



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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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, Honourable Maniok Thompson

ITEM 1: PRAYER

God, we ask for peace and justice in our land and for the constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 26-13(4): Education Week

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Merci, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Members are no doubt aware, this week we are celebrating Education Week in the Northwest Territories. The purpose of Education Week is to increase the public's understanding of the importance of education, and to highlight the work of education bodies and schools in providing high-quality education for NWT students. To stress the important link between the education system and the community, this year's theme is Education - A Community Partnership.

Today, I want to highlight a few of the many Education Week activities taking place across the Territories.

Moose Kerr School in Aklavik has a full schedule of events planned. Students have invited the community to a fish bake and will hold drum dance demonstrations throughout the week. One class has made placemats on the value of education, and donated them to a local cafe.

To help people in Inuvik understand the links between the community and the education system, activities

have included a scavenger hunt that took participants to the offices of nine organizations which are partners in education.

There are many activities in the Sahtu region also, including a science fair at Chief T'Selihye School in Fort Good Hope, parent and child sessions at the Computer Club at Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita, a speech about the importance of staying in school by a representative of the Department of National Defence in Norman Wells, photo day for students and families at Colville Lake School, and a radio phone-in program on education partnerships in Deline.

The Chief Sunrise Education Centre on the Hay River Reserve and Joseph Burr Tyrrell School in Fort Smith are focusing on reading throughout this week. The principal of Deninoo School in Fort Resolution will give a public presentation on empowering the community in education.

Students in Arviat have a number of assignments planned that encourage them to think about things they learn at home and in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the whole community is a place of learning. People in the communities are the ones who should create a vision for learning and make decisions about it. Education Week is an excellent opportunity for people to learn more about education programs in their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 27-13(4): Protected Areas Strategy for the NWT

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 8, 1996, the Premier and the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development announced a joint commitment to develop a Protected Areas Strategy for the NWT by the end of 1998.

The people of the north have expressed a need for a balance between conservation and development. Finding this balance is perhaps the most critical task facing the new Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. We need a strong economy to support and provide opportunities for all our people. However, we also need to identify and protect a range

of representative and unique natural areas. Protecting these areas is important to maintaining biodiversity, and the rich natural and cultural values which contribute to our quality of life.

This government has accepted the challenge of leading the process of developing a Protected Areas Strategy. We will work cooperatively with the federal government, aboriginal organizations, land claimant boards, environmental representatives, the mineral, oil and gas sector as well as commercial fishing, tourism and forestry interests. Communities and the public will also have an important role to play.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to begin to develop these partnerships, I have invited groups to a conference in Inuvik during the first week of March. The purpose of this conference is to establish a cooperative approach to developing a strategy. At this stage we need to hear from many different voices and we need to provide a forum for these voices to hear each other and to find common understanding. For the strategy to be successful in defining natural areas which northerners most value, people must work together.

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The NWT is in a strong position. We have an advantage over every other jurisdiction in Canada, as most of the Northwest Territories remain undeveloped. We have the unique opportunity of combining scientific and traditional knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, the development of a Protected Areas Strategy will be a lasting contribution from this government to the people of the north and Canada. I look forward to a successful and productive conference in Inuvik. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Tobacco Revenues

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to make a statement in response to the statement made by the Minister of Health yesterday, on Weedless Wednesday. Mr. Speaker, I think the statement made by the Minister is very good. It addresses the problems we have with our children

picking up the habit of smoking. I do not condone this habit, and I encourage children in my area not to smoke when I see them doing it, particularly my own kids. Mr. Speaker, this is a very good thing that we encourage the children not to smoke, but like everything else, those of us that do it know better than anybody else the results of this habit, and how hard it is to break this habit.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Minister identified that it cost society a lot of money in social and health problems in relation to smoking. Today, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister of Finance to identify the benefits of smoking, because like everything else there are two sides to a coin. I will be asking him to identify the amount of money and the amount of revenue that is received in taxes from those who do have the habit. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he could address just what he is doing for the benefit of those who smoke, from this money that they get from us. I would also like to point out at this time that, like a Weedless Wednesday, perhaps there should be a Weedful Thursday. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Absence from the House to Attend the Canadian Presiding Officers' Conference

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to advise the House that I will not be in attendance in the House tomorrow. I will be leaving this evening to attend the 14th Canadian Presiding Officers Conference in Edmonton, Alberta on behalf of the Speaker, the Honourable Sam Gargan, who will stay here to fulfil his commitments in the Speaker's chair tomorrow. I have never been to a Presiding Officers Conference, but there will be business sessions. So, just so you do not think I am going there for a holiday, I will tell you what some of the business sessions are entitled, Management of Question Period, Relations between Speakers and Deputy Speakers, Development and Jurisdictions, on which I will be giving a report on the developments in our jurisdiction, Outreach Programs and Educational Initiatives by the House. There will be a round table on the outreach programs, and then I will be chairing a business session entitled, Designation of the Official Opposition and the presenter for that will be the Clerk from the Yukon. I am looking forward to this and will report back to the

House, but that is the reason for my absence tomorrow. This is a close-by conference. I must say that there was one in Malaysia, Fredericton, New Brunswick and quite a number of locations. This is a much less exotic destination, but I am pleased to attend on behalf of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I wish you a safe trip. Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement On Housing Shortages in Smaller Communities

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues, I just wanted to make a statement regarding the lack of housing in our communities. For example, in my community in Clyde River, our bad housing situation is so obvious. Presently, the CBC had something on the air and also on the Northbeat, regarding the housing situation. What the program was showing, is based on the true facts about the housing problems. Last time when I was in my community in Clyde River, just recently, some families in their homes, for example, have 18 people in one household. If I were to visit one of my neighbours, I would see some families living in their house and the children would sleep on the floor because they are lacking rooms such as bedrooms. If we were to go to Clyde River to look at the little houses called matchboxes, they are still in existence. They were built in the early 1960s, when I was a child, and they are still in existence. They should not be in existence any more. Although they are very scarce in our area in Clyde River, they are still in existence. The problems with our housing, they cause numerous social, family problems and so on. There are numerous problems, and I would like to address some my concerns with our Minister for Housing a little later on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Nunavut Revenue Generation Initiatives

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in this House, I spoke about the continued reliance of this

government on federal funds to operate our government. Approximately, 82 cents of every dollar spent by this government comes directly or indirectly from the federal government. On April 1, 1999, and beyond, the new government of Nunavut will be at about 98 cents of every dollar spent coming from the federal government. Mr. Speaker, this may seem at first to be pessimistic, but it need not be. The elected officials in Nunavut will have to explore new areas to bring new monies and new revenue generating possibilities. That is why I wrote several letters before Christmas to NTI, our MP Jack Anawak, and met with officials in Ottawa in November. I am pleased that three of my suggestions are now beginning to take off.

The Nunavut stamp idea has been brought forward to the Canada Post Corporation, the Nunavut coin has been forwarded on to the Honourable Diane Marlow in Ottawa, and the Premier of the Northwest Territories recently wrote to

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encourage and support the idea of declaring 1999 the year of Nunavut. This was followed by meetings I had with the heritage officials in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, these ideas are beginning to take fruit, and new revenue streams are about to come into Nunavut. In Iqaluit, over the past several months, we have been continuing to work on our cold weather testing facility and enhancing the airport's ability to be marketed, in order to generate jobs and revenue to benefit our residents. We have to be pro-active in our approaches to developing new markets for our renewable resources such as fish, caribou, and seal products. The opportunity for further exploration and mineral finds seems to be very positive. Fur prices have never been higher this decade, yet fewer people are trapping. We should be looking at ways to have hunters and trappers encouraged to expand this area. A tax could be introduced on gambling or games of chance winnings. I will be asking the Minister of Finance about these areas later.

Mr. Speaker, while today, and maybe tomorrow, we will be in the throes of deficit reduction and lay-offs, we have to look for alternatives to our current situation. We have to pay today, for the largesse of previous governments and expenditures. Mr. Speaker, we have to offer the people of the Northwest Territories more than just lay-offs and cut-backs. That is not the legacy the 13th Assembly wants to be remembered for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement on Difficulties Experienced by Constituents in Receiving Social Assistance Payments

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have concerns directed to social services. There are social service recipients who have not received any assistance since December. Arctic Bay has requested for social service recipients to be continued in their community, because it is continued in some Baffin communities. Later on today I will be asking a question to the Minister responsible for Social Services, regarding this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Concerns Regarding the Implementation of Community Empowerment Initiatives

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is in regards to the whole idea of community empowerment and also the accountability of communities. Right now, I find in my constituency, a real problem, especially in the cuts that have been put forth in regards to reductions to the water and sewage program. In one case, in the case of Aklavik, they were cut by \$70,000. In Fort McPherson by \$75,000. Those incidents are affecting, not only the municipalities to deal with their deficits, but also to try and get out of them. It is also affecting my constituents in regards to delivery of these important services.

In the case of Arctic Red where you have 10 individuals living in a home, having water delivered twice a week is a little bit rash, considering all the water we have in the north. I think that these type of incidents should not have to occur, especially in this age, and also with the resources that we have. In some cases, it is not exactly perfect drinking water, but we have to live with it. I will be asking the Minister later regarding letters that have been sent to her on behalf of the Municipal Councils in Aklavik,

McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic, in regards to this problem that has arisen through the cuts to that program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Meeting in Fort Smith to Discuss the Mackenzie River Basin

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, in Fort Smith, there was a very informative community meeting held with people from a number of communities as well as four different jurisdictions: British Columbia, Alberta, the federal government, and, of course, the Northwest Territories. The issue had to deal with water and the fact that the western Arctic is the ultimate downstream jurisdiction, affected directly by the decisions of our neighbours in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. It was very clear that there was a significant impact by what is happening with the Bennett Dam. In addition, we found out there were record high snow falls and rainfalls last year.

To me, as an MLA, one of the biggest concerns was the very clear lack of coordination among the jurisdictions. When we got in that room for the meeting, it was the first time some of those officials had seen each other from the different jurisdictions or talked to each other, even though they are directly involved in the same kind of work in measuring and evaluating the same type of water systems. I am hoping that out of this meeting will come a method that we can have coordination of information so that there is warning of any changes to the river systems. I am hoping that the Minister for RWED will be able to work with his officials to push the other jurisdictions to develop a daily working relationship. In the long term, at the political level, we have to continue to pressure the British Columbia government to sign the MacKenzie River Basin Master Agreement. The GNWT has signed it, as has Alberta, and it needs B.C.'s signature so that we can move ahead on these critical issues related to water and the affect that they have throughout the land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Funding for Alcohol and Drug Treatment Facilities

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Honourable colleagues, I rise today again on the issue of funding for four alcohol and drug treatment facilities, and I refer to the way this government operates. The more things change, the more they seem to stay the same. I came here thinking of change, and although on the outside it seems we have made great strides in change, I have just come across some information that makes me feel like I have not been here for a year yet. It is like I have come back into the House for the first time to argue the same points. We have changed many of the departments. We have 10 departments, Mr. Speaker. Yet, we have the

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equivalent of 17 or 18 D.M. level staff, deputy minister level staff. I would say for 10 departments and so many deputy ministers level personnel, are we really changing things, or are we covering them up? I could see a number of those positions being deleted, so to speak. Instead of helping a few, we would help many. I feel a few of those positions might fund Delta House. I would say, Mr. Speaker, as a government and as elected Members of this Assembly, we seriously have to take a look at what we are doing. Are we making change, or are we just changing the colour of the paper? I think we need to have a look at that. I am going to be questioning later on, hopefully I can get a few questions in, to a number of Ministers on the concern of financing of the drug and alcohol treatment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Restructuring of the NWT Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, across the NWT, there are a number of government boards in place. These boards help ensure that programs and services are operating as per the legislation approved act and guidelines. One of these is the NWT Liquor Licensing Board. In the past, this board has had up to nine members. I, myself, sat as a member of this board. Last year, in September, the Standing

Committee on Resource Management suggested this board could be as effective with fewer members. The government agreed, and has taken the move to reduce the board to five members.

Mr. Speaker, I support the effort to be more efficient. However, I am concerned about how this action has taken place. I have expressed my concerns to Mr. Antoine and received some answers. Unfortunately, the answers I received did not relieve my misgiving about how the board was restructured. There was a commitment in the restructuring to ensure that one of the five seats was still held by a Yellowknife representative. While this representation is far less than the three out of the nine under the old board system, it gives some recognition of the large number of liquor establishments in this city.

In any organization, it is nice to have fresh ideas, however, it is always useful to have some continuity of service as well. I find it disturbing that the Minister decided to replace the entire board, even though he indicated that the three Yellowknife members on the board were highly qualified and motivated. It seems to be a case of taking the easy way out, rather than making the hard decision between some fairly qualified people who have worked hard to fulfil their duties. I find it particularly difficult to understand why the Minister did not give some consideration to at least keeping the chairman on until the end of his term, one year from now. After admitting that the chairman was a hard working efficient and dedicated individual, instead, the Minister swept this competent individual out in a way which mistakenly left the public impression that there was some problem with his chairmanship.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Henry, time is up.

MR. HENRY:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? You have no nays. You have unanimous consent.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The former chairman did a very good job during his term. He would have provided the Yellowknife representation that the Minister wants and would have brought continuity to the board. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that a new board will do a good job, however, if we want to be able to attract the best people to these types of positions, we need to be more considerate in how we treat them and deal with their re-appointment. Later on today, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for Mr. Antoine in this regard. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Successful Yellowknife Businessman Ronnie Hauck

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we often hear about the roads, the eye glasses, division, and many other such areas. This session I also hope to talk a bit about some of the people in my community who are making a difference. Today, I want to talk about a success story. The success story is about a small business which is providing a service in our community. It is about a young man who has achieved success despite personal challenges. Mr. Speaker, most Yellowknifers know Ronnie Hauck. He is the friendly operator of his own delivery business called Ron's Independent Courier Service. In fact, Ron delivers mail here every day. I understand the Minister of Finance helped Ron get his business started two years ago. Mr. Hauck is a mentally challenged gentleman who has had the support from many, including the Association for Community Living and his hard working mom.

Ron has achieved success because he is very serious about what he does. He provides good service to his customers, he is reliable, responsible and he is always friendly. In fact, he stops to talk to you and to see how you are doing. As a government, we talk about helping people to help themselves. Mr. Hauck is an example of what people can achieve with support systems, which allow them to maximize their potential.

I wish him continued success in this business. I also hope we can keep in place the types of support systems that helped Mr. Hauck to become a successful businessman.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Gjoa Haven Student Exchange Program

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that 10 students at the Tsiigetchic Hamlet in Gjoa Haven have been chosen to go on a student exchange this March to Oakville, Ontario. Then in April, 10 students of Oakville will have the occasion to visit Gjoa Haven. Students and staff involved with this exchange are very excited about the opportunity to travel to southern Canada to learn and share about each other, to teach them about the Inuit culture. The Gjoa Haven students plan to take

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the visitors out on the land, as well as demonstrating cultural games and events throughout the week-long visit in Gjoa Haven. Although this exchange is made possible with generous sponsorship of Vision Canada, the students need to raise an additional \$3,000. The students are asking for support for any contribution towards this enlightening exchange. It would be greatly appreciated, Mr. Speaker, if anyone or any organization would support this exchange and we look forward to receiving a contribution. I think the visit is beneficial to both, to learn about the two different cultures. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement on Concerns with Federal Government Proposal for a New Mining Royalties Regime

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I made a statement in the House before Christmas on the federal government's proposal to raise mining royalties in the NWT. I would like to follow up on those comments today. Let me begin with a quick recap. The Northern Affairs Department has released a discussion paper which says the current royalty regime is unclear and produces revenues that fall

below international standards. The department wants to clarify the rules and increase the government's income from mining.

To do this, it has proposed a royalty increase. The higher rates are offset somewhat by a flexible system of allowances that help companies lower their royalty burden in given years. Mr. Speaker, the discussion paper presents a rational proposal if it is taken in isolation. However, it is unclear to me whether it gives due consideration to the overall cost of mining in the north. I am mostly concerned with how the proposals will effect future projects.

Let me give you an example. The discussion paper recommends ending the three year royalty holiday for new mines. This will raise costs during critical start-up years. At the same time, new federal environmental review rules shift more of the costs of the approval process to the companies that propose projects. Is it possible that the end of the royalty holiday, coupled with new environmental review expenses, could act as a disincentive to development? Companies could use their various allowances to keep start-up costs low, but what is left for the future when markets slump, or other costs go up? During this Session, I will be writing to Northern Affairs with details of my concerns and questions. I look forward to reporting the department's reply to this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement on Relocation of the Keewatin Health and Social Services Regional Office

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I received written confirmation from Mr. Ng that the community of Baker Lake has lost its status of being the regional office for Social Services for the Keewatin region. Mr. Speaker, five employees have been transferred to Rankin Inlet, which will become the new home of the regional office.

Mr. Speaker, no consultation took place with the community by the health board regarding these extreme measures. Mr. Speaker, how can this be justified in light of the fact that this community suffers from between 75 and 85 percent unemployment and the other community has an unemployment rate of 18

percent? Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is, when we talk about community empowerment, this flies directly in the face of the process that we are trying to put forth. Mr. Speaker, I have some very serious reservations about the process and how it is being delivered. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 66-13(4): New Education Act

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a reply to a question asked by Mr. Evaloarjuk on January 21, 1997, regarding the Education Act. Mr. Speaker, The Education Act came into force on July 1, 1996 after an extensive consultation process.

Community Education Councils were renamed and are now called District Education Authorities. Members of these District Education Authorities are now elected at the same time as elections are held for the governing body of the community. This was done after consulting with communities in an attempt to reduce the cost and frequency of elections held within a community.

The length of the term of office for the members of the District Education Authority is directly tied to the length of term of office for the governing body. If the term is two years for the governing body members then the term will be two years for the District Education Authority members. If the length of term for the governing body is for a length other than two years, then the length of the term for the District Education Authority will be three years.

Prior to this Act coming into force, many communities had councils which had elections every year. This occurred because the members had terms which were staggered. Half of the council would be elected serving the last part of their term when the remaining half began their new term. Although there were positive features associated with this approach, local education authorities told the department through consultation that they wanted longer terms. They also requested that the terms of all members begin and end at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, the number of members elected to a District Education Authority was also established in consultation with communities. An Authority may be made up of five to seven members, and every Authority confirmed the number of members which is now identified in regulation. Igloodik, for example has seven members. Changes to the number of members, from seven to six or five, for example, may be made by request to the Minister where a community desires a change.

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Also, Mr. Speaker, residents of the education district may petition the Minister to change how they are established and how they operate, according to the Act and regulations. This process is described in the Petition Regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Peter Ernerk who is a former Member of this Legislature, member of the Nunavut Implementation Commission and he is also a well-known commentator on Inuit affairs.

-- 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 Elizabeth Colin, from Fort McPherson. I believe she is up there. Welcome to the Assembly.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. George Porter from Gjoa Haven. Mr. Porter is a member of District Education Authority, a member of the Board of Governors from Arctic College, Nunavut Water Board, Nunavut Social Development Council and the Seniors' Society of the NWT. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent today, Mr. Lloyd Brunes, a very active member of our community with the Seniors' Society and many other things, and former Public Works superintendent for the town of Hay River for about a hundred years.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize members of the NWT Seniors' Advisory Council. Some of them have been recognized already, but in their capacity as members of this Council, we have Ms Esther Braden, President from Yellowknife, Mr. Peter Ernerk from Rankin Inlet, Mr. Lloyd Brunes from Hay River, Ms Elizabeth Colin from Fort McPherson, Mr. Don Brannigan from Fort Smith, Mr. Abe Okpik from Iqaluit, and of course Mr. George Porter from Gjoa Haven. We also have with the Advisory Council, their Executive Director, Ms Barb Bond. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Ng just said, in the gallery today is a well-know Iqaluit elder and it would take me all day to talk about the awards

and the presentations made to this gentlemen. Mr. Abe Okpik is a well-known Inuk elder from Iqaluit. He has the Order of Canada, and is a very good friend of mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to also recognize Mr. Abe Okpik from many years ago when we worked together, and Mr. Peter Ernerk. Mr. Ernerk holds the distinction of being the first Cabinet Minister of the Government of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my constituency assistant, Mr. Nick Arnalukjuak from Arviat. Also a former co-worker of mine, with whom I worked in Arviat, now residing in Iqaluit, Scot Marriot.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further recognition of visitors in the gallery? Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 90-13(4): Housing Shortages in Clyde River

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier in my Member's statement in regards to Clyde River housing conditions. I would like to direct this question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo. What is the most recent policy on matchbox social housing of the territorial government? What is the policy on that type of housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Housing, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 90-13(4): Housing Shortages in Clyde River

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Mr. Speaker, in answer to the honourable Member for Baffin Central, I will look up the exact policy on the matchboxes, and I will take this question as notice and return to him at a later time. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Question 91-13(4): Impact of Reductions Made to the Water and Sewage Services Subsidy Policy

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. In regards to my opening statement about the cuts that have been taken in regards to the water and sewage subsidy especially in my region, my riding. There seems to be a real problem with the deficit situation that the hamlets are finding themselves in, and also the charter community. Is your department doing anything in the way of trying to resolve this problem with those communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. Ms Thompson. Welcome back.

Return To Question 91-13(4): Impact of Reductions Made to the Water and Sewage Services Subsidy Policy

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was having a difficult time moving into the storm in Rankin, cooking hamburger soup. I will be getting a briefing with my department on the water sewage problems. Actually, I am having a meeting with the MLA, David Krutko, tomorrow morning at 8:00, and some of his community's members, on these issues. As soon as I get updated

on the water sewage program in my department, I will know more about this issue. I am also concerned about that, so we will work with these communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 91-13(4): Impact of Reductions Made to the Water and Sewage Services

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Speaker, just on that, maybe the Minister could inquire and get some information in regards to the amount of water that is being served in the communities, and the number of times those deliveries are made to those particular houses, because I believe that, in the case of Tsiigehtchic it is twice a week, and I do not think that is adequate service that we are delivering to our residents.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms Thompson.

Further Return To Question 91-13(4): Impact of Reductions Made to the Water and Sewage

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will get updated on the water sewage program with those communities from my department and I will be able to meet with the Member on these issues as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is addressed to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my opening Member's statement today, there is a fair amount of revenue generated through taxing of the tobacco commodity. This has not been identified in such a manner as to show that those who smoke, and probably those in the same class would be those people who drink, are always the people that are identified as the bad guys. We

contribute to all kinds of problems that the government has to pay the cost of.

In that matter, Mr. Speaker, for people that drink, facilities are allowed to be built for them to continue with this habit, but in regards to people that smoke, there does not seem to be any consideration for the fact that this habit is quite wide spread in the Territories. In fact in government buildings there does not seem to be an allocation at all as to recognize and respect that people do have these kinds of problems and therefore have some kind of facilities, like this building here, whereby they can respectfully continue their habit without interfering with the general public.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that as a general rule, those who smoke are very polite about it when they are asked not to do it in a public place. They get very little recognition for the fact that the amount of tax that is generated by them. Therefore, my question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, how much revenue is generated a year by the tobacco commodity in the Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that, on average, we generate somewhere around \$1.3 million on a monthly basis from revenues on the sale of tobacco products. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

MR. STEEN:

Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, did he say monthly basis or annual basis?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

HON. JOHN TODD:

That is on a monthly basis, I am told, approximately \$1.3 million in total revenues, depending on the seasonal adjustments. So it is on a monthly basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister identify whether or not any of this revenue is actually earmarked to go directly back to addressing this problem in the Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 92-13(4): Tobacco Revenues

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, all revenues, whether it be from liquor, whether it be, since we are talking about the sin taxes, from tobacco, go back into the general fund and monies are allocated through the budgetary

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process that is determined through this House to the departments who look after whether it is in health care, or whether it is in drug and alcohol centres. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 93-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to Mr. Antoine. In making changes to the Liquor Licensing Board prior to Christmas, Mr. Antoine decided to end the term of the chairman with one year still remaining. Can the Minister explain when he made the decision to replace the chairman? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Safety and Public Services. Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 93-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would gladly answer this question. However, for the information of this House, the responsibility of the Liquor Licensing Board has been devolved to the Department of Finance. However, in response to the honourable Member, Mr. Williams' position, and any positions on the board, is at the pleasure of the Minister. With the advice from the Department of Safety and Public Services before Christmas, we looked at the different options that we had before us, so it was in the plans for sometime, and the decision was made in December, I believe. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry. Perhaps, you were not aware which Minister was responsible for the position, but if you wish to redirect your question to the appropriate Minister, you may do so.

Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Antoine has answered the first part. I would suggest that these decisions relate to his time, so he may be better able to answer the questions. If I may, the Minister mentioned that the appointments are at the pleasure of the Minister. Can Mr. Antoine tell me what that means? Does that mean just at a whim, you are here today, gone tomorrow? Would it be standard that, at pleasure, if you are not living up to the expectations of the position that you would be at pleasure and be removed accordingly. Could the Minister answer that for me, please?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member cannot direct a question to a former Minister that is no longer responsible for that department. So, I will redirect it to the Minister of Finance as a new question. The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if my honourable colleague could repeat the question so I may be able to answer it in an appropriate manner. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Antoine made it very clear when he responded to my first question, that these appointments are at the pleasure of the Minister, and what I wish to know, if Mr. Todd could answer it for Mr. Antoine, what the definition of pleasure is? Does that mean that when I have just woken up one morning and feel a little funny I dispose of a person? Or does it mean if the person is fulfilling their responsibilities, they would probably continue on? What does at pleasure mean? Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Convention is in the House, or precedents have been established in most cases where we are appointing board members or chairpersons to boards of this government that we would seek MLA involvement as well as public interest groups, that we may ask, from time to time for appointments, Mr. Speaker. Based on that, these appointments are made or recommended by the appropriate Minister, and in some cases can be appointed directly by the Minister, in other cases, require Cabinet approval.

The process, historically, has been to seek both MLA and the public's interest in board appointments. There are occasions when it would go to Cabinet for approval and there are other occasions where it is the Minister's sole jurisdiction, and these appointments are made. My understanding is that, if my notes serve

me correctly, the previous Minister did correspond with the MLAs with respect to seeking their advice as he sought others on appointments to the Liquor Board.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Todd is accurate in his statement and may be of the understanding that the previous Minister did request solicitation of names who would be appropriate as appointments to the board. I, for one, did not get that request from the Minister. I do have a copy of a letter that was sent to me over a year ago, asking for nominations for boards members, but that is a year ago, and I believe, it is standard practice to have those sent out in a much more timely basis. The question I would have of Minister Todd is, did Mr. Antoine ask him for input for a new chairman of the Liquor Licensing Board?

MR. SPEAKER:

Again, just to remind the Members that the Minister responsible for the Liquor Board is Mr. Todd. I would like the Members to direct their questions without making reference to what the previous Minister did. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

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HON. JOHN TODD:

I believe the Minister did send out letters to all MLAs seeking input to the board appointments. I do not recollect one way or the other, at this stage of the game because it was before Christmas whether or not there was a specific reference to the chairperson or not. I know that there was correspondence sent out to MLAs on the appointment of the board in general, but I cannot at this time recollect whether I was asked, or others were asked, about chairpersons. It is not uncommon for us to seek requests from everybody on board appointments, and within these new board appointments, appoint a chairperson. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Liquor Licensing Board, the previous one has been dismissed from his position. As of yesterday, the individual, Mr. Williams has not received any notification, other than a telephone call, that he was no longer chairman of the board. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Liquor Licensing Board, Mr. Todd, if that is an acceptable standard to deal with residents of the Northwest Territories who offer their services to this government, in such areas as the Liquor Licensing Board? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, it is not an acceptable standard, and it is not one that we try to accomplish. I would suggest to my honourable colleague, that if there has been no correspondence between Mr. Williams and the ministry, than I apologize for that. If it was done, it was done in error, rather than any malice. I will look into the matter, and if such has happened, I will write a letter to Mr. Williams and apologize on behalf of the ministry. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing Board

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult to ask this question without referring to what the previous Minister's has actions he has taken. But, if we call it the board, if that is acceptable to yourself, the complete board was replaced by the previous Minister. Mr. Speaker, I was told that it was a tough decision to do, so rather than make the tough decision, the entire board was replaced, now,

including the chairman. Mr. Williams was not replaced to the new board. One of the old board members was replaced, and my question to the Minister is, why would this have taken place? Why would the chairman, if it was committed that the chairman was an excellent motivated hard working individual, why would another board member who was the old board, get re-appointed, but the chairman, who had still had time left, not get re-appointed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 94-13(4): Decision to Replace the Chair of the Liquor Licensing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Most people that we appoint to boards, say it would be the exception rather than the rule, are appointed based upon their abilities and of course their continuing, their performance, et cetera. It is not uncommon for people to be changed on boards, even though they have done an excellent job. We do it all the time. It is just common practice. I do not know why one board member got appointed over another one. I understand that the old board member who is the new board member on the existing board was Mr. Reni from Iqaluit, and perhaps, it was felt that there is a greater degree of participation by western people on the board because there is a great deal of more action within the liquor commission. So, I suspect that there was a requirement to have a solid, stable, sound, individual from the eastern Arctic, considerably one lone voice, and who better than somebody of Mr. Reni's character, and, of course, the tenure he has put in the country and the commitment he has made to the liquor. So, I think it just boils down to that, nothing else. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Antoine, and it is to do with the Mackenzie Highway portion between Rae and Yellowknife. We heard Mr. Rabesca speak of this two days ago, and follow up with several questions. Then, as well, Grand Chief Joe Rabesca from Rae raised

this issue publicly about the safety of the highway. As we know the highway will see a substantial amount of truck traffic this particular winter, and, of course, over the years the traffic on that highway has been increasing. I understand, there are some 160 curves on the portion from Rae to Yellowknife, and as Mrs. Groenewegen mentioned yesterday, the Mackenzie Highway is a beautiful highway until you get to Rae. It is a very, very dangerous situation, and could result in fatalities. I guess my concern, Mr. Speaker, is that I do not hear any reassurances that the Department of Transport is addressing this safety problem, and I am wondering if the Minister could tell us if he is prepared to reduce the speed of trucks on the highway so that the concerns as addressed by Mr. Rabesca, Grand Chief Joe Rabesca, the citizens of Yellowknife and Rae, and others that travel the highway will be addressed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the highway between Rae and Yellowknife, I drive it quite often myself, my constituency being in Fort Simpson. I know that the road has got a lot of curves in it, and I know the safety concern is there, but if you drive according to the speed limit, you should not have any problem. The condition of the road, that the workers keep it in, and they are doing the best that they can, is excellent. The only problem that I see is the northern section of the road. It is narrower and has more curves in it as you indicated.

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Mr. Speaker, the department has approached all the industries that are involved in using the road, the trucking firms, within the last month, and have made it clear to them the concern that we have as a department in regards to the safety. We also have talked to the different law enforcement officers, the RCMP, our own bylaw officers in the communities, and the highway patrol. So, everyone is on alert that we are very concerned about the amount of traffic that we anticipate this winter on the highway between Rae and Yellowknife.

The department has been making these initiatives. I think these are very good initiatives to take. In regards to lowering the speed limit, we could do that. In fact, as an example, we have done it in other parts of the North. As you know, or perhaps you do not know, in my constituency around Fort Simpson this year, there is some logging activity going on. There are logging trucks that are going close to Fort Simpson down to the BC border. As a result of that, the department has lowered the speed limit from 90 to 80. Because of the similar types of conditions on the Liard Highway, where it is a little bit narrower and there are more curves in the road, when these big trucks are barrelling down on you, you want to go into the ditch sometimes. Because of that we have lowered the speed limit, and we could consider that similar type of decision as well. We will look at that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the increase in traffic will likely start fairly soon, within the month, because of the transportation of materials for the BHP mine will commence the moment the winter road is open at the end of the Ingraham Trail. Like the honourable Minister, I have experienced trucks driving on the Ingraham Trail. Because the trail is very narrow, it is very, very important that the speed limits, et cetera, be adhered to. I am wondering if the Minister can look at beefing up highway patrols and ensure that the speed limits are adhered to, specifically and certainly during that particular period of two months. I believe it is, from start of February to the end of March, when it is likely the most dangerous, and my question for the Minister would be, can he look at beefing up highway patrols during that period, and to also address Mr. Erasmus' concern at that time to check that lights are on. After all, we have passed legislation to that effect. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our concern this winter mainly is on the Ingraham Trail because of the amount of traffic that we anticipate will be using that part of our highway system. Yes, our concern is safety. Our highway patrol officers have been notified already. We will re-emphasize that to see if we could see ways on how to beef up or increase the highway patrols.

We will also be instructing on the headlights issue as well since you mentioned it. There are headlights, lights on, it is law boards that are going up, signs that have gone up. That is the law now to have your headlights on at all times. Therefore, the RCMP who patrol the communities as well as the highways, our highway patrol, and the bylaw officers of the communities have been notified that it is law now. That will be enforced as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister made reference to that particular portion of the highway, Rae to Yellowknife, to be restructured, but I wonder if he could advise us again, and just refresh our memories as to what the timing for that particular program is.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 Between Yellowknife and Rae

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the restructuring of the highway between Rae and Yellowknife, is in the five-year capital plan. It is probably going to be subject to change before that, but we anticipate that in the next three years, hopefully, we would initiate the actual restructuring of that section of the highway according to the five-year

capital plan. You know that the five-year capital plan is a planning tool, it is not really realized until the year of the construction itself. We have a couple of years before we actually move ahead with that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 between Yellowknife and Rae

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker. Yes, if I heard the Minister correctly, he recognizes that we do need to address the problem of this particular section of the highway, and he is prepared to look at reconstructing this within the three year time frame.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 95-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Highway No. 3 between Yellowknife and Rae

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this restructuring of the highway between Rae and Yellowknife is a very major undertaking in terms of the amount of dollars that would be required to reconstruct the whole 90 odd kilometres of this highway. It is a very substantial cost per kilometre, and because of that we would like to look at it as part of a highway strategy even though it is in the five-year capital plan. It is part of a bigger strategy that we are developing. As I said earlier in my statements and specifically to your question, yes, we would like to move ahead and start reconstruction of the highway within the next three years. That is to start it, the completion will take longer than that. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following on the line of questioning of the last couple of days on the growth of fungus and bacteria in our fuel supply, that has been found, I know it is a very important topic John, ...found in Iqaluit. As the Minister said it is present in other fuels but inactive. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister for Petroleum Products tell me if it is the policy of this government to buy the cheapest fuel available.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, when our Petroleum Products Division does go out for tender for fuel, the cost is a very major aspect of the proposal call. So, yes, it is a big factor.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the situation regarding the bacteria in the fuel that has been found in Iqaluit, that could also be present in other communities, is a direct result, as Mr. Arlooktoo now has just said, of buying the cheapest fuel available. Mr. Speaker, there is a point in time when we have a fiscal reality and we should look at economies of scale and buying the cheapest product. In this case, it now seems that we have fungus and bacteria in the fuel. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister for Public Works tell me if the result of the fungus and bacteria is because there is a large amount of water in the cheap fuel that has been purchased?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I told the Member yesterday that the department has taken samples from different tanks in Iqaluit and another community. The results of those tests are expected next week. Once those are in, I will share it with the Member. I do not have the results yet and I cannot give any further information, because I do not have it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past several year in my research on this topic, I have found that there has only been one other instance, and that was in 1967, of fungus or bacteria growing in fuel in the eastern Arctic. That case was on a DEW line site which caused major problems with a DEW line generator. Mr. Speaker, someone is at fault here with the purchasing of fuel. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are problems in Repulse Bay with water in that fuel, and some indication in another community. Mr. Speaker, the buck has to stop somewhere. Can the Minister tell me who is responsible for the purchase of below-grade fuel? The consequence is that when we bring fuel into Iqaluit, or bring fuel into Coral Harbour or bring fuel into Rankin Inlet, it has to stay there for a year. We do not have the luxury of putting it in a truck on the road and shipping it back out. If it is causing damage to the NTPC generator or, in some cases, it would seem to people's furnaces, that is a major concern. My question is, where does the buck stop? Who is ultimately responsible for this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the information we have to date indicates to me that it is not because of cheap, contaminated fuel. We have taken samples to be tested and until those are confirmed, I cannot answer the Member's question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Final Supplementary To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, this is shocking to me that the Minister cannot say who is responsible for this. Maybe it is not important to the people of the Northwest Territories. Maybe the media has fallen asleep at the wheel. Maybe there is just me. I am getting indications from phone calls and everything to my office that there is a greater concern out there than people are seeing. Again, I ask the Minister is he responsible for petroleum products? As the Minister of the Crown, he is. Then where does the buck stop? I see there are three of them thinking about this question now.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Final Return To Question 96-13(4): Fungal Contamination of Fuel Oil

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I realize that it is an important issue, although I did get several calls yesterday and this morning asking why we were dealing with fungus in tanks when there are many other important issues to deal with.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear! Bravo!

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

It was not me, but somebody told me that. All I am saying is until we know exactly what the problem is, I cannot discuss solutions here. We cannot start fixing something if we do not know if it is broken or not.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 97-13(4): Policy on Mid-Winter Evictions

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have recently been made aware that there have been a number of

families evicted from their homes in the community of Rankin Inlet. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. I would like to know what the department's policy is on evicting families from their homes in the dead of winter? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 97-13(4): Policy on Mid-Winter Evictions

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the role of enforcing rent payments, non-payment of rents, collections, et cetera, lies at the hands of the local housing organization, which is in all of the communities. The Housing Corporation's role is to be supportive in an advisory capacity to the LHO. There are some LHOs that have chosen to put in a policy at the board level, that if an eviction must take place, it will not take place during certain periods of the year, the coldest part of the year. This has been brought to my attention recently and we actually have a letter going out to all LHOs right now, which says to the communities, here is what some of the LHOs have done, you might want to try it to ensure there is no undue hardship to the people that are to be evicted.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 97-13(4): Policy on Mid-Winter Evictions

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure the department has a great deal of influence on the policies that are developed by the local housing associations. I would like for the Minister to take it a step further, to ensure that the policy is in place, that no family can be evicted during the dead of winter. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 97-13(4): Policy on Mid-Winter Evictions

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly our suggestion to the LHOs, that this type of policy is one that they might want to adopt. We have given the power and authority to the LHOs. We have empowered them to make that kind of decision, and it will be up to the LHOs whether they have some kind of moratorium in the winter on evictions.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Good answer.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends) In my statement that the social worker had left Arctic Bay about a month ago, there has been no advertisement for this position since then. I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services, Honourable Kelvin Ng, when his department will advertise this position for a social worker in Arctic Bay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is the first the honourable Member has made me aware of the issue of the vacancy in Arctic Bay. I will have staff take a look at it and see where it stands. As you can appreciate, if it did happen over the Christmas period, we are just getting back on our feet now from the holiday period, and I would expect that if there are vacancies, they will be filled as soon as possible. However, I would also state that if there are vacancies, I am sure that the service is still being

provided to the community residents of Arctic Bay, if there is not another social worker in town, certainly through another social worker that would be available as required, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask a question, how are the people in Arctic Bay going to proceed with the vacancy in that position? (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I heard the honourable Member ask about whether or not the community could participate in the recruitment of the social worker. I am correct? I just wanted to clarify that. I missed some of that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Barnabas. Your second supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the honourable Minister, how will the community of Arctic Bay be assisted before the position is filled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 98-13(4): Social Worker Vacancy in Arctic Bay

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the honourable Member is referring to particular issue of social assistance payments, which falls under the jurisdiction of Mr. Dent, I am told that the SAO is acting in the capacity in dealing with social assistance payments to residents of the community, until the new social worker is hired. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 99-13(4): Internet Service in Smaller Communities

MR. RABESCA:

Mr. Speaker, as we have discussed over the past number of months regarding the poor and very expensive phone and internet service available in our small communities. It has been a few months since the announcement regarding the internet service to be provided in all communities, and the communities pay very high rates for this. Many of my constituents are saying that we in the smaller communities are second class citizens because we must pay outrageous rates to get the service that, in most of Canada, is very low.

My question to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment is, when will one of our agents in the smaller communities be able to use and afford to use this very important and worthwhile form of communication called the information highway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 99-13(4): Internet Service in Smaller Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Member's question relates to the digital communications network and the Minister responsible for Financial Management Board Secretariat is the Minister responsible for that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 99-13(4): Internet Service in Smaller Communities

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague said, if my colleague across the hall is referring to the digital communication contract that I believe we approved sometime in May, discussions have been under way since prior to Christmas, to try to get a scheduling of when that communications system would be up and running in each and every community across the Territories. That is what we called for. It is imminent now that I will be receiving a response from the new consortium that received that contract, I believe it is called Ardicom, laying out the timelines for each and every community as to when that system will be up and running. As soon as I do have that, and I will check on it this afternoon, I will relay that to my honourable colleague and all Members of this House, so they can see when their constituencies will be up and running in this new, exciting state of the art, 21st century, information highway system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral question. Oral question, Mrs Groenewegen.

Question 100-13(4): Process for Advertising Sessional Business

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Legislative Assembly undertakes to keep the public advised of certain things such as when the House will be sitting, when they can watch televised excerpts of the House sitting, the types of Acts and legislation that are coming up before the House in any given session, and I was just wondering how they determine when and where this advertising will take place to inform the public? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes, the question is addressed to myself as the Speaker, and I would be glad to discuss when the House is sitting and which papers are being advertised with the Member, when we take a break. So I must rule the question out of order. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 101-13(4): Meeting in Fort Smith Regarding the Mackenzie River Water Basin

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister for RWED. The Minister was at the meeting last night in Fort Smith and heard the presentation. I would be interested in the Minister's comments on the information he heard, especially the gaps that appear to be there in terms of jurisdictions not working together and the lack of any kind of communication network where they can transmit information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resource and Renewable Resources. Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 101-13(4): Meeting in Fort Smith Regarding the Mackenzie River Water Basin

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the meeting that I attended illustrated very clearly for myself, more importantly for the public that attended that meeting, why it was so important for this government to push for the drafting, and eventual signing of the Transboundary Master Agreement. There is an agreement which we signed, and are waiting for the Government of British Columbia to sign, that is called the Transboundary Master Agreement. That agreement calls for the sharing of information of all jurisdictions, namely, the Government of British Columbia, the Alberta Government, the Government of Saskatchewan, Yukon Government with ourselves, plus certain aboriginal First Nations.

The need to share information was illustrated very clearly at the meeting yesterday where the staff from the Alberta Government conceded that, because of the particular terms of reference, they were not able to see or appreciate their responsibilities as a government, and particularly as individual staff people, extended right to the Alberta/NWT border. The staff of Environment Canada finally realized in the middle of this meeting last night that there were major concerns of events that were happening with BC Hydro last summer. Along with the record snowfalls, snow build up and spring run-off in the particular water sheds that lead from the dam, leads into the watersheds that get into the Athabasca, the Mackenzie Rivers system, and the Slave River

system, that there were major concerns resulting from those developments in British Columbia that impacted on the communities in Alberta, and well into the Northwest Territories along the Slave River, Great Slave Lake, down the Mackenzie River, right into the Mackenzie Delta.

On a different level, the representative of BC Hydro and the engineer that came from the Alberta Department of Environment, provided very good information that illustrated

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why there were such high water levels in the spring and summer along the Slave River, the Slave Lake, and along the Mackenzie River. Those are the things that I observed as a Minister attending this particular meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 101-13(4): Meeting in Fort Smith Regarding the Mackenzie River Water Basin

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government through DIAND and water resources people look after the water and our interest at the table. As the Minister indicated, it was very clear that there were gaps in the communication. My question to the Minister is, is there a way that we can, as a government of the Northwest Territories, insist that the federal government agency representing us ensure that they have in fact a daily working relationship and formal connections with these other jurisdictions, to ensure that we do not have to go through this again? While we wait for this bilateral agreement to be signed, or this interjurisdictional agreement to be signed, that a working relationship can be hammered out to prevent this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 101-13(4): Meeting in Fort Smith Regarding the Mackenzie River Water Basin

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it is our intent to continue to use whatever means we can to communicate our support and need for the Master Transboundary Agreement to be signed at the earliest occasion. We will be communicating that to the Government of British Columbia and to ask the federal government to use whatever means it can to expedite that process.

We will request the Minister of Environment to direct his officials to ensure that they provide clear proposals on how they will ensure the communities that are effected by the fluctuation in the water levels and water qualities in the Slave River, Mackenzie River, Great Slave water systems to be given regular updated, factual information on a timely basis, and accessing that through some coordinated effort with adjoining jurisdictions such as the Government of Alberta, the Government of British Columbia and agencies such as BC Hydro. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I would like to know if the Minister can tell me the funding that was spent on alcohol and drug programs for the year, 1996/97, or proposed spending for this fiscal year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we spent about \$4 million in alcohol and drug programs at the community level, and approximately \$4 million again in the residential treatment centres that we operate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us of how that funding is distributed within the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the detailed break-down of every community. I can say that, of course, for the residential treatment centres, that we fund through that program this current fiscal year, Delta House, the treatment centre in Iqaluit, the Northern Addiction Services here in Yellowknife, as well as the detoxification services here in Yellowknife, and also the Hay River Reserve. In respect to the alcohol and drug funding for the community based programs, those funds are spread throughout the majority of the communities in the Northwest Territories to provide alcohol and drug treatment, primarily awareness programs as it stands now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister can provide me with an updated list of where the funding is spent in the Territories, that would be very good. I would like to know if the department has tracked the dollars spent versus the dollars saved in health care? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do, of course, account for the dollars spent, because we have to account for them through public accounts and to report on the expenditures approved by this House. As far as tracking savings, that is a very subjective issue. I mean, it is hard to determine what savings will materialize in the future as a result of some of the spending in the preventative programs that some of the alcohol and drug awareness projects undertake. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

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Supplementary To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister inform us, have there been any studies by this government to look at possible savings that were achieved through funding drug and alcohol programs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 102-13(4): Funding for Alcohol and Drug Programs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, I cannot say whether or not there have been studies done, because once again, it is a very subjective exercise. You have to make projections of what you think you will be saving in the future by spending dollars now. Although we agree with the general thrust that preventative dollars spent now will save you more than likely future dollars in some of your treatment and rehabilitative costs, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been requested to seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. It is concerning the added amount of vehicles on our roads as a result of the mines up north. On the Ingraham Trail, there was a truck that flipped last year after it came around a corner. It fish-tailed and flipped over. This was a huge truck. It was carrying a load. Also, last year about this time there was a MLA walking with his dog, and a truck was coming, and they had to dive off the road to get out of the way.

Yesterday, one of my constituents had to stop on the side of the road as three large trucks passed her. They had a wide load sign, and there were lights on the side of the truck, but the wide load sign itself did not have any indication as to how wide the load was, and it is very dangerous. My constituent was very frightened and upset and she stated that someone is sure to be killed on that road. I understand that there is going to be about 2,000 vehicles on that road in the next two months. We all know that the Ingraham Trail is just that, a trail. I would like to know if there are any plans to widen Ingraham Trail, to make it safe for vehicles and pedestrians alike? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation. Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are no plans at this time to widen the Ingraham Trail. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister seek to enter into some discussions with people within business, in particular the businesses associated with using that road? The people that have those trucks going by there, and I understand they are going by every 15 minutes or so. Eight minutes, as the Member from the hinterlands has so ably suggested. Would he enter into discussions with these people to see if they would be willing to help with widening that road?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the increase of traffic that we anticipate to be using the Ingraham Trail this year, to bring mine development and mining supplies and so forth up north of Yellowknife, into the Slave Geologic Province, we anticipate that there is a lot of concern. There is going to be an additional, we are told as an estimate, two thousand more v-trains, the big double loaded fuel tankers, plus all kinds of different semis that will be going into that part of the country.

Yes, the people living in the Ingraham Trail are going to have to exercise a lot of caution this year with these trucks going by. We are told by the trucking firms that they have instructed their drivers to be very cautious. We are also told that if anybody reports any drivers that are being unsafe and causing a very dangerous situation, then the drivers receive a warning, and on the second warning, this is one firm that has informed the department, they will be suspended for a couple of weeks. And the third warning, they will be suspended. I think the industry themselves have realized the nature of the situation. I am told by the department that one of the firms are taking those kind of actions, and I do not know what actions other firms have taken. The industry is very concerned about it.

As for the Department of Transportation, we have met with all the industry and the law enforcement officers.

Yes, we will meet with citizens along the Ingraham Trail and the department and we will see what kind of discussion will develop perhaps some actions in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus. Supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope those discussions also include the possibility of widening the road. However, in the meantime is the Minister prepared to look at increased patrols on that road? Perhaps reduced speed

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limits? Perhaps the idea of only having those vehicles going through there at certain hours? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to widening the road like he said earlier, there are no plans to widen the Ingraham Trail. However, as I indicated to another honourable Member earlier in this question period, there is a bigger strategy that we are slowly developing that will include the Ingraham Trail. And, there are no specific plans at this point in time exactly what the nature of that strategy at this time, but perhaps the widening of the road could be dealt with as part of the strategy. There is nothing definite yet.

In regards to meeting with the constituents along the Ingraham Trail to look at widening the road and they could participate, yes, the department could sit down with residents in that area to talk about such direction.

In regards to increased patrol, as the Members know, the Department of Transportation, like all the

departments, have undertaken drastic cut-backs in their budget. Our highway patrol is very small but very effective whenever they are on the road. We will look at the possibilities of increasing patrols this year, not only on the Ingraham Trail, but perhaps between here and Rae, as well as other parts of the highway system where there are dangerous situations, for safety purposes. In regards to reducing the speed limit, that is one thing that we could do as well on the Ingraham Trail. We will take a look at that as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary. Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the Members here has indicated that he might be willing to do a small contract and sit on the road and make sure they do not speed. I would like to know how soon the constituents might be able to look forward to having a meeting with the Minister or his staff? Hopefully, there will be some senior staff there as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 103-13(4): Safety Concerns Regarding Truck Traffic on the Ingraham Trail

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you know, different members of the department listen to these debates. I am sure that, as we speak, there are some ideas being thrown around. I will get back to the honourable Member as to who is going to be there and when such a meeting could be arranged. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 104-13(4): Clyde River Housing Vacancies

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct this question to the Minister of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo. Today, in Clyde River, the government housing vacancy rates are three houses. I would like to ask the Minister of Housing Corporation, since there are no houses available for rent in Clyde River, could we use these three houses as rental housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 104-13(4): Clyde River Housing Vacancies

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Mr. Speaker, the issue from Clyde River, as was related to me, the person responsible for staff housing in Clyde River is the Minister of Finance, so I will direct this question to the Minister of Finance.(Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 104-13(4): Clyde River Housing Vacancies

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the concern raised by my honourable colleague, and I want to ensure him that if he will bear with us and wait till the budget on Monday, we will be able to show him that we have moved to try to alleviate the concerns he has addressed. There will be an announcement in the budget Monday with respect to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. In regards to the negotiations with the N.W.T.T.A., could you report to the House on

what the status of those negotiations are, and are they still on track?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that the N.W.T.T.A. membership rejected the package that we put together. We tried to negotiate with them. That is their right. We have enacted what we believe are appropriate measures to meet our budgetary obligations. The N.W.T.T.A. has taken exception to this, which again is understandable. They have taken a course of action which I understand is to see if the federal government would, one: be prepared to overturn our legislation, two: take a look at the North American Free Trade Agreement as to whether there are some areas there that they may be able to enact, and, I also believe that they are still looking at the potential legal challenge with respect to our position versus theirs. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary, the north is a small enough place where the population of people up here, we know every citizen or individual in the community. I believe that this matter should be resolved through discussions and not through the courts. I would like to know from the Minister if there is another avenue that can be taken to try to resolve it in the negotiated form and allow the teachers to have a chance to hold onto their union?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Mackenzie Delta, could you repeat your question? I did not hear your question.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was to the Minister of Finance, if there was a possibility to resolve this dispute between ourselves and the N.W.T.T.A., in regards to their talks, through negotiations? If that is possible?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This gives me the opportunity to first of all say that I did appreciate and do appreciate the civilized and professional manner in which the N.W.T.T.A. conducted their negotiations. I want to say that I appreciate that.

However, as in any negotiations, we have come to a stalemate, as I indicated in the earlier response. Each party has its own course of action that it has to take, and each party has a responsibility to take that action. The action I have taken on behalf of the government is to enact an agreement which is consistent with the other agreements that we have reached with the N.W.T.T.A. The N.W.T.T.A., because they have been rejected, has understandably rejected our position and is taking an appropriate course of action. We will have to see how that unfolds over the coming weeks. At present, we have put into effect the conditions that we were negotiating with N.W.T.T.A. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the negotiations, could you clarify exactly what conditions or criteria you used for negotiations?

MR. SPEAKER:

Can you rephrase your question, please?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister stated in his previous answer, he mentioned that they were using certain negotiation processes. He said that those processes seem to have fallen through. What processes is he talking about?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think what my honourable colleague is saying is what were the criteria for negotiations? If that is what he is saying, it was based upon the targets that were set by Cabinet to be met with respect to the total wages and benefits package that is incorporated into the N.W.T.T.A. agreement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary. In regards to the conditions that you mentioned, how many of those conditions are still outstanding and how many have been resolved?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 105-13(4): Status of Negotiations with the NWTTA

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I would answer by saying that an appropriate accommodation could not be reached with respect to the overall package that we were trying to negotiate, therefore, negotiations came to an end. I, under the authority of the PSA Act enacted what we believe was a fair and reasonable package, given the current fiscal climate that we all operate in. The N.W.T.T.A. understandably so, in representative interests of its membership, appealed that and they are in the process of taking a variety of

actions in an effort to overturn our decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as each of us come to the Legislative Assembly each morning, we are reminded of the number of days left until division of the Territories take place. I believe we are in the around eight hundred mark as of today. My question is to the Deputy Premier or to Mr. Todd, responsible for Division Committee. Either one may answer it, as they see fit. My question is, does the government have an action plan outlining the important decisions which need to be made, and the major steps which need to be taken within a specific time frame, in order to effectively achieve and prepare for the creation of the new western territory and Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

He has asked for two Ministers. What are the rules regarding question period? Just by way of process, if Members are not clear as to who is responsible for any particular portfolio or agencies, boards, commissions, then you can direct your questions to the Premier or the Deputy Premier. In this case, it would be the Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

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Return To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I would ask Mr. Todd, in his capacity as the Chair of the Division Planning Committee, to respond to that question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for the Division Planning Committee, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we are all responsible for the division of the Territories, although I do have the lead in terms of trying to put together a consensus in this House, Cabinet, and the Ordinary Members as to what the position of the government is, as we move forward towards negotiating the division of the two Territories and seeking the appropriate resources.

As I mentioned earlier, I believe, and in questions asked of me by Mr. Miltenberger yesterday or the day before, we currently have the NIC report, Footprints in the Snow 2, which has provided a model for the new Nunavut government that we have reacted to, and indicated what our assessment of it was. We are one party in the arrangement on the Nunavut side. There are two other parties on the arrangement on the Nunavut side, that is NTI, that has a legal obligation to the Nunavut Act, and the federal government, that ultimately will pay the bill. We are still waiting for, with a great deal of anticipation, the response from both those parties, I hope a comprehensive response from both those parties, to determine if there are similarities and parallels with the response that we have done to the NIC report. It is our hope that, once these responses are in place, we will then be in a position to negotiate or reach a consensus on what kind of core structural framework will be in place for Nunavut. It is premature at this time for us to know what that is, because we do not have all the information on the table, and that is the two responses from the two other parties.

On the western side, at the present time, we are making the assumption, because there is nothing to compare it to, that the status quo would be a starting point, if you want, for negotiations. Now I think it would be fair to say that while we are waiting for the NTI and the federal government response to the Footprints in the Snow 2, we are also looking at what we think we can do as a pre-implementation of the division of the Territories. We cannot sit idle and wait until April 1, 1999, and I have said this consistently, and assume that somebody is going to wave a magic wand and everything is going to fall into place. We have a responsibility to at least develop some form of pre-implementation plan that will put some framework in place to ensure that the two new governments can be up and running effective April 1, 1999.

So, I have instructed my deputy, and those involved in the Division Secretariat to do a greater review of the Footprints report, to determine from that report what

we think we can realistically accomplish, and within that, what we believe is affordable, because the issue at the end of the day is going to be affordability, and we are moving on that exercise right now. Once that has been concluded, and hopefully by that time of course, we will have the response from the two other parties, we will then share that information with the Legislature, again seek consensus because that is what this is all about, and try to bring in some pre-implementation plans in the late part of this year, and the beginning of 1998. I will be providing my honourable colleague and others in the Budget Address on Monday with a much clearer picture of what our position is. At the present time, that is where it stands. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that explanation by the Minister. I think it is fair to say that there are a number of parties who are contributing to the creation of these two new Territories and all the decisions are not made by the Government of the Northwest Territories. What I wanted to know, about the action plan, was if the Minister would consider, as it is in the half-way right now, an action plan drawing out things that have to take place between now and division, and also the groups that are responsible for input, so the public at large can see that this government is moving on division as fast as they can, and there are other parties who are maybe not moving as fast, or who are maybe not making decisions as fast as they could do to help this government proceed with the creation of two new Territories. I think it would be important if there was some kind of a chart like that, and the parties that are responsible for making decisions highlight their area and a date that they have to respond by, so that the blame for slowness, if that is what it is, can be directed to the party responsible for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

HON. JOHN TODD:

The one valuable commodity that we are running out of, Mr. Speaker, is time. There is no question. I would remind everybody that there are 22 months left, if there is going to be an election in Nunavut in February of 1999, assuming that it is there. The reality is 22 months left. So time is a valuable commodity; it is actually even more valuable than money at this stage, in my opinion. My honourable colleague is correct. We need to provide a pre-implementation plan, there are some things that we have to do now, sooner rather than later. That has been my attitude from the very beginning. It has to be approved, as my honourable colleague said, by all the players to make sure that we are all happy, if that is at all possible, and we need to ensure that it is done in a timely and orderly way. We need to, more importantly, establish what can we realistically accomplish in the 22 months that are left.

I think it would be fair to say that we are gearing up the Division Secretariat to ensure that we do have a plan in place that will accomplish what I believe are the bare minimums that are required. I am confident that, once we receive the response from the other parties, and hopefully consensus will be reached, we can then move forward in terms of negotiations that I talked about the day before yesterday or yesterday, I believe, on the fiscal framework necessary for the two governments.

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I have struggled for awhile here. I still have to understand and we have to reach consensus on what the basic core framework of the new government is going to look like so we can cost it. Nobody in NIC has taken the time to cost the new government as they currently are proposing, never mind any amended designs that may come about through discussions with the two other parties. This has got to be done quickly. We are simply running out of time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear the Minister responsible for the Division Secretariat Committee

saying that there are many items that cannot proceed until other parties outside of the Government of the Northwest Territories have responded to the government regarding the set-up of the Nunavut government in particular. The Minister has acknowledged that, at least in the west, there is something we can price out, the status quo. It does not mean that it will stay in place, but at least we have something that we can price out already. We are then, waiting for two other parties. My question to the Minister is, will he consider within the next month putting a time frame in this lobby beside the number of days left, indicating who is responsible for what decisions, and when they should be made by. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 106-13(4): Action Plan for Division Decisions

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, again, to the point of being repetitive, that this Minister, who is charged with the responsibility of division, understands the division of two Territories requiring two new formula agreements, and there has to be a balanced approach to the negotiations and to the pre-planning and pre-implementation of any division of the new Territories. I think it is important to say that. So if I say it now, hopefully I will not have to continue to say it in the coming months, because I have said it until I am blue in the face.

I fully understand the responsibilities I have been charged with in relation to the division of the Territories and the need to find a balance and that there has to be two new formula arrangements. I cannot unequivocally say today that in the next 30 days I can put together the kind of framework and kind of timetable that my honourable colleague understandably is asking for.

What I will commit to, and have already committed to, is to move as quickly as I can to provide exactly that, so there is some minimal blueprint as to the basic needs that we have to put in place whether or not consensus is reached by all the parties. Okay? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Ordinary Members, we of course are very limited in our questions over the last couple of days because of the budgets. We have to be very careful in what we ask. If that is boring to the people, who do not like fungus questions, that is all I can say.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, we have to look at other revenue-generating areas in the Northwest Territories. Over the past several months there have been discussions of different types, but nowhere, to my knowledge, has there been discussion around taxes on income from gambling, that includes lottery, video terminals, bingos and other such funds that could be used to help offset losses to Delta House and other treatment centres, have been mentioned. So my question is to the Minister of Finance. Has he looked at other alternate revenue generating sources, such as taxes on gambling, to alleviate the pain that we see in Inuvik over the closure of Delta House, and some of the other ramifications of the deficit that we have in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A short and simple answer is, no.

MR. SPEAKER:

Any more questions? Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As usual Mr. Todd likes to give me long answers so I will have a long question. In this case, why?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

HON. JOHN TODD:

Why? Our position, or my position, certainly on taxes, is that it is my understanding that lottery and gambling revenues are not currently taxed. My position is that the additional dollars that would be generated from taxing either lotteries or bingo, et cetera, would be inconsequential to the kind of fiscal framework that we are currently in and to the level of revenues that are required. Quite frankly, Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that most of these operations, the lottos and bingos, have done a lot for good causes and charitable organizations. I think at this time, if I was asked a question about whether or not I would want to tax and impede the ability of these charities to assist, whether it is the youth, whether it is kids going to hockey, my answer would be no. Not at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

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MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for this Member to ask if it is inconsequential. I do not know what the revenue generation would be. For my own knowledge, I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, when you have X number of bingos, those scratch and win tickets... Now in federal revenue, I understand from some research that I have done, the federal lotteries are not taxed. That is correct. In place of a sin tax, since Mr. Todd seems to be very happy about sin taxes, I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that gambling in any form can be a sin. Now I am the first person to say no, we should not tax lotteries or any other monies that would be coming in to help charitable organizations. There also those scratch and win cards, and those type of things, that could be looked at which would give us maybe the \$600,000 to keep Delta House going, or some other programs. That is what I am asking the Minister. Will I take it that he is going to look at that?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

HON. JOHN TODD:

I understand my honoured colleague is concerned about my image and I am very image conscious. My answer to him is no. I am not prepared to look at it, at this time unless there is an inordinate ground swell of concern of taxing people who are out there organizing bingos to help kids go to hockey games and to help people who are under privileged and bowl-a-thons and everything else. The answer is no, no, no!

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Supplementary, Mr. Picco. Final supplementary.

Final Supplementary To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

MR. PICCO:

Why, why, why? You know, Mr. Speaker. The point here is, I mean Mr. Todd likes to make it sound like I am the Grinch that stole Christmas, now I want to tax bingos. That is not what I said. I said are there areas like video lottery terminals, scratch and win tickets. Mr. Speaker, there is a myriad of things out there that this Minister could tax to help generate some extra revenue so we could off set the closures of health and care facilities like Delta House, like other programs in Health and Social Services. For some reason, the Minister is not giving me any justification. So I will ask the Minister again. Would the Minister at least look at it for the benefit of all those people in the Northwest Territories who are losing their jobs, Mr. Speaker? Will the Minister at least give some credence to this? I know he likes his image and he has a wonderful image. I love the Northwest Territories, so maybe it will help that wonderful image. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will he look at it? That is my question. Will he look at it?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Final Return To Question 107-13(4): Revenue Generation Through Taxes on Gambling

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to clarify there are no VLTs in the Northwest Territories, video lottery terminals. It is my understanding that there is a serious concern now being raised in eastern Canada and Alberta, about the effect of video lotteries on people, and the impact it has on them. I am not prepared, with 22 months left, to look at taxing these kinds of initiatives that Mr. Picco said. I have far greater things to do in the coming 22 months to ensure that, one: we get a good sound, solid, fiscal framework for the two new Territories; two: that we meet the budget targets that we have set; and three: we get some people to work through some creative thinking with some of my colleagues and try to access federal government funding. I am saying to my honourable colleague that at this time, I do not have the time, energy or interest in moving forward on it. If he wishes to get the support of his colleagues, bring forward a motion in support of this House, we will reconsider. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question would be directed to the Minister of Finance. We heard earlier this afternoon a question regarding revenue, from other people have mentioned here sin-taxes. I would ask the question what revenue does this government receive from the sale of alcohol? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our revenue in alcohol, total alcohol sales, I am told is somewhere in the range of \$16 million, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the question that was answered by the Minister of Health and Social Services that we spend in the area of \$8 million in drug and alcohol treatment. It seems that we bring in \$16 million. Is there any way that funding can be directed to the causes that come from or are associated with the consumption of alcohol? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the line of questioning that my honourable colleague is heading in. I want to make it clear that \$16 million we get is revenue, not net, I suspect and I do not have the numbers before me, but I suspect and I believe that I understand that we spend more money, although it may not be sufficient as my colleague feels how. We actually spend more money in the, I believe, I stand to be corrected, I always have got a qualifier, I believe we spend more money in the alcohol prevention side than we actually net generate out of the sale of alcohol. I think it is also important that all revenues we get, whether it is in tobacco, which we have got the highest taxes in the country. I

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am going to repeat that, Mr. Picco, the highest taxes in the country when it comes to tobacco. Our taxes on alcohol are extremely high. That all goes into the general revenue and is reflected in our balance sheet as it relates to our grants and revenues and is then disbursed through our budgetary process, et cetera. So it is not like this money, revenues from alcohol we will just move it here. It goes into the general revenue fund and is re-distributed through the normal budgetary process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the information that I have just heard from the Minister, it is not all that clear as to what the funding is, spending on alcohol and drug versus revenue from alcohol. Can the Minister provide that information?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 108-13(4): Revenue From the Sale of Alcohol

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it does cross ministerial boundaries and I would be only too happy to determine from the Minister of Health, the total costs related to drug and alcohol prevention, versus the revenues that we generate from the sale of alcohol. I will provide that to my honourable colleague and this House as quickly as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. It is in regards to a much awaited position paper on affirmative action, northern employment strategy. This particular initiative has been deferred session after session and it is now February. Once we finish this session, we may not sit for any length until next fall. Can the Minister tell this House when can we expect something in black and white in this House, before the people and this Assembly on this very critical issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I am sure my honourable colleague knows what the affirmative action policy is, I think it would be fair to say, a politically sensitive issue. We did, as I said in the

previous sitting, we did have a paper in place and we did provide to some people and to our deputies. It would be fair to say that I was not comfortable with the paper. It did not really meet the standards that I wanted to set, as the Minister responsible. I sent it back to the department and asked them to refine it. You know, you cannot look at affirmative action in isolation as my colleague says and a northern employment strategy, to me they are intricately linked.

I am hopeful that next week, and I apologize for not tabling this, because I was asked this question by Mr. Henry and Mr. Ootes in the previous session. I am optimistic that I might be able to table that, hopefully next week. I am hopeful of that. I believe that is when it will happen. I am looking forward to a healthy debate and seeking advice on how we can move forward.

But any Northern Employment Strategy is going to require substantive dollars, and that is one of the things we are going to have to discuss. Either re-allocation of existing, or if there were a ways and means in which for us to generate large sums of money, through the sales of assets or whatever, maybe we would be able to assign it there, but as I say, it is my intent to be able to table it as quickly as possible. I am hoping to table it in conjunction with at least a framework for the Northern Employment strategy, and I look forward at the House to being in the issue, so we can see where everybody sits and what resources are required to move forward on it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to hear the Minister's qualified commitment to tabling something in this House. I would like to encourage him to in fact ensure that something is put before this House. You can only go to the well so many times with the kind of reasoning for not tabling stuff. My question is, in regards to the Northern Employment Strategy component. Is that going to be in conjunction with the labour force package that the Minister, your colleague is working on with Education, Culture and Employment? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding from my conversation with my colleague, Mr. Dent, that he is moving quickly to try and get the Northern Employment Strategy in place and I cannot speak on his behalf, but in my discussion with him now, he indicated that it is his desire to have a document tabled during this Session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, I did not quite catch the last part of the Minister's reply. It was a shall or a may. I was not quite sure.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

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Further Return To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

HON. JOHN TODD:

I believe it was a desire. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

It is not a shall, it is not a may, it is a desire. I would like the Minister, and I would like to try to nail his feet to the floor on this one, to commit to having something in this House, this Session, in time for a

substantial debate, without a qualified may or a hope or a desire but something definite. They have gone to the well too many times on this issue.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding, that, talking to Mr. Dent that the Labour Force Development Strategy will be ready for tabling during this Session. I do not want to be misconstrued on the affirmative action and the labour force job strategy. We are not trying to avoid the debate, we are just trying to get it along as far as we can so we can move onward to try to find the resources and get into the implementation stage of creating employment opportunities for aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

I hope I am clear. I will table the Affirmative Action Paper which, I am sure will come under scrutiny. Mr. Dent will make a commitment and is desirous of bringing forward the other strategies, hopefully in time for a full debate, in this House, so we can move onward with a job implementation strategy. I mean, it is a particular issue that is close to my heart and soul. We need to provide job opportunities to a variety of our constituents out there. We are trying to move as quickly as we can to put this in place, so that we can seek your input into the development of an implementation plan that will actually get people to work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to point out that this particular initiative has been in the works well over a year. I think it is important to state that fact, because it has come up repeatedly since this Assembly took their seats. My question to the Minister is, can he assure the House that in fact these initiatives which now sound like they are coming from two different departments will in fact be linked and

that there will be a close relationship, that they are not done independently of each other? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Final Return To Question 109-13(4): Update on Northern Employment Strategy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are natural, integrated linkages when we are looking at affirmative action and job strategy. It is my understanding, I have not see the final document, but there will be some linkages there. I agree with my colleague that this has perhaps taken longer than it should have. I apologize for that. It is certainly no fault of anybody. I think we are just trying to move forward on it.

But I want to emphasize again, when it does come forward, remember it has to come forward in the context of where are we going to find the additional resources to do it. I think that is something we should all give deep thought. I look forward to both informal and formal discussions with the Members on this issue. Hopefully we can bring forward an implementation plan after it has been debated in the June Session, so we can get on with delivering jobs, employment and training opportunities this summer. I think it would be fair to say that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Mr. Ootes.

Question 110-13(4): Dispute Resolution on Division Issues

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to pass on my question to Mr. Todd in the hope that he does not get laryngitis because all of the questions seem to be aimed at Mr. Todd today. This is with the respect to his role as Chairman of the Division Planning Committee. I would like to state that division is the number one issue for all of us here. Certainly, it impacts heavily on the Territories. The territorial government has many programs but this division issue has to start taking the number one priority simply because of the time frame, and because of the tremendous impact that it has on all people of the Territories. It has an unbelievable dramatic impact upon my constituency and Yellowknife in general.

The GNWT prepared a very extensive response to Footprints 2 and it was obviously well thought out and well prepared. The area that I have a concern with is, what happens if the three parties cannot resolve their differences, and is there a dispute resolution mechanism in place to resolve particular issues?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 110-13(4): Dispute Resolution on Division Issues

HON. JOHN TODD:

Excellent question, Mr. Speaker. Actually in the NIC report -- again if my memory serves me correct and it is getting better every day -- they indicated that if there was no agreement reached by the three parties to January 31, 1997, that it should be left up to the federal minister to arbitrarily make a decision on the core framework for a new government. Our position on that one was to oppose it, to say that we have to reach a consensus. We have reached a consensus so far in the history of this country politically and it would be our intent to genuinely accomplish that very quickly. We have indicated in communications, both the Premier and the Deputy Premier and others, just recently to Mr. Irwin and Mr. Kusagak, I believe, that there has to be a timely response to the report and move forward to try and reach, as my colleague says, some consensus on the issue.

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We do recognize that there does need to be some dispute mechanism should we be unable to reach consensus. The actual dispute mechanism and our raising that question, frankly, has not been resolved at this time. But I do recognize what my colleague is saying. I think it is an important mechanism. I think we may need, as you say, an outsider to arbitrate should there be, hopefully only one or two, issues where consensus cannot be reached.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 111-13(4): Responsiveness of the Federal Government on Division

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of days here in the House we have been hearing what appears to be a lot of frustration and dissatisfaction from the Minister in regards to division and in regards to the response from the other parties concerned as to Footprints 2. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if this Cabinet, this government is prepared at this point -- frustrated enough, I should say -- that they would consider writing or phoning the Prime Minister directly and get Mr. Irwin moving on both funding for the west and funding for the east. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, stop playing games with us. Stop playing games with the east and the west and take his job more seriously. Perhaps the Premier may wish to address the arrogant nature of Mr. Irwin that seems to be quite the general opinion of the public now. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Deputy Premier could indicate whether or not this government is prepared at this point to take this type of concerns directly to the Prime Minister if in fact Mr. Irwin is not being responsive to the concerns of this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 111-13(4): Responsiveness of the Federal Government on Division

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I will not repeat some of the negatives the Member has stated because if I do, I would probably give them some credibility. But maybe what I will do is to clarify a bit more what our position is. I would not call our state as being one of frustration, but what we have recognized is that time is very short. The plan we have for division is very ambitious. We are still very committed to division. We recognize that there are only 22 months left, with a great deal on the books to do and what we are asking for is some clarity from the federal government and the other parties about what their positions are. What Mr. Todd, our Finance Minister, has been working on is indications from the federal Finance Minister, Mr. Martin, who is responsible for approving the formula financing for the two new territories. It is not DIAND or Mr. Irwin. Mr. Todd has spoken at length on that. I would say that is the position of the government that we are still very committed to this ambition and we have taken it upon ourselves to try get the job done as best we can.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 111-13(4):
Responsiveness of the Federal Government on
Division

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is a question of this government's ability to address division. I think in all fairness Cabinet is doing all they can to stay within the schedule in order to have division by 1999. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that it is entirely a question of funding that we are addressing here. Surely, before Mr. Martin can address the amount of funding that is required for both Nunavut and the new western territory, there has to be an indication from the federal government as what type of structure of government they are willing to fund. So that therefore we would know then what kind of funding to expect from Mr. Martin. I have come to the conclusion that there does seem to be some dragging of feet on the part of Indian Affairs in regards to addressing division at this point. It is nice to say they are in full support of it but they must realize, as well as everybody else, that the deadline is coming, there are certain things to be done before division in a timely manner.

So therefore I think that what I am asking the Deputy Premier to pass on to the Minister and to the Prime Minister, if necessary, is that these deadlines are coming up, these things have to be done. If there is not a satisfactory response -- and I do not think the satisfactory response only towards this government, I think it is a satisfactory response to all the native groups, as well. My question, Mr. Speaker, is would the Deputy Premier and this government pass these concerns on, not just the funding ones, the other ones as well, to the proper levels of the federal government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 111-13(4):
Responsiveness of the Federal Government on
Division

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, those are some good points that the Member has raised. The Premier has been, in the last

week, communicating with Mr. Irwin regarding some of our concerns. There is a meeting planned in February, subject to the responses being received from the other parties between Mr. Martin and Mr. Todd to talk further about the funding issue. The GNWT, of all parties I think, is the one who has raised the timing issue more than anyone else, because we know what needs to happen. We know what it involves. We are, after all, the ones who are being divided in two for the purpose of creating two new territories. I appreciate the Member's comments, and the Members of the Division Planning Committee sitting here have taken note of his concerns.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry. Oral questions. Mr Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will defer my question for now because the appropriate Minister is not here.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 112-13(4): Recruiting for a Senior Position

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is the Minister responsible for MACA, Maniok Thompson, and welcome back from your snow-in. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the department is presently recruiting for a senior position, and I would ask the Minister to advise me of the status of that hiring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms Thompson.

Return To Question 112-13(4): Recruiting for a Senior Position

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there was a position for an Assistant Deputy Minister to coordinate the community empowerment development in Municipal

and Community Affairs, and an offer of employment is being discussed with the candidate, who is considered both qualified and suitable for the position. We should be hiring that person early next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 112-13(4): Recruiting for a Senior Position

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. My question is to the Minister, is the individual that this position is being offered to, are they being recruited from the north or from outside the north?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms Thompson.

Further Return To Question 112-13(4): Recruiting for a Senior Position

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The individual is from the south. We did interview a total of 53 applicants. There were northerners and there were southerners. This individual is qualified for the job and actually he is quite suitable for the job. He has two masters degrees. We are hiring the best person for this position. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, reply to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of the impending closure of the Delta House Alcohol and Drug Treatment facility in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 168 signatures. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Government of the Northwest Territories reconsider its decision to close this pioneer treatment program, in light of the fact that there are so many people who are in the region who are suffering

and dying from alcoholism and all its related problems.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Mr. Kakfwi, I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 23-13(4), the Environmental Agreement between the Governments of Canada, the Northwest Territories, and BHP Diamonds Inc. This Agreement was signed on January 6, 1997. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 24-13(4). A letter from the Quqshuun Ilihakvik school of Gjoa Haven addressed to me, regarding the students travelling south on a student exchange. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a package of two letters, Tabled Document 25-13(4) that I received opposing the closure of Delta House Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Inuvik. The letters are from Mr. Eddie Kolausok, director of student services of the Aurora Campus of Aurora College, and the Reverend Larry Robertson, Minister of the Anglican and Lutheran congregation in Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion 7-13(4). Motion will remain on the order paper. 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 with Mr. Ningark in the chair. This is in regard to Committee Report 1-13(4) with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to come to order. Dealing with Committee Report 1-13(4), Report on the Proposed Amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Transportation and Public Works and Services. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

We wish to proceed with discussion on the report, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree we will be discussing the Committee Report 1-13(4) after the break? Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

As I stated earlier, we are discussing Committee Report 1-13(3), Report on the Proposed

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Amalgamation of the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Transportation and Public Works and Services and I would like you to recognize the chairperson of the Governments Ops, Mr. Roy Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the Proposed Amalgamation. It is our feeling that since 1991 the government has already undergone numerous structural changes, including amalgamation, privatization, and decentralization. There also is a vigorous deficit management plan in place which has caused major upheaval for the staff and as well uncertainty. We believe that there is a need to provide some stability to allow the staff and

the public to absorb and implement the many changes that have been introduced.

This would also benefit the private sector, which has been affected, by decreased government and individual spending. Additionally, it is clear from the responses to the consultation that the department did and the experiences of individual Members that there is not strong support for this proposal. It is clear that the public and the staff would rather see disruption of current services kept to a minimum. Mr. Chairman, the Government House Leaders clearly indicated that the Deficit Management Plan for 1997/98 is not dependent on this amalgamation. Also, there may be opportunities to reduce duplication among the three departments in terms of program operations, without amalgamation. For example, there may be a way to coordinate a tendering process without needing to amalgamate. They could also coordinate community level training, They could also coordinate the efforts of the staff working on community empowerment in each of these departments.

Many initiatives have already placed a tremendous workload on the Assembly, the Cabinet, and the staff. In the last year, we have begun a number of initiatives which span many departments, such as income reform and user say/user pay. There is also the fast approaching reality of division, which is less than 800 days away now. We feel the government needs to focus its energies and resources on a longer, as smooth a translation in 1999 as possible. The committee feels that in the future, the new governments of Nunavut and the western territory may wish to consider such an amalgamation. However, at this point, we believe that the Cabinet and government departments are better to focus their and our energy on the many other initiatives facing us over the next two years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. I believe Mr. Arlooktoo was the lead Minister in this proposed amalgamation. Therefore, I would like to recognize Mr. Arlooktoo. General comments. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for looking into the amalgamation of the three departments, what I would like to do is, first, very quickly, go over several main points of why we are trying to amalgamate the departments. The reasons behind the rationale, et cetera. And, then give Members a chance to

comment if they wish on what I have to say. My plan is not to debate the issue at length but what I would like to hear from Members is, perhaps, a little more clearly some of the reasons for the recommendation, so I can go back to Cabinet with a clear recommendation for Cabinet to make a decision on.

Mr. Chairman, the question has often been asked, why do we want to amalgamate the departments of Public Works and Services, Transportation, and the Housing Corporation. We said in the beginning, this is not a new idea, it is an idea that has been toyed around with for quite a number of years. The last two Assemblies felt that it is something that was worth looking into but never took any action. So, what I will do is I will go through six points that I have notes on. They are very short, and take it from there.

The first point is, that the amalgamation fulfils the Legislative Assembly's goal to produce a more efficient and effective government structure. It reduces costs from a reduction in senior managers. It reduces the management levels. It reduces duplication in common functions in three departments. The examples that I gave during the committee hearings were that the three departments have essentially the same type of financial policy planning, administrative and human resource services in each department. Those could be amalgamated and stream-lined.

The third point that I made during the committee hearing is, that amalgamation is a step in preparation for division. Each of the two smaller governments in the east and the west would inherit a less expensive government structure. As I said in the plans, in the committee hearings, if amalgamation goes through, our plan is to establish eastern and western headquarters units in order to ease the transition of the new governments. By doing this it would be possible to increase local expertise in program management in both sides of the Territories.

Another point I made, that it would be easier to adjust the amalgamated department to the final Nunavut and western government structures than it would be if government has to start from the present system. Which is to say that because we will have two smaller governments, it would be easier for them to deal with smaller, more efficient government structures than at the beginning of their new terms, having to amalgamate.

The fourth point I made is about cost savings. What the Finance Minister told the Committee is true, this is

not a cost cutting exercise, but savings would result from an amalgamated department. We have estimated the savings to be \$3 to \$5 million annually after the initial year of adjustments. It is understood that during the first year of amalgamation, there are costs from lay-offs, costs if there are office changes, et cetera. The conservative estimate of cost

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savings if this was to go through was \$3 million annually and up to \$5 million. As we have been hearing in the past few days, this money is badly needed for support of critical programs that may have to be cut.

Therefore one thing we have to ask ourselves is, what is more important to our government? Programs and services that provide direct benefit to northerners, like hospitals, teachers, social workers, et cetera, or more government administration and bureaucracy. That is something we have to weigh.

The fifth point I made was, that amalgamation supports our community empowerment initiative. Presently, communities, when they deal with infrastructure, have to deal with three separate departments, the three that we are proposing to amalgamate. With an amalgamated department, the communities would have to negotiate with only one department, and you can take it from there the further ease and expense.

The final point that I tried to stress during the two meetings that we had was that this amalgamation represents good government. I told MLAs, that it is our job as government to fix what can be fixed today. We should not simply pass the difficult parts of the job on to the next government. The question that I asked is, as I said before, what is a government there to do? I said government is there to deliver services and programs. It is there to make sure the hospitals run if you are sick, you get treated, for your kids to go to school. If you do not have an income for income support to help you get through until the next time. That is what a government does. The extra jobs and the economic spin-offs from what a government does are just that spin-offs. They are very important, mind you, for the communities that they are in. As I said many times with the decentralized, at least, is that, we have recognized that and that is something that we cannot just throw away. It is, to me, a secondary issue. I said I would keep it brief. I do not want to get into a big debate of the different points, but as I said, as the Minister responsible for this proposal, I am the

one that has to go back to Cabinet with a clear recommendation for Cabinet to consider, and perhaps a little further discussion and suggestions would certainly help. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to now open to general comments around the table. The three Members who have indicated they want to speak are Mr. Picco, Mr. Krutko, and Mr. Ootes. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the amalgamation process has been on the back burner for the past several months and has come to a head over the past couple of weeks. It is very difficult for this Member to give approval for this amalgamation based on the logistics, the administrative as well as the employment aspects, which seem to me to be unclear. An example, Mr. Chairman, was the impact on the staffing levels in our communities. How many people might be losing their jobs based on amalgamation? Unless those numbers were spelled out and clear, it is very difficult to be able to give carte blanche to the government to amalgamate. I guess another point was, Mr. Chairman, from my perspective, before division I do not think it is logistically feasible to enter into an amalgamation of three departments that the new government of the western territory and Nunavut might decide should not be amalgamated. Thus, having to de-amalgamate them after they were amalgamated in less than 798 days. For those reasons, Mr. Chairman, I could not endorse the amalgamation plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the list, we have Mr. Krutko, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Henry, and Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the statement made by the Minister in regards to the savings, we are talking about implementing amalgamation of these three departments and we are talking about in the first year not seeing any savings because it will cost us more because of pay outs and stuff like that. We are talking about 1998-99 fiscal year and then we are talking about division. Basically we are talking a two year time frame to try to implement something and the only time we will see the savings is after the second. Yet

you say the intention of this is to save money on behalf of the government and put it into programs and services such as the seniors' fuel subsidy, alcohol and drug programs and things like that. That is where we see the hardest hit areas in regards to the budget and the most outcry from the communities. Yet we amalgamated RWED with that intention. That was supposed to save us a whole ton of money too, and yet we do not see it. Unless someone is not exactly spelling out what the figures are stating in regards to the number of lay-offs and where they are going to be, I think from what we have seen, especially in the smaller communities, that we cannot afford to take any more lay-offs. Exactly where those lay-offs are going to be, is across the board which will affect all communities.

The delivery of the services, especially in the area of the Housing Corporation, and also in regards to transportation, which are infrastructure which our people can relate to in the smaller communities because those are things they can save. But in relation to public works, a lot of these individuals that we do have in our communities that work for public works are a key component of those communities because they are the ones that know the infrastructure of those communities such as the water treatment plants, the school, the hospital, the infrastructure that is there. For us to not know exactly where those lay-offs are going to take place and after going through the situation with RWED, I do not think we can afford to see any more cuts. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The objective was to create a more efficient and effective government and the initial comments were that this would not necessarily lead to a lot of cost savings for the government. I have found this proposal very difficult to evaluate because the information provided was very limited. The Minister has pointed out that because it was at a proposal stage, not in a detail stage I have a lot of questions with regard to how these particular departments fit together. Like Transportation and Housing, do they fit together? Do Housing and DPW necessarily fit together?

in the works but this is impacting upon a lot of people already that are employed by the government but also in communities so that is one program that is very, very big and had tremendous impact.

The time is of concern as well. There has been a tremendous amount of time spent by departmental officials, no doubt, on this issue and if we are going to reorganize a lot more time will be spent on this. With division looming in front, we spoke about that earlier today, we do not have that privilege of time on our hands. We have to spend time on division issues rather than the reorganization of government.

Our deficit management plan has been very, very vigorous and it has meant many government department changes. The necessary reductions are now in place to achieve a balanced budget. I have been led to believe that this amalgamation is not necessary in order to meet the deficit plan. I have to go back to the advantages and disadvantages. In the financial savings, the Minister indicates there is \$3 to \$5 million annually. However, I do not have the details for that. I do not think the other day, when we met on this there was clear substantiation on this. I appreciate the Minister's difficulty with this, it is hard to get these figures. This is my point. It all consumes a lot of time and a lot of concerns. Are the figures accurate? Presumably we can say yes they are. But it does not relate to the deficit plan.

For larger communities, it means a loss because we are going to have a tremendous number of lay-offs because of this amalgamation and in my community, particularly, every time we do this, each of our communities is affected, but mine is too. I am concerned about that. I am not that anxious to continue to lay off a lot of government employees because in my community the problem of division will mean the transfer of a lot of people to Iqaluit or to the east to the various communities there. So, we will continue to be hit here.

For the government's side and sake, there is already a tremendous burden upon this public service with the many programs that we have set in motion since we have come into office. There are a multitude of programs and this is another that the staff will be burdened by, if we proceed. The government really does not need additional programs.

The amalgamation is a good idea to be revisited after division because each government can then design its own particular program. In the case of Nunavut, I understand that there was some concern in the NIC

report, Footprints 2, that they wish to consider MACA to be amalgamated with some of these programs. I think that is an opportunity for that particular government to address it. And for the western government to address amalgamation after 1999.

I cannot provide and give support to this proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I have not given Mr. Minister, Goo Arlooktoo, the benefit of responding to Members. There were no direct questions to the Minister, however, there were implications of questions. I need direction from the Committee. Do I allow the Minister to respond to each Member's general comments? The Minister is indicating he wants to speak. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I do not necessarily need to respond to every Member but I would not mind an occasional chance to clarify some areas. I will do that in very quick order. Some of the Members asked about the impact on staffing levels in the communities. The plan as we have it -- and I have to qualify this because we were following a process where since October we talked about what this new department is going to do as it deals with infrastructure. We avoided trying to design the infrastructure first and then figuring what it is going to do because that is always something that creeps into your mind. As it turns out, learning from past mistakes and looking at other proposals that went ahead before, that is not the right way to go.

The way you do it is to figure out first, what is this department going to do and that will guide you to what it will look like, keeping in mind that you have to minimize the impact on staff. As it turns out the Housing Corporation does not have any staff in the communities. There is staff with the Housing Corporation in Yellowknife and in the regional centres and the district office and a couple of area offices. The Department of Transportation in Nunavut is mostly in the regions. The airports in each community are mostly run by the hamlets and therefore are hamlet employees. Public Works and Services has some maintainers in the communities which would continue.

The question about if we were to do this now would the two new governments have to de-amalgamate, I think the term was. I am trying to be as objective as possible on this and if you really think about it, after

division you are going to have in Nunavut, a government that takes care of 27,000 people and in the west a government that takes care of 30,000 people. Very small amounts of people and if you really took those numbers and put them down south, they are no more than small towns.

Each of these departments do carry pretty high levels of bureaucracy. In fact, I believe why a lot of these concerns have been brought forward, is that our bureaucracy in the NWT is large, and has become a fairly large political force compared to the rest of the population, which is something you would not see down south. I am not saying it is a bad thing, I am just saying that is what it is. The other issue about our RWED Department savings, I do not have any information on that but I would imagine that the Minister of that department could provide that. An amalgamation is not necessarily lay-offs across the board as one of the Members suggested. There would be a smaller bureaucracy.

For example, what we suggested is, one deputy minister instead of three and you can subtract from there the fewer staff that would be required. It is true that the reductions probably would be in Yellowknife and some of the regional centres, but not in the communities. One last thing I would say is to the question about not enough time. It is probably the opinion of Members that there is not enough time, but in fact it is us and the bureaucracy saying we can do it. We can reorganize and we can make the government more efficient in this time. We can show you that it is possible. That would be my comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, you have indicated you wanted the occasional chance to get in there. So, would you be able to signify when you wanted to speak. I

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believe you also indicated you are not willing to get into a big debate in your initial remarks. Let me know when you want to get in there. Okay? Thank you. I have Mr. Henry and Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister asked for some comments and reasons why the Committee were opposed to amalgamation. Just to keep my comments short, I would refer to this document which

has been tabled in the House and I think it is a reasonably good summary of the reasons why the Committee could not support the initiative at this time.

One other item I would draw to the attention of the Minister. It was discussed today in the House, the Minister of Finance talked about time to division, and time is money and he suggested that time is much more valuable than money is because of the shortage of time left prior to division. I would suggest that was probably a large determining factor in the Committee's response and reason for shelving this at this time. That is not to say that there are not initiatives that the Minister proposed with a couple of departments that could not proceed. There is no reason why one of the department's, for example Public Works, could not take on the design and project management of infrastructure, whether it is tank farms, or schools. That work can still be done for a department on a cost recovery basis. The user pay initiatives are a good example of that. The different departments can amalgamate their resources and provide services accordingly.

I think if the Minister wants a response to bring to Cabinet, I think the most strong response that I could offer to him is during this discussion of amalgamation I did not hear one ordinary Member speak in favour of this initiative. I would suggest that it has been really well looked at and if the Minister does want some ammunition, if you will, to take to Cabinet. There is not support for this at this time from this side of the Legislature at least. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. I have Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I do have problems with the proposed amalgamation. It has been my experience and the experience of my two communities of Arviat and Baker Lake have only seen pain from the other amalgamations that have been carried out. As I mentioned earlier today, there were five positions that were taken out of Baker Lake when the Health and Social Services were amalgamated. In RWED, we also lost some ground there and it is my feeling that we would also suffer from the proposed amalgamation of these departments. At this point in time, it is not something I can support. I think we should leave it for the new Nunavut government to deal with.

Furthermore, again I am going back to some of the other departments that were amalgamated in my area, the amalgamation seemed to be carried out on the backs of the smaller have-not communities. The benefits seemed to run downhill to the regional centres. Until there is a re-focusing of where the benefits are going to go, it is difficult for me to support this amalgamation, or any others that take away from the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. I have Mr. Miltenberger and Mr. Steen. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

I, as well, will be brief. We have the privatization initiative, which is labouring and needs more work. User pay/user say initiative, is another major one, that is labouring and needs work. The RWED consolidation/ amalgamation is still in process, has not been finalized or fully taken effect. The regional directors have been removed, and, in my opinion, there are problems at the regional level in terms of loss of coordination and other related issues that have to be dealt with. Personnel is no longer in existence. There are problems in that area, in my opinion, that still have to be resolved. The whole area of wage cuts has not been completed. The teachers' issue is still outstanding and we are still dealing with the fall out from that. There have been program cuts in all departments. A lot of them are still in progress. There are probably more coming in the new budget. There are some facility closures, like Delta House. We have the empowerment initiative, which is a major initiative we are starting to get off the ground. Division -- the biggest issue facing us in which we are, as the Minister of Finance indicated, one to two years behind. These are some of the other major things that we have done in the last 13 months that have major impact and significance.

In my opinion, it is time to consolidate and follow through on the changes we have implemented and evaluate to try and make sure that those are successful. There is, in my opinion, too much change. People are very distressed, as is the organization. I think the idea of amalgamation is a good one, I just think the time is wrong. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Before I recognize Mr. Steen, Mr. Minister do you want time here? Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the only thing I would add is, yes, indeed there has been a lot of change. To meet our deficit reduction targets, there have been reductions, there have been some lay-offs, some program cuts, et cetera. I think, on Monday, the Finance Minister will deliver the budget and we will get a much clearer picture of what is to come. I hear what the Members are saying and, like I said, I am trying to be as objective as possible and when I listen to Members talking about more money for drug and alcohol programs and the smaller amounts of money and saying those are important, but at the same time, let us not make some departments more efficient, even though it is clear we would be saving money. Although it is true it is not part of the deficit reduction program that we have in place, it does provide some opportunity for some flexibility, I would think. That is all I would add.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister identified some points as to the advantages of amalgamation. One would be meeting the needs of clients and he had replied, the communities as being on the receiving end of some of these programs. Therefore, I suppose they would be considered as clients.

It has been my observation that there is a fair amount of reluctance on the part of the hamlets to take on the housing association responsibilities. Therefore, I do not know how

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amalgamation would benefit in this regard. The communities, in my riding anyway, seem to prefer housing to remain separate from the hamlet responsibilities. Part of that, I know, is because both programs, hamlets and housing, are fairly large programs in the communities with a fair amount of staff. There are also the social aspects of housing versus the municipal responsibilities of the hamlet and there is definitely a reluctance on the part of hamlets to take on the responsibilities of the housing associations, and social programs attached to those responsibilities. I know that, the housing associations themselves have a fairly substantial job just keeping

up with the maintenance of these house and I am sure that the hamlet councils bear this in mind when they make their decisions.

At this point in time I am only aware of the Hamlet of Holman Island taking on the housing association, or considering it. I believe they have not taken it on yet. But the reluctance on their part is tied in with the problems of collection of rents and all the responsibilities of collection of rents and I suppose along with collecting of rent, evicting people if they do not pay. Obviously, it is not good for politicians to start evicting people. All these types of things are being viewed by the hamlets.

Now, as well, there is a similarity between the responsibilities of the DPW to housing in that they both maintain buildings and property. There is not as much similarity to that in regards to maintenance of airports. There is a tendency for hamlets to basically operate airports sort of separately, the same way that the territorial government has done it. One of the things that calls for this type of planning and operation is the fact that airport has specialized equipment and a lot of hamlets are recognizing and realizing that this equipment should be strictly limited to maintenance of airports so as to assure that type of equipment is available when needed, because airports in the small communities in the Arctic are very critical as a supply line into the community.

I think that hamlet and community housing associations, would tend to prefer to deal with separate departments, rather than one department which would address all three. Obviously, whoever they are talking to, whether it is the superintendent level or higher, they would want to know that the guy has the background of concern that they have. For instance, if it is a housing concern, I am sure they would prefer that the regional superintendent had a housing background. If it was a transportation problem in airports, then they would prefer that the guy know what he is talking about when the Hamlet addressed the airport concerns. Therefore, I think overall the thought of one department simplifying a one-shot deal to have access to one department for these problems, in reality it is not as easy to put into effect as it may be on paper.

Another concern that I have, there is a lot of emphasis being put by the Ministries on the downsizing of these departments in order to turn them into one effective department. A lot of this is going to end up in privatization of certain parts of those services and programs. For instance, the engineering aspects may

end up to be totally consulting engineers. We are suggesting here that we are going to lay off X number of engineers to stream down the size of the departments and if needed we would hire them back as consultants. That is happening already. There are many people that I know of that were working for this government a few years ago, or a year ago, are now in the consulting business. They are charging the government twice as much as they were getting in salaries. You cannot help wondering whether downsizing is actually being effective in reducing the cost. May I continue, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I believe the Minister is listening. Proceed please.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, if I may continue. I am concerned with the policies of this government in regards to downsizing of the infrastructure departments. It seems to suggest to me we are going to have very little infrastructure development if we no longer need all the staff. I cannot believe for one minute, that the government kept all that staff in the infrastructure departments simply for the sake of paying people. There must have been a use for them. I am concerned that there will be so little infrastructure development that there is no longer a need for this large a number of staff to address the infrastructure development. In other words, are we going to quit building roads? Are we going to quit upgrading airports or building airports? Are we going to cut back on housing so much that we will no longer need all the staff? Are we also going to cut back on the construction of buildings? I am talking about large size buildings, like schools and infrastructure for communities, that we no longer need this large a department? I cannot help wondering about that.

But the one that really makes me wonder is this point of preparations for division. I am getting an impression that we are suggesting that, after division, both territories are going to be so small, and that the number of Ministers may be reduced, because they do not have these departments any more to minister. If that is the case, I wonder if we were to allow amalgamation now, would it mean that we would get rid of a couple of Ministers? Because if they are not needed in the future, why would they be needed now? I cannot help asking that question.

The last point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, in my communities and I am sure it is in every community,

there are so many changes being made in the last year to the government structure, the government department, downsizing, changes, amalgamation, that it is very confusing for the guy on the street to know who is left and who is still there. For instance, right now I am sure that I am not the only one wondering, who do I go and see in this new renewable resource department? Who do I go and see if I have a concern for wildlife or economic development or energy mines? I cannot help but being confused as to who I am supposed to see any more, and that is the situation in the communities. We have made so many changes to this point in time, we are talking about more implementations, and we are implementing to some degree, community empowerment. But we make so many changes in other aspects, that we do not know what works and what does not work. We will not be able to analyze which were worthwhile changes and which were not. I could not support more changes at this point in time. As far as the amalgamation of the departments, at this point in time, I think that we should wait for division, and see what amount of MLAs or positions that are going to be, constituencies. We would then have an idea whether or not amalgamation is going to make sense.

I am totally in favour of shelving amalgamation to a long ways in the future. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Roland and Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to add very much because I would just keep repeating myself. A couple of inaccuracies I would point out. The LHOs, the local housing authorities, in the communities are the ones that run the housing programs in the communities. They are community based already. The question of whether they should amalgamate with the hamlet is a decision left up to them. They are already in the communities, run by community people. I am listening. I can hear what people are saying. I suppose what I will do, I will listen to more of what people have to say, but for the purpose of this discussion, I will stick to principal and ask, how much government can we afford? How much of the bureaucracy, how much inefficiency, are we willing to put up with to save a few jobs? I see I am the second

Minister left in here. I can see the support, so I will listen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Roland. Thank you.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a short, brief statement. I think amalgamation in a time of non-restraint would be a good idea. Having a housing corporation district office established in the community of Inuvik, transportation being there and public works already being ravaged by a government reduction exercise, I am very concerned with what is going to be left.

I ask another question, how much reduction can a community take? Once you have a healthy community with good businesses and lots of private development, you can sustain that better than you can if you are depending upon government. Unfortunately the community I represent, Inuvik, has become heavily dependant upon government, and we have for a number of years been taking cuts, and in the last year we took quite heavily, 78 positions. That is not counting the non-government organizations that have had to reduce their sizes, that is purely government positions.

When it comes to the community of Inuvik, we have taken hits, we have taken cuts. When you look at it, we have done so many changes that we need to take a look at what we are doing now, and what programs we are running before we make any more. We have not seen what we look like lately. I think it only makes good government to stop and see what is left of us, what are we functioning at. Have we received that, or not? Are we going where we need to be going? I think that right now I am starting to see the real negative effects that reductions have on a community. That would be my point.

We can say we want to be more efficient, but there comes a certain point when you reduce so much that whoever is left, the jobs they are doing, they will not be able to do it to the best of their ability. I know guys that are working a number of different jobs now because their position has taken over other positions, because those within the department have been reduced. For example, in transportation we have weigh scale officers who check the ice roads for thickness. They do sign posts. They do contract checks. They do a whole number of things now

instead of doing the job they were hired to do. Can we be so efficient that we create problems? I think that is something that we need to sit and take a look at. I said I would be brief and my counterpart here, Mr. Miltenberger has reminded me of that, and I will allow him to have the joy of my silence. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Before I recognize Mr. Henry are there Members who have not spoken who wish to speak now? No? Mr. Henry. Mahsi.

MR. HENRY:

I would just like the Minister to clarify, and this is a point that he brought up and he mentioned it a couple of times during this debate. He gave assurances to Members that there would be no job losses in the community, that they would all be in Yellowknife. I just wanted assurances from the Minister, myself and potentially other MLAs, and even the people of Yellowknife, that it is not just okay if the jobs are being lost in Yellowknife. I would just like that assurance from the Minister, that is, in fact, the position, just for clarification. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Before I get into that, I want to say, again, the principle behind this is to have as efficient and small a structure as possible that delivers the programs. To make sure that it is a small, efficient Housing Corporation, or housing arm of the infrastructure of the department as possible. To make sure as much money goes to the communities, whether it is Yellowknife or other places, for houses as possible. For transportation it is for the roads and airports. For public works it is for the buildings, et cetera. That is the purpose of this. As I indicated earlier, we have not dealt with the structure really, but it does not take rocket scientists to figure out that with one infrastructure department, instead of three deputy ministers, you need one, and three finance sections and headquarters would not be needed, only one policy division, one human resources division. That is in headquarters, that is in Yellowknife. I do not have the number here with me, but I think the deputy minister did give an estimate to the Member during one of our presentations.

The other impact would be in the district offices, or in the regional offices, where, instead of three Superintendents, you need one. The finance section, you need one instead of three. The human resources, you need one instead of three. That is where the reductions would be. Headquarters would probably be the most affected. I did not mean to say that it is okay if Yellowknife gets the most cuts, but the important part is the delivery of programs to the clients, to the people in the communities. That is the most important part.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I am sure Members and Ministers are conscious of the time that we have here. General comments. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman. I move that this Committee recommend 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.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

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

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Members' time as I presented this proposal. I will go over the

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comments again. Cabinet will consider it, and Cabinet will make the final decision whether or not to proceed with this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Can we get a recorded vote, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

A recorded vote is being called. To the motion. Question? All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Henry. Mr. Steen. Mr. Evaloarjuk.
Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Picco. Mr. O'Brien.
Mr. Krutko. Mr. Rabesca. Mr. Roland. Mr.
Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Sit down, please. All those opposed,
please stand.

Abstaining, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Antoine. Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Dent.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The results of the motion. For, 13.
Against, 0. Abstentions, 3. The motion is carried.
Does the committee agree that Committee Report 1-
13(4) is concluded? Thank you. I will now rise and
report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Good evening. The committee will come back to
order. We are on Item 20, report of committee of the
whole. Mr. Ningark.

**ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE**

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, your committee has been
considering Committee Report 1-13(4) and would like
to report progress, with one motion being adopted
and Committee Report 1-13(4) is concluded. Mr.
Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of
the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Picco. Mr. Ningark, your
motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been
called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The
motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item
22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Nunavut
Caucus immediately after adjournment, which will be

followed by meeting of the Standing Committee on
Government Operations.

Orders of the Day for Friday, January 24, 1997:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Return to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of the Committee on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
-Motion 7-13(4), Referral of Tabled Document 20-13(4) Report on the Joint Working Group on the Business Incentive Policy
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 to
Friday, January 24, 1997 at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT