultation, and in this case, again, the project was deferred out of a capital budget and we lost \$750,000 in that.

The third point being, the scope of the whole project was changed to some gymnasium modifications. So, maybe Mr. Morin could tell me that first of all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Morin, Premier.

HON. DON MORIN:

Ms. Thompson, she knows the issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mrs. Thompson, Minister of MACA, would like to respond to that.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the member of Iqaluit, I have quite a few letters of consultation that were done with the town of Iqaluit on this issue that were faxed over to me from the regional superintendent of that region, Mike Ferris. There has been a lot of consultation with the community and I have all these letters to prove it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I would like to caution the members that if the letter is not before the House you should not be holding them. Do you have further questions, Mr. Picco?

MR. PICCO:

Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the consultation took place can, maybe, the Minister tell me if there was any agreement then from the town to defer or cancel or modify the project?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Picco, Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

There was a lot of consultation in regards to this community, how and I made an offer of \$40,000 to do a study on an alternate and we have not received a reply yet for that study from the town. I know the superintendent of the region has been in touch with the office today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

When did the Minister make the offer of \$40,000 to do a study?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

It was on June 5, 96.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Picco.

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MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, in actuality, there was no agreement from the community to defer the program, there was no agreement from the community to modify the program, there was no agreement from the community, then, to change the scope of the project to gym modifications, is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

The town.. I received a letter from the town, which I received on August 12, saying that the town has accepted my offer of assistance for the study, but they have not come forward with when they want to get it done or... with community empowerment, community has to start thinking on their own and give me some feedback on what they want me to do. That is what community empowerment is trying to say. So, I had received this letter of August 12, they seem to be happy with what we were doing. I do not know what the member is talking about now, because we have done what we can with that community. The superintendent of the region lives in that community, a very well respected individual, we just had a chat with him today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Final question, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Okay, well, the Minister does not understand what I meant or talked about, so I will ask again. Who authorized, if you had no agreement from the community, who authorized, then, the change to the project scope from the million down to \$250,000 to gym modifications. Who authorized that? Did the community? Because we have already said that, yes, we sent letters back and forth but there was no agreement from the community, so someone must have come up with a plan to modify a gym, which does not specify what gym, and \$250,000. To do that you would have to have the okay from the Baffin Divisional Board of Education which, of course, control the schools.

Is there a letter there from the Baffin Divisional Board of Education telling the town that, yes, we want to

modify a gym? So, I want to know from the Minister then, who decided to change our project down? And is that community consultation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. I will take those four questions into one. You just want to know who modified the plan? Who authorized modifications? Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have not read all these letters because there are eleven pages of correspondence, but there has been consultation with the community and when they prioritize when there projects are in the town of Iqaluit I do not know what they have, but I am sure that the department looked at the existing facilities and with the cut backs, I am sure that was the best decision.

The member told me that there is no youth facility in town as I recall, there is a new parish hall that is used for the youth and three schools have three large gymnasiums and there is also a legion hall that is used for community facility. This community of Iqaluit has five recreations centres...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame. Shame.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

What is their priority? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Is there, could you possibly find out from your department who actually authorized this thing, are we looking for a deputy minister, what?

MR. PICCO:

Just to who authorized the change of the \$250,000, and I want to correct the Minister for people saying shame, shame. There is not five recreation facilities in for youth, there is no recreation facility in Iqaluit dedicated as a community hall like any other community. We have schools with gymnasiums, you

set guidance and rules for using gymnasiums. Yes, we have a legion hall, well, that would be a great place to play.

In reality there is no recreation facility dedicated to youth, young people like in other communities. Yes, there is a parish hall owned by the Anglican church, but it is not for the benefit of 4,000 people.

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So, I am asking the Minister, maybe the Minister will tell me, this consultation, I could send out a hundred letters but there is no agreement from the community to change our priority which was a community hall, we have 4,000 people, a mayor and a council, I guess they know what is their priority according to community empowerment, so the question again is, who changed the scope of the project to a gym modification, if it has not been authorized by the Baffin Divisional Board of Education? I have not seen the letter from them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Okay, Mr. Picco. Mr. Picco I have got your concern recorded and, obviously, the Minister said that she cannot respond at this time. maybe at a later time she will respond to the committee and to you as to who actually authorized it and in consultation with who, okay?

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Steen, then could I have a time frame from the Minister, when she will get back to me and inform the community of Iqaluit when and who authorized the change of our project scope to gym modifications?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. I am Mr. Chairman, by the way. Mrs. Thompson, could you give us an indication when you will get back with your response?

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just trying to clarify that a recreation is a gymnasium, a recreation centre is a gymnasium, where kids learn to play soccer and whatever, run around, our youth.

My ADM, Vern Christensen, just lost his mother two days ago and I will have to wait until he comes back. I would not want to bother him at this time. But I would

invite the mayor of Iqaluit, the SAO, the MLA to come into my office and we will discuss this face to face. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I will now move on to Mr. Ningark, MLA for Natilikmiot.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have had many disappointments in the past during my time as a Member of the Legislature, I have been here for about seven years now. I have had more than one capital project from a community that I have lost, either being deferred or money going to another region. To those Members who have lost their projects, I say, welcome to the club.

Mr. Chairman, the community health centre in Gjoa Haven seems to be the starting point of all that is going on here. Mr. Chairman, like, you got more than I got, you know. I would like to try and put things into perspective.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that Cabinet Ministers make an important decision. I would like to give you a little history of Gjoa Haven Health Centre. During my time as a member of the Legislature for the seven years I have had meetings with the community, we have had meetings with the Minister of the Health Centre, we have had meetings with the Premier of the Eleventh Assembly, in this case Nellie Cournoyea.

We have gone to the regional council, we retain their support. We have had meetings with the Ministers, with the leaders of the community of Gjoa Haven, we have written correspondence to the appropriate Ministers. We have had a petition from the community to try and retain the health centre which has been deferred once or twice in the past.

Mr. Chairman, every conceivable means has been used to acquire the health centre for Gjoa Haven. We have lost the project three times, perhaps, four times, in the past. I think the Ministers when they make the decision, in this case about Gjoa Haven's health centre, they have had many requests from different levels of leadership within the jurisdiction. Even the health board got involved in the request.

Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that during this fiscal restraint we have to, to a degree, let the managers manage. Let them set the priorities according to the informed decision from the

communities, affected communities from the leadership, from regional leadership and from the local leadership. I sympathize with members who have lost their major project with substantial amount of money, but it is not the first time it has happened. You will not be the only one who has lost your project. I have lost three projects during the past six years.

Mr. Chairman, because we are in a democracy, all

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twenty-four members of the Legislature are not able to make decisions on behalf of the government. We have selected, we have delegated the Cabinet members to make day to day decision on our behalf, on behalf of the public. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that given the fiscal restraint that we are faced with the Cabinet has a very difficult task before them. Given the needs demonstrated by the communities, by the region and also demonstrated by a number of communications between the Cabinet and the affected communities, I think, the Cabinet membership has made a good decision but not satisfactory to everyone.

Mr. Chairman, I agree that the current practice by the Cabinet Ministers is not acceptable, perhaps, unfair. But somebody has to make the tough decision. I remember when we first got elected into the thirteenth Assembly the Premier of this government, Nellie Cournoyea, appeared before the caucus, she told us at that time, she said I do not envy you guys. You are going to have to make the tough decisions, This is not a time to be popular, this is the time to make the right decision. I believe that, Mr. Chairman, like you, like the Members, especially those who have lost substantial amount of money to changes to the capital plan.

I am not happy with the process. From here on you should try to make recommendations to the government within our ability, within our power as ordinary M.L.A.'s. Once that has happened, then we have to look into the policies and directives of the government to determine, Mr. Chairman, if the current practice is, in fact, in line with the power that was given to us by the federal government. If it is within the scope of the power given to us by the federal government I am willing to live with that, but I think the problem is communication from the cabinet to affected M.L.A.'s about their projects.

I sympathize with each and every one of you, that the lack of communication may have played a role in what

is happening now at this time. It is not a pleasant discussion, what is happening, but I think once we talk about it, determine the guidelines or recommendations, and perhaps all the animosity that is going on before us will disappear. Like I said before we have news in Gjoa Haven and Kitikmeot every conceivable means to try and acquire the nursing station, we have lost it once or twice, or three times before. I believe that the cabinet has made the right decision because we have demonstrated the need to acquire the health centre. I wish from here on that the name health centre of Gjoa Haven has come up a number of times. I am not about to sit here and listen to people talking about my community. I do not want to get personal and I hope that I have indicated to you that I put things into perspective. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I do not believe there was a question?

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start off by making a statement regarding Mr. Ningark's comments. First of all, John, all the power to you that your community received a new health centre, that is great and I do not think that is the issue and I am sure some of your friends that live in Arviat are also very happy for you, but I am not quite sure if you would feel as, I guess, to be as complimenting as you have been to the cabinet, if you were sitting there with three-quarters of a million dollars having been jerked out of your community. Mr. Todd mentioned about changing a few toilets around. I wish it were only that simple.

The community of Arviat is one of the fast growing communities in the Eastern Arctic, maybe in the north, averaging between 80 and 100 babies a year and the issue of a new health centre has been on the burner for a number of years, to the point where three years ago the community just a piece of land that had a large commercial building on it, the building was demolished, the lot was prepared for what they thought would be for a new health centre. Once again they were disappointed, it did not happen.

Early this spring we had Mr. Ng, the Minister of Health and Social Services, in Arviat attending the Nunavut Leader Summit. At that point he toured the health centre with, I believe, and I stand to be corrected, a staff member and also the SAO. At that point it was, I will not say committed, but inferred that there would be dollars this year for the health centre. Even though it was only geared

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toward a retrofit, phase one.

The community was still bent on a new centre and we have some disagreement over that, but at least there was \$800,000 committed in this year's capital budget toward the retrofit of the health centre, a 35 year old health centre that is probably the oldest in the Eastern Arctic. There is no surprise that the community and myself will be quite disappointed when this money was removed and again to compound this without any consultation with myself or the community. Any consultation that did take place was after the fact.

I do not think it really matters whether we are talking about \$50,000 or \$800,000. It is the process that is wrong, flawed, and many people have said that over the last few days and I heard the premier statements and his comments indicate that he was satisfied with some of these changes. I did not hear him indicate that he reviewed the Arviat Health Centre, where three-quarters of a million dollars was removed. That is a significant amount of money and I have some difficulty when the premier states that they have accepted the rationale for these moves. Well it certainly is not acceptable to me, as the M.L.A. of the community.

What I should do at this point is ask the Minister, Mr. Ng, if he can explain the rationale to myself and the members of my community and also considering the history considering that there was at one point a few years ago, as in Mr. Ningark's case, a new health centre promised, so if Mr. Ng would not mind providing myself and the Members here with some historical background as to the promise of a new facility, to the promise of a retrofit, to zero. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng, Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, it is a regrettable situation when you cannot meet all the needs of all the people that are out there in our constituencies, and this particular example is certainly a case that highlights that, that within the Department of Health and Social Services capital allocations, both Members are correct that have spoken on the issues of their health centres, both Gjoa Haven and the community of Arviat were scheduled originally to have new health facilities, their funding for new health facilities was later during the course of events down scaled to renovations and particularly in last year's business planning cycle, the Department of Health and Social Services undertook to change all the focus of their capital plans of new facilities to renovations, partly because of the fact that they thought they could address the needs through some renovations on a short-term basis, to address needs in communities and give them the luxury and the time of planning things out, subsequent to those projects being reprofiled as renovations, that capital plan went forward to this assembly for approval in May of this '96 year, Mr. Chairman.

During March of the year, Public Works and Services completed structural and technical assessments of both Gjoa Haven and the Arviat Health Centres. Both reports recommended the construction of new facilities, or they advised that putting dollars into renovations would only be a short-term solution and the overall cost effectiveness would not necessarily be there. Because of that fact, the Department of Health and Social Services capital budget that was approved, carried four renovation projects for health Centres, that being Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Arviat and Gjoa Haven.

Because of the fact that the Arviat and Gjoa Haven were both recommended for new health centres, the Department, and particularly myself as the Minister, was in a dilemma, I mean I could decide to go ahead with renovations and bandaid, short-term solution to both communities, that might have gotten them by for two or three years, but that would not have addressed the long term needs of either community.

I made a decision or a recommendation to the financial management board for approval, that was subsequently approved, to focus on trying to create and establish a new facility in one of the communities, in this case Gjoa Haven, and as a result of that, of course, there had to be money taken from other health centre renovations to accommodate that, and as you see in the outline of the capital plan changes, \$482,000 came out of the Fort Providence renovation,

\$490,000 came out of the Fort Resolution Health Centre renovation, and \$728,000 came out of the Arviat Health Centre renovation and that is a total of \$1.7 million dollars was reprofiled into the Gjoa Haven project as a new health centre facility, which

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totalled, added onto their approved renovation amount, totalled \$2.3 million dollars, which is what the capital estimate was for a new health centre for that community.

The decision was a tough one, of course, Mr. O'Brien is correct, Arviat is one of the fastest growing communities in the Northwest Territories with an average growth rate of 2.5 per cent per year; however, I looked at that and I also looked at the fact that Gjoa Haven is also, if not one of the, the highest growing populations, as well, percentage-wise. Their growth rate over the past years have been about 3 per cent. There was also the factor, Mr. Chairman, that weighted the decision towards Gjoa Haven, the fact that their facility, even though they have a smaller population, they have a 503 square metre facility, and Arviat had a 670 square metre facility, but the fact remains that the Gjoa Haven facility, it had been pointed out to us by the Health Board there, that they did not have adequate program space. In other words that they did not have enough space for the nurses to operate in their current facility. Both facilities were also built around the same time, both in states of disrepair that required upgrading, of course. As I indicated earlier, both facilities had been slated for replacements at some point in time.

However, the other thing I looked at was the fact that the Gjoa Haven facility had been renovated in 1981, and also in 1987, while the Arviat health centre had been renovated in 1977, and the last one in 1990.

So those were a couple of the factors that I took into consideration in determining the tough decision of which community to build a new health centre in, Mr. Chairman.

Another issue that was taken into consideration, and Mr. O'Brien is correct. When I was in the community of Arviat, I did have a chance to tour the facility with the SAO, and with the deputy mayor at the time. They knew that there was some renovation monies there. They were talking about the possibility of block funding it, so that they could undertake the renovations themselves. But at the same time, the community was requesting a new facility. So there

was some conflicting messages to me, of what exactly was the request coming from the community.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, in committee of the whole, as you know, I also raised the point of the fact that the Department of Health and Social Services was deficient in some of their capital funds. Mr. Ningark had asked for a commitment on the Gjoa Haven health centre, which I had assured him I would try to do everything I could to ensure that that project took place, to meet their needs. A delegation from the municipality of Gjoa Haven, the mayor, deputy mayor, and two or three of the councillors also were down to outline to me their need of a new health facility, this past spring as well.

I was not getting the same type of signals from the community of Arviat, or their representative. Although I am not saying that they are not there, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, both communities had the need. A decision had to be made. One community would benefit, and one community would not, in the short term. I still plan on addressing the needs of Arviat in the future, Mr. Chairman, provided funding could be freed up to allow that to happen. Basically, Mr. Chairman, that is what I have to comment on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I take strong exception that Mr. Ng made in closing, that he was not getting the same signal from myself. I take it when a Minister tells me that X number of dollars are going to go into the capital budget, that they go in. I take his word that when it is approved, that it will stay there. It will be used for what it was put in there for. I did not think there was any need to jump up and down, and create a scene when this money was put in the budget. It was approved. So why should I? I accepted that the process was legitimate, and it was going to honour the commitment that was there.

The bottom line here, and we have talked about this the last few days, it is not that the money went to John's riding, all the power to him, that is great. It is the process. Judging from the comments that were made here today, I do not see this process changing in years to come, in the short time that we have left. So therefore, in order to ensure that capital dollars stay in place, for what they were intended for, we need some kind

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of a mechanism to make sure that they are not moved arbitrarily, without the consent or the approval of the Member.

I think it is fair to say, from the comments that we have heard today, there are not going to be any changes. We will be at the table again next year, facing the same situation. We could. I do not think there is any need to beat a dead horse. The changes have to be made. They have to be made here by the people who were elected to do so. That is all I have to say. Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. I have Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Erasmus, and Mr. Ootes, and we have twenty-five, thirty-five minutes left. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to attempt to refocus, at least my discussion, to some of the process issues that I still have. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to summarize my concerns here, and then I will let other people speak.

The issue to me is a system of accountability, and a process that is fair, and equally important, that is seen to be fair, and I think the basic principle that I had a problem with, as I tried to express in my mediocre way yesterday. The issue to me is once you make an arrangement, is it acceptable for a Minister to create, or bring money to their capital riding, for projects that are not on a capital plan?

I realize that there was nothing illegal done. That all the rules were complied with. But I also think that the rules of engagement as Mr. Todd indicated were changed, when this Assembly got together. Those rules were written for a system that has not caught up with the way we are trying to do business now. That in my opinion, legality often has nothing to do with what is right. As I am finding out, my own personal battle over my election for sure.

The issue is the relationship that we struck as an Assembly when we first got here. How is that being honoured? I think there are some process issues. The Premier has indicated what his suggestion is for the rec complex. I think it is a good suggestion. The road has been built, and it is an issue that is basically hypothetical. We can argue over whether it was an

appropriate decision or not. The reality is it is in there. It was not on the capital plan.

Those two items typify the concern, and the need to clarify this process. I am hoping that as we complete our discussions we can start focusing down on exactly how we intend to proceed with this issue. I understand that Mr. Todd's gone, and Mr. Antoine will be leaving, Steve's gone as well. We may end up having to defer any motions we may want to put forward. I would hope that we can bring this issue to some sort of resolution, in the not too distant future. There is a suggestion on the floor by the Premier. The key is, we have to nail down ways that we have to fix the system, so that we do not have to do this again next year. So I think we have to recognize that there are going to be cabinet ministers away. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Erasmus, from Yellowknife North. The Premier would like to respond to Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. In the previous Assemblies, there has been changes to the capital plan. As far as accountability is concerned, we are accountable to the House, and accountable to the committees. Whenever we make a change, we bring that back to the committee. I have already said earlier today that that community hall or that building in Simpson anyhow, the one that MACA is doing, is that we should put that building on hold until we can put through the process, because that is a new project. Okay.

What we should also look at doing is that when there is money to be moved, and there will be money that needs to be moved. There is no doubt in my mind, that is going to have to happen. Then we should discuss a process of how a new capital project comes into the process in mid-year. I think that between whatever committee is in charge of that, and the Minister of FMB should be able to work that out. So that you can work out a process. At all times, you must understand there will be money moved from time to time. All we have to figure out, is how we do that. So that you do not tie the hands of government so tight so that there is no movement of dollars. I commit to Members that I will ask John to work with the proper committee and then we can come back into

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committee of the whole, and you can work out the motions it takes to take care of that issue.

Just to go back to communication. When I was a Minister of the Housing Corporation, I had a hard time convincing people that I did not walk around the territories with houses in my back pocket. They were all allocated from a needs process. The needs process is what drove the allocation. So in some cases, things happen so that one community would need three or four houses, maybe in the Eastern Arctic. And it was usually in the Eastern Arctic. They could not build all their houses. So I might borrow from Whale Cove, three or four houses. But I let the Member know. I am borrowing two or three houses from you this year, and I am lending them to Lac La Martre. Next year, you will get your three or four houses back, and Lac La Martre loses three or four houses out of their allocation. It is straightforward. It is communication. That is the Minister's job.

And I will make sure that the Ministers do that job. If money is being moved in the ridings, and if it affects any Member of this Assembly, the Ministers will communicate. That is the way you should do business. And I agree with that. So that should put that item to bed. Now, all we have to really discuss is the process of how, if, and it is very very seldom, if a new project has to come into the capital process, how do you do that. If you are not satisfied that is there now, let us change it. We have that ability. But let us do that through consultation between ordinary Members, whether it be the Ops Committee, or whoever, and the Minister of the Financial Management Board. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you Mr. Morin. I have a half an hour. I have Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Ootes, and Mr. Krutko. Could I ask Members not to refer to who is absent and who is present?

---Interjection by some Hon. Members.

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I agree that we cannot continue on this subject forever without coming up with some type of mechanism for dealing with the current situation, as well as the future situations. It has been suggested that Yellowknife gets block

funding. I do not really understand the situation, Mr. Chairman. There are parts of my constituency that do not receive block funding. I understand fully the implications of Dettah or N'dilo's capital projects being deferred or deleted.

Mr. Chairman, I also understand that Ministers have to manage. And I also understand that we are trying to balance the budget. And that sometimes cuts have to be made. However, we have spent a lot of time and effort into the capital plan. Every year we will be doing that. I believe that what we agree on has to be fairly rigid. But it cannot be an iron-clad guarantee that nothing will move.

I am a strong believer in community empowerment. As a person working for the aboriginal community, I have fought for it for years. So I cannot agree that a community cannot change its priority, and want another project.

At the same time, as the Premier has alluded to, there should be consultation with the community, and with the MLA for that community, if projects are going to be deferred or deleted. If the community does not agree, however, I think there should be some kind of appeal process. Perhaps there could be a joint committee in Cabinet and the MLAs to decide this. We have had joint committees working on various things since we have come to office, and they work quite well.

I also liked the Premier's suggestion on how to deal with the current situation with the project that is ongoing in Fort Simpson and I agree that we also need some type of a process for new projects. I am not sure whether the other MLAs are satisfied with the rationalization for the projects that have been moved, but, certainly an objective observer, they seem reasonable. But we do need process for new projects for the future and I believe that is what we should try to focus on now rather than continuing on talking about what has already occurred and what I believe was done with full substantiation for most of the projects. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. I have Mr. Ootes, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to pass on my comments that I appreciate the Premier's opening

remarks before the committee of the whole today. I appreciate the

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fact that he is prepared to look at the Fort Simpson situation and to consider that the standing committees be involved in perhaps reallocating some money. He did make some references to community empowerment that raise some concern for me, but that is not a subject I will get into today. I think that is another subject altogether.

Mr. Todd also mentioned that he understands modifications are necessary and I appreciate that comment. I also feel, too, yes, Cabinet needs to be able to make modifications. There are going to be situations when that occurs. If you are underspending in a project, what do you do with the funds? I am not sure I am completely satisfied with the rationalization for the movement of all the capital, but I think we have heard the explanations for it and, to me, the issue now is the process. I need to be able to, in my mind, be satisfied that when there is movement of capital that it is done certainly with the knowledge, if not the approval, of the Member that is affected by it and that money not be transferred to new projects.

I am looking to resolve this issue as well and I appreciate being able to make my comments on that and what the other Members have stated today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Krutko, MLA for the Mackenzie Delta.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the Minister of Justice with regard to the community corrections centre for which \$1,000,074 was allocated to that program. In 1995/96, there was \$50,000 spent and part of that was used in the community of Aklavik to develop a proposal and look at developing a corrections facility within that community. Now I see that you have basically taken that out and implemented a new program with regard to the wilderness camp contributions without having the courtesy of going into that community and basically telling them that the change has taken place, and also ask them if they want to be involved with this new program.

In my riding, the community of Aklavik has no core funding this year for \$128,000. Thousands of dollars, not millions, but thousands. Why has the community not been consulted in regard to that change and had the courtesy of going in there had having a public meeting to discuss it? Yet, they put an effort into this and then find out it has been taken out of the budget without consultation with the community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Were you directing a question to someone?

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I regret that adequate consultation in this particular change was not carried out properly. I guess the word is out there now, but I will have my departmental representatives go in and talk to the community. We have provided notice on the availability of capital contributions to wilderness camps in the last couple of weeks. Again, I regret that the notification on the change was not done in a timely fashion, but it is one of the things that has been pointed out and we will endeavour not to let happen in the future, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. For the record, Mr. Ng is also Minister of Justice. I have Mr. Krutko with another question.

MR. KRUTKO:

Would you consider the revisiting the proposal that has been put together for Aklavik and a portion of that \$974,000 dollars be given to the community, and also Fort Resolution which was the other recipient of this misuse of justice with regard to the allocation of funding. Would you consider allowing the communities to sit down and take another look at their proposals with regard to developing wilderness camps because their proposal did have the allocation of developing a facility or using existing facilities for such a venture. They were under the impression that they were being seriously looked at and that they were in discussions with the department prior to this change happening.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko.

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Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, I would be willing to have the staff work with the communities to see if they can reach an accommodation and try to assist them to establish wilderness camps in their communities. I think we have some obligation to them because of the fact there were some expectations in those communities prior to this change happening, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you ensure that you will allocate \$450,000 to Aklavik?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I did not specify an amount. I said we would be willing to work with the communities to see what kind of proposals they have and to try to develop them and assist them as much as we can, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I will move on to Mr. Henry, and we have 15 minutes left gentlemen.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will keep my comments brief, realizing the time.

No amount of discussion is going to change the fact that there is not going to be a health centre in Arviat this year. No amount of discussion or debate is going to remove the pavement from where it is located in Fort Simpson. I am satisfied with the Premier's comments on putting this issue to one of the -- and I think he suggested the government OPS Committee. I would be satisfied with that to get some resolution to

that where a proposal can be worked out as to how this situation can be dealt with.

I accept the fact, and by the government's admission, that, yes, probably there was a lack of communication here. I think especially for the MLAs concerned, it is probably a very serious lack of communication. I can understand very much their frustration and I think the sooner that this goes to the government Operations Committee to work out some type of guidelines for presentation to the government for some feedback, I would suggest the better and I would encourage the Premier to ensure that that would be put on the agenda as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. We seem to be going around here again. I have Mr. O'Brien, then Mr. Ootes, and 15 minutes left.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng. The Minister indicated earlier that he was aware of the legitimate need for a new health centre for Arviat and one of the reasons he has given is the fact that there was some conflicting information as to whether it be retrofit or new, and so on and so forth. My question to the Minister is, can the people of Arviat look forward to a newer health centre next year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng, Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I cannot commit, so the capital funding for next year, the business plan as it stands now, and the budgets, will be coming forward. I can commit to trying to address the needs of Arviat as a first priority for a new health centre, provided that the funding is available, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me, at this point in time, how many new health centres are planned for next year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng, I leave it up to you whether you want to answer that or not. The question was how many health centres you plan for next year.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, It is my understanding that, because the budget is not before the House, that it would be premature to discuss any aspect that would be in the budget, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I also feel it is a little off the subject. We are talking about changes to the existing capital plan. So, I have one more name and that is Mr. Ootes and then we should come up with some kind of decision here. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman, I suggest that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the committee agree that we should report progress?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Do I have a motion? All in favour of the motion to report progress.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Is that a motion, Mr. Ootes?

MR. OOTES:

I make a motion that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

There is a motion on the floor. All in favour of the motion to report progress? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Committee will come back to order. On items 20, Report of the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering tabled document 68-13(3) and would like to report progress and Mr. Speaker I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order seconded by Mr. Ningark. To the motion, questions being called, all those in favour? All those opposed?

Motion is carried, thank you, Mr. Steen.

Mr. Clerk, third reading of bills. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, Orders for the Day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the ordinary members caucus at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Orders of the Day for Friday, October 4th.

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

6. Oral Questions
 7. Written Questions
 8. Returns to Written Questions
 9. Replies to Opening Address
 10. Petitions
 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 13. Tabling of Documents
 14. Notices of Motion
 15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 16. Motions
 17. First Reading of Bills -- Bill 16
 18. Second Reading of Bills
 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: TD 68-13(3), Ministers' Statements 82 and 86
 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
- Page 877
21. Third Reading of Bills
 22. Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, October 4th, 1996 at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT