



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**4th Session**

**Day 5**

**13<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1997**

Pages 121 - 140

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

Creator, as we take a new look at the year ahead of us ... we ask you today to help all of us to work in harmony as we try to develop the North for all our people.

We each hold our own view of the future. A view that has been formed by personal experiences and the accumulated thoughts of a lifetime. Lord, give us the knowledge we need to do our work to the best of our ability. Guide us as we serve you and the people of our land. Let us rediscover the blessings we already have, such as the love of family and friends, the beauty of nature, and the comfort of our homes.

We ask you for forgiveness when we do wrong in our thoughts and words and Lord, we ask for your help in placing our biases and prejudices aside as we deliberate each day.

We ask for the Creator's guidance to find positive solutions to many of the issues we discuss and as we enter this New Year, let us look to find more and more reasons to celebrate and be thankful. Amen.

**SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):**

Thank you. Good afternoon, Members. Welcome back. It is appropriate that as we start a New Year that we consider the many challenges we face as the last Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. As we enter our second year in the term of the 13th Assembly, we need to put the past behind us and move into this new year with hope, trust and a sharing of our common concerns, so that we can leave a legacy for our people and for the leaders of tomorrow.

I know we all want to do our best to achieve our goals, and although we may have differing opinions on issues, which is understandable, I know that we will discuss them in an atmosphere of mutual respect

for each other's views. I am sure that each of you would like to move forward to complete some of the issues we have to resolve and to face head on the many more challenges in the coming year.

On a different note, I would like to offer not only my personal regrets but, I am sure that of all Members, on the unfortunate accident of the Member for Tu Nedhe, our Premier, The Honourable Don Morin. I would like to note that until he is back on his feet, so to speak, that I have given permission for the Premier to change seats with the Minister of Health and Social Services and Justice. Perhaps that seat may prove helpful from the health point of view, but I would not say there is any justice in it.

However, in conversation with the Premier, he advised me that despite his temporary disposition, he will still be able to keep on his toes with issues. Mr. Premier, we hope you have a speedy recovery. In addition, I have also given permission for the Premier to remain seated during formal sittings of the House if he finds he is unable to stand and respond to questions.

I look forward to the session ahead and to Members' continued cooperation with not only the Speaker but, with the Deputy Speaker and Chairs of Committee of the Whole, and each other as we all try to ensure free flowing debate of the important issues ahead.

**SPEAKER'S STATEMENT ON DENT'S POINT OF ORDER**

I would also like to deal with an outstanding procedural point that was raised on Friday, November 29, 1996, which was the day before the House adjourned. The matter relates to a point of order raised by the Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake, Mr. Dent, which is contained on page 77 of the edited Hansard. The Member raised a point of order concerning comments the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Henry, made in his Member's Statement which is contained on page 58 of the Edited Hansard.

When the point of order was raised, I offered the Member, Mr. Henry, to make comments on the point of order. At that time, Mr. Henry indicated that he would like to respond to my point of order but wanted some time to review the comments in Hansard and respond accordingly. As the Session adjourned, the Member did not have an opportunity to respond. I would like to offer the Member for Yellowknife South the opportunity to respond to the point of order raised

by the Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake. Mr. Henry.

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November the 29th, Mr. Dent raised a point of order on a Member's Statement I had made earlier that day. I had indicated I would like to respond later, and I would like to provide that response now.

There seems to be a couple of concerns raised by Mr. Dent. First, he felt that I was suggesting that the constitutional package represented a government position. I would like to clarify, Mr. Speaker, that I did not state that the constitutional package was a government proposal, nor did I say that the government had endorsed the proposed package yet. I did say the government could not afford to sit back and accept a proposal that would divide northerners.

Page 122

Mr. Dent's second concern was my comment about the government behaving irresponsibly. In my statement, I did not say the government was irresponsible but instead that if the government endorsed the current constitutional proposal that action would be irresponsible. I hope that helps you, Mr. Speaker, in making your ruling. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Henry. I will consider your comments on the point of order. Mahsi cho. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**

Minister's Statement 20-13(4): Remarks on the Reconvening of the Fourth Session of the Thirteenth Assembly

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we resume the Fourth Session of the 13th Assembly today, and continue with the business we began several weeks ago, I would like to open my remarks by wishing the Members and their families a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

As we begin a new calendar year, I believe it is only appropriate that we take a moment to look ahead into 1997, and make some resolutions that will ensure that

we, as the leaders of this territory, serve the best interests of the North.

Personally, I resolve to pay attention to where I am walking ... a resolution I am unfortunately and painfully reminded often of these days.

When I spoke at the beginning of this Session in late November, I reminded Members that we have embarked on a path of change. A path that we must collectively believe is for the best for both the people of the Northwest Territories, as well as for the future of the two new territories.

When we were elected, we acknowledged these would not be easy times. I stated that if anything, our jobs would become more challenging in the weeks to come. Mr. Speaker, next week, on January 27, Mr. Todd will be presenting the 1997-98 budget in this House.

We have one more year in our deficit reduction plan. We are on target to achieving what appeared to many to be an impossible goal -- financial security for the North.

Unfortunately, as we have discovered in the past year, this is a goal that represents changes to the status quo. But good, effective leadership sometimes means bringing change and making hard decisions. Decisions that, in the short-term, may seem to hurt more than they help, but that in the long-run, will change lives for the better.

For example, it is not easy to propose the elimination of funding for the Delta House Addictions Treatment Centre in Inuvik. While some people believe the government sees this as a straight financial decision to cut \$650,000 from the budget, I would like to remind Members about the millions and millions of dollars this government spends on addictions services. Millions of dollars that we would like to see invested in the best way possible to help our people.

Therefore, when we present the 1997-98 budget over the next few weeks, you will see we are proposing a shift in how this government views and invests in addictions services to ensure it better meets the needs of the North. To some, what we are proposing will mean difficult decisions. But they are decisions we believe are the right ones, and that need to be made to address this problem.

Mr. Speaker, the treatment of addictions, and the reform being proposed by this government, is just one

part of the budget we will be introducing in this House January 27. Over the next few weeks, as we discuss and debate the budget, you will see more detail to this and other programs that represent not only a shift in how we spend, but also a shift in how we face our challenges, and resolve our difficulties.

In our 1997-98 proposed budget, we will be looking at continuing to change the way we operate as a government, at moving more decision-making to the community level, and making other changes to help improve economic conditions, and address other social problems facing Northerners today. And as much as these decisions may represent unsettling change for some people -- the decisions we make today are truly for our future.

Therefore, the ultimate question we must ask ourselves is what is the legacy we wish to leave for the people of Nunavut and the new Western Territory when our work is done? I, for one, Mr. Speaker, want to leave a legacy of hope and potential prosperity, and I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure that is the kind of future I can help create for my children, my grandchildren, and for the generations that follow them.

This is not a time to look back and remember how things were, or talk about how, in a perfect world, we would like things to be. Nor is this a time to second guess ourselves. This is a time to show our political backbone and see this through. Making difficult decisions alone will not be enough. We must maintain the will to get the job done. Now is a time to live up to the commitment we made to the people of the Northwest Territories to reshape how we deliver programs and services so they meet the true needs of the North, and make a difference today, and for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this government welcomes Members' thoughts, questions, comments and suggestions -- but what we need, and what our citizens need, is for us to focus on positive end results, and not on preserving a past we can no longer afford financially or otherwise. As a government we are always willing to listen to advice -- good advice that reflects the fiscal realities, and helps us move ahead in a positive direction.

As a government, we do not have all the answers. But we do have a willingness to put ideas out in the name of progress. And, we are committed to make the hard decisions if that is what is best for the North.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this Session, we had about 850 days left to accomplish what we need to do. At that time I told Members that we could not afford to waste even a half a day, if we want to make a difference for the people of the North, and to leave a positive legacy.

Page 123

Today, as you may have noted from the countdown sign that stands in the Great Hall, we now have only 800 days. Time is just as valuable a commodity, and perhaps more valuable, to us today than all of the diamonds and other natural resources found in this territory.

We need to remember that with this short amount of time left to us, we have an obligation to use it wisely. We are a team in this Legislative Assembly, and like any good team, we are only as good as each one of our players. Each one of us is in a valuable position, not only representing our constituents, but in shaping the future of Canada's north. Fighting with other members of the team means we lose the game. But working together, to resolve our differences and reach a workable solution, we all win. It is a great honour to be serving in this, the last Legislative Assembly of the present Northwest Territories. But it is also a great responsibility.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask every Member in this House to make it their New Year's resolution to remember why we are here, and what we were elected to do. Each one of us owes it to our constituents, our friends, our families, to all of the people in the North, and to ourselves to think of the best interests of the whole, not just a few. If we do that, we can indeed lay the groundwork for 1997 to be a happy, healthy and prosperous new year for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Minister's Statement 21-13(4): Minister Absent From the House

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Maniok Thompson's return from Rankin Inlet has been delayed due to weather

conditions, and she will be absent from the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Ministers' statements. Mr. Todd.

Minister's Statement 22-13(4): Notice of Budget Address

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

I would like to advise the House that on Monday, January 27, 1997 I will deliver the Budget Address. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Member's Statement on Proposed Closure of Delta House Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated many times before, in my Member's statement, I would like to send greetings to my family back home. Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik there are many concerns, growing by the day. Many times I have spoken about fairness, and in Inuvik we feel that we have already done our fair share. Last year we led the statistics in reductions, PY reductions, that is. This year, it looks like we are going to start out by leading the way in facility closures. This is not just any facility. This facility has provided help to the people of the Inuvik region for 20 years. Although not everybody who went through the doors of Delta House achieved, and or maintained their sobriety, many have gone on to lead healthier and happier lives. By doing this, they have been able to break the destructive effects of drug and alcohol in their lives and their families. Needless to say, there is disappointment that is being felt in Inuvik and the region with the announcement of the proposed closure of Delta House.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very concerned with the proposed closure, and what we as a government are sending out as a message to the people of the Territories. With this, Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning the appropriate Minister later. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Nunavut Implementation Commission's Proposal for Decentralized Nunavut Government Structure

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following the Premier's comments, I also note that today we mark another milestone with 800 days left remaining until the division of the territories. Mr. Speaker, there is still much work ahead, in order for the residents of Nunavut to be ready to function on its own as a new government. There is great anticipation and hope with the proposed new jobs and infrastructure that have been earmarked and that, I believe, will accompany the new Nunavut government.

Mr. Speaker, this dream of Nunavut, which means "our land", has been in the works for approximately 25 years. It is very difficult for people, I am sure, not living in Nunavut, to completely understand how important this is to its residents.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, it is important to note that the jobs and the new infrastructure that I spoke of earlier, must take place in order for Nunavut to be successful. We are all very confident that this will be realized through the dedicated efforts of NTI and of course, the NIC report, Footprints 2. In the case of my riding of Kivallivik, the Footprints 2 report identifies 50 new jobs in each of the communities of Arviat, Baker Lake and the accompanying required infrastructure, housing and office space, et cetera. This, Mr. Speaker, is significant when looking at the 70 percent unemployment rate that each of these communities suffer from.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that, if ever before, the timing for us to work closely together with our partners, NTI, NIC and the federal government, this is that critical time. I look forward to working with these parties to ensure that these much needed jobs in Arviat, Baker Lake and all small off-road communities are secured. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Language Difficulties  
Experienced With Revenue Canada

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back. Welcome back from the holidays. Mr. Speaker, for the past few weeks, while home in Iqaluit, I have had several constituents contact my office on concerns with income tax and our friend, Revenue Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the concern here is that the letters and requests from Revenue Canada are often sent to unilingual residents, who then have to find someone to interpret the letters or notices. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, that at the best of times, Revenue Canada letters can be intimidating and hard to decipher. This has resulted in some of my constituents having to back several thousands of dollars in income tax.

Also, Mr. Speaker, many unilingual people and others, do not have the facility to fill out these forms and to make sure that they are done correctly. Recently, I have had some constituents not receive GST refunds or child tax monies because of the system in place. Mr. Speaker, I know that this is not a new issue, but as a government we have the responsibility to ensure that our residents, the people of the Northwest Territories, are given every assistance to help them in this area. Later today, I will be asking the appropriate Minister what type of logistical assistance we will be offering to the people who will need help with filling out the forms, and how we can assist the many residents of the Northwest Territories, who may not have filed forms, because of any number of reasons as mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, this is of course beneficial to the Northwest Territories because we might be missing out on needed income tax dollars, as well as possible refund checks, which would be in circulation, helping stimulate our economy. In the smaller communities, people do not have access to H & R Block or other professional tax filers. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, with the advent of e-mail and electronic filing, this might help these residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On the Need For a New Airstrip  
in Pangnirtung

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to state that we are back here in good health again. Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that this winter, in 1996, I have already spoken on it. I am still going to be presenting this to you in 1997, especially Pangnirtung from my riding, that they definitely need a new air strip in the community. Pangnirtung has different aircraft coming in at different times and the air strip is right in the middle of the community. As I have stated before, the territorial government and the federal government will have to look into this in the very near future because Pangnirtung definitely will be needing a new air strip. This year, I will be asking the Department of Transportation to do a survey or review on the Pangnirtung airport to make it better.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that Pangnirtung Hamlet mayor has stated that when they do get an air strip, that they would like to see the air strip on the shoreline of the community, and this is what we are recommending. I will be working quite hard on this and also I will be asking the Minister of Transportation about this later on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement On Annual General Meeting of  
the Qikiqtani Inuit Association Recently Held in Arctic  
Bay

**MR. BARNABAS:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends) I would like to thank the Qikiqtani Association for holding their regular meeting in Arctic Bay. This is the first time they have had the meeting in my home town to my knowledge. With the advent of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 the Qikiqtani Association will become more involved in political and social economic needs for the Inuit in Baffin and in Nunavut. When I look back over the years and see the growth of the Qikiqtani Association I am proud of their representation for all needs in our region. The hospitality of Arctic Bay is famous all over Nunavut and I regret not being able to be in my home town during this eventful meeting. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the President and the Executive for selecting Arctic Bay for this meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Impact of the Bennett Dam on the Waterways of the Western Arctic

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of the western arctic from Fort Smith all the way up to the Mackenzie Delta, have, and are continuing to, experience the major effects to our water ways resulting from the release of huge amounts of water from the Bennett Dam as a result of their dam structural problems. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that we are carrying on in the same manner that we did prior to the New Year. I would have been surprised if we were not.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue, in my opinion. The waterways that run north and south through the western arctic are the life blood of the land. Mr. Speaker, there has been no consultation or warning with regards to the water levels. Water levels have risen dramatically, and the impact is felt all the way to the Arctic Ocean, and it is, and will continue to be, significant. Repairs are not anticipated to be completed until sometime next summer. When I talk about impact, Mr. Speaker, I am referring to things like the effects on fish and wildlife, flooding this spring, shelf ice, and possible loss of life and limb to those who use the land.

This issue is of significant concern that the Mayor Bevington from Fort Smith raised the issue of Mr. Marquis' office when we were in Ottawa in December. Representatives from the Bennett Dam will be in Fort Smith tomorrow night to talk about this issue which is much more than a community issue. Representatives are coming, hopefully, from around the South

Page 125

Slave. The Minister has indicated, Mr. Kakfwi, from RWED, will be there and hopefully the chairman from the Resource Committee.

We have to impress upon the people from Bennett Dam that they have an obligation and responsibility to the down stream inhabitants that they just cannot arbitrarily and negatively impact on major waterways with no consultation and they have to be reminded that they have to come up with the process to satisfy those responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Government Spending in the Mackenzie Delta Constituency

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is in regards to the unfair economic situation that the Mackenzie Delta find themselves in. The government downsizing, fiscal restraint, and the battle against the deficit created hard times for everyone across the NWT. But I feel, however, that my riding, in particular, has taken the worst of it. I have gone over GNWT capital spending figures for the past nine years, and find that my riding has created less of its adequate share. The Mackenzie Delta with population of over 1,700 people have received an average of \$1,130 per person for capital projects, which is less than half of what the GNWT has spent in other ridings of similar size.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the picture does not look like it is going to get much better prior to 1999 for division. Capital spending in communities transfer directly into jobs, and business opportunities for residents. In communities where the unemployment rate was around 35 percent, the lack of work fosters to social problems such as high suicide rates, increase alcohol and drug abuse. I have also spoken in the past of the Tl'oondih Healing Camp. This is a first class facility which is solely owned by the Gwich'in Tribal Council, and one that was designed and constructed without government assistance. Even though, in this case, the GNWT still refuses to provide core funding to this important facility. The government talks about community empowerment, but when it comes to communities taking initiatives to try to establish such a needed facility, the government cuts them back or cuts them out.

Mr. Speaker, Members have talked about being fair for all communities, I hope you remember that when we deal with the budget in the upcoming rounds. I would like to also raise concerns in my riding and try to get some fairness to the people that I represent. In closing, Mr. Speaker ... I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays.

You may conclude your statement. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing, I would like to send my condolences to the family of Peter and Mary Kay in Fort McPherson, and the Kay family at the loss of their daughter Esker Kay Lord, who passed away last week in Whitehorse. So take care and God be with you. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Just again to remind the Members, on your Member's statement, to restrict your statement to one subject. Member's statements. Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement On the Need For an Extended Airstrip in Taloyoak

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the January 10th to 15th, I had the opportunity to visit Taloyoak. During that visit I had a discussion with the mayor of Taloyoak, Mr. Dennis Lyall and Mr. Elwood Johnston, the senior administrative officer. There were many issues that we discussed, but one major issue that came out from that discussion was regarding the length of the runway in Taloyoak.

Mr. Antoine, the Minister of Transportation, will remember that I had brought this issue in this forum some time in spring. On January 15, 1996, Mr. Elwood Johnston had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Antoine and his official to talk about the same issue. Mr. Dennis Lyall, the mayor of Taloyoak, was not able to make it here because of the weather in the eastern arctic. According to the information that I relayed to you over in the spring session, Mr. Antoine, the Taloyoak runway has been reduced to 3,610 feet because of the new regulation of the Ministry of Transportation of the country. I also indicated to the minister that we need to increase the runway by about 3,390. At the meeting of January 15, 1996, according to information I got from the hamlet of Taloyoak, the same request was relayed to the Minister and his officials. It is very critical for the medevac. And, for one thing, in the event that one of the equipment in the community used for municipal services delivery, as for water truck, sewage truck, fuel truck, if one of those equipment should burn down in the winter time, there is no way that you could bring in new equipment

to the community unless by air. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the appropriate Minister about the request. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Enforcement of Mandatory Head Light Legislation

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last spring this House saw fit to pass legislation which I had introduced and which made it mandatory to have headlights on when people are driving on the NWT roads. Mr. Speaker, I have received many positive comments on this legislation, particularly from elderly people and from parents. Unfortunately, I recently drove to Fort Providence, Hay River, and to Fort Resolution, and I did not see any signs up yet instructing people that it was the law to have their headlights on. I also drove around town here and I have not seen any indication of that either, Mr. Speaker. I have received complaints from constituents, particularly those who live out on the Prelude Lake area, that there are a lot of people driving back and forth and many of them do not have their headlights on and it is dangerous, especially when it is snowing .

Page 126

I do not know why it has taken so long to have these new signs put up, Mr. Speaker, but I know that when DPW used to put up the signs, make them, it seemed to be a pretty smooth process. They made the signs and they would go out fairly quickly. At least they did one summer a few years ago, when my son worked for DPW.

-- Laughter

**AN HON. MEMBER:**

Good sign maker.

**MR. ERASMUS:**

But since Cabinet saw fit to do away with most of DPW and their workers, it has taken a year, almost, to make the signs and put them up. I hope this is not an indication of how privatization is going to work, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few suggestions.



**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Restructuring of Government Departments

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today on the subject of the restructuring of government departments. Governments, both past and present, have seemed intrigued with the concept of spending an enormous amount of time and energy designing and redesigning the processes and frameworks within which we carry out the task of governing. Perhaps in the past we had the time and money to embark on such costly reflection. There are less than 800 days left in the Government of the Northwest Territories as we know it, and we do not have the financial resources to facilitate any costly or rash adjustments to existing departments. And speaking of costs, there are many costs to be counted, even in the prolonged deliberation of restructuring and redesigning of departments. It requires a great deal of time by the effected departments. It creates uncertainty for staff, resulting in a loss of key, valuable employees, resulting in poor morale. It takes away from the important tasks at hand, the delivery of services, programs and information to our constituents. The shuffling of the debt, so to speak, also results in employees embarking on a learning curve, and it can take one to three years for a department to return to some semblance of normal operations.

I have done some research, Mr. Speaker, and have found that in the last 20 years, 60 such departmental restructurings have occurred. Take the Department of Health and Social Services, for example. In 1977, one department. In 1978, split up and, in 1994, put back together. All these changes in the name of increasing effectiveness and efficiency.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, at this time, in this government, at this juncture, we cannot afford to devote exorbitant amounts of resources to re-inventing the framework of government. We have more important tasks at hand, and I am sure the government of the west and the government of Nunavut will have their own ideas on how to structure their responsibilities and departments. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On Reconstruction of Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first, to welcome all my colleagues back from what I hope was a restful and happy holiday season. As you know, during this Session we will have many important issues to deal with, all of which will take a great deal of time and energy.

With that in mind, I would like to add another item to our busy table. That of course being the Highway No. 3 section between the Rae access intersection and Yellowknife. Over the past number of months, myself and other Members have lobbied to start construction at this section earlier than the target date of 1998. Today most of you heard our Grand Chief, Joe Rabesca, on the radio wanting to have the speed reduced because of the increased number of transport trucks that are now on this road as well as the ever growing number that will be starting to drive it with the opening of the winter roads north of Yellowknife. Some of you that drove to Yellowknife will understand what I am talking about.

In the last couple of months the traffic has steadily increased, which is making it very dangerous for our residents travelling this section. We must start the reconstruction this coming summer and, for the interim, must reduce the speed and enforce the rules of the road on these trucks. This road is dangerous and is going to get worse. We cannot sit and wait for someone to lose their life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Member's Statement On the Passing of Former Yellowknife Prospector Johnny Baker

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back to my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that I must open the sitting with a report of sad news. Sad news for Yellowknifers in particular. I have been informed that Yellowknife Johnny Baker, died of a stroke on November 24th in Toronto.

Johnny Baker was a famous prospector who made many gold finds in the early 1930s during his travels down the Yellowknife river. In 1935, he staked the deposit which later became the Giant Mine. This discovery launched a staking rush that drew people to Great Slave Lake from all over Canada. The boom and subsequent mine development laid the foundation for the city of Yellowknife.

Page 127

In a feature interview with CBC North a couple of years ago, Yellowknife Johnny compared the gold frenzy of the mid 1930s to the diamond boom of the first half of the 1990s. The similarities are easy to see. In both cases, no one had time to prospect once the race was on. People posted their stakes as quickly as they could and then went back for a closer look.

Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that I report the news of Yellowknife Johnny's death to this House. I am sure all Members will join me in sending belated condolences to his family. I would also like to thank Johnny Baker for his pioneering work in the land that has become thousands of people. People who have joined the aboriginal peoples of the North and become life-long northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS**

Return To Question 25-13(4): Norman Wells Airport Emergency Response

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, November 28, 1996, the Member for Nunakput asked me when the Department of Transportation terminated its Emergency Response Service at the Norman Wells airport and how many staff it laid off.

I am pleased to report that the Department of Transportation was able to terminate the Emergency Response Service at the Norman Wells airport without having to lay off any employees. When the department took over the airport from Transport Canada on July 1, 1995, it was reasonably certain that the forthcoming regulations respecting Emergency Response Services would not require them at Norman Wells. By not staffing vacancies and

normal staff turnover, the department was able to close the service on July 1, 1996 without laying off any staff. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Picco.

**ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to welcome to the Assembly two well-known residents of Iqaluit, for their work and also for their volunteer efforts. Mr. Methusalah Kunuk is an in-law of mine and the brother of the MLA from the High Arctic, and also the Superintendent of Transportation in Iqaluit, and the lay preacher for the Anglican Church. Sitting next to him is Mr. John Graham. John is the airport manager in Iqaluit and a long-time dedicated volunteer with the air cadets in our home town. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two individuals in the Gallery. James Ragee is a constituent of mine from Cape Dorset and he is preparing for further studies in southern Canada. James is here with Lydia Bardak, Executive Director for the NWT Council for Disabled Persons.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to respectfully recognize two people from Taloyoak. His Worship the Mayor, Dennis Lyall, and his staff member Mr. Elwood Johnson, the Senior Administrative Officer. Welcome. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With this being Education Week, it is an honour to recognize someone in the Gallery who needs no introduction because she makes her presence known here on a regular basis, Ms Pat Thomas, the President of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.

-- Applause.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Henry.

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Ken Duffin, who is with Colliers International from Edmonton. Ken has been coming north for a number of years. He works for an appraisal company, Colliers, as I mentioned, and has been coming north for a number of years. I would like to welcome Ken and also encourage him to consider opening an office in the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ootes.

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Ben MacDonald and welcome him back. He is an avid follower of our deliberations. Mr. MacDonald is with the Union of Northern Workers. Welcome back.

-- Applause

Page 128

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ng.

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two constituents, Her Honour Commissioner Helen Maksagak and her husband, John. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Commissioner's right hand man, Mr. Russel Look, and also from CBC Ms. Catholique.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any further recognitions? I would like to recognize Shirley Johnson. Shirley is a former worker with Dene Nation. Welcome to the Assembly.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 65-13(4): Status of Request for Runway Extension in Taloyoak

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's Statement regarding the runway in Taloyoak, which has been reduced by the regulation of the MOT. We are only asking that this government recognize what was taken away from the community to bring it back to the original length. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Antoine, what is the status of the request of the Hamlet of Taloyoak now, since you have had meetings with the representative, and I posed a question over spring regarding the same, what is the status of the request? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 65-13(4): Status of Request for Runway Extension in Taloyoak

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the request of the municipality of Taloyoak in regards to their airport and the length of their airstrip. The honourable Member indicated to the House here that through the Transport Canada regulations now that the allowable usage of their airstrip is reduced substantially so that the full length of the airstrip is not allowed to be used. So, as a result the airstrip has been reduced. In the meetings that we had with the Senior Administration Officer last week, the meetings were very well put together. I think that the municipality is very seriously looking at what they can do to help the situation out.

At the conclusion of the meeting, my officials in the Department of Transportation were sitting with the representative of the municipality of Taloyoak to look at this situation a little closer to see what we could do in terms of planning in the future on how we could accommodate the request. I think it is possible to do so.

I said in earlier discussions there have been many requests along with the Taloyoak airport in the north for this Department to take a serious look at the airports and see how airports could be increased in length or upgraded. The total amount that we are looking at is quite substantial as a department. It is the time of fiscal restraint and we are going to be listening to the Minister of Finance introducing the budget next Monday and from there you will have an indication of what we are dealing with.

But in the mean time, specifically for Taloyoak, we are willing to look at it. I think we started off on the right foot last week with the type of commitment that the community is willing to put forward. That is all I can report on it at this time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 65-13(4): Status of Request for Runway Extension in Taloyoak

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary question to the same Minister. The Hamlet of Taloyoak is in no fault as a result of the MOT regulation being changed to not recognize a runway that was initially used for

the type of aircraft that community was able to bring in. The community suffers as a result of a decision by the Federal government. Will the Minister communicate with the Federal Minister to indicate to the Minister that the community of Taloyoak is now suffering? We may not be able to get a faster, better, long-range aircraft, in this case Lear jet, because of the decision imposed upon the community by the federal government. We may not be able to bring in equipment that is necessary in the winter in case of emergency. Will the Minister communicate with the federal government, try and find some assistance to help the community? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 65-13(4): Status of Request for Runway Extension in Taloyoak

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, as Minister of Transportation I will contact the Minister responsible in the federal government in regards to the situation that we have in Taloyoak. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 66-13(4): Education Act Implementation

**MR. EVALOARJUK:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question directed to the Minister of Education. Under the Education Act, which will be coming in place in 1997-98. The communities in the north, the smaller communities

Page 129

particularly did not really like the idea that there had to be seven members elected in one community and they had to have a two-year term. After two years they will have to re-elect new members for education councils within the communities. Is this in fact the policy of the government at this time? Because this is becoming a concern in the smaller communities. The Act seems to state that every community will have to re-elect every two years for new education council members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Education, Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Question 67-13(4): Incremental Costs Related to Division

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance and is in regards to the incremental costs related to division. The Minister recently went to Ottawa and I was wondering if he could give some indication in his opinion as to the issue of incremental costs. Does he anticipate that there may be funds for those all important incremental costs related to division, east and west? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 67-13(4): Incremental Costs Related to Division

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and welcome back. Welcome back colleagues. The honourable Member is correct. I did have a meeting with Mr. Martin, on January 8th or the 9th. My meeting with Mr. Martin, just for clarity's purposes, was to deal with the existing formula that we have and some of the problems we have with it in relationship to our projected revenues for 97 and 98, 99. I will deal with that in the budget on Monday.

Another discussion took place in relationship to the incremental costs associated with the development of two new territories. I believe there is a protocol being established by ourselves and Mr. Martin's office to at least get the participants to the table and who they should be, to set some timelines as when we can move forward in an orderly way trying to identify the appropriate base funding and the incremental costs. I have Mr. Martin's assurance that this whole process will move forward in a timely manner.

No discussion took place in relationship to the level of money that was required, because that is premature at this time until we determine the appropriate government frameworks that are required east and west. But there was assurance that we would move on a timely basis and there was assurance that incremental costs were a key component to the discussions. The level of those incremental costs and the degree in which we will negotiate, I am unable at this time to be clear as to whether there will be sufficient money or not sufficient money because again, we need to determine very shortly what kind of basic Nunavut and western governments we are going to have so that they can be costed, and the appropriate incremental costs associated with that costed, and negotiations can then proceed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 67-13(4): Incremental Costs Related to Division

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is well known as a canny and astute politician, and above all, very perceptive, when there are issues of money on the table. So, I was wondering why he cannot be clear in the dollar sense, can he give us the benefit of his perception and sense of the kind of relief that may be there, or willingness to discuss incremental costs?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 67-13(4): Incremental Costs Related to Division

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Mr. Speaker, well, flattery will get my colleague everywhere. Anyway, no, I cannot at this time determine to what degree the negotiations will take place. Again, I want to ensure my colleague, and others around the table here, that there is clearly a commitment of the federal Finance Minister's office that we will move forward on a timely basis to work towards two new formal agreements. There is a recognition in the Finance Minister's office that incremental costs are going to be associated with these negotiations. However, the degree of

incremental costs, and the additional bills it will require over and above the base, is still undetermined, because we still have not determined what form of government it is going to be, both east and west. I am optimistic and hopeful that in the coming weeks, not months, weeks, we will be able to get a much clearer picture to the degree of dollars that are required and the enthusiasm with which the current government, or any future government, will move in providing funding for us on the incremental side.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq. Okay, Mr. Picco.

Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been some concern in my riding over the contamination, yes, the contamination of fuel oil with a certain fungus that can cause burner failure. Some Members of this House have also asked me about this. Maybe the Minister for NTPC could update me and this House on the status of this fungus, or biological growth, in the oil storage tanks that have contaminated the fuel oil in my community.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

Page 130

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Corporation did encounter a problem with the bacteria late in 1996, in fuel in Iqaluit. This was discovered because of problems with one engine in Iqaluit. It was found that fuel filters had been clogged by the bacteria in the fuel. This bacteria apparently occurs naturally in almost all fuels, but tends to be inactive in the north because of our temperatures and it only becomes a problem if the temperature reaches a certain level and there is adequate water in the fuel. This has been found to be isolated right now, in Iqaluit, in one fuel tank. An anti-bacterial agent has been put in the fuel and the problem appears to be solved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that in some conversations with some people around this matter, that indeed the colder weather in the Northwest Territories seems to inhibit the growth of this bacteria or fungus. In this case, the fungus is actually present, and as the Minister said, does impede the generator. Can the Minister tell us what is the status now of checking on a regular basis to make sure that this is not occurring, as he did say, in his response to me, that the problem seems to have been fixed. Is there going to be ongoing checks of this, and maybe in other tanks, in the Northwest Territories, to make sure this is not occurring? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Corporation has advised fuel suppliers and the petroleum products division of the GNWT, to advise them that we have encountered the problem and to suggest that they monitor tanks, and that they may be responsible for it. Tests done in early January reveal that there are no problems with the tanks in Iqaluit. The intention is to monitor tanks throughout the area where the fuel, the same supplier of fuel, was used as temperatures rise in the spring, to make sure we catch any problem before it becomes serious. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I gather from that then the problem is not actually in the distribution of fuel through the fuel corridor through the fuel pipes. It is actually in the tank itself, is that correct?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the bacteria apparently started to grow as it warmed up in the pipes, coming into the engines. It is not active within the tanks. What was found was that the bacteria had become active from one of the tanks only, and that is the tank that has been treated. So it would appear at this point in time that the bacteria is not causing any further problems in Iqaluit. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course the concern here would be that if it is in the fuel lines itself that are distributing fuel, it may infect the storage of the fuel for domestic burners and so on. Is the Minister assuring me now then that indeed in Iqaluit, private home-owners and the government housing association, do not have to worry? That their furnaces, if they are using that fuel, will not be infected by this fungus, this bacterial agent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 68-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am only responsible for the Power Corporation. I can only make the assurance the Member is looking for as it relates to tanks which are supplied by, or to

machinery or furnaces which may be supplied by tanks, under the control of the Power Corporation. As I said, the Power Corporation has advised the other agencies in the region that they should check for this problem. That is all that we can do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I stated in my Member's statement, in the concern in the community of Inuvik, on the proposed closure of Delta House. I would like to know what the Minister and his Department used as criteria when developing this scenario, picking which centre to be shut down? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were several factors that were taken into account. First and foremost, throughout the alcohol and drug residential

Page 131

treatment programs that we finance, we had a high number of beds per capita. Compounding that, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that within the bed spaces that we did have available, there was also a high vacancy rate amongst those beds. Those are a couple of the first factors, as far as the need to remove some of the beds from the system. Second to that, in respect to how the Delta House facility was reached as the facility to be targeted for withdrawal of funds, it was because of the fact that it was the smallest of the facilities that we financed, it was the oldest facility that was out there within our system, and finally, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the location of the facility itself, lent to some program delivery problems from basing the treatment out of that facility, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On one hand, we say we have the highest rate of alcohol related incidents in the Northwest Territories. Then we say we have the highest beds. Can the Minister tell me what the highest beds idea is based on?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is based on averages per capita, on the availability of beds in relation to other jurisdictions within the country, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister inform me then, when they were looking at this bed ratio in comparison to the rest of the country, could you tell me that, also, the comparison was made with the rate of alcohol abuse and the affects of it? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say definitively for sure, but I can say that we recognize that there is a higher incidence of alcohol and drug

abuse in the Northwest Territories. That was also a factor that was taken into consideration, and the overall decision for withdrawing the funds of Delta House, I would like to reiterate that we are not withdrawing the provision of alcohol and drug treatment services to the residents of Inuvik or the residents of the Inuvik region itself. We will continue to maintain and provide residential treatment beds and spaces for those individuals that require that. We will continue to provide alcohol and drug treatment funding at the regional and the local level to assist individuals needing programs and services, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the services will still be available to the residents, where will they be available if Delta House is shut down?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 69-13(4): Criteria For Proposed Closure of Delta House

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they would be available in other residential treatment facilities that we finance right now. If I could use, for example, in Yellowknife right here, through Northern Addictions services, or through MSGK, the facility there, on the Hay River Reserve. It will be determined based on the regional referral team, and of course, the client, on where they would want to undertake their treatment when that new process takes place, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 70-13(4): Update on Deficit Elimination Strategy

**MR. ERASMUS:**



Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of our terms last year, we undertook a two-year process to balance our budget. Most people understand the necessity to do that. Unfortunately, our civil servants have been put under a tremendous strain. Many of them are nervous going to work. They are scared to spend money, because they do not know how long they are going to be in their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, for the most part, our civil servants are hard working and conscientious workers, and they should be commended for doing a good job under difficult conditions. My understanding is, that if we successfully implement this year's proposed budget, we will have balanced the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if I can tell my constituents that this is it. Lord knows, Yellowknife has done its part to balance the budget. Mr. Speaker, after this budget is implemented, can people feel safe? Can I tell my constituents that the cuts are finished after this budget is implemented? That the cuts are finished other than for minor adjustments?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The question is hypothetical because it is asking the Minister to make a prediction. It is also asking a question about a proposed budget address. I would like to ask the Member if he can rephrase his question.

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from the Minister of Finance, once we have completed two-year deficit reduction plan will this, our balancing the budget, can I tell my

Page 132

constituents who are asking me, that they can feel safe in their job? That our plan has been successfully implemented?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 70-13(4): Update on Deficit Elimination Strategy

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to be able to answer that question today but I would feel somewhat uncomfortable that it be pre-empting the budget so I am not trying to avoid it but on Monday we will be able to outline to the public at large, those employed, those unemployed the fiscal condition of this government and the plan that we have to reach a balanced budget in 1997. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Todd. David. Thank you. Point of order. Mr. Picco.

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, several times in this House I brought up the fact that I like to ask questions. I have a lot of questions to ask. I keep seeing that my clock is running out here. We are in deliberations so I would ask the Speaker that the clock be stopped to allow for the extra time allotted in your consultations with the Clerk so that I can get my questions and other Members can ask those very important questions that will be (background noise)..

Thank you, Mr. Todd. I see that Mr. Todd has my concurrence.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, there is no point of order. We are still on oral questions and the oral question is for one hour and the clock runs up to the time that oral questions are concluded. Mr. Erasmus. Supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 70-13(4): Update on Deficit Elimination Strategy

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Finance Minister if he has changed his mind or whether he is still committed to a two-year process or whether he is changing it to a longer time period?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 70-13(4): Update on Deficit Elimination Strategy

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I do recognize the seriousness of the question being asked by my honourable colleague. It certainly was our intention when we started this Assembly 12 months ago to take a two-year approach to balancing the budget. I am committed to that and hopefully on Monday I will be able to reassure everybody that in fact we will accomplish that in 1997. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 71-13(4): Destination of Incremental and Transitional Division Funding

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance, also responsible for division, and it also relates to the Minister's meeting with Mr. Martin, the Federal Finance Minister. Mr. Todd has answered part of my question with Mr. Miltenberger's question but I would like some detail and background as to... There are various pots of money that we are looking at or that we are seeking. One is implemental funding. Another is transition cost. The other budget of \$150 million that has already been basically allocated. I would like the Minister, if he would, to explain to this House and the general public exactly what these dollars are intended for. We may have a very good idea but there are a lot of people out in the communities that would like some more detail as to exactly where this money will be going. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 71-13(4): Destination of Incremental and Transitional Division Funding

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a good question at an opportune time. Let me start off by saying that Federal Cabinet approved last year \$150 million expenditure to provide monies, seed monies if you want, for a variety of initiatives that had to be undertaken prior to 1999 with respect to the division of the Territories, and specifically Nunavut. However, in that \$150 million there was money for the infrastructure as required, money in there for the training that is required, money in there for the Interim Commissioner's Office and a variety of expenditures

necessary to pre-implement, if you want, our onward move to Nunavut. So that is what that \$150 million is. Most of that money has been expended by the Federal government directly although we do have some relationship with the expenditures on the education training side, on the community infrastructure that will be required through MACA and a number of other areas but it is primarily being spent by the Federal government, DIAND, on Nunavut's behalf.

The discussions with Mr. Martin are in terms of the two new gross expenditure basis, that is, the money required to run Nunavut and the West on an on-going basis or what we call the gross expenditure base. That is the base on which we develop our funding requirements. Over and above that base, that was recognized by our predecessors and others, there will be a requirement for incremental costs and those are costs over and above what it would normally cost to run one government. We would now be running two governments in different geographical locations with different costs associated to it. So once the base is established, once the design of governments has been established we will be able to identify what the additional costs are over and above one single government. So that is the definition of incremental costs and that is probably the most important issue that faces us all. How do we ensure that, depending on what is finally decided on the kind of structure of government, those incremental costs are sufficient and are there?

On the issue of transition costs, those are costs that are currently being expended as it relates to the pre-implementation of division of the Territories. There is some money being assigned by the federal government. For

Page 133

example, on the judicial side there is money being provided. Other areas that we are currently expending money on, we are now documenting that, and that will be subject to negotiations with the federal government and whether or not we will recover the transitional costs. So again, if I may, just for clarity purposes, as I said the federal government in its first Cabinet submission approved the \$150 million, which was primarily pre-implementation costs associated with Nunavut, whether it is infrastructure, training, Interim Commissioner, et cetera. We have now documented the transition costs associated with the efforts that we are doing to pre-implement an east/west, two new Territories. That is called transition costs. Some of

these transition costs are going to be recovered particularly in the justice side. I understand that those discussions are underway. Once we have identified what I call the transition costs in this government, then we have got to start negotiating now.

The incremental costs, which I see as the most important aspect of it, are recognized by Federal Finance who will lead the discussions on the two new gross expenditures basis. That is recognized that there will be an additional cost over and above what we currently have and that perhaps, is probably the most critical factor as we move forward in trying to negotiate two appropriate new formulas and identify what the incremental costs are. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated a while ago, Pangnirtung will be needing a new air strip in the very near future. Last year in 1996, the Pangnirtung Hamlet Council had written to me and I made that motion in 1996. It states that the Pangnirtung Hamlet would like us to look at this issue, that they have to be given a new air strip in a different location. For that matter, Mr. Speaker, I am asking Mr. Antoine to see what you have done, your staff has done up until today in Pangnirtung. Will the air strip be relocated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Pangnirtung airport, this one here is a very serious request. The reason why I am saying that it is serious is first of all the airport, as the honourable Member indicated, is in the middle of the community. As a result there is a safety concern for the pedestrians and the vehicles crossing the airstrip. Secondly, the length of the existing air strip is 2,900 feet, I understand, and the requirement of the air strip

should be substantially longer. However, in 1993, in answer to the honourable Member's question, the Department had studied the possible relocation and upgrading of this airport and the Department had identified about five sites where this relocation could take place. At the same time the costs were analyzed with the construction of the airport at these sites. The cost to extend the runway from the 2,900 feet to the 3,500 feet was estimated to have cost a substantial... approximately \$11 million. As the honourable Member knows, as well as members of the community know, the location to extend it would be very costly.

At the same time, the cost of the relocation of this airport would also be quite substantial, and it is also approximately \$11 million in the estimation of the Department. In the analysis, the Department concluded that because of the fiscal situation, that kind of expenditure could not be justified at this time. The honourable Member makes reference to a letter that he received from the municipality requesting the relocation of this airport and our response from the Department of Transportation was that the high cost associated with this relocation of the airport, during these times of fiscal restraint, is pretty difficult to do and prohibits the government from committing to this project. At the same time, we will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the airport infrastructure remains appropriate for use by the air couriers today. The Department has made significant improvements to the existing airport. We have recently completed the construction of the new airport terminal building and have scheduled the replacement of the airfield lighting system in the summer of 1997. Mr. Speaker, this is what the Department has done up to date. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation for what he has done up to today but, Mr. Speaker, as I stated, the Pangnirtung airport is right in the middle of the hamlet. I have spoken with the Minister, before there is a major accident right in the middle of the hamlet, that we definitely have to relocate the airport. We can not wait for too many more years. I would like the

Minister to see this as an emergency case. I appreciate that you have done quite a bit for Pangnirtung airstrip. They will be receiving new lights in the airstrip in 1997. I would like you to understand that before there is a major accident we have to relocate the airstrip. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

Further Return To Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just in response to the honourable Member's statement and comments. The Department is aware of the situation of the location of the community and the airport. They must realize that with the fiscal restraint that we are under it would be difficult to make any commitments at this time. Something like this has to be coordinated and we have to strategize an approach, if we are intending to move ahead with such a request. This would include, again, working along with the communities and trying to determine what is feasible at this time. At the present time the Hawker Sidley 748 serves the community of Pangnirtung, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The Department will continue to dialogue with the air carriers regarding the possible replacement of the aircraft and the Department will ensure that

Page 134

the air infrastructure is appropriate for any future aircraft, if and when the aircraft is replaced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lastly, I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation if there would be an on-going dialogue with the Hamlet of Pangnirtung and its Department of Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

Further Return To Question 72-13(4): Status of New Airstrip for Pangnirtung

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will continue to dialogue with the municipalities with Pangnirtung in regards to the airport. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is to the Minister of Finance in regards to my opening statement, about the mechanism to deal with the question about fairness in regards to distribution of capital expenditures in communities. Like I stated in my statement, it consists of some 1,700 people, with average capital expenditures of about one \$1,130 per person, compared to other similar constituencies who receive almost twice the amount that my constituency does. Does the Minister have a mechanism in place through FMBS or Department of Finance to monitor the amount of expenditures being allocated to other constituencies? Also, the amount of revenues that have been spent over a period of time in all the other constituencies? Also, the question about fairness. Is there a way that you monitor all of these projects that are being allocated?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Was that three questions? Two. The Minister of Finance, two questions.

Return To Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me try to answer it this way. Again, I have to step back a little bit and look at previous Legislatures. I think that, as I said in a number of occasions in this House, under the previous regime, where Ms Cournoyea was the Premier at the time. She instituted what she felt was a fairer approach, particularly on the capital spending side, in that the call letters were sent to each municipality in each hamlet council, asking them to prioritize their capital expenditures in consultation with the MLAs. That would then come in and be collated through the Premier's office and the Department of Finance, and it would be brought in to the committees

for approval by this Assembly. In a perfect world, I suppose you could wave a magic wand and say there are no inequities in the system. There are always inequities in every system. They are there for a variety of reasons and I am not about to speak as to why there are inequities in my colleague's riding.

A lot of what takes place in terms of capital spending and fairness, is based upon our ability as MLAs to consult with, to act, and to campaign for our needs in the communities. But ultimately, the authority and the mechanism to ensure some semblance of fairness and equity lies here in the House, through the committees, and ultimately, through the approval of the budget. There is no mechanism, per se, where I have the authority, because I do not, to determine whether this constituency gets this and that constituency gets that. It is a series of things and I would suggest to you that, while the system is not perfect, far from it, it certainly is a great deal better than it was in previous regimes. It was brought into place where we sought community participation, MLA's involvement, and ultimately, through the committees and the Ministers by the previous regime and incorporated into our capital planning process with this regime early when we were appointed to Cabinet. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is grand to state that whatever happened in the past happened in the past. We are dealing with some occurrences which have been carried on for 10 years and are still continuing. In some ridings, they are receiving in the range of \$8 to \$10 million in capital projects. In my riding, which consists of three communities and 1,700 people, are under a million dollars. I mean, that is a discretion that basically boggles your mind on how one community can receive \$10 million and one community of a similar size gets a million. So I would like to know, is there a mechanism there to bring that in line so it is a fair distribution?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we all recognize that, I certainly do. The concern raised by our colleague, and he raised it earlier in the House in 1996, that the reality is that the communities get the call letter asking what the priorities are in their constituencies, et cetera, and they assign the dollar amounts to it. That comes in through the committee system and the committee system massages it and gives advice to the government, based on what they believe is right and what they believe is wrong.

If there is, as my honourable colleague does imply, and I think there is, some truth to what he is saying, where he has a unique situation where there is an inordinate disparity between his riding and others. I have indicated to him in conversations that we need to sit down, identify what the priorities are, we have to consult with everybody, including myself, to find a mechanism to try to, perhaps through some redistribution, to try to accommodate some of the concerns of the Member.

Page 135

Somebody has to put pen to paper and indicate to us what the priorities are.

I have already committed earlier this week to sitting down with his constituents in the not too distant future to try to work out what, if anything, we can do to provide him with more comfort, that his constituency is being treated fairly and that the inequities that are perceived are real and can be corrected. So there is the will there to try to make the adjustments and I look forward to future discussions with his constituency on this matter.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary. Could the Minister get his Department to pull the numbers together so that he can clearly see for himself exactly what those distributions are? Also, the question of the

capital expenditures. As he is aware, there are only two more budget sessions before division, the one coming up and the one next year. So that I do not lose out in this opportunity in this fiscal year that the fiscal year prior to that, so that I can have the opportunity to get some of these discretions resolved and see some benefits to my constituents. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 73-13(4): Mechanism to Ensure Fair Distribution of Capital Expenditures

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Mr. Speaker, I have already committed to my honourable colleague that I am prepared to sit down with him and his constituents next week to see if we can put a plan together that will bring about some level of comfort to him, that he is being treated fairer than he currently is. I have already done some research in relation to where monies have been expended over the last 10 years. I think it would be fair to say to my colleague, that the level of financing in his constituency, in comparison to most, has been significantly less.

So, I made a commitment here today to sit down with his people, but there has to be some initiative taken on their behalf to give us some sense of his needs. Then we have to work closely with our colleagues and everyone else along this table, to see if we can accommodate that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Rabesca.

Question 74-13(4): Reconstruction of Highway No. 3

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question directly to the Minister of Transportation regarding the comment that I made on the highway between Yellowknife and Rae. Would the Minister consider advancing the time frame to start the reconstruction of the Rae to Yellowknife highway sections?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 74-13(4): Reconstruction of Highway No. 3

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, the Department has not looked at advancing this project of upgrading and paving the road between Rae and Yellowknife. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Rabesca.

Supplementary To Question 74-13(4): Reconstruction of Highway No. 3

**MR. RABESCA:**

Yes, my second question regarding the same statement that I made earlier, regarding the speech yesterday the Grand Chief made in regards to reducing the speed. I wonder if the Minister has anything to do with it, whether the transport truckers that are racing on the highways, would be able to reduce their speed or give them some kind of warning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 74-13(4): Reconstruction of Highway No. 3

**HON. JAMES ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have just been made aware of the Grand Chief Joe Rabesca's statement today. The Department is very concerned about safety on the highway, that is one of our main objectives to maintain. That people who use our highway systems are in a safe environment and we are very concerned about it. Certainly the Department will take a look at it. I am certain that the Department has already taken a look at it.

However, at this present time, I am not very familiar with what kind of direction the Department is going to take. In light of the amount of traffic that has increased on the highway system, and with the amount of traffic that is going to increase, in resupplying the winter roads north to Yellowknife and to the mining area. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure who my question is directed to today, but I have a letter here from a very dear senior in Hay River, who has worked very hard all his life and now is retired. He used to be able to call the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre and order a cord of wood for \$55. Our seniors have been subjected to an unusual number of adverse actions by this government just recently, and I am wondering, why has this changed? The availability of cheap cord wood for seniors in Hay River. We are fortunate to have trees and a correctional facility with manpower looking for things to do, and I want to know why this has changed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Page 136

Return To Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have all the details here on the particular issue. I will speak to the honourable Member, and work with her and find out the information. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the Minister's offer to get together to work on this. This is a concern not just to the person writing this letter, but I have received numerous calls over the holidays from seniors. I was wondering which department would have been responsible, for providing instruction to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre not to continue this service to seniors in Hay River? Who made that decision? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has the mandate to put programs at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre to undertake this type of program. We have to work with the Department of Renewable Resources who do the licensing for the timber rights, so it is a dual responsibility of both departments. Like I said, that is why it is not as simple a matter as first indicated, so I will find out more about it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister suggesting that the Department of Renewable Resources would issue a cutting permit to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, based on who they would be selling their product to and at what price? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 75-13(4): Availability of Fuel Wood for Seniors

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is a complex issue. It is my understanding that they do issue the licence to us, and I will have to get more information on this. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 76-13(4): Division of GNWT Assets and Liabilities

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. A number of constituents have raised concerns to me regarding the question of division of assets and liabilities between Nunavut and the new western territory. I understand there has been some work prepared already on the question of division of assets and liabilities. I am led to believe that the division of assets and liabilities between the two new governments may not be as contentious an issue as some people would have it be. My question to the Minister is, when will some document be prepared to, hopefully, alleviate concerns that residents of both Nunavut and the western territory have on this particular topic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 76-13(4): Division of GNWT Assets and Liabilities

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be fair to say that my honourable colleague is correct. I think that there is a great deal of concern and anxiety on the assets and liabilities side, but in fact, when you take a hard look at it, it really could be, as they say, making a mountain out of a molehill. We did do a draft report on the assets and liabilities which was distributed to a number of people including our senior bureaucrats. We have asked them for their comments. Are we on the right track in terms of the process and the participation that we are suggesting, how we define, if you wanted to, and agree to the orderly, fair, equitable and reasonable distribution of the assets and liabilities? This should probably be completed shortly. Once it is, I will then distribute it to my honourable colleagues through the committees, seeking their input. Based on their input, assuming we agree with it and it is constructive and productive and et cetera. We would then try to finalize the document. It would say this would be the process, this would be how we would go about the orderly, fair and equitable distribution of assets and liabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Question period is over. Mr. Picco.

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would seek a procedural ruling in extending question period.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Picco, do you wish to seek unanimous consent to extend the question period?

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to extend the question period.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Iqaluit is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Do we have unanimous consent? There are nays. You do not have unanimous consent, Mr. Picco. I am sorry. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Picco.

**ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Written Question 1-13(4): Policy on Fees Paid for Jury Duty

Page 137

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is for the Minister of Justice. What is the policy of the government in paying people who have to serve on jury duty, including government and other private employees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Roland.

**ITEM 10: PETITIONS**

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition, Petition 2-13(4), signed by 285 people from Inuvik and the surrounding region. Mr. Speaker, the petition requests that the Government of the Northwest Territories reconsider its decision to close this pioneering treatment program in light of the fact that there are so many people in the region who are suffering and dying from alcoholism and all its related problems.

**MR. SPEAKER:**



Thank you. Petitions. Report of standing and special committees. Before we go to item 11, we will take a fifteen minute break.

-- Break

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 11, reports of standing and special committees.  
Mr. Erasmus.

**ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations has the honour of presenting its report on the proposed amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Departments of Transportation and Public Works and Services, and commends it to the House.

In late November of 1996, the government tabled a discussion paper on the proposed amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Departments of Transportation and Public Works and Services. This paper was initially debated in the Assembly in November.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations received a copy of the discussion paper and also received a briefing in January from the Minister responsible for the proposed amalgamation, the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, and his staff. This briefing was open to all Ordinary Members.

Members found it difficult to evaluate the specific details of the proposed amalgamation on the information available. The Minister indicated that potential organizational structure and potential cost implications were not available because the amalgamation was still at the proposal stage. In light of this, the Committee Members evaluated the proposal based on the objectives presented and the explanations provided by the Minister and his staff.

The Committee would like to thank the Minister, and his staff, who have put so much time and energy into developing the amalgamation proposal.

The Committee carefully considered the objectives for the amalgamation as presented by the Minister. Key among the objectives was to create a more efficient and effective government structure. Members agree that there may be opportunities for increased

efficiency by amalgamating these departments. The efficiencies seem to primarily be in the areas of finance and policy. There were also potential cost savings in a reduction in the number of senior managers. It was stressed that potential savings prior to 1999 were limited.

The Minister also stressed that this amalgamation would reduce the overall amount of government. He stated the need to have a government structure which is in keeping with the people it provides. While the Committee understands this rationale, there is also the argument that there are unique circumstances in the NWT which may lead to other considerations when designing government.

In addition to considering the advantages of the proposed amalgamation, Committee Members raised other considerations.

Since 1991, the government has undergone numerous structural changes including amalgamations, privatization and decentralization. As well, there has been a vigorous deficit management plan in place for the past year. These changes have caused major upheaval for staff. While many of the changes were necessary to accommodate the fiscal realities facing the GNWT, they have also caused uncertainty. With the necessary reductions in place to achieve a balanced budget, Committee Members believe that there is need to provide some stability to allow staff and the public to absorb and implement the many changes that have been introduced. This stability would also benefit the private sector which has been effected by decreased government and individual spending.

It was clear from the responses to the Department's consultation and the experience of Members in their home ridings that, while there is not strong opposition to this potential amalgamation, there is not strong support either. The one thing that is clear is that the public and staff would like to see disruption of current services kept to a minimum.

The Government House Leader has clearly indicated that the deficit management plan for 1997/98 is not dependent on this amalgamation. Although there may be some cost savings associated with the amalgamation, the government's ability to balance the budget will not be compromised if the amalgamation does not proceed. During his presentation in January, Minister Arlooktoo suggested that the reductions to these three departments would continue if the amalgamation did not happen. Members would

appreciate confirmation from the Minister that he was referring to the reductions included in the 1997/98 business plans and main estimates.

One Member suggested the amalgamations seemed to be a case of tearing down a house when there was only a need to repair a few doors. There may be opportunities to reduce duplication among the three departments in terms of program

Page 138

operations. For example, there may be a way to coordinate the tendering process without needing to amalgamate. As well, with the many staff working on community empowerment, there should be a way to coordinate community level training. Members also felt there could be a way to coordinate the efforts of the staff working on community empowerment in each of these departments.

At the community level while there may be some duplication like two garages or maintenance shops, there already is a great deal of integration. With communities taking on additional programs, the opportunities to achieve efficiencies will occur in ways that communities want to see.

Another area the Committee considered was the initiatives and workload already facing the Assembly, the Cabinet and the staff. In the last year, the government has begun a number of initiatives which span most departments. These changes, such as income reform and user say/user pay, represent substantial changes in the way that government does its business. Added on top of these changes is the fast approaching reality of division. With only 800 days until the existing government ceases to exist, and two new territories are created, the government needs to focus its energies and resources in allowing as smooth a transition in 1999 as possible.

#### The Standing Committee's Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Government Operations understands that there are opportunities to possibly improve the efficiency of government operations and to achieve some cost savings from the proposed amalgamation. In the future, the new governments of Nunavut and the western territory may wish to consider such an amalgamation.

However, at this point the Committee believes that the efforts and resources of the Assembly, the Cabinet and government departments would be better spent

focusing on the many other initiatives facing us over the next two years.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Proposed Amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Departments of Transportation and Public Works and Services be shelved for the life of the 13th Assembly. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the Proposed Amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Departments of Transportation and Public Works and Services.

I would, therefore, like to move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit that the report be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you.

#### MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, your motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried. Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Item 12, reports of committees on review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. O'Brien.

#### ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

#### MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Report of the Joint Working Group on the Business Incentive Policy, Tabled Document 20-13(4). Thank you.

#### MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

#### MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a package of nine letters that I received, opposing the closure of the Delta House Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Inuvik, Tabled Document 21-13(4).

The letters are from Ruby St. Amand; Chief James Firth; Norm B. Snow; David G. Malcolm, director of the Aurora Research Institute; Brenda Bernhardt - MacNabb, executive director of the Inuvik Transition House Society; Staff Sergeant L. J. McAllister of the Inuvik RCMP Detachment; Estella Muyinda, executive director of the Beaufort/Delta Legal Services Clinic;

and Bob Dowdall of Northern Addictions Services in Yellowknife.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 7-13(4): Referral of Tabled Document 20-13(4) to Committee of the Whole

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, January 23, 1997 I will move the following motion. Now, therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta that Tabled Document 20-13(4) entitled Report of the Joint Working Group on Business Incentive Policy be moved into the Committee of the Whole for discussion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Notices of motion. Item 15, notice of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk. Item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):**

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Management Services Board immediately after adjournment which will be followed by a meeting of the Nunavut Caucus after adjournment today. Meetings for tomorrow morning, Wednesday, January 22 at 9:00 a.m. the Ordinary Members Caucus. At 10:30 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Standing Committee on Resource Management. Orders of the day for January 22, 1997:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, January 22 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT