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The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

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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 Kakwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Hon. Manito Thompson, Hon. John Todd.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.

Minister's Statement 112-13(3): Northwest Territories Crime Stoppers Award

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Crime Stoppers Association is an incorporated non-profit society with registered charitable status. The association is run by a board of unpaid volunteered directors to assist law enforcement, in particular, the RCMP in the Northwest Territories, to protect and prevent crime.

One of the principle methods of doing so is to publicly solicit and reward anonymous tips, which lead to the arrests of offenders, and often, the recovery of property and seizure of contraband.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police provide the services of members to act in an advisory capacity, Crimestoppers solicits it's funding from private individuals, businesses and service organizations, without whose support the program would not be possible. Presently the Northwest Territories Crimestoppers Association has active programs in Iqaluit and Yellowknife and would welcome the participation of other communities in the Territories.

It has recently posted a substantial reward of \$10,000 for information regarding the disappearance of Charlene Catholique. On July of 1990, Charlene Catholique, then 15 years old and a resident of Lutselk'e arrived in Yellowknife to attend the Dene Assembly in Dettah. While she was in Yellowknife, she travelled to Fort Rae to visit with friends. Charlene was reported missing having last been seen in Fort Rae on or around July 22, 1990. She has not been located to date, and the police feel the clues which will identify the person or persons responsible for Charlene's disappearance will be found in the community of Fort Rae.

The police are grateful for the cooperation and care exhibited by the people of Fort Rae to date, but are hopeful the sizable Crimestoppers reward will spur someone on to reveal some clue previously omitted. Due to the efforts of R.C.M.P. Staff Sergeant, Vern White, who has recently been transferred to another jurisdiction, and the volunteer members of the Board of Directors, the N.W.T. Crimestoppers Association has just been awarded an award for most improved Crimestoppers unit in North America, for 1995. This is indeed a notable accomplishment. 1996 promises to be as successful as 1995, as of June of this year, there were 117 anonymous tips and 9 reward payments totalling \$3,825, leading to 22 arrests, recovery of \$16,375 in property and the seizure of \$85,520 in drugs. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members will join me in congratulating the Northwest Territories Crimestoppers Association and thanking them for their contribution. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Ministers' Statement, Member's Statement, Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement on Concerns Regarding the Pangnirtung Air Strip

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to outline a problem that I see becoming larger and more serious. My constituency in the Community of Pangnirtung are worried about the future of their airstrip, and the air service. Mr. Speaker, anyone who has travelled to Pangnirtung knows that the airstrip is now in the middle of the town, right beside the main

school. This town is growing, Mr. Speaker. It is the second largest town in the Baffin region. There are rules that 740 type aircraft may no longer be able to serve the town because of this airstrip and its location. This is a growing town and great potential for business development. It is the centre for major arts and crafts business. A major tourism destination because it is the entrance to Auyuittuq National Park. It is also the centre of growing commercial fisheries in the Baffin region.

All of these positive elements in the community depend on the air services. The future economic growth of this community is closely tied to the airstrip. To relocate the airstrip is a major project in my community. In Pangnirtung with its narrow land space and high cliffs, it will be a great challenge, but the work must begin now, the planning of location, the planning of facilities and, of course, the planning of the funds necessary for such a project. It might be easy for some people to say wait for Nunavut, they can pay for that, but, Mr. Speaker we all know that these projects take a long time and we must start now. I will be working closely with the people of Pangnirtung and the Minister of Transportation in an effort to get this project started to the community to continue to grow. Thank you.

(Native Language speaker)

MR. SPEAKER:

I thought it was today, that we had Slavey translation but perhaps maybe there was not so, I just wanted to recognize the member for the Western Arctic, our MP Miss Ethel Blondin-Andrew, welcome to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Member's Statement, Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement On Minister's Literacy Award Recipient Nunia Qanatsiaq

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a constituent and long time family friend, Nunia Qanatsiaq, for her recent Minister's Literacy Award. Nunia is a single mom who began teaching as a classroom assistant in Hall Beach, during the mid '80s. She began taking Eastern Arctic Teaching Education Courses at Retap in 1989. She began working full time in the school, raising her two children, Jonah and Daryl. Nunia

completed her Teaching Certificate and recently graduated with her Bachelor of Education from McGill University in Montreal. Nunia was the editor of the Arctic College student newspaper while attending the campus in Iqaluit and was involved with many after-school curricular activities. This mother is now helping to develop Inuktitut resource material while teaching at the college in Iqaluit. She also finds time to visit my wife and I on a regular basis to give lessons in Scrabble, which Nunia and my wife usually win.

I have known Nunia since she was 14 years old. I would like to congratulate this dedicated educator, mother and friend, for her work promoting Inuktitut literacy and her drive and determination through very trying times to complete her Bachelor of Education degree and the recent winning of the Minister's Literacy Award. I look forward to presenting the award in person to Nunia at the end of the month in Iqaluit when I return at the end of the session and standing committee meetings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Member's Statement On GNWT Budget Reduction Program

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is regarding my favourite topic, this government's budget reduction program.

Mr. Speaker, this past Thanksgiving weekend provided me with the opportunity to do some visiting in the Yellowknife area. Almost every person that I spoke to had serious reservations with this government's slash and burn approach to the territorial budget. Mr. Speaker, I was saddened by the contrast of people trying to celebrate Thanksgiving while they wrestle with despair and low morale created by being, or knowing, a government employee who wondered if they were getting a pink slip or a pay cheque for Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, I was beginning to feel like a lone wolf regarding my recent statements in this House relating to job losses and reductions to this government's programs and services.

As we all know, misery loves company. So I decided to contact some Northerners from both the East and the Western Arctic. I talked to Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal people, employees of this government, whose names I cannot mention, and some who were unemployed. Mr. Speaker, during my conversation, I asked each person's view of this government's cutback policy. A summary of their views, is that most Northerners realize that there must be cuts, as a result of the questionable spending of previous governments.

But the question that surfaced, was, what are these cuts, and what are the costs of these cuts? Mr. Speaker, the business people I spoke to said although they originally agreed to the cost cutting exercise at first, they no longer could support this policy. The general consensus was that these cuts are out of control, and this government is acting more like a bank as opposed to a government concerned about it's people.

Mr. Speaker, generally people do not understand this governments paranoia with carrying a larger and extended debt, as long as it is consistently and responsibly reduced, within a reasonable time frame. If our circumstances, of course were different, it would be easier to tolerate these serious cuts. However, given the fact that very few jobs have been created, and in fact to date that we do not even have a job strategy in place. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Member for Kivalliviq is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement, are there any nays? We have no nays. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. However, given the fact that there have been very few jobs created and in fact that we do not even have, to date, a job strategy in place. We have to consider all that facts. In most communities we have the highest unemployment rates in Canada, we also have the lowest number of high school graduates, we have the highest birth rates in the country and live in one of the harshest climates in the world.

He should also remind the federal Minister of Finance that the NWT cannot withstand these cuts as we are not equivalent to provinces like Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. Mr. Speaker, I close with these words,

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that were spoken to me this weekend by a constituent of mine.

The Premier and his Cabinet do not seem to be listening to the concerns of the public, they have written their own agenda and they are racing ahead at all costs. We did not vote these people in to hurt us, we voted them in to help us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Members' statements, Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement on Poor Housing Conditions

MR. BARNABAS:

(through a translator) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (end translator.) ..especially in the north. Housing is critical to survive even in the '90s. There are still very long winters and the wind still blows. Our people have all learned to make their own homes to survive in conditions that no-one else on earth can still believe. Now we have benefitted from modern houses designed in the south, mostly built by southerners and until three years ago, often badly designed and badly built.

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for the High Arctic is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? We have no nays, You have unanimous consent Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

The Government of Canada must maintain the relatively good conditions we have come to expect in the NWT and extend our standards to the reservations in the south. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to raise this issue and I will be asking questions to the Minister in question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Members' statements, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Strategies To Promote Job Creation

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is committed to assist in the development of those sectors of the economy that provide new businesses, employment opportunities to our communities. Many of those opportunities are going to be community driven in the area that our people do well. Block funding, turning over of funds, program dollars, administration dollars, capital dollars will be transferred over to our communities as well as infrastructure, buildings and the question of ownership. This will give our elected community leaders exactly what they want - the opportunity to set priorities over programs and services, property management, capital projects delivered in their home communities.

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Government has to serve the people, not itself. This means that the government will be making sure that Aboriginal rights - treaty rights - and Aboriginal concerns and views are taken into account in the planning process and decisions. Partnerships in operating health and education boards will go to the community level under community empowerment initiatives. Is this a priority of the government and this Assembly to work towards healthy communities and community based problem solving by continuing the community wellness initiative?

Instead of three or four government assisted organizations helping people at the community level there would be a single more cost-effective agency, like that of the Tl'oondih Healing Society that can serve as a centre for community wellness initiatives within our communities. Our communities will be able to use block funding from the government to set our priorities, programs, such as education, health services, social services, social assistance, employment and training, community justice and other initiatives.

Healthy communities are needed to take advantage of job opportunities that will be created through privatization and by seizing the economic development opportunities. Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude by statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. We are preparing to deal with change, and change won't manage us, we will manage it. It is our right and we as leaders represent our constituencies, have the obligation to see that this government carries through with those commitments, and they have stated the change will be coming and the communities will have the opportunity to empower themselves. At a later date I will be asking the appropriate Minister a question on community empowerment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Just to remind the members about ties in this Chamber. I am just looking at the rules. Again, if members feel offended by the way members dress in here, then it can be brought up, if you have an open shirt on, then you should have something that goes with it, either a beaded tie or, I do feel that we take offence to it.

Members' Statement, Mr. Ootes

Member's Statement On Planning For Division

MR. OOTES:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, almost every day someone in this house gets up and reminds us that division is only 2 and 1/2 years away. There is a reason why we keep returning to this theme. Division is a massive process and we have set ourselves on a very tight deadline. When you mix it in, the priorities of deficit reduction and constitutional development in the west, the task seems even more daunting.

Given these circumstances, I worry that we will rush division. I fear that we will make ill-thought decisions and that the Territorial Government staff in services will be shipped blindly to Iqaluit. This would not be good for the Western Arctic, nor would it be good for Nunavut which is in the very early stages of building its institutions. Mr. Speaker, in my mind, for division to succeed, the east and the west will have to share resources, at least for the first few years. This will give the new government a chance to build itself and will minimize disruptions here. It may also build foundations for lasting partnerships which will help the two governments take advantage of economies of scale. Now as everyone knows, I am the MLA for Yellowknife Centre, and it would not surprise me if you are shaking your heads saying to yourselves, "He's just trying to protect jobs in his riding". This is

true, but my vision is not that narrow. I want division to succeed, but I do not and I truly believe it cannot succeed if we try to do everything in the next 30 months. We must look at this process as a partnership process. Otherwise we both come away worse off for it. Of course, each territory will

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need immediate and exclusive jurisdiction in vital areas, education, health and social services come to mind as examples. However, there are many areas where we can continue to work together, at least until it becomes practical to finalize the division process.

Furthermore, I believe there are areas where we will want to work as partners for a long time to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On GNWT Protected Area Strategy

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address the government's new protected area strategy.

All northerners recognize that we live in a unique part of the world. While many see the arctic as barren and empty, we, who live here, know that appearances can be deceiving. The land has been a fruitful source of life for northern peoples for centuries. Those of us who have lived here for any length of time still recognize the bounty of flora and fauna in the north.

We also recognize that there is great wealth beneath the surface of the land. Most of those who have come to this north over the last 70 years have come either directly or indirectly because of gold, lead, zinc, uranium, oil, gas and now, diamonds that lie beneath the arctic.

Balancing the fragile surface environment with the economic needs and resources below it is an ongoing responsibility. We need both but one must not be allowed to destroy or preclude the other. I appreciate what the government is trying to do with its protected area strategy, we do need to protect our land and our environment to ensure that it is viable for millennia to come. Those who have lived here for generations have much to teach us about, and respect for, the

land. But we must also have respect for those interests of those who have invested much time, money and effort into finding and developing the riches that lie beneath the surface.

That is why I am concerned that the government does not appear to have properly allowed for consultation with the mining industry regarding this strategy. I am not saying that we should not protect areas, but I am saying it is wrong to proceed with an initiative such as this without extensive consultation with all stakeholders, not just the federal government, Aboriginal organizations and environmental organizations. The mining industry, as well, should be included as a key participant in the development and implementation of this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Fort Smith's 30th Anniversary Since Achieving Town Status

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the month of October this year Fort Smith is celebrating its status of a town which it has had for the last 30 years.

In the last 30 years, Mr. Speaker, Fort Smith has moved from a small government run community to a strong self-confident, tax-based municipality that is economically sound. Like other communities, we are experiencing the effects of government down-sizing, however, that does not, and should not, detract from all that Fort Smith has accomplished in the last 30 years. I would like to hope and wish that the next 30 years are as progressive for the town of Fort Smith as the first 30 have been.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, given this momentous occasion, I am glad to say that Fort Smith is a place I am very proud to call home. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Members' statements, members' statements. Returns to oral questions, Mr. Kakfwi.

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ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 358-13(3): Commercial Hunting Treaty Rights

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is in response to a question asked by Mr. Erasmus on the 29th May. It is in recognition of commercial hunting treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, the existing Wildlife Act came into effect in 1979, in recognition of the practices in effect at that time. The entire Act at this time is currently under review and a list issues including licensing, permitting and paramountcy of Aboriginal rights is being compiled.

The intent is to develop options which will form the basis for discussion paper for public consultation. The public consultation we believe will be quite lengthy. Meanwhile, amendments to part two of the Act is being drafted to address provisions of the Gwich'in and Sahtu land claim agreements. These agreements require review by the appropriate land claim organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the law is always changing. That is why legislation is periodically reviewed and amended. If provisions in any territorial legislation conflict with a Supreme Court of Canada decision, the new decision prevails. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Kakfwi. Returns to Oral questions, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 401-13(3): Impact of Foster Care Rate Reduction

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Picco on October 4th in respect to the impact of foster care rate reductions. As of October 8, 1996, one foster family in Yellowknife has decided to discontinue their services and Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there have been no other families in the Northwest Territories withdraw their services. Several foster parents have expressed their concern about the reduction to the rate structure for children with special needs. Some have indicated that they may not be prepared to carry on, but will continue to do so in the short term while departmental staff and the

Yellowknife Foster Family Association work together to review this matter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome in the gallery today Mr. Adla Itorcheak from Iqaluit. Adla is one of the first Inuit to receive his Bachelor of Administration from Acadia University in the south and is a long term resident of Iqaluit and a good friend of mine.

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance, and it relates to the net value of this government's payroll tax. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister advise this House as to how much revenue this tax actually brings in to this government each year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. The net revenue, I believe it was, the best way to describe that would be to say that the total revenues brought in by the GNWT are somewhere in the range of \$12 million. Due to the

way that the tax was set up, we provide a tax deduction at the end of the year, which is approximately 11, 11.5, so the net to the GNWT is about half a million dollars. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question supplementary Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister advise this House as to what is the cost to administer and collect this revenue?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you Mr. Speaker. The approximate cost to service this \$12 million in revenues is approximately three PYs which is somewhere in the region of \$300,000. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question supplementary Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Minister is to ask if this tax is giving such a minimal revenue compared to the cost of collecting it, will the Minister consider and commit to this House to abolish this tax in the next budget?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Well, I think with the level activity that may occur with respect to BHP and other operations which may provide a mechanism for employment for a large number of people outside the territories, we will have to take a look at that. And we are looking at the possibility of a re-examination of the payroll tax. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, final supplementary Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to completing his review or assessment prior to the next budget? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 482-13(3): Revenue From Payroll Tax

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to trying to conclude our review of the payroll tax prior to the next budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, Mr. Picco.

Question 483-13(3): Allegations By The Union of Northern Workers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Has the Minister received a package from the Union of Northern Workers with certain allegations? Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 483-13(3): Allegations By The Union of Northern Workers

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the question today, because it permits me the opportunity to express my diminishing tolerance, if you want, Mr. Speaker, for being subjected to this kind of groundless innuendo from the UNW. If the hoax to send the Housing Corporation job description, was not embarrassing enough for the UNW, materials released last week confirmed that there are those within that organization who prefer fiction to fact. I would say that they utilized the Oliver Stone approach, that one should never allow facts to get in the way of or entertaining conspiracy theory. It is regrettable, Mr. Speaker, that the media are only willing to be parties to this train which needlessly and recklessly damages the reputation of people committed to serving the public interests. Although,

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I recognize that one has to have thick skin in politics, Mr. Speaker, there is a threshold point where one has no choice but to look at other forms to find a remedy from the unsubstantiated rumour and thinly-veiled innuendo. I want to inform the leadership of the UNW and I want to be clear today, Jackie Simpson, Bob Robertson, Dave Talbot, I am now at that point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 483-13(3): Allegations By The Union of Northern Workers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, The Minister is in fine form today again. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is are you officially responding to said allegations?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 483-13(3): Allegations By The Union of Northern Workers

HON. JOHN TODD:

My last comment Mr. Speaker, where I have provided those who bring forward these allegations is clear what my position is. If it continues I will deal with it forthwith, and I will deal with it in a correct and proper manner, by seeking appropriate legal council.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 484-13(3): Broughton Island Air Strip

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to address my question to the Minister for Transportation, the Hon. Mr. Antoine. In the community of Broughton Island, the community airstrip lies along the beach and it is exposed to wind and soft spray and stormy conditions. On my last visit to this community, I noticed just how rough the surface of the airstrip has become. I have just learned from the community that the pilots in Broughton Island have commented on this repeatedly. I also notice the cable for the runway lights lies exposed on the surface where the salty air conditions can damage electrical equipment easily.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the minister has expressed his department's top priority as maintaining the safety of the flying public. Could the Minister please advise us on the amount of money in the current year budget for the repairs and maintenance of Broughton Island airstrip? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 484-13(3): Broughton Island Air Strip

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question, the concern of the honourable member is very well noted by myself. The specific question of exactly how much is in the current budget, I will have to take that as notice and then get back to him on that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral question, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister Responsible for the - he is no longer here. Let me redirect that question. My question is for the

Minister of Health and Social Services. Could the Minister indicate to this House whether he has had a chance to obtain the information relating to Trail Cross, the contract development process, the amount of staff, northern staff that have been hired and the type of program that is being run? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return to Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes I have been able to obtain the information. The current contractor is undergoing local hiring. They have received ten applications from within the community of the former employees of Trail Cross. They

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also have ten additional applications from other communities or other individuals from the Northwest Territories and they are going through the screening and interviewing process as we speak. Today with that anticipated November 1st opening date of the Trail Cross facility, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question supplementary Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister also indicate whether there will be any clinical support services attached to the program, or is this strictly going to be the current existing staff with no psychologists or family therapists involved? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return to Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that there will be additional clinical support from the program director who is expected to be a trained psychologist, and as well, there will be additional support provided by consulting psychiatrists and neuropsychologists. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Supplementary to Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to keep the House informed as to when hiring is finished, as to the final number of northern people that have been employed?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return to Question 485-13(3): Privatization of Trail Cross Facility

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will certainly make that commitment to continue to keep members informed of what is happening in this area, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, Mr. Barnabas.

Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

MR. BARNABAS:

As I mentioned in my statement earlier today, I am very concerned about the possible consequences that will flow from reduced housing programs. My question is for the Honourable Minister Mr. Goo Arlooktoo, Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Can the Minister please tell us about what percentage of the housing program in '95-'96 was built with money from the Government of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker I do not have the exact number of the percentage, but the vast majority of the NWTs Housing Corporation's capital budget money is allocated through this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister please tell what efforts this government is making now to get more assistance for the housing in the NWT? Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I announced last spring that the Government of the NWT would start negotiating with CMHC to transfer the entire housing program from the Federal Government to the NWT. That effort is

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ongoing, and we are hopeful that the CMHC held programs will be transferred to the NWT by this spring. At the present time, we continue to make appeals to the Federal Housing Minister for more housing funding. The Premier has made our position known to the Prime Minister and to the other Premiers, and we have had discussions with our 2 MP's in Ottawa. But the fact of the matter is in the last few years the money for housing from the Federal Government has been reduced by over \$45 million, and it is an uphill battle. But we continue to try for more funding.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary. Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us if the number of houses built has decreased from the previous years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo?

Further Return To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation will assist in the building of more houses than we did last year, but all of these houses are home ownership units and the reason why we can build more houses, with in fact, less money, is because we are using a down payment assistance program, where the GNWT helps clients with 25 percent down payment assistance.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the new housing in the coming year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 486-13(3): Reduced Housing Construction and Funding

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, in the next few weeks the committees will be going through the business plans of the Housing Corporation, which will outline our plans for the coming year. For future housing allocations, the

allocations are based on need, and the available funding that is there, so any future houses that we build will be dependent on those 2 factors.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Krutko.

Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in relation to the fairness and equity in regards to community empowerment in offering communities ways to deal with their problems step forth. My constituency has the lowest 10-year Government capital expenditures; it roughly works out to about \$1200 per person in the Mackenzie Delta. In the other ridings, almost twice the capital expenditures that we received. It also is a loss in regards to loss of jobs, business opportunities, training, and potential benefits to my constituency. My question is to the Minister of Finance. What is he going to do in regards to looking at the possibility of dealing with this problem especially when you are talking about fairness and also community empowerment to put everybody on the same footing? Would the Honourable John Todd provide to the House an explanation as to the effects of capital spending as they affect regional economies?

MR. SPEAKER:

Again, to remind members that community empowerment is on the agenda for today. And I want to remind the Minister too, that anything that is on the Orders for Today for consideration in Committee, does not have to be answered. But you could answer the other questions, too. Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I understand what my Honourable colleague is saying. I do not want to be offensive by making that comment. We are endeavouring in our business plans and when we make presentations to the Committees to try to explain the Honourable Members and to Cabinet that there has been, wherever possible, a fair distribution of dollars, whether it has been in capital dollars or in

some of the reduction programs that we have been working on. I am not quite sure how to answer the question, to be perfectly candid. I think the business plan process will hopefully answer the questions that my colleague wants addressed. I could talk to the staff, I guess, and see if there is some way we can put that in some summary to assure him, and others, that in most cases, we try to be fair and reasonable in terms of whether it is budget restraint or whether it is in capital expenditures. I am not sure whether that satisfies my colleague or not, but that is the best I can do right now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Krutko. Just again to remind the Members that a question must not be asked to seek information about a proceeding in a Committee which has not been reported in the House yet. So just a reminder, okay? Mr. Krutko, oral question.

Further to Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Honourable John Todd, Minister of Finance, provide information as to why the MacKenzie Delta region has been cut back to less than half the capital expenditures per capita compared to all southern ridings.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand where my colleague is heading with his questioning, and I would answer this way. The process we have now in place provides a more balanced approach and a fairer approach in the way in which capital monies and dollars are distributed. It may be fair to say that historically, that balance was not there, and I can provide them, if you want, with as much information as possible under this Government and the previous one, if that would be adequate for him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How does your Department plan to implement fair, equitable distribution of capital expenditures so that the Mackenzie Delta will not find itself in the same dilemma that we are in now, receive the same level of spending as any other region.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a process in place that provides the opportunity for the communities within my Honourable colleague's constituency to determine the appropriate priorities in capital expenditures. Those capital expenditures then come in through the system, and to the appropriate Ministers. Decisions are made then, and then back to the Committees, the appropriate Committees and advice and direction is given then. I think that process now is in place, and has been in place certainly in the term of this Government, and as a previous Minister and the previous one was in place then. I think if there are some disparities that are glaring, as my colleague is suggesting, that we need to find a way to work with him and the Ministers involved, whether it is in MACA or in Health or whatever, in an effort to see if there is arrangement to be made to balance out what he sees as an imbalance in where the money has been spent over this last year in particular. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Krutko.

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Further Supplementary To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary. Will the minister make an attempt to allow the Mackenzie Delta to court for us this priority item and be dealt with, like other regions based on what we have seen in the last round where we got cut in regards to the

Aklavik correction project that they were looking for. A motion was put forth in regard to the Tl'oondih Healing Camp that was having problems, also the debate I had in the House about my water treatment problem that we are having with water, I do not see any of those items being on anything to date, and I would like to have assurance from the Minister that we would table something in the House to show how he intends to do this.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd

Further Return To Question 487-13(3): Equity and Fairness of Capital Funding

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to point out that we just give directions to cabinet ministers in terms of targets. The Department of Finance and the FMB does not advise the individual ministers how to spend the money. I think the most direct way to deal with this would be that subject to approval by the Premier that we meet, as I have suggested with Mr. Krutko tomorrow, and some of these people in an effort to see where we can provide them with assistance to try to include this, perceive a real balance that he is talking about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Ootes

Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

MR. OOTES:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier, I would like to preface my question with a comment that cabinet has been really good at providing a lot of data and that data has been useful for the standing committees to make decisions. However, I find it extremely difficult to review the business plans and the budgets, when we don't know certain details, and some of the details, for example are, I believe that our salaries in the Territories for the GNWT and boards and agencies combined reaches somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$400,000,000. In generalities we know where that money goes to specific departments but we do not know any further details for specifics.

The other question I have is, how much goes into sole-source contracts and negotiated contracts, and I find it extremely difficult to be just to a situation when I do not know how much money is going to go to a sole-source contract, or a negotiated contract. We have a particular problem as members on this side, because we have to place faith in the Members of Cabinet that this is all correctly justified and we are getting value for our money. So, to me we have a very difficult situation on our hands to try to make judgement calls, now I wonder if the Premier could tell me, and he spoke about this last Friday, that he has been advised that Justice has advised him that there may be liability if we release details of the documents. I find that very difficult to understand, Mr. Speaker, especially when we are dealing with a request for 1995/96, I just do not understand why that would be a legal problem. Can the Premier elaborate on his statement of last Friday? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. That is an interesting preamble the member had leading up to the question. The members are fully aware, those members capable of reading the business plans and I guess, absorbing the information that we supply as a government to them. I know it is a lot of information. Information is in those business plans, the PYs are in the business plans. You have to read the documents, you see it as clear as day, as far as a sole-source and

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negotiated contracts, that are supplied to the committee that that department is responsible to report to. So the information is there, all the member has to do is pick it up and read it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question, before I recognize Mr. Ootes, I would like to recognize in the Gallery Mr. Jack Anawak the MP for the Eastern Arctic. Welcome to the Assembly. Mr. Ootes, oral questions.

Supplementary To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

MR. OOTES:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I think I am very stupid, Mr. Speaker. Also, I am a bit on the lazy side, (laughter), so what I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, since I am stupid and since I am lazy, would the Premier please supply me with the list, separated out, of the sole sourced contracts and the negotiated contracts. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 488-13(3):Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be pleased, under a personal and confidential letter to the Member, supplying him with that information, and also that information is available to the Government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

MR. OOTES:

Yes, I wonder if the Premier could also indicate the amounts of those sole source contracts and negotiated contracts when he does supply it, and I do appreciate the Premier's offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin

Further Return To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will try my best.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question, final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

MR. OOTES:

Yes, my final question is, when can we expect this information from the Premier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 488-13(3): Sole-Sourced and Negotiated Contracts

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As soon as the Ministers that are responsible for those contracts get that information to me, then I will get it to the Member and it should be before very long; it should not take that long. The exact time, I do not know.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Mr. Henry.

Question 489-13(3): Participants Developing the Protected Area Strategy

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, from what I understand, a northern mining industry has not been included in the list of those who will be consulted in the development of the Protected Areas Strategy. Can the Minister explain why this industry, which is not only the most important private player in the Northern economy, but also one of the most important players in the Northern environment, was not considered for consultation, in what undoubtedly what will be a critical and far-reaching strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 489-13(3): Participants Developing the Protected Area Strategy

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HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, as I understand the Protected Areas Strategy it is to take the initiative with the Federal Government to look at what needs to be done in order to recognize and set aside areas and to require protection in the event that development should start to accelerate in the Northwest Territories. We know that, and the mining companies are aware, although the public, as I understand, even in Yellowknife is not aware that the Federal Government owns about 95% of the land and all the resources in the Northwest Territories and dictates the terms and conditions under which development can occur. For instance, in the proposed Bathurst park, there are mining interests at play there. The Prime Minister just announced that there will be a feasibility study done to look at setting up a Bathurst park. However, it is in proximity to Polaris Mine, and there are some strong mining interests, staking, that have gone into that area. The Federal Government is fully aware of the amount of money and resources that the mining companies have put into exploration in the different areas in the Northwest Territories, and as such is at this time, the strongest advocate for protecting third party interests in any type of negotiations and any type of development of strategies in the Northwest Territories to date. The mining companies can rest assured, as will oil and gas companies, and other third party interests that, when it comes down to protecting the rights and the interests of third parties in the North, the Federal Government goes to great lengths and, in fact, constitution-wise, in claims' negotiations the rights of third parties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 490-13(3): Recognition of Outpost Camps as Communities

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Through a translator,) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of MACA, perhaps I will have a preamble before I put out a question.

Knowing that we are in hard time today there are some people who have been out on the land before and people have been saying that they wish to go back on the land and the government at the time had a policy that, if an outpost camp has a population of sixty people that is the only time that the government can recognize it as a community and does this policy still exist?

MR. SPEAKER:

Community Affairs, Mrs. Thompson.

Return To Question 490-13(3): Recognition of Outpost Camps as Communities

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Through a translator.) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member for Amittuq just indicated about outpost camps and I understand his concern. He asked that if there should be at least sixty people in order for an outpost camp to be recognized as a community or as a settlement, I will have to look into this matter and get back to the member on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, Mr. O'Brien.

Question 491-13(3): Reductions To Emergency Measures Funding

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for MACA, Mrs. Thompson.

Will the Minister from MACA update this House as to the recent news that probable cuts are forthcoming regarding the cost-sharing of the federal EMO funding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mrs. Thompson.

Return To Question 491-13(3): Reductions To Emergency Measures Funding

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the member clarify if he is talking about emergency measures?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. O'Brien, clarification.

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MR. O'BRIEN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that there is possible and probable cuts coming to the cost-sharing that the federal government provides for EMO funding. Emergency Measures Organization, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will get the details from my department and get back to the member. I will take that as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, the question is taken as notice. oral questions, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 492-13(3): Funding Available Under the Rural and Remote Housing Program

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

I have two constituents who have been paying into a mortgage under the old rural and remote housing program and have been doing so for the last 12 years. They initially borrowed \$61,000 and have paid about \$85,000 in interest and only \$7,000 of that \$85,000 has been paid against the principal. I understand that this program is under review and that they are looking at trying to back out of this program or close it down.

My question is, would the Minister consider the particular specific circumstances of these constituents when trying to back out of this program and making other arrangements to do so? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 492-13(3): Funding Available Under the Rural and Remote Housing Program

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the member for Thebacha first brought this issue up this spring the Housing Corporation instigated a review of the old rural and remote housing program where clients at the time, which was in the 1980s, were able to get mortgages through the Housing Corporation but they were not as generous as programs that followed. As the Corporation review is ongoing, I understand that there may be some areas where the Corporation will be able to assist clients that need assistance. They have been paying faithfully to their mortgages, which I understand that these few constituents are.

I will look into this a bit further, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, Mr. Miltenberger, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 492-13(3): Funding Available Under the Rural and Remote Housing Program

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate the time, or whether it would be possible for myself, through his good office, to meet with himself or the Deputy Minister on this particular issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 492-13(3): Funding Available Under the Rural and Remote Housing Program

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, in fact when the member approached me last week on this issue I have already informed the President of the Housing Corporation to make arrangements to meet with the MLA so that should probably be happening sometime this week.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, Mr. Ootes.

Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for Mr. Todd as the Minister for the Financial Management Board.

I have been harping on this subject since last fall, Mr. Speaker, and that is the subject of summer

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employment for students. There seems to be a problem between the Government of the NWT and the union that we cannot reach agreement with respect to a wage package, that it has to be according to what the position is paid and the student fills that.

I wonder if, I am concerned more than that, is a program, not just within the GNWT, but also, territorial wide, and I wonder if the Minister could tell me if he has entered into any discussion with the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Minister of State for Youth, who is with us here today. I wonder if the Minister could tell us if this has been discussed?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I have not discussed directly with Ms. Blondin the idea for student youth employment program for the summer, but I want to assure my colleague that one way or the other we are going to find a method and a means by which to do that this coming year.

And my colleague is correct, we did, in the negotiations with the UNW, we did try to suggest that, perhaps, we should have a student rate that would provide us with a greater opportunity to employ more students on a part-time, seasonal basis and, unfortunately, we were unable, at the time, to get the UNW to agree to that concession and I think that is unfortunate in these difficult financial times. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could tell us if the door is still open to discuss this further with the union or if the door is shut on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the only people that shut doors these days is the union. My door is open all the time so is our staff's and so is Mr. Voytilla's. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question, supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

MR. OOTES:

Yes, well, I appreciate the Minister telling us it is something he is pursuing -- a summer employment program for students of the NWT and I really appreciate that.

I wonder if the Minister could tell us if some program may be forthcoming that will be put before the members in the near future?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

HON. JOHN TODD:

No, I do not think we.. we are working on a program based upon discussions that we held during the bargaining that took place and also because Mr. Ootes and others had raised it in the House.

So we are working trying to determine an appropriate course of action that would provide us with an opportunity to increase the student employment opportunities, because if you remember this last year, due to budget restraint, due to the fact we were unable to reach, what I thought was a reasonable position, with respect to student employment, we, in

fact, employed significantly less students this year than we did in previous years, so it is my desire if you want, and the Cabinet's, that we would try to find an accommodation, hopefully, with our colleagues and partners at the UNW, but, if not, we will have to look at some other way in which to ensure that our children and our neighbour's children get equal opportunity for jobs this coming summer. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, oral questions, final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

MR. OOTES:

Yes, I, as the Minister knows, would be fully supportive of an equalized payment for students in the Territories, both within the GNWT and privately of course the public can do what it wants, but I am wondering if the Minister could tell me if he may consider discussions with the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew with regards to summer employment of students in the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 493-13(3): Summer Student Wage Rates

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you Mr. Speaker. Part of the development, if you want, an alternative should we be unable to move forward in the current arrangement we have is to have discussions with the federal government and in particular, Ms. Blondin-Andrew who is a strong advocate of employing our youth across the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Picco.

Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Minister tabled in this House last week interim financial statements that showed the government had an annual deficit of \$15.6 million dollars, a huge improvement from the forecasted \$30.8 million dollar deficit from the May budget, and a closing deficit accumulated at \$27.2 million. This is indeed good news, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform this House, does this mean less paying and cutting because of this turnaround and the Ministers very adept way of massaging this government's finances?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

HON. JOHN TODD:

I thought I was getting a serious question there, no. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

MR. PICCO:

I thought I was going to get a serious answer. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question then, is the Minister taking a page out of Mr. Martin's book and overinflating the deficit figure so at the end of the day the number comes out lower and we receive accolades for a job well done?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Receiving accolades. Few and far between in these days and this job, Mr. Speaker. I want to show my colleague that any improvement in the fiscal situation was correct, was good - was part of good prudent management on the part of this government, partly associated with some

of the revenue changes that took place and it would be - I must remain prudent in our deficit elimination strategy which is a two-year strategy and we intend to continue along that line. However, I think it is also important that one does not fabricate financial information when one is a Finance Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, that is very good, but he did not answer my question. My question was, and of course it is not a supplemental question because I still want an answer to my first question. My question was, is he

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inflating the deficit figures so at the end of the day, the government, the number comes out lower and it looks like we have done such a fantastic job but he is lowballing the number, which Mr. Martin is doing? There is my question just a second ago, you did not answer it, you just gave me some rosy, virtued story. So can he answer that question? Is he lowballing the deficit numbers so we look like we are doing a very good job when in actuality, everything is going on even keel?

MR. SPEAKER:

Again, to remind the members that regarding your supplementary question, not to get into debate about the question itself. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I want to caution my honourable colleague, and it is not often I would do this, but I have spoken to him on a number of occasions of the seriousness of the budget elimination strategy and the impact that has on people's lives. And I want to show him in this House and the public at large that there is no inflated component to the budget strategy. When you are dealing with a billion, two hundred million dollars flaws either way take place on a daily, weekly, monthly

basis. So if we are going to discuss the budget, and we are going to stress the overall deficit elimination strategy, then I want my honourable colleague, who I know is a very serious MLA, to understand that when he speaks in relationship to it, he should speak in a very sound, solid, concise way and not trivialize the issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question, final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I did not mean to trivialize or get into a debate with the honourable member, but he just rubs me the wrong way. My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the result of the deficit as we have learned over the last nine months is from continued cuts to our base from the Federal Government which was announced in the 1995 Federal Budget. My question for the Honourable Minister of Finance is "Is there any indication from the Federal Minister, Mr. Martin, from Mr. Todd's two wonderful meetings with him, if we are going to be cut again for fiscal 96/97? I hope that is not too trivial.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd

Further Return To Question 494-13(3): Outlook For Future Budget Reductions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. The cuts that were determined by the Federal Government which is approximately 5% of our base, roughly about \$60,000,000 was for the period of time that the formal financing arrangement was in place which is until the 31st of March, 1999, so I cannot speak for Mr. Martin, but I am fairly confident at this time that I do not think there will be, but I have to qualify any other significant cuts to the base. So I think it is important to say that cuts to the base of \$60,000,000 was only one part of the fiscal problem of this government. The other part of it was the forced growth in the social envelope. The lack of job opportunities, burgeoning population base, demands for services etc, so you cannot just simply up load all the problem on Mr. Martin and the Federal

Government, we have to take some responsibility. I have, as the Minister of Finance, as we move forward in a two-year strategy to balance the budget for the future children of the two new territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question, Mr. O'Brien.

Question 495-13(3): Implementation of the Interim Manufacturing Directive

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker my question is to the Minister responsible for the new interim manufacturing policy. I am not quite sure if that

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is Mr. Todd, or the Premier or Arlooktoo, at any rate, my question is when will this policy be available for debate in this House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for resource, Economic Development. Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 495-13(3): Implementation of the Interim Manufacturing Directive

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the business incentive policy which is the policy we have with the manufacturers is part of the spill-out with the department following the consultation we had, I have yet to receive some recommendations from officials on exactly what we should do with the old business incentive policy, whether we should leave it as it is, or we should make some changes to it and within that context we will be responding to the question regarding the policy on manufacturers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions -- supplementary. Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 495-13(3): Implementation of the Interim Manufacturing Directive

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the interim manufacturing policy, or the proposed policy was somewhat separate from

the BIP, and my further question was, can the Minister inform this House as to whether this policy takes into account regional as opposed to Territorial manufacturers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 495-13(3):
Implementation of the Interim Manufacturing Directive

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I would take the question as notice.
Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions, Oral questions. Written questions, written questions, returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. We will take a 15 minute break.

--- SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We were on Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 7-13(3): Report on the 1996-97 Mid-Year Review

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Programs report on 1996/97, mid-year review. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of 1996/97, mid-year activity reports. Overall, at this time, the Committee on Social Programs was pleased with the mid-year activity status reports provided by the Social Envelope partners with many initiatives under way in the Social Program Departments; Community Wellness, Community Justice, Income Reform, and the Government-wide Community Empowerment Initiative. The Standing Committee is concerned about Departments working together. Members see a need for a common approach when dealing with the communities. The Committee does not view these initiatives as separate entities which

can be planned and implemented in isolation. They are inter-connected. There has been a high degree of co-ordination and integration between these initiatives, at the Territorial, Regional, and community levels. While each Department is working on its own initiatives, Members are still looking for more integration and co-operation between the Departments. In all initiatives, the Committee is looking for frameworks which are fair and practical. Members are looking for concrete proposals and implementation ideas. With limited funding and tremendous pressure on our social programs, Members echo the concerns voiced by the Auditor General recently. We can spend the dollars, but we do not have necessary, know if the funding is

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doing what it was meant to do. We need to be clear about what we are trying to achieve before we can determine if we achieved the results we want. During the initial review of business plans, the Committee supported a number of reductions program areas. Members were disappointed to discover over the summer and during the mid-year review that these reductions were implemented without the level of consultation and concentration of creative options the Committee assumed would take place. For example, the Committee approved, in principle, reductions to foster care payments for special needs, and the Fossil Fuel Subsidies. However, the actual reductions were done without the consultation in developing options that the Committee expected. As a result, in some cases, the Departments are not reviewing and revising the way the program is structured.

In the next round of business plans, the Committee will be looking more closely at proposed reductions, to determine whether appropriate consultation is planned, and whether the full range of implementations has been considered. The Committee has a strong concern about subsidies. The Government provides subsidies in many program areas. There does not seem to be a consultation of those subsidies or any detailed co-operative knowledge of how these subsidies interact. Members are aware that the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment was the lead agency in developing a list of all Government subsidies at one point. This type of information would be very valuable when reviewing programs and ensuring consistency in approach between Departments. The Committee strongly suggested the Social Envelope partners prepare comprehensive lists of subsidies available, at least

within the Envelope, to assist the integration of programs.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my remarks on the Standing Committee on Social Programs report on 1996/97 mid-year activity review. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha that the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the 1996/97 Mid-Year Activity Review be reviewed by the Legislative Assembly, and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Just a correction, not "reviewed", it should be "received" by the Legislative Assembly, and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. Those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried. Reports of Special and Standing Committees. Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. O'Brien.

Committee Report 8-13(3): Report On The 1996-97 Mid-Year Review

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Resource Management Development is generally pleased with the Mid-Year Activity Report submitted by the departments in this envelope: Transportation, Safety and Public Services, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Members noted that projects seemed to be moving on at a reasonable pace, and that initiatives or strategies undertaken by the departments are being carried out for the most part, in a timely fashion.

Members have noted, however, that strategies and initiatives are being implemented prior to the Committee having a chance to review them. For example, dismantling of the Department of Safety and Public Works was not introduced to the Committee prior to the implementation of this initiative. Information on the dismantling was first provided to the Standing Committee during the Mid-Term Review, well after the strategy had been implemented. Members noted, Mr. Speaker, that this was contrary

to the committee process, and counter to open government. Members would therefore like reassurances from the government that the committee process will not be circumvented in the future.

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In addition, Members recommended that the government consult with the Standing Committee on Strategies and Initiatives before asking for input from ordinary Members. Mr. Speaker, that concludes my remarks on the Standing Committee of Resource Management and Development Report on the 1996/97 Mid-Year Activity Review.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Mackenzie Delta, that the Report of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development of the 1996/97 Mid-Year Activity Review be received by the Legislative Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. O'Brien. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Mr. Picco.

Committee Report 9-13(3): Report on the 1996-97 Mid-Year Review

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. This is the Report of the 1996/97 Mid-Year Review for the Standing Committee on Infrastructure. As the Committee noted in its review of the 96/97 Main Estimates, the business plans of the departments in this envelope share a recurring theme of devolution. While the community empowerment initiative is the most notable undertaking in this area, devolution also encompasses the privatization of services, formerly provided by government departments, and developing user-pay systems for services still provided by government.

Generally speaking, Committee Members agree with this focus for the departments in the infrastructure envelope, and applaud the principle as well as many of the measures taken to date. However, specific concerns regarding the implementation of some of these measures were raised during the review of the business plans and budgets earlier this year. These concerns were repeated during this mid-year review. The committee believes that the devolution of services from the government to community should not take place merely for the sake of devolution itself. Transfer of powers and responsibilities should only take place where such a transfer will generally benefit those receiving the service. This will only happen when adequate preparations have taken place. Committee Members are concerned that communities are not yet ready for the profound transfers of responsibility that are planned and underway. The decisions and initiatives introduced by the government must not be arbitrary, or seen to be arbitrary. Every decision and initiative must have a sound rationale behind its introduction, with a visible implementation plan in place, and it is the government's responsibility to provide and explain those rationales to the House and to the citizens of the Northwest Territories. Much of the discussion to date has treated Community Empowerment as a motherhood issue. None of the community members will disagree that generally speaking, decision making is most effective when the decision-makers and the service providers are on the same level. However, there is more to community empowerment than mere decision making. While the principle of community empowerment is certainly worthy of open discussion, it is even more critical that the details of the government's implementation of community empowerment be subject to the open debate by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly. Committee members are concerned that the full assembly has not yet had the opportunity to engage in a full public debate and a community empowerment initiative, except for this afternoon. The Committee recommends that the government phrase, implementation of initiatives, related to community empowerment until such time as this debate this afternoon, in the public forum. Mr. Speaker, this concludes my introductory comments and our committee's report.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that the report of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure on the 1996/97 mid-year review be received by the Assembly and moved into the committee of the whole for consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. That would be the Legislative Assembly. The motion is in order. To the motion. Questions being called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Report of standing and special committees, Mr. Henry.

Committee Report 10-13(3): Report On The 1996-97 Mid-Year Review

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to report on the 1996/97 mid year review of the Standing Committee of Government Operations.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has a responsibility to oversee the budgets and expenditures of the Legislative Assembly as well as agencies including the NWT Power Corporation, the Workers' Compensation Board, and the Public Utilities Board, for the purposes of this mid-year review, however, the committee has chosen to examine only the Legislative Assembly.

The Standing Committee is also responsible for dealing with government-wide issues that do not fit within the mandate of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Social Programs or Resource Management and Development.

The review of the Affirmative Action Policy that is underway is one such issue and the committee felt that it should also be addressed in this report. That includes my introductory comments on the committee's report. Therefore, I move, seconded by the Member from Kivalivik, that the report on the Standing Committee on government operations for 1996/97 mid-year review be received by the Assembly and moved into the committee of the whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, the Legislative Assembly, the motion is in order to the motion. Questions being

called. Those in favour. Those opposed. Motion is carried.

Reports of standing and special committees. Report of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Ms. Thompson.

ITEM 13 : TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 101-13(3), copy of the letter from the Village of Fort Simpson regarding the Fort Simpson Community Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Thompson. Tabling of documents. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 102-13(3). It is a package of letters from Transport Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Transportation regarding the Resolute Bay Air Terminal building. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Krutko

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to table three documents. The first one, Tabled Document 103-13(3) is the NWT Seniors' Advisory Council. The motion was passed at their annual general meeting directing the government to basically cease the implementation of the fossil fuel subsidy and basically something for April 1997 and to start basic consultation and process with the seniors in the decisions of that program. The other one is in regards to the letter of port, Tabled Document 104-13(3), to the Tl'oondih Healing Society, the three residents of Mackenzie Delta, and also a motion passed at the Gwich'in Tribal Council Assembly. Tabled Document 105-13(3), directing the Gwich'in Tribal Council and this government to find out if there is funding to maintain the program at the Tl'oondih Healing Society.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. Mr. Henry.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Whereas the government of the Northwest Territories has embarked upon a plan to downsize government.

And whereas amalgamation of government departments is one of the approaches adopted by the executive council to downsize government.

And whereas the departments of Economic Development and Tourism, Renewable Resources and Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources have been amalgamated into the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

And whereas the Department of Personnel functions have been integrated into government departments.

And whereas the Department of Safety and Public Services will be eliminated and integrated into other departments by December 31, 1996.

And whereas the executive council are considering the option of amalgamating the departments of Public Works and Services, the Department of Transportation and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

And whereas the Legislative Assembly as a whole did not give approval to the amalgamation already implemented.

And where any decision on further amalgamation should be considered by the Legislative Assembly.

And whereas any further amalgamation require careful consideration prior to implementation.

Now therefore, I move, seconded by the Honourable member from the High Arctic, that the executive council provide to the standing committees a discussion paper on the proposal to amalgamate the Public Works and Services, Transportation, and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

And further, that the executive council not proceed with this amalgamation until a sessional discussion paper on this proposed amalgamation is tabled and approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Henry, your motion is in order. To the motion. Questions being called. All listen. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. This motion that the member raised in the House today has, for myself, some significant concerns. Everybody should be quite clear that difficult decisions are unavoidable. We have to make some hard choices and there will be more in the future of this Legislative Assembly. Members have raised many times in this Legislative Assembly the whole issue of cost cutting to social programs or teaching/pupil ratio in our communities, as well as many other issues that affect our communities. One of the things that make common sense is the things that are good government and good management. What management would do, is get rid of duplication in this government. The amalgamation of departments that have similar responsibilities and mandates should be amalgamated. That makes good government sense, Mr. Speaker. But the major concern for me is that we have passed legislation in this assembly on the Deficit Elimination Act, and by this motion here, members have basically, not only tying our hands but you are tying your own hands and what options are available to you to eliminate the deficit according to the law that we passed in this Assembly? So think clearly about that when you vote on this motion. I also need, Mr. Speaker, clarification on this motion, because this Motion reads to me that the Executive Council not proceed with this amalgamation until a Sessional discussion paper on the proposed amalgamation is tabled and approved by this Legislative Assembly. Mr.

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Speaker, how can we not proceed to develop that discussion paper, how can we not proceed to develop a work plan to put before the Committees of the Legislative Assembly that are responsible to review that work plan? Then it would come to the Legislative Assembly. I have already stood earlier in this Session, Mr. Speaker, speaking exactly of that. That was the plan of the Government. We have already directed the Departments to work on a work plan so it can be

presented to Cabinet, then come to the Committee, then to the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, that is the right way to do business, I do believe. It is the proper way to do business in this day and age. It is giving Members of this Legislative Assembly every opportunity to debate and discuss that issue, as well as the Committees, as well as Cabinet. So we are all agreed on a course from when we set out in this Legislative Assembly on consultation and working together. We are committed to that, but I do have concerns, Mr. Speaker, about this motion. So if the Member who put this motion on the floor could clarify to me what he means by Executive Council not proceed with this amalgamation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will allow the Member to respond only after the rest of the Members have spoken to the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Krutko, I have not seen the motion and I do not know if it has been translated for Mr. Evaloarjuk, so I would like to know if that has been the case.

MR. SPEAKER:

Okay, just to .. All the Members do have a copy of the motion, and it is in your binders, on the left hand side of your desk. And it is also translated.

There was no point of order there. To the motion. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. Mr. Speaker, I am in support of this Motion. There have been a lot of jobs lost in the Baffin region and if these departments are amalgamated, more jobs will be lost due to the amalgamation of the departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. To the motion. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would speak in favour of the motion also. I think the amalgamation of these three major departments need to be addressed in the public forum, as requested by the

motion. I also would suggest to you that the amalgamation of the departments is one thing, but the amalgamation of a Crown corporation of this government is another thing. I do not know how well that had been thought out. In my riding, I have three superintendents for three different departments and a number of civil servants are affected who want to see this public debate go forward, and thus I would support the motion in its entirety, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the Motion. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to point out here that there is a process in place for amalgamation and for presenting the case. Cabinet will, as it been assigned by the Premier, choose a lead Minister, to take a look at the amalgamation of the 3 Departments. A document then will have to come to Cabinet. Cabinet will have to sanction or not sanction it. That document will then go towards the Government Operations Committee. The Premier made that commitment earlier last week. The Government Operations Committee would have full opportunity to review it and make recommendations, etc., and find if there is a public or legislative support for this amalgamation. That is not what this resolution says. This resolution says that, in fact, the process that we set in place, collectively, is not adequate for this, that we want a public debate in the House, and that can take place, but it can take place after it goes through the normal process that has been established by all Members in this House. There is no intent here to avoid any public debate, there is no intent here to avoid any changes to recommendations that are necessarily required. But it is still very early in the

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process, because the Minister Mr. Arlooktoo has been assigned to lead on this issue, has still to bring the document forward for cabinet's approval. So, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that while this motion is well intentioned it in fact circumvents the process that we set up early in the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion, Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will also be supporting this motion, as I have indicated many times in this House, I have very serious reservations about some of the pending amalgamations, the possible job loss especially in the Eastern Arctic, that is all Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Henry do you wish to make closing remarks? No. To the motion, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Sorry, I apologize for sitting down and speaking to the Chair. Mr. Speaker one of the qualification requests that there is going to be at the end of debate so I am just wondering if that is going to be clarified, so we could all hear it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Yes, there has been a point of clarification requested and I wonder if the move of the motion might provide that clarification? Closing remarks. Members that wish to speak to the motion. Mr. Henry, you have the final words.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier, last week went quite a ways in alleviating concerns of the ordinary members in how he proposed this would be handled. It was felt that in moving this motion it would confirm and ensure that there was full debate on this particular item. The Premier has described a committee process and he had suggested it would go through that process and recommendations could be made, as this is probably the last large initiative of the Government and certainly from amalgamation point of view it was felt that it would be important that this be handled well and it be clearly understood and well debated and all implications are as many as possible of the implications of this amalgamation would be made known through that debate. And also, that it was of an important issue that all members of the legislature should have input and approve it. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Questions being called. All those in favour, all those opposed, all those abstaining. Thank you, the motion is carried.

Motions. First reading of bills, Mr. Todd.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Nahendeh that Bill 20, Supplementary and Appropriation Act No. 1 96/97 be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. First reading of bills. I am sorry, your motion is in order. To the motion. Questions being called, all those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried. Bill 20 has had first reading. First reading of Bills. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Sahtu that Bill 21, an Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be read for the first time. Thank you.

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 passed. Bill 21 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of Bills. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move seconded by the Honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 1996/97, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this Bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the fiscal year

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ending March 31st, 1997. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Todd. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the Bill. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Bill 20 has had second reading and accordingly stands ordered to Committee of the Whole. Second reading of Bills. Consideration in

Committee of the Whole of Bills and other matters, Tabled Document 1-13(3), Tabled Document 83-13(3), Tabled Document 90-13(3), Tabled Document 91-13(3), Ministers' Statement 82-13(3), and Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 96/97, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the Chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I call Committee of the Whole to order. There are a number of items before us today. What is the wish of the Committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Madam Chair, I would recommend that we would consider document TD 90-13(3), Community Empowerment and TD 91-13(3), Community Empowerment and New Partnerships together, as one document.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Is the Committee agreed? If any Members did not bring your copies with you into Committee, there are additional copies here, if anyone would like them. I understand the Minister would like to make opening remarks. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you Madam Chair. My comments will be brief. Madam Chair, I have been looking forward to this discussion with Members on the important subject of community empowerment. Last Thursday, I made a Minister's Statement in this House and tabled a number of documents relating to community empowerment. It is my hope that we can have a constructive discussion today. Madam Chair, right across Canada, Provincial Governments are re-examining their relationship with Municipal Governments. In every jurisdiction across the country, more authority and control is being transferred from Provinces to local Governments. Over 30% of Government spending in Canada is now controlled by Municipal Governments, up from 15% just 5 years ago. Our community Governments in the Northwest Territories are also stronger and more experienced today. We see this in the improved financial management in communities, and in the successful transfer, under the previous community transfer initiative, of a number of programs and services over the past few years. Madam Chair, Community

Empowerment means a fundamental change in the way we do business as a Government. It has major implications for communities, for residents, and for this Legislative Assembly. It means that some of the decisions that we used to make in this House will be made by communities. The main issue is a simple one. Are we, as Territorial-level politicians, willing to share the power and authority we have with communities? Madam Chair, I hope the answer is yes. Community Empowerment is a big change, but it will be a big change for the better if we manage it properly and well. I think all Members realize that we have to change the way we deliver Government programs and services in the NWT. Yes, we need to reduce the costs of delivery, but that is only part of the picture. We have to deal with the fact that many of our programs and services would probably be more effective if they were managed and controlled at the community level. In a big Territory like ours, a one size fits all approach just does not work well. This is nothing new. Members raise this issue frequently. I know that I did myself when I was an ordinary MLA. Madam Chair, the most important question we have to discuss today is whether or not this Legislative Assembly supports the transfer of an appropriate level of authority and control from the Territorial level of Government to the community level of Government. I say an appropriate level of authority and control. Every day Ministers deal with Members who raise concerns from their communities that might be better handled in the community itself. Madam Chair,

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Cabinet has never said that we should blindly, and without thinking, simply transfer wholesale Government programs and services to community control. What we have said from the beginning is that we have to re-think what the Territorial Government and the Territorial politicians need to be responsible for, and what community Governments and community leaders should be responsible for. With authority and control comes accountability. I mentioned that we are working with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to identify and address accountability issues. I expect to bring an implementation plan for the Community Empowerment Initiative to Cabinet in early November. I hope that today, we will get a clear understanding of Members' concerns and questions. I will ensure that these issues are addressed in our implementation planning. Madam Chair, with the co-operation and constructive advice of all Members of this House, we can strengthen communities and put the tools for

solving local problems back in local hands. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. The floor is open for general comments on either or both of the documents before us. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The original vision of Community Empowerment was to give the communities the flexibility to establish their own set of priorities with respect to certain programs and services in the community. Communities have always said they should make their own decisions, set their own priorities, and be accountable to the community residents for most programs and services presently provided by the GNWT. Even though it is a community empowerment initiative of the government, it has been a vision that communities would empower themselves through knowledge and opportunities created by this government. That has been there for many many many years, Madam Chair. Communities are fully committed to doing that. The communities envisioned that the government would facilitate this process in partnership with the communities. The government would provide the tools, training and support, and advice to communities, so communities could empower themselves. It has never been, I do not think, in history, where people have been willing to easily give up power. There is no doubt in my mind that when the communities start making decisions, it will affect the job that the MLA does today, including mine. Because the community will be the one making those decisions, and it would be better for them. MACA was chosen to facilitate the community empowerment initiative and create opportunities to empower themselves and create opportunities for the departments to work with the communities in various areas of community interest.

It was also envisioned that a community development approach should be used, and existing government staff would be assigned to work with, and for the community. That portion there, is very very important, because the communities have to feel comfortable with the people that are working with the communities, have to trust them, and the communities have to make sure that they can move ahead in good faith with the government people they are working with. So the vision for the community profiles would be developed in partnership, and these were to be used for assessment purposes of community

capacity, structure, training, development, transfer plans, time and etcetera. So that is a very important part that MACA will be working with the communities, and the government will be working with the communities, so that they can go into the communities to assess, and know what assistance the community needs to move ahead.

Like I have said before in this House, there is no doubt in my mind, the communities are able, willing, and capable of taking on and making their own decisions at the community level. This whole issue of community empowerment has been there for many many years, and it will continue to be a major priority of the communities until they do have the decision-making at the community level.

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It was understood that community empowerment initiatives within the government is quite complicated. The government has to change the way it does business, and untangle itself in order for the government to develop adequate tools and frameworks so that communities can empower themselves.

What still must be undertaken while an implementation plan is developed, is what program functions can be transferred to the communities? An assessment process which can confirm that programs functions, requests by the community should be transferred. The GNWT must ensure that the communities are adequately trained, so they have the necessary skills and expertise to effectively manage these programs. There is no doubt in my mind that as we move along with this process, and as we move down this road there will be some mistakes made. That is how people will learn as well. This government and previous governments have made mistakes themselves. I remember my good friend, the Member from Yellowknife Centre talked the other day about being involved when Stu Hodgson came here. That was in the sixties, I believe. From that time to this time, there has been very little empowerment to the communities, other than the water and the sewer, water delivery, sewage, garbage pick-up, a bit of road maintenance. That has basically been the community empowerment in my communities. Other than that the decisions are made in Fort Smith or Yellowknife. I am totally convinced that our communities in partnership with this government will be able to do that, and work to empower themselves. You know it is just a matter of us, as a government, facilitating that. We also have to make sure that, when we are talking about

community empowerment and how it is going to work at the community level, that we have to ensure that the self-government initiatives by the First Nations are co-ordinated with empowerment. That is very important, because there are some of our people who are going down that road, and we have to go down that road with them. Regardless of whether or not this government came out with a priority of community empowerment, it is going to happen. One way or the other, it is going to happen. It is our choice as to whether or not we work with the communities and assist it to happen. That is the bottom line. Our good friend from the Mackenzie Delta -- it is right in their claim, they have self-government. Sahtu has got self-government, and all the other claims are negotiating the same thing. So we had better get on with the job and respond to our communities and respond properly, and work with them so that we can help them and assist them to make it happen. Community empowerment is one way of starting that vehicle down the right path. I know that probably it is not going to come as any surprise to me, but Members will raise the whole issue of accountability, rightfully so. We have to make sure, ultimately, that we are accountable to the public purse, and we have to make sure the process is in place so that communities are accountable as well. That is one of the reasons that we are here as Members of this Legislative Assembly, is to receive the dollars, whether it be from the federal government, and produce programs and service to people who we are elected to service in the most economical and efficient way. One of those ways would be through community empowerment, where we would not have the layers upon layers of government to go through just to make a simple decision. I could give you, for example, Madam Chair, that this would have been two years ago now, or a year and a half ago, a lady in my riding, a simple thing of a broken window cost \$237 to replace. It took 10 people -- it had to go through 10 people in government -- before the decision went back to the community to the Housing Authority to replace that window, and back charge her so she could take it out of her paycheque. But 10 people from Government had to pick up a phone or write a letter just to solve that one little problem. If the community had the power to do things at the community level, it would have just meant a trip down to the band office and it would have been solved, and it would have saved government money, and she would have still had to

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pay her \$236. So community empowerment makes sense. Community empowerment is the way to go. We had just better get on to that train, because that train is going to leave the station without us. It is as simple as that. So we can fight it, if we want, but in the end it is going to happen. Communities are demanding to have the say at the community level. They are going to get it, one way or the other. We can either be good guys and be along to assist them, or we can be bad guys and say no, no way. But in the end, Madam Chair, it will happen, there is no doubt in my mind. It will happen. Because it is evolution and that is the way it goes. Accountability--no problem. We set up a system and we make sure that it is accountable. So as time goes on, this is not a new issue, this is an old issue. It is just finally that the government is getting that opportunity to address it. I have heard many, many things about the bad news that is out there in the last few weeks. Everybody keeps talking about cuts and rollbacks and restraint. One of the good news things that we have, and we are able to deliver on, is community empowerment, and we should not take it lightly, because it is good news. Like I have told my constituents, they have asked me, is this off-loading? I said no, it is not off-loading. What it is, is it gives you the opportunity to make the decisions at the community level, or else if you do not do it, it will be made at the Yellowknife level. You have that opportunity. All we have to do is sit down, make sure the proper training is in place, the proper resources are in place, and the proper accountability is in place, and move on with it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Ootes. General comments.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to preface my remarks by stating that I support the idea of communities controlling and managing their own affairs and especially in areas that are of prime concern to them. I am going to make some general statements which will include questions but I will come back to the questions at a later time. I just simply want to run through the process of my statement first, and then when other general statements are done then I will come back to questions.

Community empowerment to me is an extremely complex process despite the fact that it looks simple. It is a simple statement that has tremendous

complexities. This initiative of community empowerment is driving the direction of a great number of programs and people in this government. It must not be instituted too fast nor in the wrong way. It must be implemented with checks and balances built in. A big question to me is, will communities be forced to take on community empowerment under this initiative and who will determine the pace of program transfers. If communities truly get control of many government programs, do they understand that there will be no or greatly diminished central expertise, advice or central agency to which to refer many disputable matters.

This program has so many implications that it is incredible. Communities will become responsible for: public housing, various health and social services, adoptions, local schools, workfare and welfare reform, community justice, local renewable resources, resource offices, economic development, transportation, education, renewable resources as mentioned. We are going to build 52 bureaucracies if every community takes this on. We are also going to build 52 political bodies. We now have the economy of scale with the GNWT handling this direct.

I have been told that the transfer to most community programs should be complete by 1999, and this was in, I believe, one of the documents I had been given. I would like to ask and pose a comment about consultation. The government keeps saying for many years, community leaders and the public have said that the communities want more local control. My question is, has a survey been done on this, and where is that survey? We need a comprehensive assessment done to make sure that the services in the communities do not deteriorate and that the

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interrelationship of all government departments with MACA are studied.

One of the main thrusts of the program is that we have got to cut costs, and the main document issued, it states that we can no longer afford our current system of program delivery. I guess my question is, what does that mean? That communities must be the ones to do it and make it cheaper to do it? And how much will we save in a year by doing this?

My big question is, what happens if some communities choose a program, say social services, and others do not. Where do the regional employees go? Do they work for the community or do they stay

on the region? And I guess if that is the case, for the next couple of years, until this whole program is through, I just do not understand how this saves money, which seems, as I said earlier, to have been a primary purpose behind community empowerment.

The other big question we have to ask ourselves is, what will the Government of the Northwest Territories look like when this is all finished? And what have we created out there? What we have created 52 success stories.

Another big concern I have is for the tax based communities. After all, what is good for one, is good for all, and if you are going to do it and ? town, you have got to do it in Yellowknife, you have got to do it in Hay River. And what is going to happen with the department of social services, are you going to hand the whole thing over to Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Iqaluit. It has to be addressed. So my big question comes. What will the territorial government look like at the end of all this? The other question I have is, a big, big question. Have other options been explored? Let me just raise the big questions. One, did we, the 13th Legislative Assembly approve of this program? Have pilot projects been done in communities, and have those pilot projects been assessed? If so, where are the reports on that? Has the union been considered in this, and the employees been considered, the present employees of the GNWT? What is the timeframe? We need success models. What about the tax-based communities? What about the community in maturity? Those are my big questions. I will address those later Madam Chair. I wanted to make this a general statement. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Ootes. General comments. I have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Madam Chair. The whole question of community empowerment and especially in my riding, the region, we do have another process, which is the self-government process that is presently underway, which they are looking at having a document, agreement-in-principle in place by next spring. Basically you were going after the same items in regards to program delivery, and also looking at community structures.

Right now, in the case of Fort McPherson, for instance, you have the hamlet council, you have the

Metis local, you have the band council, you have several other organizations in the community, which makes it awfully cumbersome to deal with issues, especially if there are overlapping interests, such as programs for say, recreation, or else even programs in regards to program delivery for social services or housing. You have the band on one hand which represents almost ninety percent of the residents, and the hamlet on the other hand who basically represents a large majority of the population, also Metis locals, which represent the other portion of

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the population. To date, in Fort McPherson they have requested to sit down and start negotiating community council structures like they have in Arctic Red River, Tsiigehtchic, and also in Fort Good Hope. Start looking at the creation of community councils to cut down on the administration and bureaucracy we have in the community, where you have one administration body within a community which administers the administration of programs for the municipal affairs through one council. That has been an ongoing process which they requested input from MACA out of Inuvik to kick start this process, start the deliberations. To date, it is basically not even at a crawling stage. It is pretty slow. There is still a lot of animosity between the hamlet and the bands. The bands want to do some things, the hamlet wants to do something else. They cannot see eye to eye on a lot of these things. Also, the problem that the communities are seeing, about taking over responsibilities from government with no assurances that there would be some guarantee for a protection clause in there that if anything happens that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be solely responsible. So that if there is a funding allocation which basically there is an overexpenditure, or else if they fall short in their revenues, that they are able to go back to the government and ask for more revenues, if that is what it takes. But there has to be a more co-operative approach to those other organizations that are presently working in this field also.

In the case of Aklavik you have the Aboriginal Council, which consists of Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Metis, along with the hamlet council, trying to formulate some sort of a mechanism that everyone is involved in regards to the day-to-day decision making. There again, it is a cumbersome process again, you cannot just drop something on a community without the other interest groups wanting to have a say or participate in the matter. In the case of Tsiigehtchic, the other community I represent, they have adopted

basically a community charter, similar to Fort Good Hope, which seems to be working. They have taken the approach of resolving the Band administration, the Municipal administration under one roof, basically running programs and services through that agent. Basically they call a meeting, you only have to deal with one meeting where you deal with all community issues, you do not have to go to a Band Council meeting, get a Motion from there, then running back to the Hamlet Council, getting another Motion from there. Basically, those have to be looked at in the context of what is happening here in regards to the regional Self Government Initiative. They are also developing institutions and mechanisms to implement those self-government agreements, which is another process that is presently in the process of being developed. There again, we have to formulate how those things work. In the regional context, we are formulating Beaufort leaders conferences looking at the whole overall regional structures. We have the Education Boards, we have the Health Boards, in regards to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Inuvialuit, tax based municipalities, all those infrastructures. We are talking about down-sizing government, will have to be affected some way or another or involved in the overall complexity of what you are doing here. This is just one component of a larger component that we are looking at. At the end of the day, it all comes down to cost. In my riding, I raised the question earlier to the Minister of Finance of fairness. In the case of Fort McPherson and Aklavik, the reason that they are not gung-ho about this is because they have see no productivity from this Government in relation to programs and services in regards to infrastructure--maintaining the road system in Aklavik. They do not even have money in their budget to have gravel to upgrade their roads. The same thing in McPherson, they have a lot of potholes and problems with the infrastructure falling apart in regards to the water treatment plant, the whole cost of that infrastructure. There are no guarantees that you are not going to have a major breakdown down the road, and who is going to be responsible for that? I think you have to look at it. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Krutko. Next on the list I have Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Madam Chair. This whole initiative of empowerment is not something that I think is new. In fact, it is an issue that is long overdue. In the communities that I have been involved with, it has been a long time goal. Over my twenty years with the government, this whole issue of more control at the community level, was a steady source of aggravation and conflict with the government, especially at the headquarters level. Looking back over the years, it is a definite move from the old days when regional directors and the Commissioner were masters of all they surveyed, and made use of what I call the great white mentality, where we were their vassals, and they were in charge. It is an issue that is very critical. Coordination with other community initiatives is going to be essential. The whole thing with the social program committee, the point that is made over and over again, that you need integration with the other community initiatives, justice, wellness, income reform. We also need very clear, concrete implementation plans so that communities can see and touch what we are talking about, and that is not just a vague abstract idea. I do not believe communities are like little children that have to be taken by the hand, and treated like they are little children. I consider that analogy or comparison somewhat insulting. I know the people in my community would not accept being characterized as little children that have to be led by the hand, and shown how to do the most basic things. There are risks to be sure. But in my opinion they are acceptable ones. To me, we certainly will not do any worse than has been done in some of the program areas by government of old with transient or far-away civil servants making all the decisions, and telling us how they are going to run our lives.

What we do have to combat is that whole mentality of dependence. Over the years, it has been created by the government, by us. Where the government runs everything, makes all the decisions, brings in the consultants and the specialists, to tell us what is good for us. We also have to, in my opinion, because we have that dependency, and the whole mentality of entitlement, we have to look at revitalizing some basic virtues that built the north. Virtues like the initiative, co-operation, hard work, and sharing. I think this is a very valuable initiative. We have things to do. I think we have to move ahead on it, because, as has been indicated earlier, it is going to happen in spite of us, anyway. We might as well try to be in front of the parade on this one, and not hopefully under it. Thank you.

---Applause.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Miltenberger. General comments. I have Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Madam Chair. Madam Chair, community empowerment is one of these things that is very hard to argue against. But it is also very difficult for any Member here to put it in words, what is community empowerment. We talk about making decisions at the community level. What does that mean? What are the implications for logistically, and financial control for this? Sometimes it sounds like we are involved in an experiment here. Are we in some type of biosphere, some type of scientific evaluation, to allow people to empower themselves, and then see what happens? An example is on the tabled document presented by the Minister. It says "take responsibility for the design and delivery of programs and services". What does that mean? For example, now the divisional boards of education in most of our regions have not got the funding to design, or produce aboriginal curriculum. I know that one of the people that won the Minister's Literacy Award, right now is scrambling to find the resources to do this, make the Inuktitut literacy resources. What type of responsibility delivery are you going to hand down? Some other Members talk about how the government in Yellowknife, which is 24 people here today, have so much power. We

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have got to give it up. I do not know how much power I have got. I do not think I have very much. What you do have is the legislative power, not the authoritative power. You have a fiduciary responsibility, but you do not have the power to change things. Under community empowerment, what would the community gain by, for example, taking over programs - what programs and services would they take over? Would they take over social services? Could they change the social guidelines under the Financial Administration Act? No, they cannot. Would they be able to change the hours of school? Yes, they could, but that is also their right now under the Community Education Council, because of the new reforms to the Education Act.

Most of the powers for a lot of our communities are at the community level today. The controversy over the Fort Simpson Rec. Centre which made it look like this

assembly was stopping it, I mean, that is a project \$150 million dollar capital budget over 1.2 billion dollar budget of this government \$680 million dollars of this government goes to O & M, operation and maintenance, with continued reductions to our federal transfer base. My fear, madam chair is that the idea of community empowerment is a way of, kind of, bringing down the common denominator as is were, and setting up infrastructure at the community level which will not have the resources to keep it in tune.

So, for example, if the community of Hard Luck Bay takes over the school today and then at the end of the week three boilers go down, whose is going to pay to bring in the boiler mechanics, if the community does not have it? Does that come out of the O & M budget of the school so they have to cut the land program? I do not know, no-one has answered that. Mr. Todd is shaking his head and saying no, over there, but the reality is we are laying off all of our DPW boiler people, regional people, so how do they get to the community?

I mean, these are realistic questions, these are realistic comments. I would challenge the Minister to give me five examples today, when we get into question period, of what is community empowerment? Give me five examples of what communities want. Do they want to have by-laws? We have that. Do communities want the ability to write social assistance cheques? We have that. Do communities want to build arenas? Well, that is fine, let them build the arenas, but where are they going to get the architects, the engineers, project engineers? Will that come from a company that they have to hire? Who will float those things?

So, give me five examples, I would like to see that. Maybe it is me, as Mr. Ootes said earlier today, maybe Mr. Ootes was dumb, maybe I am with Mr. Ootes, maybe I am dumb too, because I do not see the responsibility transfer that you are talking about. In parts of the Northwest Territories you have the situation where you have band councils, you have a hamlet council, then you have a regional aboriginal organization. Well, in the eastern arctic we do not have that. We either have a hamlet or a town council and we have an NTI land claim organization above it. We do not have that same duplicitic or triplistic organizational structure in our communities. In that instance I do not see where community empowerment would fit. Maybe I am not understanding the big picture.

I have a problem with community empowerment empowering people. It sounds so great but show me how it is going to work and give me examples of it and then maybe I will understand. Mr. Miltenberger talked about my analogy about educating children, but what I am trying to say is that, you do not expect someone to walk before they can crawl. We have to be able to do those things, and that is not being paternalistic or patronistic.

So, that is just some general comment for discussion and, again, if I hear community empowerment any more over the next couple of weeks, maybe I will finally understand it, but today, I sit with the caucus of two and not understand it at all.

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Madam Chairperson, those are my comments and I look forward to debating this later on today and questioning the Minister on the logistics of community empowerment. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Just a comment to caution the members that it would be appropriate to refer to yourself as dumb but it would not be appropriate to refer to a member, to another member, as being dumb or to make any derogatory personal remarks about another member.

MR. PICCO:

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to my honourable colleague from Yellowknife South. I was thinking about the analogy of the great movie that just recently came out, won several awards, and that was as a result of Mr. Ootes. I did not mean it in a derogatory way. We are quite well known, thank you, madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Alright, thank you, Mr. Picco. I had a great deal of difficulty retaining my composure while I made that little reprimand there.

Mr. Barnabas, please.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Through a translator.) Thank you, madam Chair. In regards to community empowerment, I have a concern about it as well. The questions that I would like to raise as to, like the taxation part of this, I mean

if the community is going to be taxed up to seventy-five percent and there are lots of things to consider, especially high costs in communities. How are the communities going to be able to survive with the kind of funding they will be receiving?

If they would like to borrow money from the banks, how would they go about requesting a loan? Particularly in the smaller communities some hamlets do not always run their monies well. Some usually have deficits and if these small communities do end up having deficits, who will end up paying for the deficit that they already have on top of the low funding that they may be getting? These are the types of questions I would like to raise. Thank you, madam chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. General comments, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, madam chair. I am going to try and stay rational in this discussion but I am frankly, disappointed at the tone of it by some people who have been in this company a long time. You know, some members are saying slow down, but balance the budget, do not make change, but balance the budget. do not transfer PYS, do not do this, do not do that, but balance the budget.

You know, I have not heard one single alternative in the time I have sat in this House in twelve months from anybody besides the program we have brought forward. So I am concerned about that. I am particularly concerned, particularly concerned, by the fact that my communities I represent and the region that I represent, clearly wants community empowerment. Baffin region wants community empowerment and community empowerment is the ability for people to make their own decisions, their own choices, based upon the funding we have got available to us.

There are too many levels of government and there always has been too many levels of government, this will reduce a significant level of government. I heard some members, and they have left the House, talk about micro-management, I wonder whether they want to be politicians or they want to be bureaucrats, they have to make up their mind. My vision of a politician is a politician that is involved in public policy, that is developing policy for the betterment of people.

It is not somebody who deals at a micro-management level with how are we going to get the plumber - for heaven sakes, I would hope that we are past that in the nineties.

Somebody talks about the risks. Everything we do is risky right now. We have stepped up to the plate, we have brought forward some significant changes, we have had to make to this government to make it

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smaller, because we had no alternative. let me remind you all, we had no alternative. We may not have done it in a manner that satisfied everybody, we may not have done it in a manner that satisfied many, but we have had to do it to balance the budget, to make sure that the money is there and moves to the community as quickly as possible.

It reminds me of the scenario when I remember years ago trying to determine where should I give my twenty dollars a month, should I give it to Oxfam, should I give it to Save the Children et cetera, and I determined that I was going to give it to those where the administrative costs were the least.

And we have got a government that spends \$455 million dollars on administering programs to the people that we are supposed to represent and if we continue to administer programs at that level there will be less money for the people at the community level. it is insulting, and I use this deliberately, insulting, when I hear my friends Mr. Picco and Mr. Ootes imply, rightly or wrongly, imply the people are not ready for it. My people are ready for community empowerment, they should be entitled to that option. Block funding has been provided to Yellowknife. It has been provided to Hay River. It has been provided to Fort Smith. I want the same options provided to my community, and the communities that I represent. I heard this argument in 1970, as a local government development officer, when Yellowknife, and the bureaucracy said, we cannot transfer settlement councils over to the people. I heard that story. I am hearing it again today, and frankly I am dismayed. People have to be given the opportunity to make the decisions for themselves, to ensure that the decisions they make are reflective of their needs, not some bureaucracy or politicians, for that matter, who sit in this mausoleum, while our people are out there suffering. People are on suicide, people are looking for jobs, etcetera, it is insulting to say that these people should not be allowed...fully elected people by the way, mayors, they should not be allowed to make

the kind of decisions that they are prepared to make. Where the constituencies are prepared to make, to cross that road to community empowerment, we should get behind it, and give it the support that is required. It does not require either this legislature or the bureaucracy pontificating from above to determine what is appropriate for people in the constituencies. And if there are constituencies that do not want it, that is fine by me. But I do not want to be placed in a position by this House, of somebody from some other community determining what mine wants, and for that matter, what the region wants. It is my understanding that both in the Keewatin and the Baffin region, that the leadership, the elected mayors of these communities, support community empowerment. Support the requirement for more authority and autonomy at the community level. They want to ensure that whatever dollars are there, are in their hands to ensure that they make the right decisions, not us. The last twenty years this legislature has made all the decisions for all the people, and particularly, the last ten or fifteen. Little or no involvement up until five years ago was involved in the constituencies in the determination of capital monies and the way in which we spend them. The former Premier, Miss Nellie Cournoyea, brought the process in, allowed constituencies, municipalities to have some direct linkage to the priorities in the communities, and the way in which the money was spent. This legislature, somebody asked the question, is this a policy of this government, I do not remember it. Yes, it is a policy of this government. Let us be clear. There is, and I am not going to deny that today, there is less money available. There is no question of that. There is four times the national average in birth rate, seven times incarceration. He has heard this from me before. So there are limited dollars. We need to ensure that the money that is spent to look after the services for people moves to the people as quickly as possible, from this House where it is voted on. That is what I view as community empowerment.

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The mayor of Whale Cove, the mayor of Rankin Inlet, and the other mayors in the Keewatin region are prepared to move forward on this. We need to move forward with them, in harmony with them, and provide them not only the technical support, but the moral and political one. We do not have to put obstacles in their way. We need to move them out of the way. We need to move quickly, with all due respect to my friend Mr. Ootes. We cannot continue to discuss the issue without moving forward on a twin track of trying to

determine how we best do it. Yes, there are risks. As Mr. Miltenberger said, there are risks every day in this game. But there are greater risks in doing nothing, greater risks in doing nothing. We have twenty-nine months left in this constituency. We have a massive task before us, not just community empowerment, division, etcetera. This is not the time to slow down. This is the time to take some risk, put the responsibility where it belongs, in the hands of the constituencies, provide the support that is necessary, and yes, frankly, reduce the role of MLAs. Because in fact, at the end of the day, somebody asked the question, what is this government going to look like. In my eyes, I see us as public policy makers, spending the time in trying to bring policies and programs into place that affect the constituency that we represent, not bickering and arguing over a \$100,000 in capital expenditures.

So Madam Chair, I want to say -- and no one is to misunderstand me, it is not intended to be derogatory to anybody -- I want my constituency to be given the same privileges as those sophisticated constituencies that have the highways, that have the school systems, that have the swimming pools, that have cost-effective housing, oil and power, et cetera. I want my constituency and the constituencies of the Keewatin to have the same opportunity. I believe community empowerment is one small way of accomplishing that and at the same time reducing the cost of doing government in the way in which we are doing it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Next, I have Mr. O'Brien. General comments.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not quite sure if we are saying the same thing or not, but I will get my two cents' worth. Having had the opportunity to work and live in small communities like Tuk and Arviat, I like to think I have a fairly good grasp and understanding of community empowerment.

Firstly, I want to make it very, very clear, crystal clear, that I am in support of community empowerment. Having said that, I do have some reservations and I think we have heard from most of the people who have spoken today and over the last few weeks that there are reservations and concerns. Briefly, my concern is that we provide adequate training for the people in communities so that when they take on

these responsibilities and these jobs, that we are not setting them up to fail. We have to provide, within reason -- I think we all know that we have limited resources in our budget, but there has to be enough monies put into the kitty so that they can run their show in an efficient and effective manner. If they get into trouble, there has to be some flexibility to help them in the system.

As Mr. Miltenberger said, this is not a new initiative. It has been around for a long, long time. I think the sad commentary here is that it is very, very unfortunate that this initiative did not take place, did not occur when this government was a lot more healthy and flush with funding. Here we are now providing the communities with the opportunity to take on these new initiatives and to take on these additional responsibilities, but we are saying we are going to let them take it on but they probably have to run it on a shoe string, or close to it.

In closing, I will just say that I will work very hard with my two communities, and I know they are interested in community empowerment, to ensure that they do succeed and that they get whatever assistance that we can provide through this Assembly again to ensure their success. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. I have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to make a few comments, and I do have questions in future form on community empowerment. I noted in the Minister's speech that she said she expected the implementation plan for community empowerment initiatives to be presented to Cabinet in early November.

Madam Chair, over the last two or three weeks and previous to that we have been hearing from the government that community empowerment is nothing new. It has been going on for years and years, and we are carrying it over as a matter of fact from the previous government. So why are we presenting it in November for consideration? That is one of my questions.

I would like to expand a little bit on that, Madam Chair. I agree with the Minister and with Cabinet that community empowerment is nothing new - it had all

different kinds of names before this and it has been in effect for years.

A prime example was in the past where settlements were asked if they feel comfortable they could take on responsibilities and become a Hamlet. That was basically the same thing that is happening now - is that you take on more responsibilities. Most of the communities on the coast took on the responsibilities and became Hamlets. But I note that there is a fair amount in the southern portion, particularly in the Fort Smith region, that did not want to become Hamlets and preferred to have their services supplied by the government through DPW and whoever.

In the communities on the coast, and I know there were a few that failed as Hamlets, but they were not allowed to go back to settlement status. They were encouraged to mend their mistakes, the government poured more money into them, and basically bought them out of the financial difficulties they had. The government would not let them fail because the government would then have to admit the program did not work.

Lots of these communities are still in the same financial situation - barely surviving. Some of them managed to do good. They learned responsibility but that is not to say that, you know, they took on Social Services, they took on Housing, they took on everything else. We are just talking municipal services. We are not talking about communities taking on Social Services, taking on Housing, taking on Justice. Where is a community of 100 or 200 people going to find all this expertise.

That is a big question. They may have the expertise and know-how for municipal services but what makes you think that they have the rest of it. Do not forget that any community that has people with the ambition to reach grade 12, 99% of them do not stay in the community - they are gone! They went to some place where they got a better job, a better salary - they are gone! They are not there no more. And even those with grade 12 who did not proceed onto further than that are being in jobs of unskilled labour. They are not into managing Social Services or Justice Committees. This all takes time. Nobody pays these people to go to these committee meetings. So why should they - what makes you think that they are going to do this voluntarily day after day and month after month.

You know, it may be that once in a while a community will get into a situation, Madam Chair, where a drastic event will happen in a community to bring everybody

together and everybody works together to try to solve the social problems again but social problems are so big because they really - the grass root of the problem is drug and alcohol. And as long as this government does not address that, they are wasting their time with the rest of it. It is true. It is a basic thing. I think most communities realize that.

But my point Madam Chair is this - in the past if communities failed as a Hamlet, they had the expertise of the government departments to fall

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back on. They had government staff to come in and assist them. But we laid off all our staff last April for DPW - we will lay off some more in Transportation and probably DPW and Housing. So who are these failing communities going to count on? It will not be this government because we do not have the staff. So we are setting up our communities for a major fall.

We are going to accept a lesser standard of services in these communities. That is the bottom line that I see. Because they will not have the ability to go back to the government, and say, hey, we need help. The government says they will have it, but you cannot have both, lay off all your staff, and have the expertise. That just does not make common sense. One or the other is going to lose. I think in the end the communities are getting scared.

I think I may have mentioned this before. In my communities, we have tried taking on social assistance, social services. It was a political disaster. Anybody that was on that social committee, was sure not to get elected again. That was the basic fact. Nobody sat on that committee. Nobody would touch it. There was no way you could ever get re-elected. We took on housing.

We had a thing in Sachs Harbour, called Prime Body Concept. It took on everything in the community. It was of the first ones to try this thing. In the end, the communities left it. It just did not work. They did not have the expertise in the community. They did not have the amount of people that are required to run this type of operation.

I believe that in the bigger centres like Inuvik, like Rankin Inlet, there are the people there. You have big enough numbers, plus you have a big enough number of outsiders, non-aboriginal who are into this type of thing. I think it could work in the bigger communities.

But I think the government is asking too much, if they think it is going to work in the little communities at this point in time. What worries me is not that is going to fail. It may even succeed. What worries me, is that we are laying off so much staff, that we cannot take back what we gave them. For instance, airports are critical in small communities in the Arctic. If they fail on the maintenance at the airport, how do we get the thing back. If all the equipment is broken down, how do we go in there and clear the snow off that runway. We end up hiring contractors who cost us more in the long run. It is a fact of life. It has happened before. Those are the type of things that I am really concerned about. I am not saying my communities are not experienced enough, or educated enough, which is one word the Minister used, but I am saying that we should not think that if one does it, they are all going to do it. What I am worried about, is because one is doing it, we are laying off all our staff. That is what I am worried about. That I think is the major difference, as to what has happened in the past, versus what we are going to do now, is the fact that the government is not going to be able to go in there and pull that community out, supply the services that we are mandated to supply to those communities. That is what I am worried about. It suggests here that communities...can they keep the surpluses. Yes, but also, if they go into deficit, they have to be responsible for over-spending. How? What are they going to use to pay it, peanuts? It says here, can they move money from infrastructure to human services? Yes. It is assumed then, they can do it the other way too. They can move money from human services to infrastructure. But supposing a community did that, took all the welfare money and built a road. That is not going to stop that welfare guy from coming and asking us for welfare. And because of the law, we are still going to have to supply it. So that is the type of things I am worried about. In the eight, nine months that I have been sitting here, I have not been convinced that we will be able to undo what was done, until it is back where we started. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Steen. Next on the list, I have Mr. Henry.

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MR. HENRY:

Thank you Madam Chair. I believe I am on the record a number of times in Hansard, of my support for community empowerment. I would certainly not, in

good conscience, deny the rights of residents of any community, to have what I have in my own community. I believe I have got community empowerment. I have a municipal government that generates taxes, makes decisions on my behalf. I could not in good conscience oppose community empowerment, and those same rights for anyone living in any community, regardless of size.

What I am opposed to is the speed that community empowerment seems to be moving at, and the lack of a concrete plan, that everyone can sit down. I think there has certainly been demonstrated here today, the number of questions that remain unanswered. The people that are asking these questions, are people that have been dealing with, and have had access to information about community empowerment. If that number of questions are not clear, or have not been answered for those individuals, I think there is probably less of an understanding outside of this legislature.

What I would like to do, is I would like to see community empowerment done once, and it done correct the first time. I think that could be achieved by a much slower speed than what is proposed. I believe MACA as a lead ministry for community empowerment does presently have the resources and people to work with communities, and get it right the first time, a small number of communities, produce a manual if you will, and go on and increase the number of communities that community empowerment could be extended to.

From my perspective, we hear about such things as "our communities want it". Well, I would turn around and say, well why do the communities not take it? Why do you not take the initiative? Why do you not initiate a tax regime, where you can take control? If you are generating funds in your own community, that is control. And then you can be accountable in your own community. My understanding is that we have only a handful of communities in the Northwest Territories that are tax-based. So community empowerment will not work properly until a community is generating its own taxes, and can be responsible and accountable. I think we are walking around with our heads in the clouds, if we think otherwise. That is the basis for a community. You raise your own taxes, and you get support from another level of government.

I also hear the Minister of Finance and the Premier talk about MLAs having less of a role. My community has community empowerment, Fort Smith, Hay River,

Inuvik. I question whether my role and responsibilities are lessened because my community has community empowerment. We hear comments about the day of civil servants in far away places making decisions for people in communities. Have we forgotten that we still have Ottawa? This is a community that is making decisions that affect us. We have input to those decisions by our elected officials, no different than what we have in the Northwest Territories. I still believe that communities can have community empowerment, but they first of all, have to have a tax base, to have some empowerment, to have some control.

I believe that you do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that if you have three different departments providing a service, for example, maintenance to houses, DPW doing it, Housing Corporation, and another department doing that, it does not make an awful lot of sense, to have that number of maybe half-time people, have one person provide those responsibilities, or privatize or whatever. Those community empowerment initiatives are excellent. But there are still many many more out there that still can be accommodated.

That is all I have at this time, but I certainly will have lots of questions on community empowerment, when we get out of the opening remarks. Thank you Madam Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Henry. Mr. Erasmus. General comments.

MR. ERASMUS:

I am sorry, Mr. Miltenberger was asking me a question here. I did not want him to wait until I was finished, before I answered him. I just want to indicate that I am totally in support of community empowerment. I have worked towards it for many years. before I decided to run for office, and I still totally support it.

I think it should be totally clear that community empowerment is not about the ability to have a tax base. It is not about the ability to write checks for social assistance. It is all about having a say about what happens in your own community. It is about having choices, real choices, not just administering

programs that have been approved five or six hundred miles away.

I think a lot of people totally resent the analogy of the communities being like children. But I guess perhaps once people have been in the situation of being almost like a benevolent father, they like to keep it that way. I agree with Mr. Todd. It is insulting to insinuate that the communities cannot run their own affairs, that they cannot make their own choices. Once they meet a minimum standard, that they cannot decide that they want to use their money in another area, which they cannot do now. Of course there are risks. That is what community empowerment is about. It is making people accountable. This government has made lots of mistakes. Communities will make mistakes too. But it seems to me they cannot do much worse than this government has done in the past. When you take someone from Ottawa, and parachute them into a community, they do not know a thing about it.

I am not too sure about the eastern communities, although I have been to a couple, and where I was at this past winter, they certainly showed a lot of interest. I do know about the west, because I have been working with communities in the west, over here. They have been saying for years they want community empowerment. But they want meaningful control over programs and services. Our present systems encourage dependency. Some people seem to want to keep it that way. As I indicated before, the way it is today, we make a one size fits all program, and we expect all the communities to fit into that little mould, whether it is in Tuktoyaktuk, Yellowknife, Holman Island or some place else.

A few years back I worked with the Housing Corporation, the district office, and at that time they used be called district offices, in Hay River. They used to be programs coming from administration in Yellowknife that were totally out of reality. The workers at the district level saying they just do not work, because they are all coming out of Yellowknife. Yet, I still hear people here espousing that we should continue to do the same thing. We have all said that there are too many community committees, and that communities should be involved, deciding how to reduce costs. This is our opportunity. People will have to be accountable. People in offices in the communities will have to be held accountable if they make mistakes.

This is the first time I have seen this information from the department. I am just looking at the amount of

money that we spend in administration. It looks like almost fifty percent or more of our dollars goes to administration. If that kind of money can go to programs to actually go to the people in the communities, I think they will have a lot of money, to hire whoever they want. Whether it is people who are community people who have graduated and decided to leave their home town because there are no jobs, why should they stay home if there are no jobs? However, if we do provide the communities with money, a lot of people will go back to their smaller communities, to their home towns. I have seen it happen already. Places where they cannot hire their own local people they can hire people who are working for the government now. Or they can hire someone from Ottawa, or Edmonton, the same as the Government of the Northwest Territories does. The big difference is they will be working for the

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community. They will not be flying in and out from Fort Simpson, or from Rankin, or some other regional centre. We are not talking about the GNWT just hanging people out to dry. We are talking about the GNWT providing training, and support services. Those support services will have to remain for a long time of course. In some instances, we will have to provide them more than for others.

Communities will not have to take everything over all at once. We are not just going to say okay here is five million dollars, you are on your own - hire all your own people - even if they do not want to. A community might just want to take Housing, two years later they might want to take something else, two years later something else.

I know in Dettah and N'Dilo they signed the _____ Funding Agreement for Housing a couple of years back and their housing program is working today better than it ever did before. So I know it can work. But Dettah and N'Dilo are not professing that they want to take everything over all at once either. They are working, they are planning but they definitely want to take a lot more and I think that we as elected representatives should be giving those types of communities every opportunity, the support that they require. Not to be running out on them and crying wolf - scaring them - saying you are not going to get enough money - you are not going to have no support - you do not have enough people to work to help you run your own programs.

As I said earlier, I am in total support of community empowerment and I will do whatever I can to help it be implemented particularly in this area around here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Erasmus. General comments. I have Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you Madam Chair. I do have a few comments I would like to make on this issue. And while I am doing that I think what I will do also is to give Members some examples of what - of some of the areas that I know of that the government is doing - more specifically to answer Mr. Picco's question about giving examples.

Before Mr. Erasmus spoke, I was just amazed at the amount of doom and gloom that was being talked about and I could not figure out how Members figured the sky was going to fall if we empower communities and gave people in communities a say in what they - what goes on in their settlements. And a lot of background has been - a lot of the reasoning has been said over and over again and I think it is important to note that we are trying to do what our constituencies want us to do - to give them more power and more say.

The Minister of MACA and I were in the Baffin region at the Baffin Leadership Summit several months ago talking about community empowerment and basically giving them some of the principles of why the government planned to do what we were going to and as I recall there was only one community that had some reservations about it - only one mayor and in the end he ended up moving the motion to support the community empowerment.

I know there is and continues to be concerns about training and capacity of our communities. There are still questions that will have to be answered about funding, about territorial interests, etc. But I have not heard anything today that would cause me to say that I do not support community empowerment anymore. I do support community empowerment very much. I know the thirteen settlements in the Baffin region do and it is up to us to guide and support them.

As Mr. Erasmus said, we are not just going to hand over the funding and the programs and say there you go - go on your way. As was said earlier, I believe too

that empowerment is part of the evolution of our communities on how they should run their own affairs. When I was growing up I recall we used to have what were called "Settlement Managers" and I believe most of the communities in the Territories had them and the

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Inuk name for the Settlement Manager basically translated to "Settlement Bosses". I think at one point our Finance Minister was one of them. There was - there is a gentleman who lives in Yellowknife now who was and who is still a family friend when I was growing up - he was a Settlement Manager. People went to him for permission on what they should do, he issued Social Assistance cheques and in the minds of people he had a say in the lives of just about everybody in that community. It is not because that was the kind of person he was - it was the job that he had and that was the way the government ran.

Where we are today is nowhere near that. We have gone far, far beyond that and we still have a ways to go. I have not heard anything today that would cause me to say, as I said before, let us stop now and this is as far as we are going with the communities. We need to keep going. We need to be giving them more power and authority.

One of the communities that I represent, Cape Dorset, was one of the communities that was in the pilot project for community transfer initiatives and what that is just a step before community empowerment concept. Basically what the GNWT did was transfer the funding and the programs to the communities as they were, with all the personnel but not with the flexibility. What community empowerment, as I understand it, as I believe it to be, is you go a step beyond that and you give the community the flexibility to do what they need to do with the funding and the programs.

There are a couple of things I have seen in Cape Dorset that give me some hope in what this thing can do. In the area of Social Assistance, the community members have talked quite openly about Social Assistance, dependency, about fraud, and how they can get young people that are in their homes, not in school, not looking for work, watching t.v., and gathering Social Assistance - how they can get them on their feet. Get them out and becoming healthy. They are talking about that openly and have some pretty innovative solutions or suggestions on how to fix that.

In the area of housing the community has been quite active in teaching or educating clients on how to run a household, how to pay bills, etc. When it was an outside agency, the government that ran these things, people did not have an ownership and people basically just went on a day by day basis and without - with very little sense of responsibility.

I said I would give some examples of some of the areas that I know of that are happening in your constituencies right now and maybe some of these you do not know about or some Members might not know about.

An example I have will be from the Housing Corporation which happens to be the portfolio that I run. In the North Slave the responsibility for all (?) housing delivery in Dettah, N'Dilo and Fort Rae has been transferred to the local bands. The Snare Lake Dene Band has taken over staff housing, property management and the delivery of home ownership programs. Discussions on program transfers with Rae Lakes and Wha Ti Bands continue. The City of Yellowknife may also be interested in housing at this point in time.

In the South Slave, local housing organization boards and staff have been consulted on assuming more program delivery responsibilities. Communities' specific plans are being developed to transfer all functions to the community level within the next eighteen months.

Discussions also continue in a number of communities with respect to amalgamation and transfer of home ownership programs and community governments. Local housing organizations in Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Inuvik are being prepared to assume responsibility for the home ownership application process this year. Discussion on amalgamation and transfer of additional programs are underway in Aklavik, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, and Tulita.

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Programs in the Baffin - programs have been transferred to local housing organizations in seven of the eight communities where these programs are delivered. Discussions to amalgamate local housing organizations with municipal governments are underway in Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Igloodik, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay, and Sanikiluaq.

In the Kitikmeot the Hamlet of Pelly Bay has taken over the responsibility for all housing programs as of April 1, 1996. Holman has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to amalgamate housing in the Hamlet by April 1, 1997.

In the Keewatin, community governments express interest in taking over all of the housing programs in the region and requested that LHO's be amalgamated with Hamlets by April 1, 1997. Rankin Inlet is preparing for amalgamation on November 1, 1996 and all the other amalgamation will be completed by April 1, 1997.

Madam Chair, the reason I listed some of those things that are going on already is because I saw the debate seemed to be going in the area of whether or not to empower communities. As Mr. Miltenberger said earlier, this thing is going to go ahead with or without us - in fact it is going ahead, it has gone ahead and it is up to do as good a job as we can.

I, like other Ministers, are more than willing to share with MLA's what the different departments are doing with your specific communities. In fact, there are a lot of things going on. With that Madam Chair, I will finish. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Arlooktoo. I have for general comments Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you Madam Chair. Just very briefly. I feel that communities have been dictated by the government at the territorial level and the Canadian government for a very long time. The communities, whether they are small communities or not, have been asking for more responsibilities and more powers to take over responsibilities in their communities.

I understand that we are going through a lot of changes this time and nobody really likes going through changes because they fear but listening to all the other Members this afternoon, I think most communities in the Northwest Territories are willing to take community empowerment because I understand three communities in Baffin Central are willing to take community empowerment.

I think we will be making mistakes in the future but it does not hurt sometimes to make a few mistakes. If I feel that my communities need help in order to take over community empowerment, I feel that it is my

responsibility, as a leader for those communities, to help them out if they need help. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

... (inaudible) ... Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. For years there has been discussion of the importance of having decisions made at the level closest to the people affected and this has been a goal of several previous Assemblies and prior governments have tried and tried again through a number of initiatives -- one mentioned earlier called the "Prime Public Authority Initiative" and the others, the "Community Transfer Initiative" and so on and the idea was also a cornerstone of the "Strength at Two Levels" report.

This has been something discussed in the Tenth Legislative Assembly in the Eleventh and as well in the Twelfth Assembly. Each time we have needed to start all over again. It has been frustrating to see the delay in providing communities with the authority to make their own decisions. The people in the North were making decisions about how to deal with their own affairs, how to handle their own social issues and how to serve their own people long before the current model government was imposed.

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Basically, the community empowerment initiative is simply giving the people decision-making authorities that were somewhat taken away when the current form of the bureaucracy was brought here a number of years ago. After all these years, we are finally making progress towards empowering communities to take charge of their own affairs. I think that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and her officials deserve a lot of credit for moving this initiative forward as progressively as they have.

As the Minister of Transportation and as well the Minister of Safety and Public Services, I have seen this progress first hand.

We have seen how, by transferring responsibilities for some of the programs and services to the communities, better decisions are being made that affect the people, decisions that have been made with the leaders that were elected locally.

For years, for example, the issue of lottery administration has been a contentious one. People in the communities have been aware of the impact of things like bingos and other gambling on the social conditions on the people in the communities. People have seen the social causes and have wanted to have some direct control over these things. Now that this Department of Safety and Public Services has made progress towards placing this decision-making authority in the hands of the communities and the department has ensured that these transfers have received all the training and the authorities in the communities have received the training and the support that they need.

We are also moving towards empowerment in the area of transportation. Discussions, for instance, have been under way with Tuktoyaktuk for about two years. We have moved from using a territorial government workforce for airport operations to contract with the hamlet. We have also contracted directly with the upgrade of the air terminal building. We have been involved in discussions with Baker Lake for the transfer of the airport. This idea has now been expanded to include consideration of airport transfers to other Keewatin communities. The framework for these sorts of transfers are now being reviewed.

There are other examples. In Broughton Island, we have recently done a full authority transfer agreement to allow the community to take over a road relocation project. Over and over again, we find that communities are capable of taking on these authorities and they are motivated to take them over. Thirty-six of the 52 community airports are already operated by communities. This is the first step towards full transfer.

Through all of these experiences, the message that is coming loudly and clearly from communities is that this government should continue to provide the communities with the authority to make their own decisions. In many cases, it is not the government that is saying, "Here, take this on." Communities are saying, "Give us that authority that is rightfully ours."

What would the honourable Members who are speaking about the risk and the concerns associated with community empowerment have me tell the mayors, the community leaders and the chiefs? What would those Members have me say when the northerners tell us to get the decision-making out of the offices and the boardrooms in Yellowknife where they have been made in the past, and have me tell

those leaders, "No, you have to wait until we take you by the hand and show you how to do it."?

I think community empowerment is the right approach for the 90s and it is the right approach for the North. Again, I believe that our communities are capable. I think there are people in the communities that have the skill, and I believe they have the expertise. If they do not have that, they would acquire that expertise. Where it is necessary, they have the capacity to take on the training. Most important, I believe the

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communities have the leadership to do this.

Finally, I would like to say that now is the time to push ahead with the ideal that we have recognized and which have been needed for many, many years. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Next, I have Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It is surprising to my counterpart here, Mr. Miltenberger, I will speak.

Just to add a few more things to what has already been said, in Inuvik, the council has been looking at taking over more and more of the authority that usually belonged out of its hands. I heard some comments earlier on that we might be creating 52 other bodies to do this, well, we already have all the councils in place. All they want is some of the power. I agree that we need to make sure we have the support there and the training. That is what I have been hearing is going to happen and I will do my best to make sure that is there for the other communities.

I know a lot of people have been saying it and I think when we all got together early on in our time here in the Assembly, a large majority, as I have been hearing here as well, were saying it is time to bring the control and the responsibility to the communities. I know that during the election campaign, one of the things was that it was not to bring the people to the government, it was to bring the government to the people. I believe that is the right approach with community empowerment; that is, instead of having the government and all the control situated many

miles away, we will be bringing the control to the community where the decisions can be made.

I believe there needs to be some factors put in place, some framework, that would make sure that failure, while not impossible, will be greatly reduced. I think we need to make sure those standards are in place, but it has to be flexible for a community to make choices of its own and have the flexibility to do a lot of the work it wants to do now that it does not have. We have heard an example used in our meetings and it is a good one to use here. It is a comparison of the National Building Code. It is a framework, but when you look at all the houses that are around, they do not all look the same. That has been one problem with the way past government operated. We have built something at this level and brought it out to the communities and told the communities to make it work there when it is not going to work.

We hear about the problems that happened in the past, well, I think a lot of it is not directly related to communities because I know in some communities, they wanted to take the power over, but it was within the departments themselves of having the right information and knowing what to do. That is why we have heard the different terminologies: community transfer initiative, now community empowerment.

We definitely need to bring the control to the people in the communities. We have heard it stated earlier in the different government bodies out there right now. I think that we have heard people say we need more time to do things. Well, this initiative has been on the books and worked on, changed and readapted for quite a number of years. I think there will be, even as division comes upon us, some initiatives started from this Assembly that will move forward to other governments that will have to deal with those matters that are before them, but they were initiated at this level.

I would encourage the department to continue the work. Make sure the resources are available to the communities that need help and to those that would need more time, to give them more time. Also, to those who want to take the control over sooner, to have that ability to do the same. I think we will find that there will come a time when there will be fewer and fewer mistakes made at those levels. We do have to give the communities the opportunity to

prove themselves. Like I say, if we developed a framework that gives them the opportunity to develop and change things the way that they are normally done, it will vastly improve the way this government does business. I know we said we would change the way government does business. Thank you, very much, Madam Chair.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any further general comments? General comments. Mr. Krutko. One moment, I should have recognized Mr. Morin first.

HON. DON MORIN:

Is it still okay to make general comments?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Yes.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you. I know I already took the opportunity to make some general comments, but it was brought to my attention earlier today that when we talk about community empowerment, we should also talk about devolution and how Ottawa talks about devolving certain powers to the territorial government; whether we are responsible, whether we are able and whether we are capable as a government to take on certain responsibilities. That is what community empowerment is about as well. Maybe Ottawa has the same concerns that some people have about us empowering communities. Maybe they do not want to do it unless we raise our taxes. They have told us to raise more taxes and we will have more say, and things as such. I guess you have to look at the coin from both sides at all times. We are wrestling out there to get devolution from Ottawa. We are saying we have the capability of doing it and that we are willing and able to do it. Well, what I say is the communities have the capability. They are willing. They are able and we are here to assist them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Morin. There are a few Members who have not participated in general comments. I just want to make sure they have the opportunity. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, would like to say a few comments about this because for many years now the Inuit have been asking to have more say on the issues they would like to run by themselves because how many times have we heard the people ask when they will be able to do things on their own instead of just listening to the government. For many years, we have been saying this. I am a leader of the summit in the Baffin and we have been asking for power. I know that for a fact. I know we are not going to be efficient right away, but when you do something for the first time, you cannot do it properly. I know we are going to be making mistakes but, as we know, even if you are an Inuk or kabloona there will be mistakes. We learn from our mistakes and I can give you an example. We cannot really say that because there are many laws that we have to follow. For example, when men do something to the female, the law tends to send victim out instead of the offender. It is something like that as well. Anything you do, we have to think about many different kinds of issues that we are going to have to deal with. For instance, when we are dealing with social issues, if we are doing our own social programs, we would completely turn some of the programs around. I use this as an example. A lot of people have stated that it would be better if the victim stays and the offender leaves the town. This would be a good example to use where we can turn things around. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Evaloarjuk. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Madam Chair, we had a motion on the floor earlier.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

The Clerk advises me that we are still on general comments. The motion on the floor was not recognized. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

There is a motion on the floor, it is not

debateable. All those in favour of the motion. Those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on Item 20, Reports of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Committee has been considering Tabled Documents 90 and 91. I would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Items 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, Order of the Day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Constitutional Development Steering Committee, at 6:00 p.m. this evening. Meetings for tomorrow at 8:45 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, at 9:00 a.m. of the Ordinary Members Caucus, and at 10:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Orders of the Day for Wednesday, October the 16th, 1996.

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 and 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
- Bill 21
19. Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and other matters, tabled documents 1-83-90, 91, Ministers' Statement 82, and Bill 20.
 20. Report of Committee of the Whole.
 21. Third reading of Bills.
 22. Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned to Wednesday, October the 16th, at 1:30 p.m.