



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

4th Session

Day 9

13th Assembly

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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, 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 Manitoak Thompson

ITEM 1: PRAYER

Oh God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land, and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Orders of the day. Item 2, budget address. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 2: BUDGET ADDRESS

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

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the second budget of the 13th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

This budget represents the final stage of our two-year deficit recovery plan announced last year. With the implementation of this budget, our government will return to a balanced budget position.

-- Applause

HON. JOHN TODD:

As importantly, Mr. Speaker, we will ensure that the two new territorial governments are not burdened with a large accumulated debt when they come into existence on April 1, 1999.

Mr. Speaker, the 1997-98 budget calls for expenditures, including estimated supplementary appropriations and lapses, of \$1.155 billion. Total

revenues in 1997-98 are estimated to be \$1.164 billion.

I am pleased to announce that with the cooperation and commitment of the Members of this Legislative Assembly, for the first time in four years, this government will not run an annual deficit.

In fact, we are projecting a small surplus of almost \$9 million for 1997-98.

--Applause

HON. JOHN TODD:

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, our planned deficit for the 1996-97 fiscal year is expected to be \$5 million less than we budgeted for last May.

Our accumulated deficit picture has shown improvement as well. Last May, we expected our March 31, 1997, debt to be \$85 million. We can now expect that figure to be \$65 million, and by March 31, 1998, it will have declined further, to less than \$57 million.

Mr. Speaker, we all know how difficult it has been to achieve these results. We have had to reduce government spending by almost five percent this past fiscal year and by an additional five per cent in 1997-98. Everyone has had to make a contribution to lower government spending.

- Employees of the GNWT and its boards and agencies have seen their salaries and benefits reduced;

- The rationalization of programs and services has resulted in substantial reductions to person years;

- Contributions to municipalities, boards and agencies have all been reduced;

- Capital spending has been cut significantly, and in some cases, Mr. Speaker, facilities have had to be closed.

Mr. Speaker, there has also been a great deal of discussion in this Assembly about the fairness and equity of the reductions being implemented by this government. It is important to observe that the reductions implemented by this government have transcended regional and constituency boundaries. Job reductions, facility closures and program restructuring have affected all constituencies and all communities in the north.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that we are not out of the woods yet. While we have significantly restructured government and reduced duplication and inefficiencies, we continue to face intense pressure on the expenditure side. Reducing expenditures to this degree when we are facing growing needs from our ever-increasing population and our very real social problems has meant that we have had to make some tough decisions. However, these decisions have been necessary to bring our expenditures in line with our revenues and to ensure the sustainability of the system in coming years.

Mr. Speaker, in order to meet our deficit reduction targets we have had to reduce expenditures by \$100 million in each of 1996-97 and 1997-98. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have not yet succeeded in reducing our operating budget to a sustainable level. We cannot continue to reduce capital spending without long-term implications. It is essential that we continue to look for ways to do government in a more cost-effective manner.

The stark reality is that funding from Ottawa will not continue to grow annually, as it has in the past. We took an exceptionally large hit in 1996-97. The federal government reduced our gross expenditure base in our Formula Agreement by five percent, a reduction, as I have said many times, totalling \$60 million annually. In addition, the growth in our funding under the formula is tied to the growth in provincial

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and municipal government spending in the rest of Canada. Since provinces have been reducing their spending, some by dramatic proportions, we have taken another substantial blow. Continued budgetary reductions in southern Canada, particularly in larger provinces like Ontario and Quebec, will significantly impact on our revenues and further threaten our ability to deliver essential programs and services to our residents.

Mr. Speaker, this government cannot afford to absorb any further revenue reductions. It is for this reason that the Formula Financing Agreement which covers the period 1995-1999 has not yet been signed.

I have been meeting with the federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Paul Martin, to try and obtain his support to include a "floor" in the Agreement. A floor would provide us with some protection against further large reductions in our funding should provincial governments continue to

curtail their spending. I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Martin has agreed to review the GNWT proposal with a view to finding an equitable solution to this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, those who suggest that we are moving too aggressively to put our financial house in order and return this government to a balanced budget position are not considering the consequences of inaction on future generations. Larger deficits, and correspondingly high interest payments to service this debt, will only lessen our ability to deliver essential services and programs to the people. Mr. Speaker, this is not an acceptable alternative. This government is not prepared to leave a legacy of debt to future generations.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the greatest pressure towards increasing expenditures is within, what we call the social envelope. Staggering demographic factors such as our rapidly increasing population continue to create demands for services that are straining the existing system.

As a result of the deficit recovery plan adopted by this Legislative Assembly, a conscious and informed decision was taken to protect the funding levels within the social envelope. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as a percentage of total expenditures, the social envelope funding has increased from 58 per cent in 1995-96 to 61.5 percent in this budget.

However, Mr. Speaker, maintaining or even increasing funding levels, frankly, is only a short term solution. As I stated earlier, a rapidly increasing population is placing demands on the system that is outstripping our capacity to deliver services as we have in the past. We recognize that fundamental change must occur within the system to ensure its sustainability.

The Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Kelvin Ng, with the participation of our program delivery partners, is actively managing the evolution of the health and social service system.

This process includes an extensive analysis of the current system and the development of a comprehensive plan for reform that will serve as a solid base for the future development of two sustainable health care systems. Systems that will ensure our ability to meet the needs of our residents over the long term. To guide this process, Minister Ng has established a steering committee comprised of the Minister and the chairpersons of the Inuvik and

Baffin Regional Health Boards and the Northwest Territories Health Care Association.

Mr. Speaker, while the reform of our health care system and social services system is a critical issue, I said last May that we must also look hard at how we do business throughout our entire organization.

We had to improve communications, eliminate unnecessary administration and duplication, streamline departments and get out of the areas that are best left to the private sector or communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have done many of those things. The past 12 months has been a time of unprecedented change in the way that government programs and services are delivered.

We are in the process of developing a digital communication network with our private sector partners to support cost-effective government operations. This network will provide for communications needs required by a modern, decentralized government operation as we head into the twenty-first century.

We have consolidated and reduced the number of government departments from 17 to 11. The new Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has been established to provide a one-stop, one-window approach to sustainable development.

Government has removed itself from functions that can be better done by the private sector. Systems management has been privatized, property management functions are being privatized in several regions and, in some cases, the operation of facilities has been privatized. Decisions relating to privatization in areas such as petroleum products and computer services will be made in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, these operational changes have not been an exercise in moving functions around. They have been serious and successful actions that have reduced expenditures. They have been followed up with action to reduce internal red tape, decentralize decision-making and increase the authority and accountability of our managers. Today, our managers have more authority to make decisions than ever before. It is a fundamental belief of this government that decisions affecting our communities are most effectively made by the people living in those communities and by our front line managers who deal with these issues on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that these organizational changes have not occurred without consequences. Although we are now administratively more efficient, organizational change, undoubtedly, brings stress. We have attempted to help our staff deal with these changes through the Employee and Family Assistance Program. However, Mr. Speaker, what is now necessary is clarity on what the future holds. I hope to offer some clarity today.

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Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Public Works and Services announced that we have accepted the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly not to proceed with the amalgamation of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Works and Services. With this decision, our fiscally induced restructuring is largely complete. We can now bring greater stability to the organization. This is not to say that we will stand still. Division, community empowerment and social and economic reform will bring about some change. However, Mr. Speaker, it is now time to turn our attention away from restructuring, towards the issue of the division of the Northwest Territories and the implementation of a transition plan that will ensure that there are two viable governments on April 1, 1999.

There are only two years and two months remaining prior to division. During this time, decisions must be taken to implement government structures for Nunavut and the new western territory, assess and determine employee complements and establish any inter-territorial service delivery agreements necessary to ensure continuity in the delivery of programs and services. As stated on many occasions, this government is committed to taking the operational steps necessary to ensure that there will be two efficient governments operating on April 1, 1999.

This Assembly has established as a priority and demonstrated its commitment to have two fully functional governments on April of 1999. However, Mr. Speaker, to accomplish this, we must begin soon. We are currently in the process of preparing a division transition plan for all departments that will address the necessary steps and identify the financial and human resource requirements for Nunavut and the western territory. This plan will be ready for review by Members of this Assembly at our next session in June.

Mr. Speaker, a key issue for this government as we prepare our transition plans is the government design for both Nunavut and the new western territory. With respect to the design of the Nunavut government, the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) recently released its second comprehensive report recommending a design structure for the government of Nunavut. Earlier this month, this government responded in detail to the NIC report emphasizing our commitment in principle to an affordable model of government that is decentralized and serves all residents of Nunavut effectively and efficiently. It is our intent to move quickly to ensure a smooth transition as we approach April 1, 1999, by entering into a protocol with the interim commissioner with respect to the implementation of the new government.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that we are only one party to this process. We have fulfilled our obligation to further the process by providing our response to the NIC report in a timely fashion. We now anxiously await the response of our two partners, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and the federal government. Once the positions of the federal government and NTI are clear, it is essential that we move quickly to reach a consensus on design considerations so that planning and implementation can proceed in an orderly manner.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that the implementation of a new Nunavut government is wholly dependent on the federal government living up to its commitment to provide the necessary incremental and on-going operations and maintenance funding. Mr. Speaker, to that end, it is essential, essential, that the federal government address the funding issue in a clear and comprehensive manner in its response and at the Nunavut Leaders' Summit in February.

With respect to the western territory, the design of the new government will emerge from constitutional and self-government discussions. We are fully committed to participating in this process and have identified over \$1 million in 1997-98 budget to ensure that we can contribute effectively to the self-government talks. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it is important that our division transition plan for the western territory includes an efficient model of government that ensures that services and programs continue to be delivered in an efficient manner after division.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Finance I am very concerned that the Northwest Territories is left in sound financial condition on March 31, 1999. The

successful creation of Nunavut and the new western territory is dependent on the steps we take to stabilize our financial situation and ensure that our 1996-97 funding base not be permitted to erode any further.

Mr. Speaker, one of the key issues that must be addressed in the short term is the determination of base funding, including incremental costs, that will be established for both two new territories.

The federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Paul Martin, has agreed to a process that will address the structure of the financial arrangements and the amount of funding that will be available for each territory after division.

For Nunavut, this process will include the participation by the interim commissioner and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Parallel to this, on the advice of the western Caucus, we have ensured similar participation by the stakeholders from the western territory in this process. To facilitate this participation, the government has provided seed funding to the western Caucus to form a steering committee to oversee this work. The steering committee is comprised of representatives of the western Caucus, the Aboriginal Summit, the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce and the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that given the importance of this issue to the people of both new territories, this government is committed to ensuring that there is broad representation from both territories at the negotiation table.

The timely resolution of the funding issue is essential for the planning and implementation of two new viable governments.

On April 1, 1999, the governments of Nunavut and the western territory will require a capable public service to ensure the continued delivery of programs and services to all residents of the Northwest Territories. In Nunavut, decisions to address the immediate staffing needs of the Nunavut

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government will have labour relations implications for the GNWT and its current staff.

While the interim commissioner has the mandate to recruit employees, prescribe their conditions of

employment and establish human resource systems and processes for the Nunavut government, the GNWT's position on labour relations with respect to Nunavut has been clear and unequivocal:

- All GNWT staff located in Nunavut must become employees of the Nunavut government on April 1, 1999 and that they be automatically transferred with all terms and conditions of employment intact;
- Existing GNWT headquarters staff should have hiring priority on Nunavut positions for which they are qualified;
- The same principles must be applied to the staffing of the Nunavut and western territorial governments as were applied to federal-territorial devolution arrangements; and
- The costs associated with hiring new staff for Nunavut, the transfer process, office space adjustments, relocation and severance packages are transitional costs and must be covered by the federal government.

It is our intention to enter into discussions with the interim commissioner at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss the transfer of GNWT employees to the new Nunavut government so that our employees are given the security they require as we approach division.

Mr. Speaker, there are many fundamental issues to address in the division process. This Legislative Assembly is committed to addressing these issues with our partners in a manner that ensures that division occurs, I have said many times, in an orderly and equitable fashion.

Mr. Speaker, while the planning and implementation for division will continue to be the focus over the remaining two years of our mandate, we recognize that dealing with our fundamental social and economic challenges and delivering programs and services remains the primary role of this government. As I stated previously, addressing these issues in a time of severe fiscal restraint, frankly, is a daunting task.

However, as a beginning, we have reinvested funding in the social envelope to target specific program initiatives designed to deal with some of the more pressing challenges faced by our communities. It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that these initiatives have been funded by internal reallocations from other

envelopes. For the past two years the social envelope has been allocated funding for the Community Action Fund. This fund allowed communities to develop wide-ranging plans for wellness activities and resulted in a number of successful initiatives. It is now time to begin providing communities with the funds and support required to implement these plans.

In order to maximize the long-term benefit, the social envelope will be focusing community expenditures on children and their families. By investing early in children, and supporting their caregivers, communities can realize immediate improvements, and help prevent the development of problems later in life which may require expensive remedies.

This year the social envelope has allocated \$3 million for early childhood initiatives, bringing the total funding for this initiative to \$4.5 million, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent, has the lead for this initiative and will work in conjunction with the Honourable Kelvin Ng, to distribute funding to communities to enable them to offer early intervention services that support families. These funds will be used primarily to provide community based education or health promotion activities to families, to pay for early intervention workers, to enhance specialized services for children, to purchase specialized equipment, to improve screening programs for better detection of children at risk and to enhance child and home care programs for all these children.

The Department of Health and Social Services will also be investing in a specialized treatment program for youth suffering from addictions. By investing in our young people we believe that we can most effectively ensure the future wellness of our communities.

However, this is not the extent of this government's reinvestment in social programs.

An additional \$960,000 has been allocated to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, for income support community program delivery, bringing the total budget for this program to \$1.4 million. Minister Dent has the primary responsibility to distribute these funds to local delivery agencies who will be involved in the design and delivery of income support services best suited to meet local needs and priorities.

This funding will enable communities to hire and train staff to deliver income support programs, while

allowing community social workers to more fully concentrate their efforts on working with the community to prevent or alleviate our growing social problems.

The social envelope has also received an additional \$1.5 million to train and support staff in communities who supervise offenders on probation or in the fine-option or other community-based supervision programs. Working with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Justice will be distributing this funding to communities that assume responsibility for community supervision.

Given the high cost of incarceration in the Northwest Territories and the need to develop better and more effective alternatives to the present system, this government is committed to encouraging communities to develop their own strategies, services and programs to deal with their own residents who find themselves in conflict with the law.

Mr. Speaker, these three initiatives, Early Intervention, Income Support Community Program Delivery and Community Supervision, represent a strong commitment by this government to enhance the resources available to communities so they are better able to develop programs

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designed to meet the needs of their residents and address local program requirements.

Mr. Speaker, this government also remains firmly committed to the transfer of program authority and capital infrastructure to communities through the community empowerment initiative. Led by the Honourable Manik Thompson, the Department of MACA is proceeding with transfer requests at a pace that is acceptable to communities and is based on building capacity at the community level through training and development.

To facilitate this process, the department has been allocated an additional \$2 million dollars to address the community empowerment priority. The department will also be reallocating \$1.7 million of existing funding to this priority from savings realized through land reform initiatives. These financial resources will be specifically targeted for community-based planning, community assessments, community training and community ownership of infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize the tremendous demand for social housing across the north. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, has been working diligently to address this issue through program reform but it is obvious that the demand for social housing far exceeds the Housing Corporation's delivery capacity.

As part of our initiative to sell our stock of staff houses, we expect to identify surplus units. This government is not prepared to allow surplus units, whether owned or leased, to sit empty. In cases where unsold housing units are no longer required to meet the housing needs of employees and where we have vacant leased units, we intend to transfer these units, and the corresponding funding, to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to help address our urgent social housing needs.

Mr. Speaker, in the long term what people want most is hope. Hope for their future and the future of their children. The hope that comes from opportunities to become more self-reliant and productive.

This can mean jobs. But it is not just a wage employment. It can also mean pursuing traditional activities like trapping, sealing, fishing and hunting. It can mean self-employment or the opportunity to start a small business.

We have good reason for hope. The north has a wealth of natural resources, which are the envy of many nations. We are blessed with minerals, oil and gas, forests, fish and wildlife and a vast unspoiled landscape. We must conserve and protect these resources. We must use them wisely so that we can harvest them today for the maximum benefit of northerners and ensure that they are there for future generations.

Whether it is mining, renewable resources, tourism, arts and crafts, manufacturing, construction, or small business, every sector of our economy has the potential for growth.

Mr. Speaker, in my last budget address, I indicated that government can no longer sustain economic growth. The onus for future economic growth and job creation must shift to the private sector and to communities. This government, Mr. Speaker, is committed to developing a climate that will stimulate economic growth and create new, sustainable jobs.

A stable and competitive tax environment is critical to ensuring that this occurs. Our personal and corporate income taxes are among the lowest in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that this budget contains no new tax measures.

--Applause

HON. JOHN TODD:

In addition, Mr. Speaker, a clear and concise regulatory environment is also an important element of economic growth. Last year, we made a commitment to initiate a comprehensive review of all government regulations in an effort to reduce regulatory burden that deters economic growth while, at the same time, ensuring that the public trust is protected.

Although this initiative has been slow to get off the ground, we have now established an office to undertake this work. I want to make it clear that this review will be transparent and an open process and will include participation by all interested stakeholder groups.

Mr. Speaker, opportunities do exist for significant job creation if the business community has access to a trained labour force. This remains one of our most pressing needs. Without an adequately trained northern workforce, the new jobs that are created will be filled by imported labour and historically disadvantaged northerners will continue to be under represented in our workforce.

During a recent discussion of the affirmative action policy, Ordinary Members called for the development of a broad northern employment strategy to deal with this issue. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has taken the first step through the preparation of a labour force development strategy that he will be bringing forward during the current session.

With this baseline work completed, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development will be able to work with industry to develop a strategy that brings together supply-side training with demand-side job creation measures. It is our intention to fast-track this initiative for completion this summer.

Mr. Speaker, to assist in the creation of an economic climate conducive to economic growth, we launched a new business investment strategy and established a

Northwest Territories Investment Office designed to bring money and jobs into the territories.

Since that time, we have sponsored the establishment of the Aurora Fund, an Immigrant Investment Fund incorporated under the current federal regulations. This fund was approved by federal regulators on November of 1996, and is now being marketed overseas, with potential for up to \$21 million dollars of reasonably priced debt financing to be available to northern businesses in the coming construction season. It is important to note that this fund is expenditure neutral to this government. We made an initial \$300,000 working capital advance that is fully repayable by the fund prior to March 31, 1998.

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Mr. Speaker, the Investment Office has also been reviewing a number of other exciting initiatives to foster trade and investment in the territories, including but not limited to:

- Marketing the advantages of doing business in the territories including, as I said earlier, the attractive corporate tax rates and support services available in the territories;

- We are looking at a taxpayer investment initiative plan designed to encourage northerners to invest in the establishment or expansion of existing businesses, and;

It is our intention to bring forward recommendations on these initiatives for review by this Legislative Assembly in the spring of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment to Members of this House that I would not proceed with the \$5 million equity investment in the Mortgage and Loan Fund until I had discussed this issue with the traditional banks. I have since met with senior representatives of several of these banks. They have provided assurances to me in writing that they are willing and eager to provide financing to prospective home owners and housing developers, particularly in our smaller northern communities, and for this reason, Mr. Speaker, we will not be proceeding with this initiative at this time.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, the government will reinvest \$1 million in economic development initiatives designed to provide opportunity for northerners.

The community futures program is a community economic development initiative that provides small loans to community businesses and supports the creation of badly needed jobs in small communities. \$500,000 will be allocated to this program to assist in the establishment of Community Futures Societies in those regions where none now exist.

The Minister of RWED is also examining ways to supplement this funding to ensure that viable Community Future Societies are functioning in all regions.

\$500,000 has been allocated to the NWT Corporation to place increased emphasis on the marketing northern arts, crafts and products outside of the Northwest Territories. The enhanced sale of northern products will maintain and increase the number of jobs supported by the Development Corporation.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Charles Dent has indicated to the federal government our commitment to extend the Canada/NWT Infrastructure Agreement for one further year. This program provides contributions from the federal, territorial and municipal governments and is targeted at the construction of small community infrastructure projects and the creation of much needed short-term employment. The federal and territorial governments will each contribute \$1.1 million to this program in 1997-98.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has stated on many occasions, we are governing in a time of unprecedented fiscal, economic, social and political change in the Northwest Territories. With change comes some difficult challenges.

As difficult as these challenges may be, we are moving ahead on the issues of fundamental importance to the Northwest Territories. Progress on these issues will not always be easy and, certainly, not without a great deal of debate, but I am confident that if we all work together, we can maintain our course and achieve our goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 3: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 30-13(4): Minister Absent From the House

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi is ill and will be absent from the House today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 4: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Report on Presiding Officers' Conference

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to report to the House my observations and impressions of the Presiding Officers Conference that I attended in Edmonton over the weekend.

As a relative new-comer to the political arena, I found the discussion sessions very informative and interesting. The delegates to the conference consisted of speakers, deputy speakers, deputy chairs of committees and clerks from every jurisdiction in Canada, except Ontario, and included representation from the Senate and the House of Commons. To listen to the sage remarks of people who had been parliamentarians for 20 or 25 years was very encouraging to me. It renewed my commitment to what I obviously believe to be an honourable undertaking, to be the representative of my constituents in a democratic process. A process which we sometimes take for granted, and a process which only works if people believe in it and actively participate.

I was reminded of the privilege it is to be chosen by your peers, colleagues and fellow citizens to represent their interest, and the trust bestowed on you in that undertaking. As parliamentarians, we possess certain rights and privileges. With those rights and privileges comes an awesome responsibility. I was intrigued by the remarks of the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable Gilbert Parent, when he

articulated those rights as the right to speak, the right to attend, and the right to vote.

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We have a very unique system in the Northwest Territories with consensus government. In my opinion, we have a wonderful opportunity to participate and obtain goals and objectives on behalf of our people, which in other jurisdictions is incumbered by which party you belong to, whether you are in power or opposition, whether you are a Minister or a backbencher.

Without fail, I have the opportunity to stand and speak to an issue of my choice in the House every day that it sits. I have the opportunity to ask questions of the government on behalf of my constituents every day, and incidentally, for Mr. Picco's benefit we have the longest question period of any jurisdiction in Canada.

--Laughter

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

And furthermore, I have the opportunity to make these statements and ask these questions generally without being ruthlessly heckled and shouted down. There is a lot of cynicism towards politicians, and there are some sacrifices to be made in terms of privacy when you are in public office, but collectively and individually we have a high calling and a high standard to uphold. We should not waste any opportunity to participate as constructively and as intelligently as possible in this government. Mr. Speaker, may I have unanimous consent to complete my statement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should not waste any opportunity to participate as constructively and as intelligently as possible in this government. I am proud and protective of our democratic system. I am proud of our consensus government, and what can be achieved within its framework, and I am proud to speak, vote and to attend with you as the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot

MR. NINGARK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stand, today, I am from Natilikmiot region. I ask on behalf of the people from my region, from my constituency, Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, regarding housing. This is their main concern as well as ours. We all understand that we are concerned about our housing situation. Mr. Speaker, in Gjoa Haven, there are 13 houses without any sewage system, no running water. In Taloyoak, five houses without any sewage or water system, and they are occupied. There are some vacancies in those communities and they belong to the government staff. When you see those vacancies, and they are all fully supplied with sewage and water, and you see our people in the community that do not have any sewage system or water. Those people without any running water in their places, they have to do the upkeep on a daily basis for hygienic reasons and keep their clothes clean. They normally have to heat their water on the stove. Mr. Speaker, when it is time to ask questions, I will ask the Minister about the housing situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Funding of the TI'oondih Healing Camp

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement is in regards to the TI'oondih Healing Camp, which is the first facility of its kind to be established by an aboriginal organization in Canada to deal with the whole question of family treatment. In regards to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, who have spent some \$2.1 million to establish this facility to deal with the social and economic problems that they see within their region, and to deal with the problem of alcoholism, drug abuse and violence.

Later on today, I will be asking the appropriate Minister, Mr. Kelvin Ng, a question in regards to

exactly what is the status of these negotiations? I had a commitment from the Minister, along with the Premier and the Minister of Finance, to look at this issue and to try to resolve it. At a later time, I will be asking the Minister on this to see what the status of these negotiations are. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Clarification of Questions Previously Asked

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify some points that happened last week during Session, specifically question period. Thus, my statement is about misinformation. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I did not say that I wanted to tax charitable bingos or bring VLTs into the Northwest Territories, as quoted by certain members of the media.

For the record, I will quote from the unedited Hansard of Thursday, January 23 in response to my questions to the Honourable Minister Todd about other revenue-generating possibilities and ideas for the Northwest Territories. I quote from page 300 of the unedited Hansard: "We should not tax lotteries or any other monies coming in to help charitable organizations but scratch and win cards, and those types of things, should and can be looked at." That is what I said, Mr. Speaker. The point of my questioning, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories, was to demonstrate the need for this government to look at other revenue-generating ideas. I suggest that those people interested should review the Hansard.

As for the VLTs, I said that they are another form of revenue-generation. I did not say I was in favour of them. I asked Mr. Todd if he had looked at that possibility.

The other area, Mr. Speaker, is the fuel problem. For the record, I am now satisfied that the fuel purchased on the 1996 sealift met GNWT standards as demonstrated by the information provided to me by the Minister of POL, Mr. Arlooktoo, on Friday. My line of questioning was on the purchase of fuel at rural markets that was below standard and

bought on the cheap. This was the information that was provided to me and it would seem that it was not entirely accurate.

Collaterally to this, the fuel supplier in Iqaluit, Nuksuk Corporation, were not at fault and they have been doing an excellent job. It is unfortunate, however, that it took four days of questioning to resolve that matter. I would like to thank Minister Arlooktoo and Minister Dent for their cooperation and the extra work put in by their staff to clarify the issue for me, for the record, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Members' statements. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 5: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 50-13(4): Supreme Court Justice for Nunavut

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Picco on November 29, 1996 with respect to the appointment process for a Supreme Court justice for Nunavut. The appointment of a Supreme Court judge is the responsibility of the federal government. However, the government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for the administration of the court which includes such matters as facilities for the judges and the court, as well as the personnel to support the maintenance of the court, such as court reporters, clerks and the sheriff's office.

The Department of Justice has determined that there will be incremental costs if a judge were to be appointed and based in Nunavut. The department does not currently have the resources to cover these costs and it has asked the federal government to cover the incremental costs as a cost of division of the Northwest Territories. Once funding for incremental costs has been identified and the structure and composition of the Nunavut court is clarified, steps can be taken to appoint a Supreme Court judge in Nunavut. It is expected that this will happen within the next 12 months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my partner in life, Celine. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Winnie Blake from Tsiigehtchic along with Art Christensen from Yellowknife.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Bill Erasmus, if he is still here, the esteemed leader of the Dene Nation, who lives in the community of N'dilo, which is in my constituency. 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, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a well-known, investigative and gutsy journalist from Iqaluit, Todd Phillips, of the Nunatsiaq News.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have often mentioned, it is difficult, from this particular location in the House, to see the gallery but if there are residents of Yellowknife South in the gallery, I would like them recognized, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Mr. Henry has mentioned, it is hard to see if visitors in the gallery are still here. I would like to recognize Mr. Al Falconer, the President of the Yellowknife Association for Concerned Citizens.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of Fort Smith's home-grown talents and businessman and a pretty fine golfer, Mr. Jake Heron.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to recognize Fred Koe, a former member. Welcome to the Assembly.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 124-13(4): Process for Responding to Budget Questions

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. I have a question concerning the process of asking questions in the House with regard to the budget, Mr. Speaker. If the budget is moved

into committee of the whole, and questions are asked during question period about

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matters regarding the budget, could we expect a reply from the Minister at that time? Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question would have to be made perhaps to the Government House Leader, but I would like to ask Mr. Ootes if he might be able to rephrase his question because I am not too sure if the Minister can respond. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will address the question to the Government House Leader. The question being, if I have questions regarding a budget item, will the Minister answer those questions immediately during question period?

MR. SPEAKER:

Again, the Minister would not be able to respond until the question has been asked. Do you want to ask the question? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes. My question would be, as a general rule, will the Minister answer the question during question period on budget issues, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

I want to remind the Members that the budget address will be moved into committee of the whole for discussion. As of yet, we do not have a motion on referring this. Members are allowed to ask questions regarding this budget while it is still in the House. Once the motion has passed to put this in the items for committee of the whole, it will no longer become a question regarding this, there will be no questions asked.

Mr. Ootes, did you wish to ask a question to the Minister regarding the budget itself. Okay, just a correction. All tabled documents that are referred into committee of the whole, Members are not allowed to ask questions on them, with the exception of the budget itself. Members can ask questions regarding the budget itself, in the House or in committee. I am sorry but I was mistaken. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. That does clarify it. I guess the question I have of the Government House Leader is, will the Ministers respond when asked about that process?

Return to Question 124-13(4): Process for Responding to Budget Questions

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

If any colleague wishes to ask a question of any Cabinet Minister, on any issue, there is some obligation, I suppose, for us to make an effort to respond and we will do so. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes. No. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 125-13(4): Negotiations for Funding TI'oondih Healing Society

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my opening statement, I was talking about the TI'oondih Healing Camp in regards to what its status is in regards to this government. I did have a commitment from the Minister, along with the Minister of Finance and the Premier, through a committee that was struck to look at the possibility of finding funds to carry out activities or a possibility of a program to run at the centre, I would like to ask the Premier what the status of those talks.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 125-13(4): Negotiations for Funding TI'oondih Healing Society

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not been informed recently by the Minister of Health as to what the strategy of those talks are. I will raise the issue with him, and he will bring me up-to-date, honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is regarding Mr. Todd's budget address. I noticed in the 1997-98, the document provided by the Minister, and provided to all the Members that Mr. Todd is forecasting a surplus of \$8,893,000 for 1997-98. That is a dramatic turnaround, Mr. Speaker, from 1996-97 where we had a cumulative deficit on the current books of \$38,304,000. My question to the Minister has he been low balling the numbers to show a huge increase in the surplus, this dramatic increase? Will the Minister tell the people of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe, I would rephrase my question for the benefit of Mr. Todd, and his short answer today. I am getting tired of these little short answers. Can Mr. Todd explain why the dramatic turnaround from a \$38 million deficit to the \$8 million surplus for the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return to Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it is important to differentiate and that was something my honourable colleague did, given his previous experiences as community futures executive director between a balanced budget approach and the accumulated deficit. In fact, the accumulated deficit is the only place the balanced budget approach will come about based upon this budget being approved and the targets that we set together in committee with the ordinary Members. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has provided the Main Estimates for 1997-98, the surplus for the current year, \$8,893. Can Minister Todd give us an idea of what he thinks the picture will be like the following year, for 1998-99?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are projecting, as I said, a balanced budget this year, subject to the budget being approved and the targets that have been set by Committee and by the Ministers. I think it would be imprudent of me at this time to make any public statements as to what I can project in 1999, because there are a number of factors out there that have to be taken into consideration, and if I had to do that I would have to qualify it by saying, you know, subject to et cetera, et cetera. So, perhaps I may be prepared to answer that question in the coming months or next fall. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the surplus of the \$8,893, will Mr. Todd be putting that against the accumulated deficit of \$56,586, as forecast?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. That was your final supplementary, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 126-13(4): Forecasted Surplus and Debt Figures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Sometimes, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink. Anyway, if Mr. Picco will take the time to read the financial statement, he will see that any surpluses that are determined are charged up against the accumulated surplus.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will briefly try to come between this learned debate between the Member from Iqaluit and the Member from Rankin Inlet. My question is to the Minister of Finance in regards to division. Did the Minister indicate whose obligation it is, of the three main parties, to cost out the type of government put forward in Footprints 2?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the party responsible for determining the costs associated with Footprints in the Snow 2, I believe, would be the NIC. We have a significant amount of obvious fiscal data that we would be prepared to share with them, but I

would see them taking the lead on determining the actual costs associated with the design that they have provided us with.

I think it is important, as I have said last week and I said in the budget address, that it is incumbent upon the federal government and the NTI to come forward with their response to Footprints 2, and now. We hope that they will call for action, so that we can then work on appropriate compromises, what the basic framework of the new Nunavut government would be. I am prepared then to get on with a much more aggressive approach to costing it and determining the associate interim costs on the basis required to get it going. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is to the Minister of Finance in regards to division and the issue of infrastructure. I will just assume that the Minister's initial aside was directed to the Member of Iqaluit, so that I will not take deep and personal offence.

-- Laughter

MR. MILTENBERGER:

My question is in regards to the infrastructure that is being projected to be built in Nunavut and to be started prior to 1999. Can the Minister indicate where the O & M costs for those new capital expenditures will be coming from? Will they be coming from the GNWT's budget, or will they be coming from anticipated incremental costs from the federal government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Excellent question by my honourable colleague from Thebacha. The fact of the matter is, any operation/maintenance costs, not the capital costs, only operation and maintenance costs, on infrastructure, that is going to go into a decentralized government, has to come from the federal government, from what we call on the incremental side. The responsibility, as I said in the budget, and I have said consistently, and I am speaking with Mr. Martin, has to come from the federal budget. It is important on this serious question being asked and the serious discussion/debate that is taking place, on a serious issue, that we get some clarity as to the position of our partners, as to the framework that is being suggested in Footprints 2. Naturally, that is what we are pushing for right now. Once that is done, I

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think we will be in a much better position to determine the associated costs and of course the additional funds that are required because it is in a decentralized format. I hope that answers his question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate that if this clarity that he is making reference to, is not provided by NTI and the Minister of Indian Affairs, prior to the February Nunavut leaders meeting in Cambridge, what would be the focus of that leaders meeting, if you cannot talk of substantive issues like money and financing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 127-13(4): Obligation to Cost Design Model

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am fairly confident that the NTI response that we have received, it is my understanding, I was talking to some people on the

plane last night that there is a major meeting in Coppermine going on this week. One of the issues on the agenda for the Nunavut Tunnagavik Incorporated, I believe, is the response to Footprints. The Premier, I believe, has corresponded with the Minister of Indian Affairs, asking him if we are going to get a comprehensive response from the federal government. We do not know what that is going to be at this time, or we do not know if in fact we will get one. I am fairly optimistic that we will get NTI's and we will have to push hard for the federal government's. If we get that, then I think there could be substantive progress made in the February meeting in Cambridge Bay. If we do not get that, I would obviously have to seek counsel from my colleagues in the Nunavut Caucus and seek some direction from the Premier as to what course of action we want to take. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Oral questions, Mr. Ningark.

Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement earlier, we have about 13 homes in the community of Gjoa Haven, and we have about five homes in Taloyoak without the benefit of a running water system. It is not an uncommon sight in a small, remote community in the eastern Arctic, I am sure, as well in the western Arctic, to be walking down the street in a community, past homes without running water on the same street that you see government style homes, that are vacant, with a running water system, with furnacing, with all the comforts of a home that we expect to see in a community.

Sometime when we talked about long range planning, we talked about looking over that horizon. Sometimes we tend to forget the real issues, the real situations in the community, the smaller communities especially. My question, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Minister of Housing, Mr. Arlooktoo. When does the government plan to address the homes in Gjoa Haven, and Taloyoak, that have no running water? The request has been made some time ago. I am wondering if the Minister will, in this case looking at the brighter financial future of this government, address the need of the community of Gjoa Haven and Pelly Bay, in the area of homes without running water systems? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as the Member indicated, this is not the first time that he has brought up the issue. He has spoken to me earlier this year about it. I am well aware of the housing situation in Gjoa Haven. Houses without running water in that community are the inventory of northern rental housing units that were turned over to the housing corporation from the federal government, and at this point in time we have set aside about a quarter million dollars for the Kitikmeot area, as its share for improving and modernizing those units. I am told that the majority of that funding will likely go to Gjoa Haven this year. On the issue of empty staff houses, we are aware that in a few communities there are empty staff housing units that are vacant, ones that we have not sold, or are not going to sell. As the Finance Minister said, the financial board secretariat is in the process of transferring them to the housing corporation, and the housing corporation will soon be transferring those to the local housing organizations to be used as social housing.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary. I would like to thank the Minister for his positive response, but the term he used "likely", gave very little comfort to communities of Gjoa Haven and Pelly Bay. Mr. Speaker, we are, in fact, building access units left, right and centre. Mr. Speaker, we are retrofitting homes with running water systems. When will the Minister address the real problem in Pelly Bay, in Gjoa Haven, and Taloyoak? I am not comfortable with the term "likely". Will the Minister do it, and when? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the materials for the Gjoa Haven houses will arrive this summer and the work will begin shortly after that. Our limitation is with funding. We have very little funding for modernizing these older units. The federal government has effectively cut off all funding to improve those houses and therefore we are left to find our own funding from the territorial government. We are taking some action. We are spending a quarter million dollars in the

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Member's constituency to improve these houses, and that is the best we can do for now.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the honourable Minister. Will the Minister assure this House that conditions like the housing situation in Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak will be addressed during the coming summer? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the communities in the Member's constituency, as well as all other communities, are participating in the housing needs survey that we are doing at this very moment. Early indications are that we have an immediate need for over 3,500 new units, just to address today's needs. As the Finance Minister said in his address to the House, we have nowhere near that amount of funding. We are doing what we can to understand and to find out exactly where the

needs are. Then we will use what little funding we have to address those.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a demand for housing in the NWT, and we can realize that, and I can relate to that. Because people are living in homes without running water, are these people in fact living in condemned homes? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 128-13(4): Housing Concerns in Natilikmiot Communities

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I would not be able to comment on any specific house without seeing the case, but the northern rental units that are being used without running water are not condemned homes. They do not have the shower or bath facilities that we would like to see in houses to meet health standards. We are doing the best we can to improve them and to put running water into them. As I said, we need them to house the people that are in the community, and it is going to take some time to catch up to what we need to fix them up.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of MACA. It is in relation to community empowerment. I am pleased to see, from the Finance Minister's budget address, that this government is still committed to the community empowerment initiative. We had been told in the past that this government

was looking for someone at the assistant deputy minister level to work in this area. We all know that the communities are suspicious of the community empowerment initiative. We have all been anxiously waiting to see who that person would be. We know we are probably going to find a familiar face that communities can trust, that they know is honest to deal with.

I know that there have been about 200 people in Yellowknife laid off this year alone, and numerous others in other communities. I know there are a lot of people out there, and I would like to know if there has been someone at the assistant deputy minister level, or thereabouts, that has been hired to work at community empowerment? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms Thompson.

Return To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to a deputy minister, or ADM, who will be responsible for community empowerment programs, maybe I will say this in English. (Translation ends) An offer has been made to Mr. Graham Murchie from Vancouver. I felt having two masters degrees, well qualified, also having 20 years of management and planning experience with municipal, state, provincial and federal levels, and also extensive experience in teaching and leading workshops, would be beneficial to all the communities in the Territories. We did interview people from the Territories, but the offer was made to this candidate who was considered both qualified and suitable for the position. We hired the best person for the job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if we could get a short explanation of what this person's job is going to be?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will table the job description as soon as I get it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions, supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

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MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, it is disheartening to hear that, or to infer from the Minister's statement, she does not know what this person is going to be doing. However, will the new Mr. Murchie, be travelling to the communities to talk to the people in the communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not say that I did not know what this person is going to do. The ADM position will have a major leadership role in insuring overall success in the government's community empowerment initiative. If the Member would like a description, then I will be tabling that. This person will certainly be travelling to the communities and meeting all of the regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Final Supplementary To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated that they hired the best person for the job, but I had also indicated that we laid off over 200 people in Yellowknife alone, and many from the communities. This government, as I understand it, still has a policy of affirmative action, and they are developing a northern employment policy. I would just like to know if MACA is still following the affirmative action Policy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 129-13(4): Senior Position Responsible for Community Empowerment

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An open competition was held to staff this particular position, with ads appearing in newspapers in western Canada, and throughout the Northwest Territories. The competition closed on November 22, 1996 with 23 northern applicants, and 37 applicants for a total of 53 applicants. The screening criteria was consistent with the qualifications set out in the advertisement, and after interviewing northern applicants and southern applicants, we made an offer to this person because we felt he had the best qualifications for the job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 130-13(4): Update on Division Meeting in Holman

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday I noted in my Member's statement that the Hamlet of Holman was still waiting for a time when high level government officials would be able to come to the community and address the division issues affecting Holman. My question at this time, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Premier. I wonder if Mr. Morin could give us an update as to when this meeting may be possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 130-13(4): Update on Division Meeting in Holman

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have talked to the Member previously about this issue last year, and I have made a commitment to the Member that very soon in the new year, that would be January, February that secretary to Cabinet and other officials would go into Holman and meet with the people of Holman. I will get the exact dates for the Member, but let me assure him that it will be by the end of February. We just have to work the dates out with him, but I made that commitment to him and I will follow up with it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo. I was wondering if the Minister could give me a brief explanation of his experience in the ordering of homes, and the shipping and supplying of homes for the construction season of a regular year's work in the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I understand the question, but if the Member is asking for the process and the time it takes to apply for our home ownership program, to go through the design process, the buying and ordering of materials, et cetera; I do not have that information in front of me, but I can get it quite quickly, and pass it on to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that Mr. Arlooktoo understood my question extremely well by his feedback. The point I am trying to get at, Mr. Speaker, there are over \$30 million allocated to infrastructure development for the creation of Nunavut. What I am wondering is, since there have been no decisions made as regards to the infrastructure that is to be allocated to Nunavut, how much notice does the Minister require to ensure that proper ordering and arranging for delivery can take place in a normal construction season?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I think I understand the thrust of the question. As far as our housing programs go, we are in the process right now of ordering and identifying

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materials for housing that will be shipped during the summer, but the time is quite tight as it is. As far as the \$30 million that was approved for Nunavut infrastructure, incremental infrastructure, the plans have not received final approval as of yet. The GNWT has given its response, and we are waiting for responses from the NTI, which I understand might be coming out this week, and from the federal government. We hope to come to some kind of agreement and show some progress by the middle of February as the Finance Minister said, and start finalizing plans around that time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am trying to find out from the Minister, does he have a last date in which

you could know about what the requirements are, and when they would have to be ordered for supply for any construction that would take place in the 97 year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo

Further Return To Question 131-13(4): Acquisition of Building Materials

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, it would depend on the size and complexity of any kind of projects. It is possible for some of the simpler building designs to have the plans finalized by the end of April, and if we really push it, to early on in May. The issue with the Nunavut infrastructure right now is that the Public Works and Services Canada have basically gone on their own. We have very little involvement as of yet. We have been knocking on their door, trying to let them know that we need to be involved and that we do have a role to play. But the time is indeed getting tight.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to some remarks made by the Minister of Finance today in the budget address, I took note and interest in the fact that the social envelope has allocated \$3,000,000 for early childhood intervention, bringing the total funding for this initiative to \$4.5 million. I was wondering, if perhaps the Minister for Health and Social Services could give the House some kind of an indication of what kind of programs are and initiative are involved in early childhood intervention.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services.

Return To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is the main lead on this initiative, so I will refer the question to him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an awful lot of research has been done on programs which are offered already in the north and in other locations and the framework to help communities design a successful program within their own community has now been completed by the department. We have not settled on one particular design, but instead, are offering communities the chance to work with people within the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services at designing a program which makes sense in each individual community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when we refer to early childhood intervention, what are we intervening in? In what area is the intervention?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, the program will be aimed at children from the age of zero to kindergarten. It will also include programs or permit programs aimed at maternal health to ensure that the children are born well. It basically is a very broad program at this point in time in the way it is designed. We have to work with each community, because some communities already have early intervention programs, like Aboriginal

Head Start, in operation and what we are looking to do is complement the programs that may be out there and make sure that we broaden the services available, within each community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not involved in a social programs committee, but if I had to guess the kinds of areas where we need to intervene with children of that age, zero to kindergarten, I would imagine that we would need to intervene, educate and offer programs in the areas of nutrition, and with older children, certainly, advising them of the pit falls of alcoholism and intervention in the area of abuse of substances and also abuse in general. I am just trying to articulate a few that come to mind, but there is one area that I am curious about, that you do not hear much talk about, and I do not know if it is even politically correct to address, but we talk about the growing pressure on our social programs and we talk about the birth rate and the population growth rate in the Northwest Territories. What I am wondering is, is there any program or educational initiative in the Northwest Territories to deal with the issue of teenage pregnancy and the health and social issues of children bearing children?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that this fits in with an early childhood intervention program. But, to answer the Member's question, beginning in grade 7, in particular in grades 7 to 9, the health curriculum does, in fact, emphasize issues of this sort. In particular, dealing with AIDS and other potential problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 132-13(4): Allocation for Early Childhood Intervention

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that everyone in this House would agree that a human life is a precious thing. Right from the time of conception, we as a government have a responsibility to take care of our citizens. So these programs are very important, but, I am genuinely curious, whether or not it is culturally inappropriate to suggest that young people who have no education, who have no means of support, who are immature and not adults themselves, and I know there are issues of custom adoption and so on, but, is it culturally inappropriate to suggest that children who are uneducated and unable to provide for themselves should not be bearing children? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Can I ask the Member for Hay River if you might be able to rephrase this question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment regarding early intervention?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the risk of rephrasing it inappropriately, I will attempt to formulate a written question and find the answer that way. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. The Minister has indicated today that we will have a projected surplus of 8.893 million, can the Minister indicate whether or not we will see further lay offs to civil servants in this budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I heard my honourable colleague's question correctly, it is our hope to provide some stability out there to the civil service. We tried to indicate in the budget that any major restructuring of the government will probably be put on hold at this time. There will be an emphasis on stabilizing the situation, providing some security to our civil servants, like I tried to on the division issue, and to move forward, to try to create some new opportunities outside of government. But I cannot, in all fairness to my colleague say today whether or not there will be any more lay offs over and above this budget. Some of this budget will cause some job loss, there is no question about that. Certainly it is our intent once this budget is balanced, we should be in a reasonable fiscal position to do some positive and creative things. So, there will be some job loss with this budget because of there is significant change coming about. But hopefully, in the future, this will be the end of it. Certainly, it is my hope that it will be the end of it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister be prepared to identify the magnitude of the losses and also, in which communities these potential lay offs will take place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

HON. JOHN TODD:

A great deal of discussion took place by a number of Members about fairness and inequity. As part of that whole fairness and equity rationalization, I did ask the department to give me, in detail, community by community, what the lay offs were, and the percentage of lay offs as it related to the employees

and I am prepared to provide my colleague with that and it will be part of, if you want, the debate, I am sure, that will unfold as we move forward on the budget that we presented to you today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at what point will the Minister be able to provide that information to the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not trying to avoid tabling it, I think there was some dispute or difference of opinion between my department and my staff and the ordinary Members. I believe that we have, as they say in this business, signed off on what we think is an accurate assessment of the job loss and the percentage by community. I will check with my deputy after the House adjourns today and I will try to move quickly to provide that information either through tabling it or providing it to the Committee chairs as quickly as I can, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 133-13(4): Future Civil Service Lay-Offs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the sooner we can get this information to the public, the sooner a lot of people will be relieved as to their job status. We have all been somewhat disappointed with

the number of lay offs that have occurred over the last year or so. I think that it is fair to say that some individuals, the ones that have been laid off and the ones that are concerned about being laid off will be somewhat surprised to see that we are projecting a surplus. Needless to say, it is a positive point. There will be some concern and probably even frustration over the fact that we are projecting a surplus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. There was no question. I would like to remind the Members about their preambles and also for statements like these, it is inappropriate for Members to be using question period to make Member's statement or statements for that matter. Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 134-13(4): Closure of Vital Service Facilities

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Minister responsible for Finance. Mr. Speaker, the earlier conversation we heard on the projected surplus in the 97-98 budget, I know projecting something to actually receiving it are two different things. But I know the question being asked now in my community is, with the projected surplus, of over \$8 million, why are we looking at shutting down vital facilities, such as Delta House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 134-13(4): Closure of Vital Service Facilities

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, it is, as my honourable colleague said, a projected surplus. We have not got it yet. It is \$9 million, we can spend that amount in three or four days in this government with the kind of money we have got. It is not a lot of money. It is a cautious projection, but the projection is based upon the budget that we presented and the arrangements that we made with committees and part of the targets set by myself to the Minister of Health and Social Services, and it was his decision and the decision of this Cabinet through Committee, that the kinds of things that are happening in my honourable

colleagues riding and in my own riding and others are part of the deficit strategy.

So, unfortunately, in these difficult times, as I have said, difficult decisions have to be made. Now, I would not want anybody getting excited about a \$9 million surplus, that is what I am trying to say. I mean, if we had a \$100 million surplus, I could see it, but, we are projecting a \$9 million surplus based upon the fact that we can get the targets that we have set in the budget. Just to give you an example, you could have one bad year in forest fires and it is gone. It is just that simple. I would not overplay the fact that we are projecting a \$9 million surplus. I would say to my colleague, unfortunately, in these difficult times when we have to do the kinds of things we are doing, his constituency and others, it is not just in his constituency where facilities are going to be closed, are part and parcel of this difficult task of putting this budget together so that we can make the \$100 million cuts so that we can balance the budget.

Let me say this to you, remember we will still have an accumulated deficit, and you will all inherit that accumulated deficit on April 1, 1999. I am attempting, with your cooperation, to bring that deficit down. Mr. Picco and others have spoken eloquently to it in Committee about what steps we are taking. If there is any surplus, and I hope with your cooperation and with the will of this House to move on the budget and get it done there will be, that will be charged up to the accumulated deficit. So, I do not know whether I have answered my colleague properly, I am trying to. I know the difficulties he is under right now, and he is probably under intense pressure from his constituency because of what is happening there. I think it would be fair to say that we appreciate the difficulties he is under, but it is all part of our deficit elimination strategy, and all part of reaching the \$100 million goal that we have set for ourselves, so that we can balance the budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 135-13(4): Alternate RCMP Officer for Grise Fiord

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Kelvin Ng. (Translation ends) I have a concern that when the RCMP goes out for holidays,

there is no alternate RCMP to replace that RCMP from Grise Fiord. My question to the Minister is, can his department provide alternate RCMP for Grise Fiord?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Justice. Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 135-13(4): Alternate RCMP Officer for Grise Fiord

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for providing manpower for relief situations for RCMP officers does rest with the RCMP. They would of course take into consideration how busy a detachment is in the community, and provide a relief individual if it was a busier community. If it was not a high incident community, there may be the possibility that they may leave it vacant, but still provide coverage from a detachment that is within close proximity to that community. I am not fully aware of the situation that the honourable Member is referring to, but certainly I could speak to him and try to alleviate any concerns that he might have, if he does have any, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to follow up on questions asked by my colleague from Yellowknife North to the Minister of MACA. I am quite distressed to see that this Assembly and this government is following in the footsteps of the previous Assemblies with its very poor showing of hiring senior managers from the north, especially as we work on developing a new affirmative action northern employment strategy. I would like to ask the Minister,

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could she indicate what type of northern experience this gentlemen has that they are hiring from Vancouver, about 10 feet from the American border? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Ms. Thompson.

Return To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. None.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker. I have to say that I am shocked and appalled. It is just unthinkable to me that we would have to hire somebody who has not one minute of northern experience to come north, to do community empowerment in northern communities where it is considerably different than in urban Vancouver. He may have two degrees. My question to the Minister is, how does she expect somebody of that calibre to come north and in less than 700 days do any kind of meaningful work at that senior level? I think it is a travesty, Mr. Speaker, an absolute travesty.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I met this individual and I felt that he was qualified for the job. He is qualified for the job. He has a lot of experience, and that is what we need. Experience in teaching and leading workshops. He has two Master's degrees, one in planning, one in Applied Behavioural Science, plus a doctorate in Political and Regional Science.

He has over 20 years of management, and planning expertise with municipal, state, and, as I said before, provincial and federal levels, and has extensive experience, as I have also just said, teaching and leading workshops. I felt this individual was qualified to do the job.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, this government has hired 66 percent of its last senior managers from the south. Community empowerment is one of the key initiatives of this government, and you are bringing a gentlemen in who may have a multitude of years experience in other jurisdictions, but absolutely zero, a big fat zero of any kind of northern experience. Does he know what it is like to be in 40 below? Does he know that division is coming? Can this Minister indicate to this House, how she expects this gentlemen in less than 800 days to get off his learning curve to be able to do anything meaningful in this government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms Thompson.

Further Return To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have staff that are experienced in the field and also have a lot of experience in northern communities. This gentlemen will be working with that staff, and the staff with northern experience will be working him. He has the qualifications to do the job.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While this experienced northern staff that we have

which I agree we have a lot, and they should be in other positions, are carrying this gentlemen around, trying to help him learn his job, what is going to happen to community empowerment? Where is this government's commitment to affirmative action, and

hiring northerners to do jobs after 30-40 years, they are still not deemed to be acceptably qualified to do? It just boggles my mind, Mr. Speaker, after all these years that we still have to do this.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 136-13(4): Hiring Southern Senior Managers

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

We interviewed northerners, and we followed the policy. This person was qualified for the job, that is why he was hired.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Krutko.

Question 137-13(4): List of Deputy Ministers in the GNWT

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Could he give us a list of the number of deputy ministers that we have, and also the ones that have been hired from southern Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd. Yes, I will refer to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 137-13(4): List of Deputy Ministers in the GNWT

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information in front of me, so I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Question period is over. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to the Budget Address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees.

Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills.
Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 15: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document, Tabled Document 26-13(4), from Robert Alexie to the Premier, myself and all the MLAs in regards to Roberta Vaneltsi, in regards to her children being abducted and taken to the Czech Republic, and also the letters that she sent to other dignitaries, such as Audrey McLaughlin, the Prime Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. 8-13(4). Item 19, first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 19: FIRST READING OF BILLS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1997-98, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Bill 8 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 20: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1997-98, be read for the second time, Mr. Speaker. This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make operation and maintenance expenditures, and capital expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Accordingly, Bill 8 has had second reading and will stand ordered to committee of the whole. Second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. With Mr. Steen in the chair and consideration of Bill 8.

ITEM 21: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee to order. The only item before the committee is Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1997-98. I would like some direction as to how to proceed. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Considering that we have just received the report and Members will likely want to take some time to digest the statement, as well they probably will want to look at and complete the standing committee reports, so I would suggest that at this point in time if it is the Members' wishes that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We have a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? Motion carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Item 22, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 22: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker your committee has been considering Bill 8 and would like to report progress. I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion

is carried. Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk.
Item 24, orders of the day.

ITEM 24: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Management and Services Board immediately after adjournment today. There will also be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations immediately after adjournment today. Meetings tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. of the Ordinary Members' Caucus and at 10:30 a.m. of the Full Caucus.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, January 28th:

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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

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- Motion 8-13(4)

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 8

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, January 28, 1997 at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT