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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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, Mr. Henry. Good morning. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 45-13(4): Television Program on Suicide Prevention

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, the suicide rate for teenagers in the Northwest Territories is two and a half times the national average. This is a serious concern for this government, for the education and health care systems, as well as for communities and families. A better understanding of the factors that contribute to teen suicide is essential. Teenagers need information about how to deal with the pressures and stresses of their lives. People who care for, or work with youth need to be able to recognize suicidal behaviour, so they can find help for young people who may be thinking about ending their lives.

This evening, "Live and Well", a television series produced by Education, Culture and Employment, will air a show about teen suicide. The show is called "Facing the Pain: Suicide Prevention for Teens". It is a joint project between Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services. "Facing the Pain" is a television drama created by a group of

Fort Smith high school students. It follows the thoughts and actions of two characters as they contemplate suicide. The show includes educational information about how to identify suicidal behaviour.

The ultimate message of the show is that the only way to grow as a person, and the only way to deal effectively with problems, is to face painful situations. The two characters in the TV drama eventually recognize that their lives are valuable and take steps to resolve their problems. The show also emphasizes that talking about suicide and personal problems is the first step towards healing.

After the drama is aired, people will have the opportunity to phone the show to ask questions or discuss issues. Professional counsellors from various health backgrounds will be screening the calls. Members of the audience will also be able to e-mail or fax their thoughts about the show.

"Facing the Pain" will be shown on Television Northern Canada, that is TVNC, tonight at 6:30 p.m., Mountain Standard Time. It will be repeated on Friday at 11:00 a.m. and Monday night at 8:00 p.m., Mountain Standard Time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 46-13(4): Federal Support for the Western Constitutional Process

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi and I met with the Honourable Ron Irwin, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, in Calgary on February 8. I am pleased to inform you that Minister Irwin has announced his continuing support, along with the Government of the Northwest Territories, for the Constitutional Working Group working to have a new constitution in place for the western territory when the NWT is divided in 1999.

Minister Irwin also joined the Government of the Northwest Territories in accepting the general objectives set out by the Constitutional Working Group in Partners in a New Beginning, as the basis for developing a new model of government for the western territory. The bottom line objective in the Partners proposal is to bring together public government and aboriginal self-government at the

territorial level in a manner consistent with the constitution of Canada, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, treaties, land claims and self-government agreements.

Together with Mr. Irwin, we agree that we must work diligently towards a new Act, passed by Parliament, which will replace the existing Northwest Territories Act which no longer reflects our needs or the realities of the post-division environment.

Partners proposes that the Act be accompanied by a companion self-government agreement which would acknowledge and ratify the new federal Act as a system of government which implements, in part, the aboriginal inherent right of self-government at the territorial level.

Minister Irwin agreed that federal officials will work closely with the Constitutional Working Group over the next few months to help resolve any concerns that have been raised or which may be raised with the current proposal in Partners. He also agreed

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to seek support from his Cabinet colleagues once an acceptable final proposal is complete. We thank him for this and for his continuing support.

Over the next few months, the Constitutional Working Group will be seeking the views of the public on a constitution for the west, consistent with the objectives in Partners. It is our expectation that, based on reactions from the public and on input from the federal government, the Constitutional Working Group will produce a final constitution, consistent with the principles which we collectively support, that will then be put before the public for ratification.

Mr. Speaker, the date for division is rapidly approaching. It is essential that the Constitutional Working Group has the support and active involvement of the public and the federal government in order to complete a final constitutional proposal and see a new Act passed by Parliament before April 1999.

I acknowledge that the northern agenda is very crowded, but I strongly believe that, in key areas, and this is one, we need to get the job done. This is also the case in relation to establishing Nunavut, negotiating formula financing for both territories, streamlining government in accordance with fiscal restraint, and continuing to negotiate aboriginal land

claims and self-government agreements. Some would suggest that we set aside the development of a constitution for the western territory until after division and aboriginal rights agreements are settled. Mr. Speaker, we simply do not have that luxury. If we allow the April 1999 deadline to pass, the pressure will be off and there may be very little enthusiasm or commitment to see the job done. I believe we need to act when it remains possible to do so.

I realize that it will not be easy for the Constitutional Working Group to complete its work and Parliament to pass a new Act before April 1999. That is why it is essential that Minister Irwin extend his support to the western constitutional process and commit himself, and federal officials, to engage with the Constitutional Working Group and the Government of the Northwest Territories to help arrive at a constitutional proposal acceptable to the residents of the west and to the Government of Canada.

Mr. Kakfwi and I welcome Minister Irwin's commitment and encourage the Constitutional Working Group to seize this opportunity to move ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 47-13(4): Recognition of MACA Staff by the Yellowknife Women's Society

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Wednesday, February 5, 1997, I had the pleasure of attending the open house at the Yellowknife Women's Centre. The Yellowknife Women's Society recently received a grant from CMHC to do some long-overdue renovations to their facility. I had the honour of accepting an award in recognition of the many acts of support that the staff of MACA has given the Women's Centre. The award reads, "1997 Humanitarian Award of Notable Achievement and Excellence for the Advancement of Social Development and Community Prosperity".

As some of you may know, the Yellowknife Women's Society provides several services to the women of the Northwest Territories and their families such as: a hot lunch program; a food, clothing and furniture depot; and advocacy and support for women in their dealings

with other agencies, employers, landlords, and the legal system.

The Women's Society has received an ongoing contribution of \$30,000 from the GNWT, which assists with the core expenses. For the last two years, the Women's Society has received funding from Brighter Futures Canada. This is a federal government program to promote healthy babies and mothers, by providing high-risk pregnant women with information about health care during pregnancy and after delivery.

The efforts of volunteers are indispensable in a not-for-profit organization. Many staff members from MACA have contributed both time and money to helping make the centre flourish. They have taken positions on the Board of Directors. They have provided cooking and baking for the annual Christmas dinner. They have assisted at fund-raising bingos and have made many donations to the food and clothing depots.

I am very proud to be associated with this department. Please join me in expressing my congratulations to my staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Thompson. Ministers' statements. Before we go on to Members' statements, I would like to recognize the Member for Yellowknife North, whose birthday it is today. Happy birthday, Mr. Erasmus.

-- Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Notification of Job Losses

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I returned home and had a public meeting with the residents of Inuvik. At that meeting, I supplied some information to my constituents on the overall impact of the reductions that are happening in the community.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is that, with as much fluidity in the budget that has been put forward, it is hard to give a definite answer as to what is happening, when

it comes to the impacts. One of the things -- I just received a call -- was a concerned person from Inuvik who had heard there were some PY reductions coming. The rumour had started that someone was going to lose their job. Right now, with the information I have, I could only put "potentially" and I think we

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need to address that. When we go through committees and we are at this stage, the budget is tabled in the House to have fixed information. When we go to our communities and explain the impacts, or the possible impacts, on a community of these reductions, that we would be giving accurate information. I do not want to be said to be spreading fear in the community that more jobs are being lost. That is the last thing I want to do, especially in the community of Inuvik, which has been hard hit already. So, I will endeavour to find out the correct information from the appropriate Minister during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Fire Education Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is regarding the whole problem that arose yesterday in relation to the fires in Fort McPherson and also other communities in the north. There has to be a mechanism in place to deal with not only the problem, but educating the youth and making them aware of the cause of fires and the destruction of fires and the effects that it has on people and the community.

Mr. Speaker, in the past, this government offered a learning not to burn program. This program raised an awareness amongst youth about the damage caused by fires, only the Department of Safety and Public Service cut this program. Since then we have seen an increase in youth in fires, including the fire in Fort McPherson and incidents involving some children setting fires to other children. Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent matter and has to be dealt with by this government. I believe that education is the way to go in dealing with the youth and making them aware such incidents that have occurred. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of MACA to seriously consider looking at implementing this

program in relation to a "Learn Not To Burn" program for the youth in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement On Priorities for the Balance of the Term

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been in office 16 months now. We took office facing a very difficult and demanding agenda. We are a third of the way through our term and we have 25 months to go until division. The budget and the deficit reduction program has consumed a lot of our time and we only have one year left to implement our next priorities, then, a year left to accomplish that. Our deficit elimination program is underway and, hopefully, under control and seems to be working barring any unforeseen disasters.

I have taken some time to sort out what seemed to be some priorities for the people of the NWT and for myself. There are many, many issues and sometimes the number of issues seems insurmountable. All are very important. But the priorities for me now, with 780 days left until the two new territories are created, division is certainly an area that I feel that we all need to concentrate on. In the division area, there are issues like formula financing, division of assets, GNWT staff employment, and ongoing east/west relationships among some of the issues.

Then, of the other major issues that are of great importance to me, is job creation. This includes the student employment program. Another item is tackling our social, health, and education programs which always appear to be gigantic, the difficulties that we seem to face there. Another issue is creating a more effective and responsible territorial government. In that I see improving employee morale as a necessity and sorting out the affirmative action policy. Mr. Speaker, these are four major issues that I think we need to concentrate on for the next couple of months and two years in office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Western Constitutional Process

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to briefly comment on the issue of the constitution and the process we have laid out before us. Mr. Speaker, last weekend in Fort Smith there were some very clear comments from some of the leaders in regards to their opinions on how this process should unfold and directions that should be taken. I value that kind of input and it is the kind of input that we are going to be seeking from all the people of the western territory. I think it is very important to keep in mind that we have to proceed with the process underway. We have an opportunity that may not come again for awhile to look at what type of government we want in the western territory.

There are very strong opinions on this issue. The document that we put out provoked discussion as it was supposed to do. But I think people have to keep in mind that we have to go through the process and we need to hear from more than just political leaders. We have to hear from the people in the communities, all the communities in the western territory. If at the end of the day, we get a consistent message then I think we will be obligated to reflect that message. But I think that we have an obligation to very clearly tell the people not only what is in that package, but we have to communicate as effectively as possible all the things that are happening. This is a very fluid situation where there is a rolling draft. The Minister indicated that there has been a meeting with Minister Irwin and that they have made a sufficient move in terms of their involvement. So, we have an obligation in this House, especially the Members of the western territory and the Constitutional Working Group, to be very effective in how we communicate what is happening so that people have a full picture as they try to make the decision on how we proceed with the constitution for the western territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Impact of Anti-Seal Hunting Groups

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MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends) Many Members of this House spoke about the national media's video of seal hunting in Newfoundland. Today, I would like to talk about this a bit more. I would like to speak about how Inuit often bear the brunt of the media stories created by animal rights activists. The video seen a few days ago on national television showed seals being slaughtered alive. A group described this as cruel, criminal and out of control. Although this footage was a specific case in Newfoundland, my concern is that all seal hunters, including the Inuit, will be tainted with the same brush. What will Canada or the world think about Inuit people now? These animal rights groups have had a devastating effect on the livelihood of Inuit seal hunters in the Northwest Territories. We all know that aboriginal people have the highest unemployment rate, the highest suicide rate, and the highest alcohol rate in Canada. Mr. Speaker, these groups play on issues like this but seem to forget about how important it is for Inuit hunters to maintain their culture and traditional way of life. Anti-seal hunting groups say the seal hunt must end. This is not realistic or fair to Inuit hunters. The Inuit hunt not only hunt for fur but for food as well. Our traditional lifestyle is very important to us. We cannot allow people who know nothing about us, to tell us how we should live our lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Funding for Day Care Centres

MR. PICCO:

Good morning and thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to take this opportunity to talk about day cares. Mr. Speaker, as the former President of the Iqaluit Childcare Association, and having been and still am accessing day care, it is becoming obvious that the financial implications to students, parents and the different non-profit organizations that are running day cares is becoming of great concern.

Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of years with reductions to wages and increased costs, day cares have had to rely on fund-raising more and more. As we all know with the less dollars available out there, this is starting to have a negative impact on these day cares, because they cannot raise the proper funds to

operate the day care. Also the cost of having a child in day care has increased. For example, Mr. Speaker, it costs myself and my wife \$320 every two weeks to have our son in day care or \$640 a month. Mr. Speaker, in some parts of this country, \$640 a month would be a good mortgage payment. The financial help to help offset these costs are very minimal. Volunteer boards are having to deal with higher operating costs and lower monies being generated from fund-raising because of less money, as I said earlier, in the public's pocket.

Mr. Speaker, day cares provide not only essential services, but are also a place where a child can be brought up in a safer environment. Statistics have shown that children attending day cares have better opportunities to improve academically when they go to school. Mr. Speaker, later today, I will be asking the appropriate territorial government Minister on our support to day cares in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Socio-Economic Benefit Agreements

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to talk about a reference that was made by one of my colleagues yesterday in committee of the whole. The inference made was that the companies that come to do business in the Northwest Territories are just going to automatically deal with northern companies because we are here, because we are competitive and because we are going to go after their business. This was in relation to BHP and the fact that there was business going on between BHP and northern companies prior to any socio-economic agreement being signed or put in place by this government.

In thinking about those and reflecting on those remarks Mr. Speaker, it comes to mind that we have had many things in the north over the years. We have had uranium. We had had oil. We have had gas. We have had gold. We have had zinc mines. We have had many things. We have seen companies come in and reap the benefits of these natural resources that are here in the Northwest Territories and unfortunately many times these benefits have flown right over our heads. There has been nothing and no

arrangement in place with teeth in it to keep these jobs and these monies in the Northwest Territories. I could give you an example here. I have had research pull out some old newspaper articles from Hay River. When Colomac, before they fired up their operation, their gold mine, Royal Oak Mines, big newspaper headlines in Hay River read "Colomac Chooses Hay River as Base", "Hay River Pickup Point for Colomac Mine", and how excited we were when we heard these things in Hay River. As time went on, eventually the pickup point, the contract was cancelled. Now today we know that there has been recently a memo sent out to staff of Colomac telling them that they can pick up their quick tickets at the airport here to come out of Edmonton. We were down to eight residents in Hay River that were actually working for that mine. Now for something like \$200 a rotation, they can get picked up in Edmonton and dropped off at the mine.

So, I think it is very clear and my point is, Mr. Speaker, that it is about time that we did have agreements with these companies that come here and tap and take advantage of our natural resources. It is about time that those agreements did have some teeth in them. I really would like to applaud the effects of Minister Kakfwi and of his department on putting such an agreement in place, because I am still quite convinced that if history repeats itself, we would not be reaping those benefits but for those efforts and that agreement. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement On Yellowknife Women's Centre

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MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister for MACA just made a statement concerning the Yellowknife Women's Centre. I too had the pleasure of attending the recent re-opening of the centre which underwent extensive renovations following a flood last summer. While I was there, I spoke extensively with the staff. The centre is a non-profit organization established by the Yellowknife Women's Society in 1990. Women and their families are welcome to use the centre's programs. Their services include: soup kitchen; emergency food bank; donated clothing and furniture

depots; and kitchen, shower, laundry facilities. They also provide programs of advocacy and support services, family support services, lifeskills, literacy, parenting classes, nutritional counselling, and support to new and expecting mothers. Mr. Speaker, the centre is also used as an emergency shelter. All programs and services are free. I must stress that most clients are low income women and their families from the communities, not people from Yellowknife. These are people who are either passing through or have moved to Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, there are problems. The centre is run out of a house which has been converted to an office building. They receive program funding from the federal and territorial governments, but the money is simply not enough. They have to rely on donations from people like the Yellowknife Dene Bands, from the Yellowknife businesses, also from their own fund raising activities, and through the efforts of volunteers and staff. I have been informed that many of the staff are paid part-time wages but they work full time and even more, putting more hours than a regular full time position would do. As I indicated, the building is simply not big enough. There are over 100 people using the centre each day. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Women's Centre has over 100 people using the centre each day. The programs and services are being run out of the house which has been converted to office space basically. Meanwhile we have Akaitcho Hall sitting there virtually empty. We are spending money to keep it heated and water running and the rest of that. There are still 100 bedrooms or more in there. It has not been renovated to take the bedrooms out of there. I believe we should turn this building over to the women so they can run a proper emergency shelter for the homeless and for the women, in transition and, of course, the children that are with those women. This way they can properly run all their programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the women who are running the shelter, primarily on a volunteer basis, but they

need help. We are in a position to provide that help. I believe we should do so. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate today to have many constituents in the gallery, primarily as a result of a workshop conference being held by Nunavut Arctic College. I would like to recognize the adult educators and the program instructors from my constituency. From Kugluktuk, there is Gordon Bolduc and Mr. Al Phillips. From Cambridge Bay, there is Elizabeth Hadlari, Vicki Bobinski, John Power, Nicole Babiuk, Nancy Piirainen, Carol Gregor, Mark Bates and, with them, they have the campus director, Mr. Carl Isnor. I also have three other constituents I would like to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that is Larry Aknavigak, his wife Vivian, and their daughter Hilary Ovilok-Aknavigak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to respectfully recognize Jeremie Roy from Gjoa Haven, an adult educator, Dennis Doyle, Pelly Bay, Paulette Tymko, Gjoa Haven, Cheryl Campbell, Gjoa Haven, Rick Morin, Taloyoak. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the adult educator for the community of Holman Island, Marsha Martin.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Are there any further recognitions of visitors in the gallery? Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of MACA. In the past, the government offered a "Learn Not To Burn" program to raise awareness amongst the youth about the damage caused by fire. Originally, it was delivered through the Department of Safety and Public Services. Through the cuts and the dismantling of that department, the program has been eliminated. Since there seems to be an increase in youth fires in relation to the fire in Fort McPherson and incidents of youth setting fire to children, can the Minister assist towards re-implementing the "Learn Not To Burn" program through the Department of MACA, in relation to the Fire Marshal's office, to assist communities teaching the youth about fires and the damage caused by fires? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Return To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the program "Learn Not to Burn". I know that it is being implemented in the schools because one of my sons was talking to me about it. He is only seven years old and he was planning his fire escape in our house. So, I know it is being offered in the schools. I will make sure that the school in Fort McPherson is using that program because I know it is still in existence. We will look after it for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the government and the large cost to this government in relation to incidents involving youth and fire, such as the loss of a school or damages to community infrastructure, I think we need to educate children about the damages caused by fire and dealing with them effectively. Will the Minister commit to looking at reintroducing this type of program, either through the Department of Education or through the Fire Marshal's office?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that our department's officials are already working with the schools with this program. I will make sure that they are doing that in the Member's community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the program is needed, not only in my community, but across the north in all communities. I would like to ask the Minister if she can attempt to implement this program across the board to all communities in the north and deliver it to all schools, so that everyone will be able to receive this needed program in "Learn Not To Burn". Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is what I am saying. It has already been implemented in all the schools. Because I was involved in education, I know, for sure, that the teachers are implementing it in their programs. But I will make sure that the Fire Safety office in my department is working with the teachers in that particular community because I know it is in their curriculums already for the school programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister ensure that there is adequate funding in place to ensure that this program is implemented in the next fiscal year and years to come? To ensure that this needed program, especially in relation to the youth, is implemented and making sure that adequate resources are there in the upcoming years? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 296-13(4): Fire Education Programs

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Adequate resources are already there because the teachers are teaching it in the classrooms and they use the resource person in the community to implement the program. It is in their curriculums. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, in my Member's statement, when I went back to my home community of Inuvik, I shared information on the potential impacts of this budget on the community of Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, they identified the potential for four regional positions being taken out. I would like to know if the Minister has come up with where this might happen or if it is still in the books. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Can I ask the Member for Inuvik if he can rephrase his question? The Member is seeking information from the Minister based on a rumour. Perhaps you might want to rephrase your question? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I am asking is from the presentation we were given from the Department of Education during briefings. I would like to know if the Minister of the department has finalized those discussions as to where these positions or, will these positions, be taken out? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right that our plans for the 1997/98 budget do show a reduction of four PYs in the regional offices. There are six regional offices and we are not, at this time,

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certain where the reductions will actually take place, or if they will be full person year reductions or, perhaps, partial person year reductions in some of the offices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister have this information out once this process is finalized, the work we are doing on the budget? Right now, the people involved in the regional office in Inuvik were unaware of this and I have caused some concern amongst the workers by bringing this information out, although I did not think it was confidential. I would like to know if we will be able to identify, in the short term here, so I can send back information or the Minister might forward that information to the community so that people are made aware of this at the earliest time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that we are sensitive to the concerns of our employees and would like to deal with them in as caring and quick a manner as possible. However, these changes will result because of changes in the funding formula for how career and development programs are going to be offered across the Territories. I cannot promise the Member that, within the next two or three weeks, those answers will be forthcoming. But, as I said, given that there are four PYs that we are expecting to see reduced, there are six regional centres and we are not certain, whether or not there might be only partial PY reductions, the impact will not be significant on any one regional centre. We are not sure that it will affect every regional centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated before, the community of Inuvik is already reeling from all the budget reductions our community has felt in all areas of the departments. I think it would be only prudent to bring this information out and identify where these are coming from as we are in the budget process now and we will be dealing with specific departments while we are in Session. My concern is that, if we are

approving budgets and formulas are not identified or are not set, what are we approving? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 297-13(4): Notification of Job Losses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are sensitive to the cuts that have been taken in centres across the Territories and we will endeavour to get the information out as quickly as possible. In response to the Member's specific question, what we are doing is approving a final dollar figure and many times the formula is juggled to fit the dollars that are available. Putting it bluntly, that is what we are looking at in this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for RWED regarding the diamond evaluation facility. This is one of the key components to the development of diamond mining in the north. I am wondering if the Minister could update this House as to the status of those negotiations with the federal government and the industry in terms of having that facility located in the north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has lobbied the federal government to make certain that the evaluation facility, which would take rough diamonds that are produced here in the north for the purpose of evaluating before they are moved elsewhere, is

located in the north. I think we have met with some degree of success. First of all, the Minister Ron Irwin has indicated his support for locating such a facility here in the Northwest Territories provided we work out the logistics and technical details and address the cost of building and maintaining such a facility. We have agreed to work on that together.

Our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, has also met with the Finance Minister, Paul Martin. Mr. Martin has indicated to her, I understand, his support for locating such a facility here in the Northwest Territories as well. We have also gone ahead to contract a diamond valuer out of Britain to give us a report on how these types of facilities are managed and funded in other jurisdictions, and to look at the requirements and feasibility of having a facility here in the Northwest Territories and how we would go about developing that. This report will be available in the next couple of weeks. It is our expectation that the consultant will be here in Yellowknife in the first week of March to meet with us and other parties to work out and explain the implications and the expectations of having such a facility here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate whether the talks have focused to the level as

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to whether there is going to be a commitment to have it not only in the north, but in a community in the north, as opposed to on-site at the mine? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it is our suggestion that the facility be located in an existing community in the Northwest Territories, yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate to this House, so we could have an idea of the scope of this project, the proposed size of such a facility in terms of jobs and that kind of thing? Are we looking at a large operation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I am not certain about the exact number of jobs that locating a facility by itself in the north will create, but there will be some jobs. I am not certain of how many full-time jobs it will involve, but I do know that the industry had indicated earlier on that their preference would be to have the process of evaluating rough diamonds off-shore in places perhaps like in Amsterdam or Antwerp. It is the Government of Canada's position and ours that rough diamonds be evaluated here in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

And as close to site as possible. I think we have moved a great deal since those early indications were given. Once we have established, with certainty, that the diamond evaluation facility will be located in the Northwest Territories, then we will look at specifically where it should be. It is my expectation that should we win this first stage of agreement, then other spin-off activities such as sorting and cutting of these diamonds will then be possible as a result of locating the facility here in the north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister provide some background information on this facility to give a little more sense of what the process is and indicate as well what timelines he is looking at in terms of a final decision possibly being made in regards to this facility and its location? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 298-13(4): Diamond Evaluation Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the facility at this time, as I understand it, would be a physical structure where the diamonds would be shipped from the production sites and sorted in a manner that an expert trained in trying assess the value of these diamonds would have access to them, be able to put a specific value on these rough diamonds for the purposes of the Government of Canada, for instance, deciding what their share of the value would be in terms of taxes or royalties. That would be the primary purpose of the facility. It would involve a very high element of security, of course. Whether that facility would be going on continuously, whether there would be a diamond evaluator working in shifts, one person doing, doing it part time, I am not aware of. I am not really able to provide any more information than that. But as I said, there will be a report as we have engaged an expert in this field to provide us with some details. We will be meeting with him in the first week of March. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Mr. Dent. The other day I received a letter from Yvette Schreder, who is a constituent and now a student at the Southern Institute of Technology in Calgary. She had encountered a problem with her student financial assistance. I prepared a number of questions for today, that I was going to pose today, but I understand that the problem has been solved. I want to compliment the Minister for intervening so fast and for turning this around in a day. But could the Minister confirm that this problem has been solved for Ms. Schreder? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the appeal by Ms. Schreder, has been upheld. Ms. Schreder has been contacted and advised that her cheque is in the mail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could tell if they have looked into similar situations, if other students may be encountering similar difficulties under this particular basic grant and primary loan program?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the applicant was forthright in her application. The problem was that the staff who were examining the

application did not understand that the program being applied for was an upgrading program. Therefore there will be an adjustment made on application forms so that our staff and the applicants will all be very clear as to what the program is when they are applying for student financial assistance. Hopefully, this will ensure we do not encounter this kind of problem again where assistance is offered initially and found not to be applicable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

MR. OOTES:

Could the Minister tell us if it has come to his attention that other students were affected in a similar way?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 299-13(4): Student's Concerns with Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that some students had received support and that the department had not been aware that the program was for upgrading and therefore, students in similar situations would be looked at, I would say, in a similar manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to Mr. Kakfwi, the Minister of RWED. Mr. Speaker, I have had comments made to me in the last few days that the Department of RWED has at least 90 positions that are vacant. Could the Minister confirm, deny or advise me how many positions are vacant within the Department of RWED? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that, yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

MR. HENRY:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister was short in his comment there and I missed it. He usually goes on much longer so I missed that little short one. I was not prepared. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I was just accepting your point to try to be brief sometimes.

-- Laughter

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Bravo!

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, there are some 90 odd positions that are vacant in the new department at this time. It does look unusual, but there is an explanation for it. There are about 20 seasonal positions that are vacant at this time. Fifty odd positions we were holding pending the decision of some staff. That is, there were about 50 positions that were effected. We thought of people who could apply for positions, so we were holding some 50 odd positions for effected employees within the departments. It appears that some may be requesting voluntary layoffs. In fact, there are only about 20 vacant positions that were being held and most of these positions are now about ready to be

advertised, since our effected employees will not be applying for some of these positions. It is not the anomaly that it appears to be. It is just that when you play around with the statistics, it can set off undue alarms. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that information. Do I understand it correctly, the Minister is telling me there are only about 20 positions available and if so, could laid off employees from other departments have filled those positions? I am definitely concerned because I listened to the Minister of Finance when he was presenting his budget, that they have in fact paid out over \$6 million in packages. I think it would be an awful shame if the government paid out packages to one group of employees and had to hire people with similar qualifications to fill positions in another department. My question to the Minister, what type of positions are these? Are they positions that could be filled? These 20 positions, are they positions that could be filled by people that have been laid off from other departments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to mislead the Member. There are in fact 18 seasonal positions

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that are vacant which will be filled once the spring and summer season is upon. There are 72 full time positions that are vacant within the department at this time. Of those we thought that some 52 positions could be potentially filled by affected employees. But as it turns out, there are 52 employees who have chosen to be laid off. So, there will be some 73

positions that will be advertised and filled through due processes by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, there are 50 positions. Can the Minister, and I anticipate that he would not have this information available to him now, but of the 50 positions that have to be filled, I would like the Minister to present to this House a detailed layout of the number of positions that have to be filled and also, the categories of those positions. If he could present that information to the House at a later date, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 300-13(4): Vacant Positions in RWED

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just want to draw attention to the Member, again, to what I said. There are 73 vacant positions. Of those 73 there are some 20 odd vacancies which is sort of normal, I would say, for a department of this size. Of the 73 that are currently vacant, about 52 of them we had thought, could potentially be filled by affected employees, but in fact there are 52 employees who have requested and have chosen voluntary layoff. So, that is what led us to have the 73 vacant positions at this time. We are in position now to get into staffing. Most of our jobs, the newer jobs created as a result of amalgamation, have been detailed. They have gone through the process of having the proper job descriptions, terms of reference and all the necessary paperwork done in order for them to be advertised. We will be advertising them over the next few weeks. The information that the Member has requested, I think is available, and we will provide it to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed towards Mr. Antoine, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pursue a line of questioning I have done for the last two days. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard from the Minister that in the negotiation processes at the negotiating table for the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit, the GNWT plans to be present to protect the interest of the NWT residents, in particular towards constitutional rights and democratic rights of the citizens. Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday, the Inuvialuit along with the Inuit from Nunavut are probably one of the most receptive aboriginal groups as far as accepting democratic process.

So, my question to the Minister, he has indicated that he intends to keep a sharp eye on the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in to assure that democratic rights are protected at that table. Now, I would like to ask the Minister, would he assure us that the democratic rights of the citizens of this territory are just as well protected in the four communities that he mentioned in his riding whereby democratic rights are not protected at the community level? I would like to ask the Minister, would he assure that those rights are just as well protected in his riding as they are in my riding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member makes a very good point in regards to rights in the north. For many years in the Northwest Territories there was concern by the aboriginal first nations, Metis, in regards to their rights, in regards to the federal government, on treaties and aboriginal rights. I think that over the years this government has taken a position and has followed through with their commitment and their positions in regards to supporting land claims, supporting the self-government talks. We are talking about rights here. As a third party in the discussions in regards to self-government, we are dealing with the rights of people in the communities. Yes, we are assuring everybody the intention here is not to eliminate anybody's rights,

to try to recognize these rights that are there, the inherent right to see self-government. We are trying to define it. We are trying to see how it is going to work. We are talking about individual rights as well as collective rights. As I said yesterday, we are dealing with a new era here where we are more or less taking the forefront in the west here in regards to aboriginal right to self-government. As we move along in the negotiations we will be seeing how they evolve. I would like to just maybe simply make a commitment here that yes, we are there to ensure that the rights of everyone is protected at the communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that yes, we are going to protect this government. We will protect the existing rights of the citizens of this territories. I would like to hear from the Minister, is he prepared to go into these communities and advise these people that, in order to receive funding from this government, they should consider amending their local community level government's policy to allow all citizens of this territory, if they conform to resident's clause, to vote at this community level? Now, I would like to ask the Minister. Can I expect him to go into these communities this summer, or whenever and advise the groups that the process that they are following is not democratic or can I expect him to come into my communities and say it is okay if we do not let Dene vote? It is okay if we do not let Metis vote. It is okay if we do not let others vote.

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According to the Minister in the Hansard on pages 858 and 859, it is the reality of the day. I would like to hear this government's position on that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is making reference to chief and band councils, and these four communities in my constituency that are the community governments. These chief and band councils, they have Treaty 11 with the federal government. In there, that whole area is still in dispute. They have not sat down and negotiated with the federal government in regards to the rights that they have under the treaties. This is the Deh Cho region. I have always said that whatever arrangements the chief and council have in regards to how the government itself is with the federal government, this is for the treaties. This territorial government here came in after those treaties were put in place. Therefore, there is dispute. This is why, I believe, that the Inuvialuits went and settled their claims to resolve the land and resource issue, the same as the Gwich'in and the Sahtu. Now the Dogribs are negotiating. The Treaty 8 and the Fort Smith South Salt First Nations are also beginning to negotiate. They are dealing with the federal government first to initiate it. Now, we are having cases of self-government which deals with the governments of how the communities will govern themselves, in this case the Gwich'in and the Dogribs where the chief and councils are in there.

So that the whole question of the rights at the community level, yes, is a serious question. It still has to be resolved. It is between the chief and band councils and the federal government. That is the reality of the day. It is something that still has to be resolved. In the Deh Cho area, they are slowly evolving into a position where they are saying that they want to sit down and negotiate with the federal government based on the inherent right to self-government. I think that the position that this government has taken is that we support land claims discussions and want to move that along at the same time as self-government discussions, so that these areas could be explored and resolved.

I cannot go into a community, to a chief and band council and tell them that this government is not going to give you any money unless you conform to the way we want you to operate. We have to respect that. In the small communities, there are non-aboriginal people that live in these communities, but the large majority are the aboriginal people. I think that another department, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, has attempted over the years to try to resolve this issue. Where you have a municipal government like a hamlet, it is easy. But then, in some cases in some communities, you have a hamlet

council which is a municipal government created under the Government of the Northwest Territories. At the same time, you have the band council which has been there for many years through the treaties and then we have Metis locals as well involved. In the west, it is a little different from the east but here we have to respect the situation and each case is different in these communities.

For example, in Fort Simpson, the village council and the band and the Metis internally formed a tri-council arrangement to see how they could work together. This is why I am saying that it is important to develop a constitution that is reflective of what is a reality in the north and sure I go to the communities and we talk about programs and services. The First Nations want to settle their claims. In some cases they are. I think the Deh Cho is the last area where there is no formal negotiations under way. They have indicated that they want to sit down with the federal government to start talks and the ball is really in the federal government's court whether they are going to talk formally, in a negotiation-type setting with the Deh Cho First Nations. Mr. Speaker, it is a very complicated issue as you are aware of. Yes, this government is funding the communities to provide services. They do not get the full amount of funding that a hamlet gets, so there is a program under MACA called SOAP that provides basic services. There is a contract with the First Nations to provide those services. I think this government is going to continue to do that and hopefully down the line there will be a time when these communities will be sitting down with the federal government to do their land claim discussions or the inherent right to self-government discussions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen. I would like to remind the Members about their supplementaries, to keep them short.

Supplementary To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that there are two types of funding in these communities. The funding for the bands from the federal government and the funding the communities receive through what is called a SOAP program. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to make clear I am not referring to band funding and the ability

for people to vote as to what is done with band money. I am talking about funds for the SOAP program. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that over and above the SOAP program, communities also receive other benefits such as forest fire protection services, they receive capital funding for capital infrastructure. Therefore these communities do receive a lot of money from this government. What I am asking the Minister is, will the Minister consider going into these communities and perhaps more strongly requesting these communities to come up with a formal government which would allow all residents of the Territories to address the funding from this government, not from the federal government? The Minister has also indicated that there are some communities that have already accepted this policy and amended their structures at Good Hope, Fort Franklin. So, all I am asking, is the Minister willing to go into these communities and perhaps have another look at these SOAP policies? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I would also like to remind the Ministers to be brief in their response. Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

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HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a lot of cases it is really up to the communities, the chief and band councils to run the communities the way that is most economical and feasible for them. Perhaps there are some non-aboriginal people who are there, that live in the community for perhaps jobs or because they choose to live there. They may feel that they do not have a say in the way funds are spent in the communities. In that case, it is difficult for me to go into communities and tell them to see if these people could be included. I think this government has been doing it over the years. I think it will continue to do it. I think there has been attempts in the past by MACA to see if they could find a way to do what the honourable Member is saying. Yes, I think the policy of the government here is to continue to do it. I think the department that is taking the lead role in this endeavour for chartered communities is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Jointly, we could continue to talk about different options that are out there. Again, at the same time,

there are bilateral arrangements between the chiefs and the federal government. The view that the chief and band councils take is that whatever happens on their land in their communities is through the treaties. If this government is providing money for infrastructure, for programs and services then this government is saying everybody is entitled to it. That is the reality of the day. Yes, I could tell the Member that whenever I go into the community we have these discussions, we talk about these things and we will continue to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister feels it would not be productive to go into the communities, could the Minister consider taking his concern to Cabinet and asking Cabinet whether or not the SOAP program policy could be reviewed again whereby it could be suggested that this type of concern has to be addressed in order to receive this funding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 301-13(4): Protection of Democratic Rights

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is asking me if I would go to Cabinet and see if we could reconsider this program that goes into the small communities. I want to say that this program is fairly new. It has been in existence for maybe three years now, but in the past these communities still needed to get their garbage collected, water delivered, the roads cleaned and so forth. This is the kind of money we are talking about. We will still continue to provide that type of funding to the communities. Whatever is said here, as a Member of the Cabinet, I am aware that other Cabinet Members are fully aware of the discussion that goes on in this House and whatever is said is taken very seriously and we will take the honourable Member's suggestion very seriously as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, one of the phrases we often hear from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is "life-long learning." I assume this emphasis on life-long learning also applies to government staff. Can the Minister indicate what programs are in place to support staff training? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what programs are available largely depends on what training departments see as being necessary for their staff at any given time because departments pay the cost of staff training. The staff training is typically offered through the colleges in a coordinated manner. The colleges and departments discuss what training will be needed, what departments are prepared to pay for, and those offerings are then made. I do know that this year, at least as of September 30th, all three campuses in the west saw a decline in the number of full-time students and a significant increase in part-time registration. This is as a result of career development courses which were added due to the demand for Government of the Northwest Territories staff training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to know that through the colleges the GNWT offers many training

opportunities to its staff. I am curious about how staff are supposed to access this training. Do they request it or do supervisors suggest they take specific courses? In other words, can the Minister explain how staff become eligible for this type of training?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it can happen both ways. The staff person can go to their supervisor and suggest training that they see as being useful or a supervisor could suggest to a staff person that they believe that the training program being offered would be useful. Programs are publicized through HP Desk and regular communications offered by the colleges to ensure that people are aware of which programs will be offered, their locations and their costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For a number of reasons an employee may not know what is available or that a certain course would be helpful to them. What is the role of the supervisor in identifying and encouraging training opportunities for their staff?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the role of any supervisor is to ensure that their employees are made aware of opportunities to be more productive and to advance their careers. Every

supervisor, whether they are in government or in private industry, has a responsibility to look out for the interest of their employees to ensure they are given whatever opportunities are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my final supplementary, I would just like the Minister to verify whether this training is available to all staff, meaning clerical, lower management, middle management and senior management? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 302-13(4): Staff Training Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Staff training from the colleges tends to be aimed particularly at clerical and middle management staff. Staff development programs for senior staff also exist, but tend to be delivered through other sources. Many of the courses that are offered are, for instance, computer courses on word programming. Other courses offered through colleges are in accounting. I think the Member will find that there is a broad range of courses available. What I will do is endeavour to supply the Member and other Members of the House with a list identifying the types of staff training which have been offered thus far this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 303-13(4): Funding for Day Care

MR. PICCO:

I see the appropriate Minister is not there, I will have to find one of my other questions. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment and it concerns my Member's statement earlier about day cares and day care funding. Can the Minister inform this House the last time that the funding grant for day cares as provided by this government was implemented, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 303-13(4): Funding for Day Care

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member's question refers to a program being implemented. The program is ongoing and still in operation. There are currently 1,260 spaces available in 60 licensed child care facilities in the Northwest Territories. The department spends, on an annual basis, over \$1 million to support development of child care spaces and to support users. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 303-13(4): Funding for Day Care

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform me and this House when the last time that amount was increased, the amount being used right now by the users and the 60 licensed day cares? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 303-13(4): Funding for Day Care

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the last time the user subsidy was increased if that is the question the Member is asking. I can provide that information to the Member very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The time being 12 o'clock, we will recess until 1:30 p.m.

-- Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to call the House back to order. We are still on oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 304-13(4): Education Board Funding

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Could the Minister clarify how the 43 percent cut to the bussing budget ties into the overall budget of the South Slave Divisional Board of Education, so in fact does not apparently constitute an actual 43 percent cut overall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 304-13(4): Education Board Funding

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HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the formula was being modified, some areas within the formula increased, while others decreased. The amount of money, for instance, for inclusive schooling was increased in the formula. I believe there may have been some extra funds for early childhood programs. The amount of money that went into the formula for the South Slave Divisional Education Council for bussing was decreased. Overall, the result of the formula was to leave the amount of money that the education council would have received, just about the same, with actually a small increase had we not had to reduce our total expenditures for schools in the budget this year. It is only as a result of that overall target adjustment for this department that their monies were reduced and it was not by 48 percent. Their overall reduction, as a divisional education council, would only have been, I believe, in the range of 5 percent or so. It is still up to the education council to determine how they spend their monies within the contribution they get from this government. They could choose to spend more money on bussing, if they wanted, and increase the pupil/teacher ratio or they could choose to reduce the bussing and follow

the way the formula is allocated for points. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 304-13(4): Education Board Funding

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated that if there would not have been a reduction, they would have had an increase, a slight increase. I would assume that rationale would hold true for all programs in government and all departments. If we would not have had to do budget reductions, we all would have been much better off. My question to the Minister is, just so that it is very clear, this is like a block funding situation where there is a certain amount of money given to the divisional board and it is up to them to move the money around within that budget to address the various needs? Is that, in its simplest form, what the Minister is saying?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 304-13(4): Education Board Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The essence of the contributions to divisional education councils, is very much like that. Of course, the education councils must demonstrate how they intend to fulfil the mandate of this government to deliver an education program. As long as they do that, they are given a tremendous amount of flexibility to move funds around within their allocation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 305-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Wood From Correction Centre

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made it under the wire. A number of days ago, I asked a question about the \$55

per cord of wood from the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre for seniors in Hay River. At the time, Minister Ng indicated that he was going to be having a meeting with some officials from his department and some officials from the Department of Renewable Resources. I was wondering if the Minister could please update the House as to the outcome of that meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Justice. Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 305-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Wood From Correction Centre

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is correct. There has been a meeting between officials. A formal request from Justice went to RWED to request that the rates for firewood to seniors be allowed to revert to \$55 and that approval, to my understanding, has now been given to allow for that sale of firewood to seniors at that rate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions are over. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Thebacha is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in the gallery, behind me, Mr. Phillip and Mary Norwegian, long-time residents of Fort Smith that have very strong ties with the Member for Nahendeh's riding as well. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 15-13(4): Information on Grievances

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat concerning grievances. The question is, can the Minister provide the following information for grievances filed in the calendar years, 1995 and 1996? 1) Number of first level grievances; 2) Number of second level grievances; 3) Number of grievances sent to the third level; 4) Number of grievances resolved at the third level; 5) Number sent to arbitration; number of arbitration rulings in favour of the employee; number of arbitration rulings in favour of the employer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Written questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Written Question 16-13(4): Staff Training Participation Levels

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MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat concerning staff training participation levels. Can the Minister provide the following information from each government department? The total number of staff as of December 31, 1996, broken down into aboriginal staff and non-aboriginal staff; number of staff who have been involved in at least one training course in 1996; number of aboriginal staff who have participated in at least one training course in 1996; and the numbers to complete the chart below for 1996. The chart is for management - aboriginal staff and management - non-aboriginal staff; aboriginal staff/non-aboriginal staff and, for each one, to indicate how many have taken one training course, how many have taken two training courses, how many have taken three training courses, how many have taken four or more training courses? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the topic of restructuring NWT libraries, I wish to table a letter I received from Jessie Nutarak, Chairperson of the Pond Inlet Community Education Council, in support of the government's initiative to extend library services to all Northwest Territories' libraries, Tabled Document No. 48-13(4). However, the Pond Inlet Community Education Council strongly objects to reducing funding to the Pond Inlet Public Library as a means to achieve this goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion 11-13(4). Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 11-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, I make the following motion, seconded by the honourable Member for Natilikmiot. It is on the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program.

WHEREAS the seniors and elders across the NWT have made significant contributions to these families and communities;

AND WHEREAS we wish to support and encourage seniors to live independent lives as much as possible;

AND WHEREAS the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program provides assistance for seniors in the high cost of heating their homes;

AND WHEREAS the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program helps seniors and elders to maintain healthy lifestyles;

AND WHEREAS the majority of seniors and elders live on fixed incomes, support extended families and live in areas where the cost of living is high;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly had approved a change to this program in 1996/97 to eliminate seniors with high incomes from being eligible for the program;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment instituted changes to the program beyond the expectations of Members;

AND WHEREAS the majority of Members, along with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, have been encouraging the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to maintain this program;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment intends to eliminate the program in the 1997/98 budget;

AND WHEREAS there is a fragmented approach to the delivery of programs and benefits for seniors, including inconsistencies in the criteria and ages for eligibility;

AND WHEREAS the social envelope departments have not completed the comprehensive review of all subsidies to seniors.

Now therefore, I move, seconded by the Member for Natilikmiot, that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment be urged to continue the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program with the following changes:

- . increasing the single income threshold to, at least, exceed the Statistics Canada poverty level for a single person, indexed to Yellowknife's cost of living;
- . indexing qualifying incomes to the cost of living across the Northwest Territories, using Yellowknife as a base;
- . including seniors who rent private housing in the eligibility criteria.

AND FURTHER that the funding necessary for this program should come from instituting a rent policy for seniors living in public housing;

AND FURTHER that the revised Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program remain in place until the recommendations contained in the report of the comprehensive review of all programs and benefits to seniors and elders is reviewed by the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, your motion is in order. To the motion, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a year ago the Minister indicated that he was implementing a reduction for the seniors' fuel subsidy. He talked about a handful of high income seniors who did not need it, but who were eligible. We agreed this was a way for them to do their part for fighting the deficit. We agreed to use an income test. We thought we were talking about those with incomes of

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\$50,000 to \$60,000. We were shocked when the Minister announced changes, whereby people with a single income level below the national poverty line and couples was half of what we thought was the intent. There was approximately \$600,000 or more cut, so that it is now only a \$250,000 program.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has raised concerns for months. Similarly, Ordinary Members have raised concerns in this House. We do not see a great deal of thought in changes. It seems to be an easy way for administering without consideration of the seniors, the way it has been implemented this past year. It forgets about the real cost of heating a home for singles versus couples. It forgets about the regional disparities in costs. It forgets about people who are renting and who may actually have greater costs than the person who owns his own home. It forgets about poverty levels that our seniors live at. It also flies in the face of encouraging independent living. With our no-rent policy for seniors, we are actually encouraging seniors to move to public housing.

We believe we need to treat seniors more fairly, whether they live in their own homes or in public housing. We have taken the time to offer the Minister many suggestions. He seems to have dismissed them all out of hand. To date, he has not managed to come up with his own suggestions yet and we cannot believe that the Minister has not found a way to manage this. The government has been able to find an extra million dollars to support self-government talks and we commend them for this, but similarly, we also hope that we can find \$250,000 or thereabouts, to help seniors. This seems like a small amount, but it is not small to the seniors who count on it. We need to recognize the time and contribution that seniors have made to the north. Mr. Speaker, this small amount could be the difference between staying in a person's own home or moving into subsidized housing, which would mean substantially more costs for us. It could also mean the difference between a senior staying in

the north or leaving because it is cheaper to live in the south. We need a program with some thought in it.

We considered just recommending keeping the existing policy in place. However, there are such glaring inconsistencies that we could not bring ourselves to do this, to recommend that the way it is being implemented now be kept in place. This motion tries to address the most problematic inconsistencies. The seniors have contributed much and they continue to help us with their wisdom and experience. It is unacceptable to us to take away this subsidy that is so important to the many seniors. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. To the motion, Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one issue that most ordinary MLAs have talked about. This is one issue that most ordinary MLAs have supported. Over the course of a month we have met in our committee with the seniors and the elders. They have indicated to us that they have chosen to live in the territories. Each and every one of us knows that the elders have provided leadership in time of need. They have provided shelters to us when we were young and unable to provide for ourselves. They have provided food for us when we were in need and needed help. Mr. Speaker, the seniors have contributed to the society when we were in need. They are the leadership. They have the wisdom and we have learned much about life from our elders. Therefore, I would urge each Member to vote in favour of the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the changes to this program in 1996 created, and continue to create obviously by today's motion, considerable concern to Members of the House, the public, and to seniors. I have heard these concerns, contrary to what some Members may think. We have been faced, Mr. Speaker, with some difficult choices. I am no less sympathetic than anybody else to the contributions of seniors and the need to ensure that seniors are adequately supported. But, Mr. Speaker, as I have

outlined in this House, we have been faced with difficult choices. We have had to make cuts to income support programs. We have had to make cuts to schools. We have had to make cuts to bussing. Mr. Erasmus has questioned us about the cuts to adult education and colleges. There have to be some choices made and they are always difficult choices when you are talking about cutting. None of these choices were made lightly or taken easily.

Mr. Speaker, the motion presented suggests that my department maintain the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program, increase the income threshold, and include those seniors who rent housing in the private market. The motion further suggests that funding for this expanded program come from a rental increase to seniors who are in public housing. Mr. Speaker, I think that this motion is premature. I have committed to the committee, to Members, and to the Seniors' Advisory Council, that I would keep looking for ways to ensure that there could be a program in the future. This motion presents me with an option as to how the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program should be run, which may not be the best way. Departmental officials and I met only recently with the Seniors' Advisory Council. I have heard their concerns, as have my officials, and we have received, just recently, some suggestions from them. The Council has made it clear that the fuel subsidy program was very important in maintaining a dignified lifestyle for seniors. They have also suggested the income cut-off level was too low, especially for single seniors. I have committed to continue to work with Mrs. Braden and the Seniors' Council to address these concerns and I am committed to continue to look at sources of funding.

Mr. Speaker, the motion suggests that the program be amended to reflect the real cost of fuel in northern communities by indexing the income threshold to provide support to low income seniors. The program currently does that. It pays for an equivalent amount of fuel, no matter the cost in the community. Mr. Speaker, I want to also remind this House that the government provides an income support program to all persons in the Northwest Territories, including seniors, that is fully indexed. The income support program provides the full cost of fuel all year to those seniors most in

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need, renting or in home ownership, along with the full cost of rent, food, utilities, and other financial support to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the motion suggests that the cost of this subsidy be transferred from middle income seniors to low income seniors in public housing. Analysis of the proposed amendment by departmental officials suggests that a program of the sort outlined in the motion would significantly increase costs. The preliminary analysis indicates that the revised program would cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000 per year. Based on this proposal, these monies would need to be obtained from rents charged to low income seniors living in public housing. The administrative cost of the program will be further increased by over \$30,000 a year due to the increased case load and need for eligibility verification. On top of that, Mr. Speaker, it needs to be remembered that seniors living in public housing are among the poorest seniors in the Northwest Territories. The rent that they would pay would be used to fund a fuel subsidy for seniors living in private rented accommodations. This group of seniors is likely more affluent than those who live in public housing.

Mr. Speaker, in early May, the final report of the working group, which will be the comprehensive review on supports to seniors, will be available. May would also give my department more of an opportunity to look for areas of savings in next year's budget in which to offset the cost for seniors' fuel subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I will again suggest that this motion is premature. I have already said that we will look for a way to continue the program, if we can find the money. We are working with the seniors, we have committed to work with the committee and Members of this House to try and find some way to carry on the program. This motion really sets a standard for the program that is beyond the level that I believe the committee Members had initially expected that we would try and maintain and makes it much more difficult for us to find the monies. I think it is important that Members remember that when they vote for this motion, you are voting to raise the rents to the poorest of the people in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. I would like to also remind the Members to speak for or against the motion, and not to make comparisons with other government initiatives. Speak to the motion. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I will be able to follow your ruling, but I will try.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

I am just being honest.

MR. SPEAKER:

I have asked the Members to speak to the motion and nothing else. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that and I will speak to the motion, especially on one fundamental part of the motion that Mr. Dent spoke to and that is the second last paragraph, which reads:

"and further, that the funding necessary for this program should come from instituting a rent policy for seniors living in public housing".

I am speaking against the motion and similar in the lines Mr. Dent said that we are already looking at options. The social envelope, the Minister especially, Mr. Dent, myself, and Mr. Ng, are already looking into the issue to see if we can find any options. What I wanted to inform Members about is of the consultation that the Housing Corporation conducted late last year on the issue of charging rent to seniors. As Members know, through the Housing Corporation, programs do not charge rent to seniors if they are in public housing. When requests came from a couple of MLAs and a few Members of the NWT Seniors' Society, what I did was write to all the communities asking for their input. I will not go through the responses, but I just wanted to mention a few of the communities. The communities that were against re-assessing rents to seniors, they only chose the boards themselves, were Rae-Edzo, seniors did not want to pay rent; in Arctic Bay they were against seniors being assessed. In Clyde River, in Iqaluit, in Kimmirut, in Pangnirtung, in Resolute Bay, they are also against charging rent. In Arviat, Chesterfield, in Coral Harbour, in Holman Island, most are not in favour. A few stated they would be prepared to be assessed a minimum rent, like \$32. Cambridge Bay, they also said that they would be willing to pay \$32. Gjoa Haven does not support rent being charged to seniors. Hall Beach Hamlet, no support for change. Fort Providence and so on. There are about twelve

other communities that said the same thing. So with that, I would ask Members to vote against the motion, keeping in mind that we are already working on this issue. The Minister of Education has committed to coming back with an answer on a certain date. I will be asking for a recorded vote at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking to the motion and speaking in favour of the motion as put forward by my colleague from Yellowknife North. Indeed, we have had difficult choices to make in considering the reductions and meeting our targeted reductions in our budget. But, I believe that we have made those good choices in good faith and this is a choice that we are making. We are asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to reinstate the subsidy to seniors in the way of fossil fuel subsidy. In response to Mr. Dent's suggestion that this motion is premature, may I suggest that no, this motion is not premature. The cut of the senior fossil fuel subsidy without reviewing it and giving it due consideration, that indeed, Mr. Speaker, is premature. So, I am aware that there is income support available to all citizens in the Northwest Territories, but I do not think that we should be asking our seniors to go through the tedious task of applying for income support. This was a program that was in place. It was working.

On the subject of charging rent to seniors living in public housing, I believe that what the Minister Dent said in respect to that is somewhat misleading. He is making a categorical statement that every senior living in public housing is a low income individual and that is absolutely not the case. It may be

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an east/west issue. There may be more people in the east, for example, that have not come out of the wage economy that paying rent would be more difficult for. But I can guarantee you that in some of the western communities, there are people living in public housing who did come out of the wage economy who are getting pensions not only from this government but from the federal government and are classified as low income. So to suggest that the Members of this House would try and charge low income seniors for something to supplement middle income seniors is a

categorical generalization which in fact is absolutely incorrect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

I would encourage Members, I am not going to respond to the heckling here, but I would encourage Members to support the motion. The motion is not premature. The Minister's actions are premature.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to rise to speak in favour of this motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

MR. MILTENBERGER:

I must say quite clearly that I am somewhat aghast at the foot dragging and shuffling of my colleagues in the social envelope on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. Very clearly there is a need to send a message which is what we are trying to do. There was a message sent months ago that met little response. Now we are being asked to place our faith in the commitment to find the money if it is available. It has been indicated to us that, in fact, the Ministers of the social envelope are now collaboratively working together which they should be applauded for. But, I would like to point as well as I speak to this motion, that we are talking about a \$700 million combined budget. To tell me that now if you are bringing all these players to the table that they cannot between them all with their big hearts and bigger wallets find the money for this particular program defies belief, Mr. Speaker. I think that very clearly asking for a nominal rent of \$32 a month is not an onerous burden on anybody and would help a lot to alleviate this issue. Every suggestion that we have put on this floor or in writing as a way to get funding for this program has been summarily or cursorily dismissed. So, we are at somewhat of a loss, Mr. Speaker.

I know very clearly that elders do not want welfare. Without a doubt, they do not want to be in the welfare

lines for something like this. I think it is shameful that we would even suggest that is where they go. It has been indicated that there is to be a review of subsidies for elders. On one hand they are reviewing, on the other hand they are cutting at the same time. You cannot do both. In the very least, we should get a clear commitment from this government, from the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, that he is going to more than commit to the process, but will in fact commit to funding this program with his colleagues in the social envelope. To do otherwise is unacceptable and shameful. They should be hanging their heads at the thought of taking that money out of the pockets of the poor, the elderly who have worked their whole lives. Now the thanks they get is, get in the welfare line if you need help. Unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Unacceptable.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would say that we vote in favour of the motion. I am disappointed to hear the Minister say that we are taking this out of the poor and giving it to the middle income. He is painting a picture for people out there that is incorrect and irresponsible. I think that to the Ministers of the social envelope, I think we have given direction. We have left it open. They have turned it away as we have heard earlier. Now, we are giving a little more direction to it. I think that if they had reacted sooner as we started this process back in the springtime or early fall, that this would not be at this stage today. I know many people who have moved from their own homes to public housing because it is cheaper to stay in public housing. I have had people, who have their own homes and turned senior, ask me to ask the government to pay their bills because it is being done so in public housing. We are showing an incorrect picture here. I think this would be taken care of quite easily if the work was done soon enough. So, I would suggest to the Members that we do not react to certain words and put down by the ways thing are expressed. The fact is, we suggested a nominal rent to those in public housing because that was there before. We charge people who are disabled in facilities, sometimes up to \$700 a month. Yet, we argue the fact that those who do have pensions and that cannot afford small rents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to talk on behalf of the motion. If I understand it correctly, I could support it. But it seems I cannot really support it because I do not really understand it. With respect to my constituents, I feel that of the people who get support, there are not very many people in our area that get this support. There are a couple of people that I have heard from but with Nunavut coming, I feel that this will be dealt with when the time comes. I think that there will be a time when we will be able to deal with this issue. So with that respect, I will not be supporting this motion. With Nunavut coming, I think once Nunavut becomes a reality, we will be able to deal with it. Because I do not really understand the motion, I am not saying that I am not in support of the elders. Of course, I am in support because I represent a majority of elders. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Mr. Erasmus. You have final comments.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to point out that the motion is indicating that this fuel subsidy program remains in place until the recommendations contained in the report of the comprehensive review of the programs and benefits to seniors and elders is reviewed by the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Legislative Assembly.

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I do not think that this is attempting to tie the Ministers' or the Cabinet's hands to a certain program that would stay the same way forever. I also do not believe that we have the very poorest of the poor living in seniors' housing. They are some that are working. There are some that live on government pensions and some who have both the wife and the husband living on government pensions. So, we cannot just categorically say everybody is living on \$200 a month or whatever it is. But, we have done a little bit of checking also. We know that there is a

certain level, everybody has to get pensions up to a certain level. We waited for months, many months, Mr. Speaker. We did not just come out of the blue yesterday and say we want this program. We have been talking about this for a long time. We made suggestions. Everything seems to be falling on deaf ears. There is a huge disparity in the way we treat our seniors in the north. We allow seniors to live in social housing without looking at whether they are working or whether they are drawing government pensions. They pay nothing for the running of their house. They may be living on pensions, like CPP, and the supplement alone but there are seniors out there who are living in their own homes with exactly the same pensions as those that are living in social housing for absolutely nothing. Those seniors that live in their own homes have to pay for all their electricity, fuel, water, the repairs on their house and everything else that goes with it.

What we are talking about is trying to treat people fairly. We want to try to assist the seniors in maintaining their independence, to help them live independently as long as possible without having to go to the welfare office. They have changed the name of that now to income support to make it sound a little better, but it is still the same thing. We do not want people lining up at the soup lines to get soup, the bread lines to get bread. These seniors have lived all their lives and contributed to the north. Does the Minister have a plan hanging in his back pocket to implement a new fossil fuel program? No. Do the seniors have a need? Yes. This is the strongest message that we can send to the Minister that we are serious. This is why we are making this. Thank you.

----Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question has been called. To the motion. All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. The motion is carried. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration Mr. Henry.

Point of Order

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order. Yesterday, in committee of the whole during the consideration of the Business Incentive Policy, I used a phrase that the Member for Sahtu found to be unacceptable and the Member

indicated that the Legislature had previously found it unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the chair of the committee of the whole agreed with the Member for Sahtu and indicated that the phrase "bang for your buck" is unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, in reading unedited Hansard on page 930, I have considered the matter and would like you to rule if indeed I used unparliamentary language as indicated by the chair of the committee of the whole and whether I should apologize to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will allow Members to comment on the phrase used to the point of order. Do we have anybody who wishes to make any comments on it? There are no comments. Mr. Henry, I will get back to the House with my ruling at a later date. Thank you. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 8, Committee Report 2-13(4), Committee Report 3-13(4), Committee Report 4-13(4), with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call the committee to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would recommend that we consider Bill 8 and Committee Report 2, 3, and 4, concurrently.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ootes. Your microphone is off, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Starting with the Department of Finance, followed by the Department of Public Works and Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We will go on. Department of Finance on page 3-13 in your budget main estimates book. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring in the witnesses?

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do indeed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we have the concurrence of the committee that the honourable Minister shall bring in the witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses.

Order. Before we recognize the witness, I would like to recognize Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at this point I would like to advise the Members of a business which is controlled by me, Greenway Holdings Ltd., leases office space to the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission, which falls under the authority of the Department of Finance, and as such I am in conflict of consideration of this line item and would like to declare this conflict and indicate that I was absent from the House when this matter was considered by committee on Monday, and indicate that I will

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refrain from debating this matter and withdraw from the committee for this item. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you please introduce the witness to the committee.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Ms Margaret Melhorn, who is the director of fiscal policy in the Department of Finance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 3-13 of the main estimates, 1997/98. We are on page 3-13 of Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, this is an information item. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since this is an information item, I would like some information. Regarding other income, there is a \$125,000 and also under other expenses, \$830,000, what are those particular items for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

A moment while I check the book. I do not have it all in my head.

Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. It is an information item, I do not have that detail, but I will provide it to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The Minister has indicated, Mr. Krutko, that he will be providing the information at a later time. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the expenses for the Liquor Licensing Board, \$619,000, is that the cost of flying of people in and out for meetings? What is the cost breakdown for that \$619,000? I see that there is a slight increase from last year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

That is a revenue from liquor licence revenues. In other words fees, special permits, and stuff like that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, information item. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

What was that other stuff that he was talking about?
Is that stuff?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

It is stuff, stuff, like licences, special occasion licences, wedding licences, charity licences. The kind of stuff that you buy a licence and you go sell liquor. This is \$619,000 revenues related to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Liquor Commission Revolving Fund. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the cost to operate and maintain the Liquor Licensing Board and how many Members are on that board?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Ms Melhorn pointed out, if you look under expenses. Liquor Licensing Board salaries are \$245,000, Liquor Licensing Board other expense is \$116,000, for a total of \$361,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We have Mr. Picco. Thank you.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question is under expenses and it is related to the constituency of Iqaluit where there is a major problem with our liquor warehouse. Can the Minister update me on how is that situation or is it before the courts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

That is kind of a general statement. There is a problem with the liquor warehouse? I am not aware of any problem, but if the Member could be specific, I

would be only to happy to take his question and answer it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess what happened, the way that I understand it, and I have had several phone calls over the past several months on this issue. The person in charge of the liquor warehouse in Iqaluit absconded out of town with several thousand dollars missing in inventory. So I am just wondering, I do not see any loss here. It says there is LLB other expenses. Would the loss of something like that be included under that line, or where would that type of loss be shown?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am advised that the controller general has requested that the RCMP conduct a formal investigation in this matter and it would be improper for me to comment at this time any further. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 3-13, I have a question on other income. On other income in '96/97 it was \$135,000, in '97/98, it went down to \$125,000. Can the Minister please tell me what this money is for and why it was reduced from last year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I would really like to answer my honourable colleague's question, but unfortunately I do not have the information available to me, but I will provide it to him tomorrow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are on page 3-13. It is information item on the Liquor Commission Revolving Fund. Do we agree?

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

It is concluded. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the whole problem in relation to alcohol, is there any influence that the Minister has or that the department has regarding directing the Liquor Commission or Liquor Board to look at the possibility of finding a mechanism to spend more in the area of advertising the effects of liquor regarding the unborn and also to people to whom it has become a problem, in relation to alcohol abuse and stuff like that? Is there a way that this government can influence that board, either through the Minister's office or through the House?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

If we are going to do anything, we would co-ordinate with other departments, like my honourable colleague Mr. Ng, who is involved with Health and, of course, with Justice. We could probably provide some direction to the board to work a little more closely on this issue. I have found the other income component, the other income is mainly the expected surplus of bottle deposits collected over the actual returns. That is what it is. It is a lot of bottles. I think on Mr. Krutko's question, which is a very serious one, I would be prepared to discuss it with the new chairperson of the liquor board and see where we could co-ordinate with Mr. Ng's department, and create an awareness program as it relates to alcohol. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, information item, do we agree this page is concluded? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding Mr. Ng's shop, maybe there is a possibility that the Liquor Commission can contribute some of their profits to the alcohol treatment centres, since we seem to have a real problem maintaining them these days. Maybe that is something you can also recommend to the board? If there is a way of re-allocating funds to non-profit organizations, such as Delta House, and other institutions such as that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think I elaborated the other day how our revenues and expenses work, Mr. Chairman. I think I answered that question the other day. That the revenues go into total revenues and expenditures go through the envelope committees and they are allocated by department and then they assign them to the appropriate expenditure base that they feel is necessary. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I am having some problems here. We are discussing the Department of Finance and we seem to be leading slowly over to another department. We would like to remind the Members to stay within the topics on the table. Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, information item. Do we agree that this page is concluded? Mr. Krutko, you have one more question.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Did the Minister state that he was going to seriously consider looking at the profits that is generated through liquor sales and see if there is a way of contributing some of those funds to non-profit organizations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

No, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we agree that this page 3-13 is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 3-14, active positions, Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, information item. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Is there a reason that Inuvik does not have anybody in that area? Because there is no one in there that has the ability to talk about liquor or have an influence over liquor decisions on the Liquor Commission.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am not sure how this all equates to the budget. But anyway, no, there are no indeterminate full time, indeterminate part-time, seasonal or casual wages at this time in Inuvik with respect to the Liquor Commission Revolving Fund as there is in Fort Smith, as there is in the Keewatin, and as there is in Kitikmeot.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Acting positions, information item, 03-14. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

What is the reason for those positions in the other regions that are presently there in regards to the Baffin? I believe there are three positions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you. I believe Baffin Island has these positions because they do in fact have liquor sales there. There is a requirement for some permanent positions. We are thankful that there is not any in Keewatin. I do not know what Kitikmeot's position is. My understanding is that Fort Smith would be covered off by headquarters, and Inuvik. So, that is the reason there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Information item, acting positions on Liquor Commission Revolving Fund. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Krutko, your third question.

MR. KRUTKO:

So, basically what you are saying is that because there is a warehouse in the Baffin that you need three people there. Are there not warehouses in other jurisdictions? In Inuvik you have a liquor store and you have a warehouse.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, the Member is right.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Your fourth question, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, why are there no positions in Inuvik if there is a liquor store similar to the one that is in the Baffin?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

The difference is, Mr. Chairman, remember this is the Liquor Commission Revolving Fund which is an information item. Maybe we should define what is budget and what is an information item here. The reality is that in Baffin Island we have a warehouse that requires warehouse support. That is why we have jobs in Baffin, to cover the warehouse which takes care of Baffin Island, I believe. There is no requirement in Inuvik for these jobs therefore we do

not have them, as there is no requirement in Fort Smith, Keewatin and Kitikmeot.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, acting positions. Your fifth and final question. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, in the case of the other areas where there are no positions because they are private, why is the facility in the Baffin not being privatized?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

You have got to remember that Inuvik has the liquor store. Baffin Island has the liquor warehouse. We are contemplating full privatization of the Liquor Commission. I have just recently been assigned that before Christmas. My department right now is working actively towards putting together proposals that would fully privatize the Liquor Commission, et cetera. So that is the reasoning behind this, store versus warehouse.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Acting positions, Liquor Commission Revolving Fund, information item. Do we agree that this page is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

We move back to page 03-7, program summary, Finance, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$9,351,000. Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Picco.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I would like to know is are there any people working in this area that used to be personnel officers, I think they were called, in the Department of Personnel, Personnel Secretariat?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are on the page, program summary, page 03-7. When Members ask questions, they should be in a general nature. It is kind of a detailed question, but I will allow the Minister to respond. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am not aware of any. I do not think there was any transfer from when Personnel was downgraded. My best answer to my honourable colleague would be that I am not aware of any at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

The reason that I am asking because I had asked the Premier under Personnel and he indicated that it would be best to ask each individual Minister that came up. So, rather than asking in each little area, I thought it would be best to do it in the program summary. So, I wonder if the Minister would be kind enough to confirm he will undertake to find this out and get back to us please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, I will undertake it to do that. But, our best information right now is that none of these personnel positions were transferred to our department. But, I will double check with it and advise my colleague accordingly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Program summary, Finance. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this issue, I would like to ask the Minister has the government or will the government be making a contingency fund for the pay equity case that is ongoing that he mentioned in an earlier question on this matter during the Department of Finance review last week? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am unable to answer that question at this time.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that because it is now before the courts again or because we as a government are still contemplating what we are going to do?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am unable to answer that question at this time.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Okay. Are you okay, Mr. Picco? Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I understand that this is a very sensitive point and I think it affects the government of the Northwest Territories very drastically. So, I guess my third question on this area would be to the Minister when do we expect the response by this government on the recent court ruling on the pay equity case?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Perhaps, the Member should ask the consent of the Members to go to page 03-8 Directorate. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am unable to answer that question at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Program summary, Finance. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could let me and the House know when he would be able to answer those questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am having some difficulty here. We are in the program summary, finance, and we do not ask detailed questions on this page, program summary. Members will have to ask Members to consent to go back to a particular activity if they want to ask detailed questions. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I have already said to my honourable colleague, and I met with him privately and I am disappointed with his line of question right now, I am unable to answer that question at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree that this matter program summary, total operations and maintenance is \$9,351,000?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. A total expenditure, \$9,351,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we agree the Department of Finance is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister and the witness for appearing before the committee. Thank you. Does the committee agree that we deal with the Department of Public Works?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. I would like the Minister, Mr. Arlooktoo, to make an opening remark on behalf of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today, I am pleased to present the 97/98 main estimates for the Department of Public Works and Services. This budget covers the first year of our three year business plan. The department's proposed budget for 97/98 showed the need for \$83,672,000 in O and M, for 335 positions. Also for \$3,835,000 in capital funding. This represents a decrease of 12 percent from the 96/97 main estimates. These amounts do not reflect the transfers of O and M resources that will go to departments as a result of the user pay/user say initiatives. The department estimates that \$56 million will be transferred to other departments so that they can manage services such as the operation and maintenance of buildings and vehicles, purchasing and mail services, and project management.

After the transfer of funding to client departments about 150 Public Works and Services employees will continue to provide various services such as building and maintenance. The department will charge back the costs of those services to the user department. This charge back fund is expected to include \$20 million and \$25 million. The remainder of the \$56 million transferred will be used by departments to provide their own service. The user pay strategy is a good way for departments to become familiar with the costs and the responsibilities of these services.

The department also continues to manage resources for the petroleum products division through a revolving fund which operates on a cost recovery basis. The research for privatization of petroleum products is being finalized in preparation for review by Cabinet before the end of March, 1997. I will update Members as soon as possible, as soon as more information is available.

A major change from the last fiscal year is the addition of the safety inspection group, formerly located in the Department of Safety and Public Services. This will increase the O and M budget by about \$1.5 million. The Department of Public Works and Services provides support for many of the services that are being devolved to communities as part of the community empowerment initiative. The department is working with MACA to ensure that this

process works smoothly. My department will turn over ownership and operation of buildings and equipment which support many community programs. While the plans are being developed, the department is preparing transfer agreements for the communities of Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Repulse Bay, Cambridge Bay, Tsiigehtchic, and Kahtlodeeche.

Thirteen other communities have expressed interest in transfer agreements. Community transfer agreements are the best way for the communities to gain experience in managing government resources. It is a natural transition to take more responsibility and helps the community to develop management skills. Mr. Chairman, a transition team was created in the department to steer the department's privatization, user pay and community empowerment initiatives. This transition team is temporary and will phase itself out as its objectives are accomplished over the coming year.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to add that the Department of Public Works and Services takes career development seriously. We demonstrate this by working closely with Education, Culture and Employment; Transportation and the private sector to sponsor the first ever northern pre-engineering program at Aurora College. Students in this program are working to gain the math and science skills to allow them to go on to studies for engineering technologist careers. I would like to take this opportunity to commend both management and staff of Public Works and Services for their contributions in accomplishing government initiatives during

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these difficult times. I am proud of how the staff of Public Works have dealt with the many significant changes. That completes my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman. I will be pleased to answer Members' questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe the Committee on Infrastructure is the committee that reviewed this particular department. I am wondering, Mr. Erasmus, are you going to be making a comment on behalf of Infrastructure Committee?

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if we could get copies of the Minister's opening address?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we have copies of the opening remarks? I believe they will be circulated. Mr. Picco, I believe you are the designate of the Infrastructure Committee to make opening remarks. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Public Works and Services is continuing to forsake its past of being a provider of services and evolving towards being an administrator of services. Through various user say/user pay initiatives, the department expects to transfer almost two thirds of its current \$88 million budget to other departments. Some of the services presently provided by PWS will be privatized. Most, however, will continue to be provided within the government but on a chargeback basis.

On user say/user pay, the whole user say/user pay concept has generally met with approval from the Committee, requiring those who use a service to pay for the service and often, to dictate how that service will be provided, will undoubtedly provide greater efficiencies and cost-savings to the government operations. However, Committee members still have some concerns in this area. While devolving authority and responsibility to the clients of services has many advantages, some members have expressed concern that inefficiencies may result from loss of economies of scale, from decentralization and from other details of the implementation of these initiatives.

As the Committee has said before, these initiatives should not be used merely as an excuse to download programs onto others. The goal should always be more efficient provision of services with the limited resources available. Off-loading must never be a substitute for more efficient, internal initiatives if they exist. The government must do more to ensure that these initiatives will not be more expensive than retaining the provision of services and working to provide those services more efficiently. As well, the government must be careful not to over-estimate the savings from these initiatives. Committee members understand that money transferred from PWS's budget to departments' budgets to pay for these services, will be reduced due to anticipated savings. However, the reductions must not be too high. If only 60 percent, for example, of the funds for a service are transferred to a department, and the department is not able to realize a 40 percent savings in that area, the remaining funds would have to come from other

departmental programs. This would not be acceptable, Mr. Chairman. Public Works and Services should work closely with other departments to ensure that this does not happen.

On the petroleum products privatization, the committee expressed concern about the proposed privatization of petroleum products storage and sales. Members are concerned that fuel prices could rise upon privatization and would like more detail on how the GNWT plans to regulate this area. In addition, Members are concerned that once privatized, northern communities could receive fuel of inferior quality and this could lead to a host of new problems. Based on these concerns and the lack of information received from the government, the committee made the following recommendations. Recommendation 1: the Standing Committee on Infrastructure recommends that the privatization of petroleum products storage and sales not proceed until Committee Members have had an opportunity to review at a minimum the cost benefit analysis of the proposed privatization, detailed description of the anticipated end result of this move and responses to committee concerns regarding fuel quality and price. It was further recommended that GNWT take no further steps towards privatization, including a decision on the request for proposal, until such time as the above information is made available to Members and Committee so that the concerns are addressed.

Mr. Chairman, the Committee noted the government maintains ownership of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation because affordable, reliable power is a necessity here in the north. Members feel that affordable, reliable supplies of fuel are as much a necessity. As a result, some Members discussed the possible advantages of NWTPC taking over the delivery and sales of fuel. This move could result in the best of both worlds, privatizing to take advantage of a more efficient private sector, and retaining ultimate public control over the provision this essential service. Since NWTPC is at present the largest consumer of fuel in the north and since NWTPC often has its own storage tanks located within PBTs tank farms there would be many efficiencies to this possibility.

The Standing Committee did note that NWTPC was one of 33 firms expressing interest in taking over some or all of petroleum products storage sales responsibilities. The government's response was that once requests for proposals were issued, any

proposal from NWTPC would be evaluated using the same criteria as all other proposals.

Some additional information: In addition to the above, Members would like the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services to provide written briefing material on the following, an explanation of grants in kind given by the department generally and specifically related to the office complex in Fort Resolution, and a summary explaining the use of the project officers by the Department of Transportation, along with a brief explanation of the relationship as it relates to the Rankin Inlet air terminal project. Some of this information, Mr. Chairman, has been forthcoming from the Minister. With that, Mr. Chairman, is the Infrastructure Committee Report on the Department of Public Works and Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Before we ask the Minister to entertain general comments, some honourable Members have indicated they wanted to take a short break. Agreed?

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call the committee back to order. Mr. Minister, during questions from the Members, do you wish to bring in witnesses?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, please seat the witnesses. Thank you.

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you please introduce the witnesses?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, to my left is Ken Lovely, the deputy minister of Public Works and Services and to my right is Dave Waddell, the outgoing director of finance with Public Works.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Welcome to the committee.

Before we get into general comments I would like to remind all the Members that general comments should be general in nature and questions should be assigned to a particular activity. Understood? No? Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question regarding the Minister's opening remarks, if you would allow me, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Yes, Mr. Enuaraq. Thank you.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister of DPW indicated that ownership and operations of the buildings and equipment are going to be transferred to such and such communities and one of those communities is Pangnirtung, which is my community, my question to the honourable Minister is that, when are those transfers going to be finalized? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

It will just take a moment to find that information, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Pangnirtung along with several other communities have been sent draft CTI agreements and are reviewing them and once they have made their comments and given us their input, we have

hope the actual transfer take place early in the new fiscal year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The question asked was, in fact, an activity asset management, but the Member was also responding to the opening remarks from the Minister. That was on the borderline. General comments from Members. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last week I asked the Minister a number of questions regarding the contract award system and I would like to repeat some of those comments and then later on during general questions, I would like to pose a number of questions to the Minister for further clarification.

I have stated a number of times that to me and to certain contracting people that are in the contracting business and members of the NWT Construction Association, we feel that there are aspects of the system that are unfair. About 20 to 25 percent of the government's contracts are done through sole-sourced, negotiated, or construction management proposals, or site superintendent services, among some. Certainly there may be more, but those are the ones that I have been able to flush out. I am putting a figure of about \$30 million on that value are done through those particular areas.

I guess the concern I have, Mr. Chairman, is the whole area of openness and the ability for the public and for us to know that we are getting value for our money. Certainly that has to be a great concern during these very, very tight economic times that we are facing. We have to remember here in the north the whole philosophy of what private enterprise is and how it works and what it stands for. Some of these tendering areas are challenging that philosophy, in my opinion. We have responsibility to be very open with the public and so, as I said earlier, I will be asking a number of questions in this area, seeking some statistical information and some rationalization of why these programs exist. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have some brief comments, if I may? The Department of Public Works

and Services has been, without doubt, under severe organizational stress now for the last year. It is probably one of the most heavily impacted departments with all the cuts.

Now that the amalgamation is not on the table any further within the life of this government, I think that one of the key issues for me is the whole area of the stability in dealing with the very apprehensive communities and staff that are trying to work under, at best, what could be described as trying times, so that there can be some sort of constancy in the lives of the communities and the peoples in the department. Public Works and Services was caught up, like the rest of the government, in these reductions and I know speaking for my constituency for sure, the impact there has been significant and people are very apprehensive.

I recognize that there is still a need to pursue organizational efficiencies in the areas of duplication that the Minister talked about between Housing Corporation and Transportation and Public Works and Services. What I am also going to be asking very seriously, and I am hoping that the ministry as well will commit to that kind of stability so that the employees will know that once this round of targets are hit and reductions are done,

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that people can get on with their lives, get on with their jobs, get on with the planning and the good work that they have to do in the department that they work in.

I am also very interested and will be, like the Minister I suppose and his officials, looking to see the impact of user pay/user say as it is being implemented and the effects are realized by the departments. There are concerns out there that have been transmitted to the Minister by a number of MLAs, so I think that is another issue of concern. Last but not least, regarding this budget is the session to follow this, where we will be looking at the divisional plans as we start moving towards the final 700 and some days to division. It is not specifically germane to this particular budget, but it is going to flow out of this, I am sure, how the structure will look and I am very interested in that. Those are my opening comments, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

General comments. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a Member of the Infrastructure Committee I have had opportunity to ask many questions of DPW regarding the overall operation of this department, including privatization initiatives and also transfer of ownership and operations of building and equipment and other government infrastructure to the communities. I appreciate all the information that the department has supplied to the Members. I have still, at this point in time, some outstanding concerns regarding privatization of POL. I am sure that the Minister is aware that I brought it to his attention in the past. There are people in the communities who are awaiting this government's decision as to privatization of POL and how that privatization will affect them, either as individuals, contractors, or the community as a whole. I would urge the government to come up with a decision on this matter as soon as possible, and I am quite pleased to see that they are trying to come forward with a decision by March of this year. I am sure that this would serve to assure the general public that this government does have the ability to operate on a longer term basis than a month to month. It does have the ability to plan longer than a month at a time, because people do get that impression now that we have so many things on hold, pending decisions of the Cabinet or of this government as a whole. I would encourage the Minister to try and address this issue of contractors being on a month to month basis.

My other concern is, there are departmental staff that are on hold, will probably be served pink slips and wondering whether or not they are still going to have a job in the future. I believe we as a government have a responsibility to make a decision in this matter as soon as possible. I have a number of concerns in regards to the transfer of ownership and operation of buildings and equipment and other GNWT infrastructure to the communities. I do not want to see the communities down loaded with all this infrastructure, unless both the government and the community agree that they can handle this responsibility. I would think, and I would strongly suggest to the department that they come up with a policy, whereby a criteria is established, and communities would have to meet this criteria in order to be able to apply for this responsibility. They have to show that they are capable of taking on this responsibility and continuing with the service that was expected by the public. I am sure that most communities will be responsible enough to do this. However, there are so many new things coming into

play, like the increased cost of fuel, the increased cost of power, that the communities will have assistance to analyze all these new costs and to analyze the long-term impacts of taking on these responsibilities and I hope that the government would give them all the assistance possible while encouraging them to take on these responsibilities. There will be a continuing monitoring to ensure that the standards that the communities have now begun to expect of this government and they are used to receiving this standard of service and I hope that the standard of service is not going to drop. I hope that this department will continue to assure that the maintenance to the buildings does not fall below acceptable standards. In particular, safety standards in those buildings, so that we do not end up with large new costs if we have fires or whatever contributing towards the costs of establishing new buildings.

But overall, the Minister seems to have indicated in his opening remarks that his department feels confident that they are proceeding as planned. There really is not much that I as a Member can do other than encourage them to keep in mind that they are making large transfers of responsibilities to these communities. I hope that they support these communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments from the membership. Do we agree we go line-by-line, page-by-page?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are page 5-8 directorate, Public Works and Services, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$12,245,000. Mr. Roland. Thank you.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is in the process of bidding and tendering, you have got a section here on non-competitive contracting. How many times is this used in your contracting out? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. The honourable Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, could I seek some clarification? Is the Member referring to negotiated contracts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have here an overview of Public Works' PW&S contracting procedures, tenders. You have a section here on non-competitive contracting. When is this used?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the policy, Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I do have the document that the Member is referring to now. Non-competitive contracting includes sole-sourced contracting and

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there are several criteria that have to be met before we go to this process. As pointed out in the criteria that the Member probably has, these need to be urgently required and if delay of the work being done would be harmful to the public interest and only if one party is available and capable of performing the contract. There is a criteria of how much is allowable.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to this, the three main parts here in a community that has contractors, for example, plumbing, there would not be any sole-sourced or non-competitive contracting in that case, it would always go out to tender?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, it would depend on the urgency of the situation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I take it that not that all three of these have to be met, it is one or more of these are to be met?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Okay on that? We have Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, can the Minister tell us or does he have information available to let us know how often this is used, the non-competitive contract in communities that have more than one supplier or contractor? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I would have to dig out that information, but the information that we have on hand is that there was non-competitive contracting eight times in the area the Member represents.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. In order to allow other Members to ask questions on this particular page, Mr. Roland I will give you one more question. Okay? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister be able to supply me with the information respecting the community that I represent? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, we will get the information together and provide it to the Clerk so that all Members can have that information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We have Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Ootes, and Mr. Henry. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my first question is in regards to privatization of POL, I wonder if the Minister could just give an update where this privatization initiative is sitting right now. Also, as he indicated in his opening remarks, they may have a decision by the end of March and I am hoping that the Minister would indicate whether or not at this point in time after March 31st, he would be able to indicate to the public what the plan is for POL facilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the summary status report on privatization of POL is that the Minister of RWED and his staff and myself and the staff of Public Works and Services have been working closely in putting a proposal together which we are nearing completion, close enough to be able to bring it to Cabinet within the next few weeks, at which point the Cabinet will look at it and hopefully make a decision before too late in the spring, at which time we would be able to inform the Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr Chairman, my second question is, is the department working towards a policy for transferring buildings and equipment to the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the issue of the transfer of ownership of assets, such as buildings, is a pretty broad-based initiative. It involves several departments led by Department of MACA. We are working closely with them providing our input in putting together a policy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I presume then that some time in the future the committees would be approached for input on this policy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the process, Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I am informed that the group co-ordinating this work would be prepared to give a proposal to the Ministers in several weeks time and, there again, MLAs would be consulted and asked to give input at the time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

I have a question Mr. Chairman, in regards to transfer of the buildings and equipment, I am just wondering how, after the buildings are transferred or the equipment is

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transferred, how do the communities receive O and M funding for the building?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated earlier, we are still working on the final guidelines on how this would be done. At the present time we are moving towards block funding the communities to make sure they have the adequate levels of funding for maintenance, along with the maintenance schedule, et cetera that the government had in place.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. For final on the directorate. Final question, Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

My final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the buildings or the block funding in the block funding process, that is the O & M funding for the buildings. I also have a question in regards to if we transfer the buildings to them, what happens? How do I get them back if the maintenance crashes?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Obviously our first goal and preference would be that the hamlet is well prepared and has the resources to do the maintenance properly and that in most cases that is what would happen. There is a contingency, there has always been I believe, for the government to be able to step in and take over as administrator if the job was not being done properly. I would think that probably will continue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. We have Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Henry. I am trying to allow Members to ask five questions and move on to a Member that has not asked a question. That is not to exclude Members to ask again, at which time when Members who have not spoken or have not asked a question, have asked it already. Mr. Miltenberger. Directorate.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question in regards to position cuts. It is fairly specific to Fort Smith. Just if the Minister could clarify? The purchasing officers, there was two positions slated to be combined into one. My understanding or the concerns that have been voiced to me is that, in fact, if the one position that resulted from the combination of the two, is in fact, itself possibly slated to be cut. Could I ask the Minister if he can enlighten me on that particular situation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the management of human resources. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, on individual and specific cases, especially when it is in regards to layoffs, I am a bit more comfortable in asking the deputy minister to respond. If I could just make an overall general comment on especially what the Member had said earlier in opening remarks about getting some certainty on layoffs and some stability, I would say that we have pretty much completed our rounds of layoffs and barring a disaster as the Finance Minister likes to say, that after 12 more layoffs planned, that should be it for us. If I could ask the deputy minister, if it is okay with you, Mr. Chairman, to comment on the Fort Smith situation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The position that is being referred to is slated to be eliminated under the user say initiative for purchasing. The money that the Department of Public Works and Services has would be transferred to client departments. At this point it has been determined that there is not sufficient purchasing volume in Fort Smith, in the Fort Smith region to justify a buyer. The individual in that position will likely be laid off somewhere around mid-March. We are finding that that is the case in other locations as well though. We anticipate that eight or nine buyers will actually be laid off across the Northwest Territories at around the same time. These are part of the 12 layoffs that Mr. Arlooktoo referred to. The 12 remaining from our 97/98 budget process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the list we have Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Henry and Mr. Ng on the Ordinary Members side. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then, if I could just get the Minister to confirm a while back there were combined lists done in consultation with FMBS and all the departments in terms of PY reductions. They were sent out to all the Members. The list that I have for the constituency that I represent had a number of Public Work and Services reductions and some new positions. One that was designated as a new position has now been cut. I would just like the Minister to assure me as specifically as he can that this list is

itself accurate. I am concerned about the quiet piecemeal erosion and further cuts to the community which is highly sensitized as the Minister is aware at this point to any kind of further job loss.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Once again, the deputy minister is well aware of this particular file so I would ask that he responds.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Deputy Minister, Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am aware of the list that is referred to. I think that the point was made at the time that the lists were prepared, although I do not know that that information was passed to Members, that there were 25 layoffs where we had not yet determined the location. Part of that was because we were not sure what the impact of user pay/user say was going to be. We now have that detailed information. We know exactly what remains to be done, and that is the 12 that I referred to earlier. I can assure the Members that unless there is a disastrous financial situation, we are moving towards a period of security within the organization at least for 1997/98 fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Directorate. We have Mr. Ootes.

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MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department, if I understand correctly, is the one that drafts, implements the overall contracting policies and ensures that consistent application of the policies is applied throughout the government. I would like to follow up with one area that Mr. Roland referred to and that was the non-competitive contracting. Yesterday, I tabled the Minister's letter that he had sent to me and on page 4, he outlined the conditions under which non-competitive contracting could take place, specifically source contracts. In it is the statement that government contract regulations

require all contracts be issued through a competitive process unless they meet the strict regulatory requirements for sole-source contracting. The only exceptions to this competitive contracting process are those that meet the regulatory requirements for sole-source contracting. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what are the strict regulatory requirements and can he supply a copy of that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The Honourable Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. First a couple of things that I would like to clarify. The regulations that the Member refers to is government-wide policy. It does not just pertain to the Department of Public Works and Services. The other thing that we have to keep in mind when we are talking about government contracts is that the foremost goal is to make sure that the government gets value for money and to ensure that the work that we are trying to do is in fact done at a reasonable price. Secondary, close second mind you, is that economic benefits, et cetera, and at the same time following accepted procurement policies, et cetera.

The strict guidelines that we spoke of are exactly what I referred to earlier is that the job, the work must be urgently required and if it was delayed that there would be damage to the public interest. If it is urgent and only one party is available at the time and being capable of performing the contract and the contract is less than \$1,000 or less than \$25,000 for A and E services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Just to follow up on a number of comments by the Minister. If I understood him correctly, he stated that the department is only responsible for their own implementation of its own contract policies, that it is not responsible for other departments. So, I have a question which I will follow up with more comment. The question being, does each particular department apply its own policies for contracting? Now further to the Minister's comments on the explanation of the regulatory requirements, the items that the Minister seems to be referring to are to me guidelines. If there are regulatory requirements, I wonder if the Minister

would supply me with a copy of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There is a bit of detail in the question. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, what I will do is to get our staff in Public Works and Services to pass on to the Legislature staff the government contract regulations so that all Members can review the regulations for their information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding that some concern had been expressed before about is there a single government policy on negotiated or sole-source contracts. Can the Minister answer that for me if there is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. I cannot recall if there is an actual policy but there are strict guidelines that are used by Cabinet and those, I have heard the Premier mention quite a number of times in the House. One of the criteria is that for negotiated contracts that the contractor must be northern, that the government must get good value for money and that the benefits of doing negotiated contracts should meet or exceed benefits that would be received in any other way, and that there is political support from MLAs from the community, et cetera.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Could the Minister tell me in the proposed budget that we have got before us, how many of those... Can he give me an indication of how many are sole-sourced, how many are negotiated, how many are done through the management services contract, how

many through non-competitive contracting, and the dollar amount out of this budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Realistically for the Department of Public Works and Services itself, there cannot be a whole lot because our capital budget this year is, I think, only \$3 million plus a few dollars. It is impossible for us to determine whether client departments that are building in communities will ask us to administer and negotiate a contract because that is up to their judgement. But I can tell you that last year the department administered seven negotiated contracts and one sole- source contract for the entire N.W.T.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate. Your question number five, the final for the time being. We have Mr. Henry and Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

From what the Minister stated, therefore, I have to ask each individual department how much will be done through negotiated, sole-sourced, et cetera. That is my understanding from what the Minister said. The seven negotiated administered by the department and one sole- source, is that the complete government amount of sole-sourced and negotiated contracts and secondly, how many dollars were involved in those?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ootes. You were cut off. Go ahead Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know at what point I was cut off. But I will repeat my question. Could the

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Minister tell me how much was the cumulative total of the seven negotiated and one sole-sourced contract dollarwise and secondly, was that the total government of the NWT number of sole-sourced and negotiated contracts and construction management proposals site superintendent services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Merci. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I cannot inform the Member what other departments achieved through negotiated contracts last year, but I can tell you that the majority of contracts that they let, the larger ones were through the Department of Public Works and Services. But, I could not categorically say these were the total. There were seven negotiated contracts and for the Member's information I can name the projects off. The Fort Providence school was negotiated, the Fort Providence health centre, the Hay River Reserve hall, the Fort Good Hope health centre, Tulita school, the Tuk school demolition, the Fort McPherson school. There was one sole-source contract for work on the Gwich'in Park and the contract management proposal, the Member refers to, there was only one last year and that was for the Snare Lakes Office Wellness Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Merci. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recently computer services were privatized and my understanding is the Department of Public Works and Services had the complete responsibility for this. Could the Minister confirm if that is accurate?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the privatization initiative was spearheaded by Public Works and Services staff, the actual legwork but the policy level work was done by informatics policy committee made up of deputy ministers of several departments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate, Mr. Henry?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This committee, informatics group, were they working under the auspices of Public Works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the chair of the informatics committee is the deputy minister of FMBS, but members include staff from Public Works and Services, RWED, Education and one other department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What portion of the work, I guess I am trying to find out, I hear you mentioning RWED's involvement there, that involvement seems to be on a committee. Did RWED have other involvement in the privatization initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the staff of RWED were members on the steering committee and on the working committee on this privatization and others. They did a lot of work putting information analysis together for the privatization initiative.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Directorate. Mr. Henry, this will be question number five.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was RWED a lead department in this privatization initiative?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. DON MORIN:

RWED was involved, but I as I said this was the informatics committee, which oversaw this, chaired by the deputy minister of FMBS.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Directorate. Mr. Henry?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will get another round later, I take it? Thank you, that was my understanding of it too. The Minister and the staff had presented this to the Infrastructure Committee of which I am a member, prior to it proceeding. I did not recall any involvement in particular and certainly not this elite department, RWED. I am wondering if that privatization initiative was considered a success, maybe the Minister can comment on whether he thinks it was a success or not but if it was considered a success, why now, when we get to the consideration of privatization of petroleum services? Why is another department coming and supposedly being the lead department in this initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The Honourable Minister for Public Works and Services, Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, we are very optimistic that the privatized services of the one half of the computer functions will be successful but they have only been recently given the contract and then it will be sometime before we can analyze to see if it was successful in cost savings, et cetera. We are very optimistic. The issue about RWED being the lead on other privatization initiatives, the department RWED, formerly Economic Development and Tourism, is a department with the expertise on economics, business, et cetera that we require and use for these initiatives and it may or may not be spreading the work around rather than anything else.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Before I move on to or recognize Mr. Roland, I would like to recognize Mr. Ashoona, his daughter Gutta and granddaughter Mary and son-in-law Bob Goosey. Mr. Ashoona is a constituent of Mr. Arlooktoo and is the 1997 recipient of the Aboriginal Achievement Award.

HON. MEMBERS:

Applause.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Qujannamiik. Welcome. I have directorate, Mr. Roland.

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MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of lines of questions but I will start with one here. I understand in a non-competitive contract that Public Works and Services itself is unable to go through that system that it has to go through Cabinet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. One of the requirements for negotiated contracts is that only Cabinet has the authority to approve negotiated contracts.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate?

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My other questions will be in the area of user say/user pay. I would like to know what the impact of user say/user pay is. Was it measured out in the areas of health boards and education boards? I use the example of Inuvik Regional Health Board, where you have a hospital that is tied to a high temp system. Actually, just recently, they are proposing a 60 percent rate increase. That will have a real negative impact. I wonder if those effects were looked at?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, in planning for user pay/user say and preparing ourselves in other departments, boards and agencies, we did as much as possible to gather the information we needed to prepare everyone. Of course, it is not always possible to forecast price

increases as the Members spoke about. In those cases, it will probably be necessary to make some adjustments to budgets.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Directorate? Mr. Roland, then we have Mr. Picco. Mr. Roland?

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was the budget when it was transferred over or going to be transferred over to the health board, was it 100 percent of the previous year's cost?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I do not have the numbers for the specific board, but overall the utilities budgets that were transferred to departments, boards and agencies included a forced savings that is a reduction of six percent overall. They would have received six percent less than what was used the year before.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Roland?

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again in the area of user say, user pay, were property management dollars being transferred with the utility transfers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the property management function was a user-pay initiative and there were no reductions planned on that side.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Roland, your last question?

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not understand. Were there dollars transferred with the utilities transfer, I guess, when it comes to property management or was that going in a separate pot?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Maybe I will try again. In the case of utilities, the power, water, et cetera, when we pass the money along to the department, board or agency that needed it, we shaved off six percent and told them, "You will have to find a way to save money in this area because this is all you are getting." Basically, that is what we did. In the area of maintenance and O and M, which is what the Member is referring to, I believe, the system is on a charge-back basis, which is we will pass the money along to them, but our maintenance staff will still do the work and we will charge them for it. It will be on an as required basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. For the record, we are on Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1997-98, Department of Public Works and Services directorate, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have Mr. Picco and Mr. Ootes.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question under this area is concerning, just going back to what Mr. Henry was asking earlier about the privatization issue that has been brought up a couple of times in the House, my question to the Minister was what policy was the government following in the privatization initiatives?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, it was an initiative of the government early on in our mandate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you. What policy were we following? What was the policy? Were we following the privatization policy of this government, and if so, which one?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, there is no policy, per se. I understand there is in the policy binders of the government, there is one there back from three governments ago, I believe. But, the privatization initiative was one that the new government decided was something that we were going to do.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Tabled Document 46-13(4), which I tabled yesterday, is the document that Mr. Arlooktoo referred to. For in my research, when I received this document, I understand that it is still on the books of this government as a policy. It does not matter if it is three governments ago, ten governments ago, or five terms ago. It is still on the books as a policy of this government. Yes it is. It is still on the books as a policy of this government. So if we are not following that policy and we are not following some policy, we are just following his direction, then how can, for example, we look at, as a government, the different areas that are being privatized? Is there some kind of rule set out on which areas that we will privatize so that the Members can have a look at them? That is the point here, Mr. Chairman. I ask again, can maybe the Minister provide that direction, this legal document, these legal borderlines, or paralegal, or whatever there is in place that tells you of how you are going to privatize? Maybe the Minister could give

us an idea, other than say that, well it was the direction of government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. If I could summarize your question, you are stating that you are of the opinion that this document or policy is still on the books and therefore applicable to this government. I think that the Minister did indicate already that the document is in the book, the policy is in the book, but I will now ask him if he can explain whether or not they are required to follow the policy?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the document that the Member refers to, and I did skim over it the other day, is from 1985. It is a policy of a different government, but happens to be in the policy binder. From what I remember in that document, there are two broad principles in the beginning which said that the government supports businesses doing business in which they are capable and that if the government privatizes, that the standards that the government uses should be met, or exceeded, and that staff would be treated with respect and so on. Those broad guidelines still apply. Then there was a bunch of pages following, specific to what the government wanted to do at the time, but other than that, that document is 12 years old.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Does that answer your question? Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

No. All I am asking, Mr. Chairman, when you rephrased my question you rephrased it wrongly. What I was asking for is, if you are not following this policy, which is the only policy that I can find on the books for privatization, then what policy is the government following? I would like to see a policy, if this is not the one and this one is redone and that is the only one I can find, then give me a policy of five pages, 10 pages, one page, saying this is what we are privatizing, this is what we are doing, so that I can ask legitimate questions and questions to find out information based on a policy. Are we just making it up as we go along? I do not know. That is what I am asking. Do you have something? Then provide it! That is all that I am asking.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, if I could direct the attention of the Member to page 16-1.11 and part 8 and it is in the same document that he has, I believe, the prerogative of the Executive Council. It states nothing in this directive shows in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take actions respecting privatization of government services and programs outside the provisions of this directive.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Picco, you have one question left.

MR. PICCO:

I do not understand what his point was. So you are telling me that it is 12 years old, it is not redundant, it is a policy of the government. All I am saying is, if you are not following that policy, now he quotes from the policy, are you following that policy? If you are not following that policy then what policy are we following as a government, so that when I go to look at privatization you can say, yes, Mr. Picco, turn to page 3 and it will explain why we are privatizing property management, how we are doing the POL initiative and then the guidelines that have to be followed, or for any other privatization issues that are coming up. That is all that my question is. If you want to quote from the policy then, and that is the only one that is on the books, and I understand from some advice that I have, is that if the policy is on the books, then you follow it. If not, if it is out, then that is it. So, my final question is again, can the Minister furnish a written policy on privatization initiatives of this government as I have requested now in four supplementary questions. If not, when can they get it for us to see and if they do not have one, when are they going to write one?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko. Mr. Picco, that was two questions. One question. Which one do you prefer?

MR. PICCO:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I am not going to question the chair, but I think I have asked the same question for four supplementary questions. My question is, where

is the policy that you are using and then maybe one of my other colleagues here can go after it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I think the Member is wrong on the two fronts that he is trying to follow. One is, if he is saying that the government is breaking a policy. One, he says that there is no policy, I think that was the original question. What I said is that the privatization initiative is one that the government in the beginning decided that it was part of its Deficit Elimination Strategy, job creation strategy, et cetera. But now they will argue that this policy is in effect, and I have yet to get advice on whether it is or not. If it is in effect, this section 61.11, part 8, does allow us to go ahead with what we are doing. That was my point.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. I have Mr. Ootes and Mr. Krutko. Now, I do not wish to limit your ability to ask questions, Mr. Picco. Do you wish to be listed again?

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MR. PICCO:

Yes, I would like to be wait listed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am informed that, I believe it was in March, that DPW held a briefing in the Caucus room and they presented the Members with a proposed amendment to the sole-source negotiated contract policy. I wonder if the Minister could tell me if this is correct and where the proposed amendments sit at the moment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I will find that out and let the Member know. We do not have that information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could tell me if each department decides if the contracts and how the contracts can be let, whether it is by public tender or sole-sourced negotiated, construction management proposal, or site superintendent services? Secondly, I wonder if the Minister would clarify for me, are those all considered non-competitive contracts except for the public tender? Just for clarity in my questions, so it makes it easier to ask the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, before I get in to that I would like to repeat a couple of things that I mentioned before. The vast majority of the jobs or the contracts that we let are through the competitive process through public tender. The few that we do for negotiated contracts, sole-sourced, et cetera, have to meet quite a strict list of criteria which includes that the government gets good value for money, that the company is northern, that we get political support, and that the benefits exceed any extra costs. Just on the list that the Member spelled out, the construction management proposal one is a competitive one, the others are not. The departments follow widely accepted procurement policies subject to some of these policies of Cabinet.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday, the Minister stated that they would include in the response to the unsuccessful bidders in the competitive process, construction management proposals, an offer to get the department to answer questions of why they were not successful. Will the department also review, in detail with those unsuccessful bidders, their rating sheet or rating sheets, that the Department officials do in awarding the contract.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. If I could clarify the statement I made yesterday. I did say that we have taken steps to ensure that the unsuccessful contractors or bidders are given the opportunity to ask questions. What that means is unsuccessful bidders right now receive letters saying who won and in most cases there is a standard line which says, "if you have any questions or concerns about your proposal, give Superintendent X a call". The steps we have taken is to ensure that portion of the letter is in all of these letters. I understand there may have been a couple of times where it was not included.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will the Minister undertake to publicize or allow the unsuccessful contractors to know, once the project is finished, how much those projects cost?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, that information is already provided. There is a process through this House, through public accounts, where all government expenditures are made public and reviewed. I would be willing to consider additional steps, but we have to keep in mind that the first priority is that the government is getting good value for its money, that it is doing the job it is supposed to do. If these other measures could be done without much greater costs, then we will consider them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Ootes. You are on your last question.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Getting instructions on my side here. Mr. Chairman, I am still unclear as to

whether the Minister has answered my question on the overall policy. If there is a single overall policy for awarding contracts? I wonder if the Minister could answer that for me?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Yes, there is. The government contract regulations which I committed to answer an earlier question that I would pass out to Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. For the record, we are on Public Works and Services, directorate, total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. I have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question in regards to the directorate was in regards to personnel. As we know, especially in my communities, the people in Public Works, especially the people that deal with the water treatment plants, the school and other things have been there for several years. I have a real concern in relation to these transfers to communities and exactly where those individuals are going to go. I think they are a vital group of people, in relation to the problem we had last year in McPherson in the water treatment plant. The thing that I would like to know is exactly when these transfers take place that these individuals go along with those transfers. That you do not go out there and start re-inventing the wheel by retraining all these people. These people have worked themselves into these positions and have served the community for, in some cases 10 to 15

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years. Basically they have taken over that responsibility from the federal government. I think those people know exactly when anything breaks down in those communities and where those problems are because they have probably dealt with it a couple of years ago or they know exactly when something happens. They are able to respond to it right away. I feel it is critical that we do not do away with those public service positions, especially when you are dealing with the fundamentals, especially with the water treatment plant which is a crucial and vital system to the community. Regarding sewage and

backup systems, in case there is a utilidor system in those communities, those are vital infrastructure in those communities. I do not think we can afford at this time to have that service deteriorate. There is enough impact on that infrastructure in regards to usage. A lot of these infrastructure are outdated but it has probably been several years since money has been spent to upgrade and bring them up to par. Because of those individuals, I feel that it is critical that those people stay in those positions. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what is the intention of his department when it comes to personnel within that department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do agree that, in most cases, the individuals that perform work for DPW in the communities have a vital function and in many cases these people have been in the community for many years. What the situation is with community empowerment and transfer of those functions to the community is that we hope to be able to show the community the way that we have done the job is a good way. Along with the money comes a good person that you should probably use, but if it is to be real empowerment, it is up to the community to decide on what they will do, but as the Member says, these are vital functions that you always need somebody to do that job. Naturally in most cases it would be that person that has done the job before.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason I raised the question is because there is an instance that happened in Aklavik in which the initiative was put in place to basically through a community transfer initiative, transfer the authority of the water treatment plant to the municipality. Basically they took it on for one day because the individual that they had who is the hamlet foreman, did not have a clue in regards to how that facility operated. The guy did not have any training or background in regards to the plant itself, yet the two individuals that were working for the Public Works for several years, did not have an opportunity to partake in that job offer. So that is the

type of circumstances that I am afraid will occur in other areas in which the well being of the community has to come first before a public decision by an elected body is considered. There should be some safeguards in place to ensure that these people, first of all are trained and secondly are familiar with those facilities and know exactly where those problem areas are and have some experience under their belt when you deal with the facility, especially if you are dealing with water treatment, for instance. You are dealing with chemicals and how to mix these chemicals, in regards to calcium and other things that you put into the water system. I think it is critical that we have to have trained, qualified individuals to take on these responsibilities. It is great to empower a community, but without those trained people and also the personnel having some sort of a ticket or certificate to show that they are accountable if there is an incident where someone is poisoned either because of the wrong mixture in the water or someone gets sick. Who is going to be held liable, in that instance, because the individual was not trained? That is my concern.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I would just thank the Member for his advice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Yes, since we are talking about the water it is just about that time of year again. I will probably be hitting up on the next couple of weeks or months, exactly what the status, in relation to the water treatment facility in Fort McPherson, which was a hot topic last year which I basically raised in the House. I believe that to date, no major repairs were done on that facility and the thing that I am afraid of is that it is going to be this time last year and we are going to have the same outcome. I would like to know what is the department doing to try to resolve some of those problem areas, so it does not occur again during break up in the next couple of months?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. You are getting into possibly another activity with your question. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Chairman, Public Works does maintain the water treatment facility in Fort McPherson. So the question is to the Minister, what has his department done to ensure that this problem would not occur again this year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I will allow the question, although I think it is more properly addressed under assets management. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the Department of MACA, with the assistance of Public Works and Services, initiated a study in Fort McPherson, which would look at exactly what the problem is and what the long term needs are. This has been done in the past few months with the support and assistance of the people of Fort McPherson. As I understand it, the study or report is to be completed in the next two weeks. It will come to the government and we will look at it objectively and see what the needs are and see what resources we can come up with, if any.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the costing out of assets and property this government has, does

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your department have a list of what assets and properties have been let go by this government and what other assets are going to be considered to be put out to public process to either get rid of, in regards to the Laing Building and other facilities such as that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I am not sure if I heard the question fully but the Department of Public Works and Services

maintains a detailed inventory of assets that belong to the government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko, you are in your last question.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do not believe he answered my question. My question was that do they have a list of assets that have been sold to the private sector from this government in regards to assets of this government? Also, is there any intention of selling other assets over and above the ones that have already been sold? Do they have a listing of all these assets that have been sold, and is there a possibility of getting a copy of that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, you are now, no doubt on assets management. Could I ask you to hold your question until we reach that activity? Do you have one more question under the directorate?

MR. KRUTKO:

Consolidation, application of property, which is under directorate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko. I am going to allow your question because if you do not ask it here, you are going to ask it under assets management anyway. I presume that you are addressing something under the directorate here and rather than disallow your question, I will allow it to go ahead but I would prefer if Members would read and identify clearly that they are under an activity that we are addressing. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, this department and others do keep records of what assets they have disposed of and I would think how they were disposed of, whether it was through auction or through grant in kind or any other overlap way that we might do it. That would be, for government-wide, a pretty extensive list unless we narrowed it down to a certain part of the year, maybe for a certain community. Later, if I could get that from the Member, we can attempt to dig it up.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. I have total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Chairman, regarding the question about properties in the government, we are supposed to be getting how many million dollars for the selling of government houses. Exactly how much have we received to date from the consolidation of properties and selling off of those properties. Have we lost money in selling them off versus the value or have we gained from the sales?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the sales of staff housing is under the responsibility of FMBS. But I would add that this department has been asked by the government to look at our inventory to see what else we could sell. That is an issue that we are currently working on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

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MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding GNWT properties, is the government looking at privatizing government infrastructures, such as garages and that type of things which are presently under Public Works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, the short answer is yes. We privatized this past year, for example, the vehicle garage in Inuvik and we privatized in different areas also.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a chance that we could get a list of the areas of privatization that this department is in regarding garages and other things, so that we have an idea of exactly what this government is getting out of versus what they are continuing to maintain?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, I am going to rule that you are on activity summary, assets management, where it suggests this includes owned and leased office space, management and operation and maintenance of GNWT buildings. If you do not have any more questions on the directorate, you can hold your questions until we reach assets managements. Total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Chairman, my question is in relation to the last question I asked to the Minister, in which he stated that they are presently into privatizing garages and other things in Inuvik. That is why I asked my question, which is in relation to the earlier question that I asked, so I am asking the Minister, could we get a list of what other items have been privatized regarding this department. It is in relation to the earlier question that the Minister already answered.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko, the response from the Minister, the last question, was not in fact a strong suggestion that we are in assets management and your two following questions are both in assets management, where the department addresses what they do with the buildings, O and M, maintenance, the works. I cannot find anywhere under directorate where your questions would fit as to the sale of buildings. If you do not mind, I will ask you again to reserve your questions until we reach assets management. Total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you. Regarding GNWT properties, I believe it does fall within the directorate regarding the departmental goals. That is why I asked the question regarding the properties of this government, so that we can have an idea of what properties this government presently owned, what properties are they getting rid of, so that we can have an idea, as Members, of exactly what properties are being

maintained and what properties are being let go. So it is in relation to the GNWT properties and departmental goals.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko, I do not know if you are challenging the chair's ruling, but if you are, we have opportunity to appeal this thing to the Speaker, but right now I am ruling that you are off the subject and the questions you are asking are in relation to assets management rather than directorate. Unless you are challenging the chair and we will then take a break and ask the Speaker for a ruling, I am again on total operations and maintenance, \$12,245,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Agreed. Total expenditures, \$12,245,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I have to think of something here. What communication facilities is this department regarding in the maintenance and the effectiveness of communication? Is that computers and services?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I did not get the question. I heard, "got to think of something here," then he read something off. I ask for some clarification about what the question was. I missed part of it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko, could you be good enough to repeat your question?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the directive of the department regarding maintenance of effective communications, is that in relation to the computer systems between departments, telecommunication systems?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I take it that the Member is now referring to the computer section, but what I believe the line says is that the directorate, which is the policy and planning division, the finance division, is the deputy minister's responsibility. Part of the responsibility is to make sure that there is good co-ordination between other departments, especially departments that deal with infrastructure, just to make sure that the GNWT priorities and goals are achieved. It is just a motherhood statement of what the goal of the directorate is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Regarding the directorate, is there a way of incurring that there is a fair and equitable way of ensuring that the distribution of projects and also the upkeep of facilities in communities, which the department presently maintains is fairly equitably distributed in relation to capital projects and in relation to upkeep of facilities, to ensure that communities are not being left out, yet some communities be getting some things that the other communities are not? Is there a way of monitoring that through the directorate?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, maintenance of buildings is done through a maintenance management system, which is the same throughout the territories, and that system will tell our maintainers when it is time to check out a certain part of a building, check the electrical, et cetera. There is a system already in place to make sure that the buildings and assets that we have are maintained as well as possible and it is equitable no matter where you are.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have total expenditures, \$12,245,000. Mr. Krutko, you are on your last question.

MR. KRUTKO:

I might as well use them all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the question of distribution and the problems that we have run into in relation to the Fort McPherson water treatment plant and also in the case of Aklavik where there seems to be a real problem with that facility also regarding the upkeep of the facilities and also in relation to the department, who makes the decision regarding which projects will go and which projects will not. Do you wait until there is an instance, such as McPherson, or is there a way of monitoring to ensure that you are overlooking the whole departmental assets in relation to water treatment plants versus utilidors and that type of things to ensure that there is money being spent on each of them to ensure that the upkeep is there. How is that being carried out?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I think this is partly more of a question on a government-wide basis. There is not a lot to talk about in the Department of Public Works, our capital budget is \$3 million. The issue that the Member refers to, the water treatment plant in Fort McPherson, the community and the Member has raised it as an issue. We recognize it is an issue. We have taken steps to understand exactly what is there and how we can deal with it and until that occurs, we can not go in and start spending a whole bunch of money trying to fix something we are not exactly sure what it is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Total expenditures, \$12,245,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Project management, page 5-9, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$5,784,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Krutko.

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MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the project manager's position, is there right now with the other departments a way of sharing management responsibilities between one department and other, to ensure that there are no duplication of services in certain areas? There may be an overlap between Transportation and Public Works and also with the Department of Education.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Krutko, you were cut off. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

My question was in regards to project management. Is there a way of ensuring that there is sharing of managerial experience in certain fields? With the Department of Transportation, regarding road maintenance, in regards to Public Works, regards to water treatment plants, things like that, the sharing of managers between the departments has this government looked at that to save money, especially in relation to the cuts that we are presently taking?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. The government has the interdepartmental capital planning committee made up of heads of different departments that goes through capital needs and distribution to ensure whatever is done is coordinated.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Project management, under the operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$5 million. Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the administration of the community granular revolving fund, do you have a list of exactly where these funds have been allocated and which communities they have not been, especially in relation to my

constituents? I know for a fact that it has been a number of years since Aklavik received any funds for gravel in that community. For that community I believe it was 1990 or 1991. Why is that? Why has that community not been able to access those funds?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, according to our information, yes we do have a list that we could have information available for interested Members. In Aklavik, according to our information, there is 202 cubic metres remaining of gravel supplies valued at \$63,000 at this point in time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, \$5 million. Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the community granular revolving fund and the stockpile you are referring to, I believe, that is for the airport. Do you have a list of exactly what the gravel is for and exactly when was it allocated in regards to the year, so we have an idea of how many years it has been since this fund has been accessed by that particular community?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, when the department has a capital project that it needs to carry out, for example the Housing Corporation intends to build several houses, or if the Department of Transportation is working on an ATB, included in those costs, capital costs, is an allowance for gravel and the department will check with the community, check the inventory, to make sure that the inventory will allow the building of these projects or take steps to make sure there is enough there. It depends on what is going to be done in that particular community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Project management. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the needs of the community, in the case of Aklavik, I mentioned it was, I believe, it was 1990 or 1991 that they have had any gravel in that community in which they are looking at some projects which were upcoming in the next budget, regarding the renovation of the existing school, some work being done on the water treatment plant and also the public housing units that have to be built in regards to the access units. There is a real shortage of gravel in that community. I am asking the Minister to ensure that enough gravel is available to those communities. To ensure that the gravel is there before these projects happen. I believe the renovation for the school is going to take place this summer, yet there has been no gravel allocated in regards to the capital plan for that particular community. That is why I am asking for those communities, which have not had the opportunity to access this program or have not been able to, for some reason or another, receive funds through this program, be able to do so. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, there are some capital projects planned for Aklavik for the summer and beyond. The departments responsible will ensure that there is gravel that is required. The information that I have does not indicate there is not enough there right now for the summer, but if there is not, because the foundation is part of the capital project, we would make arrangements for somebody in the private sector to crush gravel. The community granular revolving fund, as some Members understand, is not a grant program. It is a revolving fund where we will make arrangements for gravel to be made available and the department that works on a capital project is charged for its use from that fund.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Project management, total operations and maintenance, \$5,784,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed? Thank you. Total expenditures for this activity is \$5,784,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On to page 5-10, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point I would like to advise Members of a business which is controlled by me, Greenway Holdings Limited, leased office space to the gas and electrical inspectors for the GNWT, fall under the auspicious of the Department of Public Works. As such I am in a conflict of consideration of this line item. I would like to declare this conflict and refrain from debating this matter with the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. On page 5-10, asset management, operations and maintenance, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at this point I would like to advise Members of a business which I control, leases office space to the GNWT, which falls under the auspices of the Department of Public Works. As such I am in conflict of such consideration of this line item and would like to declare this conflict and refrain from debating this matter and withdraw from the committee.

- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, honourable Mr. Henry. Assets management, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$64,890,000. Agreed? Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the community empowerment initiative, I mentioned earlier the transfers that have taken place, there has to be a better way to manage these transfers to ensure public

safety. This is a vital and most important element of these transfers. We have to ensure that we have people in place who have the experience and qualifications to carry out these responsibilities before these transfers take place. Will the Minister ensure that part of these transfers will include one of these elements in these transfers which will take place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Total operations and maintenance is \$64,890,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Question about asset management. We were talking about property management here. Are there changes for this department for the upcoming year? Are there any plans of transferring the responsibilities of this activity or to privatize this section? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, in most cases, there are no plans to do that, except for a couple of cases, the Legislative Assembly, for example, and the Northern Heritage Centre where we were passing on the management responsibilities to the organization. Other than that there are no other plans.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. This particular activity is asset management, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$64,890,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total expenditures for this particular activity. We will move on to 5-11, details of capital

asset management, buildings and works headquarters, total region, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Buildings and works, Fort Smith, total region is \$5,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Building and works, Inuvik region, total region is \$325,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Buildings and works, Baffin region, total region, \$1,227,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total buildings and works for this particular activity is \$1,857,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 5-12, details of capital asset management. Acquisition of equipment, Baffin region. Total region, \$26,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Can we get a list of all the assets that this government is presently leasing?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Maybe the Member could clarify. There are assets that this department manages as a file for the government. Is he asking just for the department or is he asking department wide?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding leases of buildings by this government and all departments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can. I believe we have passed that information on to one of the

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committees, but we will ensure that the Member receives a copy also.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total region. \$26,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How soon can I get this information?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Within the next few working days.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total region, \$26,000. Agreed. Thank you. Total acquisition of equipment, \$26,000. Agreed.

Thank you. Total activity, \$1,183,000. Agreed. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. In regards to asset management, do you have a figure on exactly what we are spending to date in regards to leases?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call again. Total activities, \$1,883,000. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, on an annual basis we spend \$18.5 million on leased office space.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total activity, \$1,883,000. Agreed. Thank you. Page 5-13. Petroleum products. Details on page 5-14, details of capital petroleum products, buildings and works, Fort Smith region. Total region. \$400,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to petroleum products, last year in the Auditor General's report, there was a question in regards to liabilities to tank farms and storage tanks and such. What has been done in relation to that? Have we, the department, looked at that to see what liabilities are there? Also, are we looking at privatizing this portfolio? What legal implications do we have to those people who are going to be taking these over?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. The issue of liability for tank farms is a big one. It is one that we have flagged very early on when we started talking about privatization for POL for PPD. We have estimated that an assessment of all the tanks would be quite expensive and we are still in the process of figuring out how we will do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total region, Fort Smith, \$400,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to insurance and regards to this liability, have we taken more insurance in order to cover this liability in case of an accident because of the concerns by the Auditor General?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. I am not aware of the Auditor General's concerns in this area. We insure ourselves to what we believe is an adequate level.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total region, \$400,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Could I make a motion to report process?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour, raise your hand. Down. Opposed. The motion is defeated. Thank you. We will carry on. Total Region, buildings and works, Fort Smith region, Total region, \$400,000. Agreed? Thank you. Buildings and works, Inuvik region, total region, \$850,000. Agreed? Thank you. Buildings and works, Baffin region, total region, \$280,000. Do you agree? Thank you. Page 5-15, detail of capital petroleum products, buildings and works, Keewatin region, \$200,000. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

I was just curious, the \$180,000 identified for the upgrade re-supply pipeline. Can I have an explanation as to exactly what that is for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe that is for you. No? Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. The condition of the re-supply pipeline has deteriorated to the point that it is environmentally unsafe. Rusting and pitting of the metal has advanced to the stage of possible failure under peak periods. Location of existing sure-manifold is unsafe during re-

supply and severe weather conditions. The plan is to replace portions of the pipeline and the relocation of the sure-manifolds to a more acceptable location this coming year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Keewatin region, building and works, total region. \$200,000. Agreed? Thank you. Building and works, Kitikmeot region, total region. \$222,000. Agreed? Agreed. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

In regards to using the term "environmental safety" and "code-upgrade", is that because of the concerns of the Auditor General?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. The department does an ongoing assessment of all our tank farms to make sure that we are meeting the safety requirements and we are up to code and also that the environmental liability aspect is covered. It is after an assessment is done by our own people in the field that we make a decision on what work is required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Kitikmeot region, total region, \$222,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the inspections, how often are they done? Are they done every year, every couple of years?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

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HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

We follow a regularly scheduled maintenance cycle of at least once a year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total region. \$222,000. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have they done an audit over all the tank farms, pipelines and everything in the whole territories, in regards to the concerns of the Auditor General?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman. I am willing to ask my staff to find out exactly what the Auditor General was concerned about, but we do have pretty good information on each of our tank farms and what condition they are in and what is required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. What the honourable Member from the MacKenzie Delta has been referring to, in this case, is the Auditor General's report and the Minister has indicated that he has no knowledge at this time of that recommendation by the Auditor General. I would caution the Members to try and maintain precedent within the knowledge of the Minister. Total region, in this case, Kitikmeot, \$222,000. Agreed? Thank you. Total buildings and works. \$1,952,000. Agreed. Thank you. Total activity is \$1,952,000. Agreed?

We move on to 5-16, systems and communications. Total operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$753,000. Agreed? Thank you. Total expenditures is \$753,000. Agreed. Thank you. On page 5-17, activities for systems and information item provided for you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After the positions for Inuvik, you have from 60 to 43. Can I get an explanation of those? Were they ones where the staff were already notified or is this new and above all the PY reductions that have gone out since last budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

I am going to ask Mr. Lovely to answer that question if it is okay, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Aid of the Minister, Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reductions that are referred to in the main estimates have all been implemented at this point. There are only two outstanding, one buyer and a clerk in the Inuvik office. There are no additional ones beyond that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Information item, active positions. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can alleviate some of the concerns back home that the positions have already been identified, people have accepted packages, or so on. There are only two left outstanding and that is due to the privatization of petroleum products?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I guess it would be pretty safe to say that if the individuals have not been informed to this date by the Department of Public Works and Services staff, then they can feel fairly safe. All I would add to that is that we hope that this will be stable. There are still a few things that we need to work out with privatization, for example, division.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Active positions, information item, 5-17. We agree on this?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. As provided to Members. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The positions in headquarters, I am somewhat as concerned as Mr. Roland. Have all the people there, as well, been notified or are there still people that have to be notified of their termination?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

The honourable Minister is indicating that he is designating Mr. Lovely to respond. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Mr. Chairman, the only layoffs that remain to be implemented in Yellowknife are five, and they are mainly tied to the user say initiative for purchasing. The people who are involved are aware of this and there will be no surprises for anyone. There are five more and that is the end of it for '97/98. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. An information item, active position, provided to Members. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We heard today there are 20 some positions that need to be filled in RWED. Is there anything similar to this area in headquarters?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the number of layoffs that have to take place, how many of the employees have gone back to school?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do you, Mr. Minister, have the information, as requested, available? Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Three.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Three. Information item, page 5-17, do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 5-18, active position system and communication. Information item, as provided. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. 5-19, schedule of least budget requirements. Information item as required. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Schedule of least budget requirements on page 5-20, as provided. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I would like to make a motion to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour signify. Please, when you put your hand up, keep them up until duly counted. All those in favour, please signify. Down. Opposed. The motion is defeated.

Schedule, back to the review of 1997/98 main estimates. Schedule of least budget requirements, page 5-20, information item, as provided. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 5-21, public stores revolving fund, information item as provided. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 5-22, petroleum products revolving fund, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Petroleum products revolving fund on page 5-23. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Active positions, petroleum products division, 5-24, information item, as provided. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Renewable program revolving fund on page 5-25. Information item, agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding this fund, I would like to ask the Minister if he can make an effort to have someone go into the community in Aklavik and see what their needs are and if they can have access to this program regarding the needs of that community?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you send someone to assess the situation in Aklavik? Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I am pretty confident that our regional office in Inuvik already has that information. What we

will do is find out from them what their latest assessment is and inform the Member what it is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could the Minister also check to find out why the community of Aklavik was not allocated gravel for the last five years. What was the reason for that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Yes, we can find that out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Renewable program revolving fund, on page 5-25, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, page 5-26. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 5-27, agreed? Information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

And on page 5-28, detail of work performed on behalf of the third parties, total department is \$11,855,000. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Back to page 5-7. Program summary, Public Works and Services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$83,672,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I do not recognize a quorum, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I will ring the bell.

Thank you. We do have a quorum here. Program summary, Public Works and Services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$83,672,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total capital, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

How soon can we get the information the Minister said that he was going to get regarding this portfolio, especially regarding the leases?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, I think that was in a way an overall question. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

During this month, I will try to get it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$83,672,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total capital is \$3,835,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Regarding the Minister's statement, I was not clear on his answer. Did he say this week or next month?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I believe Mr. Minister has indicated this month. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, there were two items the Member asked about. One was the list of assets that we had disposed of, a list of leased buildings, and then also the Aklavik gravel situation. We will get it as soon as possible. I indicated that at the latest it should be by the end of this month in a couple of weeks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

The information requested will no doubt be in the Hansard. Capital, total capital \$3,835,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total expenditures is \$87,507,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree then that this department, Public Works and Services, 1997/98 main estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister and the witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make a point that there are two Members who declared

conflict in this portfolio, yet we are still talking about the portfolio and they are in the room.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I believe two honourable Members were indicating that they were in fact in conflict in the activity of assets management. They were out of the room when we discussed most of the activities and I believe that they were not in conflict towards the end of the discussion. Thank you.

What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Chairman, regarding approving the overall budget of the portfolio, I believe that section of the budget is part of the overall cost of this portfolio so that is the point that I would like you to raise.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are you making a point of order, Mr. Krutko? Could you please identify the point of order clearly so that it will be recorded? Mr. Krutko.

Point Of Order

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the overall budget of this portfolio, I believe there were two Members who did declare conflict regarding the assets and liabilities and I believe that the overall budget that was approved, \$83,672,000, does consist of that portion of this budget. That is the point I would like to have you check.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

We will check the Hansard. Thank you. To the point of order, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Krutko is correct. I did declare a conflict of interest on that particular item, removed myself from the discussions and from the House. I had consultations with the law clerk. I was advised that on the overall summary, I could participate without being in conflict. That was why I returned to the room after discussions in the areas I did have a conflict.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Member indicated that he had sought the advice of the law clerk and, thereby, was advised that he was not in conflict when the overall budget was being approved. He has not taken part in the actual discussion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to state the same thing, that I went to considerable lengths to consult with the law clerk to get an actual ruling on this and also requested a ruling from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. It was very clearly indicated to us that on the summaries, there would be no problem. I would have no problem staying out for that item also, but we were clearly instructed in this matter and were following their instruction. If it is overturned or found to be incorrect, I will be happy to comply with whatever the ruling is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. To the point of order. Agreed. What is the wish of the committee?

Thank you. We will take the point of order under advisement and report to this House. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that we move on to opening remarks, at least, of the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree, as suggested by the honourable Member that we will, at least, go into the opening remarks of the Department of Transportation. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

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MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My mother is waiting to attend a supper for my birthday. I would like to move that we report progress.

-- Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

There is a motion to report progress and it is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion to report progress, please put up your hand. Opposed. With regret, Mr. Erasmus, I would like to advise that the motion is defeated. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine, to make your opening remarks on the Department of Transportation. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department's budget for 1997/98 must be seen in the context of the government's larger priority to balance this budget and eliminate the deficit prior to division. It has been a difficult budget to prepare. It represents an overall 14 percent reduction in the Transportation portfolio. The department's budget dropped from \$99 million in 1996/97 to \$85 million in 1997/98. This is a combined capital and O and M reduction for the next year of \$14 million.

In the transfer agreements, the Department of Transportation has negotiated since 1989 with the Government of Canada. It has taken on responsibility for the construction, operation, and maintenance of 45 public airports and 2,200 kilometres of public highways. The territorial system of transportation infrastructure represents a long-term public investment with a replacement value of approximately \$2 billion. Mr. Chairman, despite the budget reduction, the Department of Transportation retains responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of a much expanded public transportation system. Meeting the reduction in its 1997/98 budget will require the department to reduce its maintenance operations and levels of service across the system. We will not be able to provide the services to the public as we have in the past. The department's capital program has been reduced from \$42 million in 1996/97, to \$30 million in 1997/98. This is a substantial reduction. At this rate of capital spending, the department can meet only a third of its capital requirement, as identified in 1994 transportation strategy update. It no longer has the resources to make many needed improvements in the transportation system.

I would like the Members to know that in prior years, the Department of Transportation has moved capital from its highway programs to its airports and community marine programs. This was done

principally to take advantage of one time cost-shared federal infrastructure agreements that came with the airport transfer in 1991, as well as the strategic transportation infrastructure agreement, or STIA, of 1993. As airport and marine projects are completed and cross sharing agreements come to an end I hope, in future years, to return capital to the highway program.

On other matters, I have more positive developments to report. The Department of Transportation is moving along well with the community empowerment initiative. All seven communities in the Keewatin region, as well as several more in other regions, have expressed interest in taking over responsibility for their airports. I fully expect several airport transfers will take place over the next few months. The department continues its work on the transportation agenda, to develop partnerships with aboriginal groups and the private sector for the construction of new northern roads.

The Department of Transportation is an active participant in the national program Vision 2001, to improve road safety in all the jurisdictions across Canada. Specific initiatives include: the national occupant restraints program to increase the use of seat belts and child safety seats, the strategy to reduce the impaired driving, aims to reduce highway fatalities and injuries through enhanced enforcement measures, and public awareness campaigns.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I have heard the Members of the Legislative Assembly commenting on the government's budget reduction measures and calling for fairness and equity. I want to assure the committee that in deciding on the reductions detailed in this budget, I have done my utmost to achieve fairness in equity. The fairness in equity we strive for is the efficient operation and balanced delivery of programs across the territorial public transportation system. I hope the committee will agree that we have done this. With that, Mr. Chairman, I conclude my remarks. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There was a consent of the membership of this committee to at least conclude the opening remarks of the Minister. Now what is the wish? Mr. Ootes. Mr. Erasmus indicated that he wanted to speak before Mr. Ootes did, so Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

I had my hand up for general comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. In order to go into general comments, we have to follow the procedures that we have been following. After the comment by the Minister, it is on the item, on the rules, that the committee which has reviewed the particular department will do the opening remarks. Agree? What is your wish now? Do we agree that the Member of the appropriate committee will make the opening remark? There was an indication earlier that we would at least do the opening remarks of the Minister of Transportation, that is why I asked what you wish to do. It seemed to be the consent that we will now go into the opening remarks of the chairman who will designate the appropriate committee. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The proposed 1997/98 budget for the Department of Transportation has been outlined as \$85,16 million. Of this amount, \$55,631 million will be spent on O and M and \$29,885 will be spent on capital. This represents an overall budget reduction of over \$16 million from the previous years, revised forecast in the account of some 29.5 positions.

The Rankin Inlet marine resupply terminal; while reviewing the 1996/97 main estimates for the Department of Transportation, Members questioned the Minister regarding a \$1.05 million capital project entitled Rankin Inlet Marine Resupply Terminal and asked if the project was related to the proposed Rankin Inlet tank farm. Members were told that the community of Rankin Inlet needed these docking facilities, regardless of

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whether or not a tank farm was established, and that the project could be cost-shared with the federal government. The committee was also told that the Rankin Inlet tanker mooring project for \$900,000 was directly linked to the proposed tank farm.

Based on this, the committee recommended that all projects related to the tank farm be removed from the budget until a final decision was made by the Keewatin resupply steering committee. The department responded by removing the \$900,000 tanker mooring project and redistributing the funds within the department. While reviewing the 1997/98

business plan and the subsequent main estimates, however, Members noted an \$820,000 allocation for the Rankin Inlet Marine Resupply Terminal Project. After questioning the Minister about this expenditure, Members were told that this expenditure was in fact linked to the proposed tank farm. Members were very disappointed with this move and noted that the proposed expenditure of \$820,000 in 1997/98 went against the standing committee's earlier recommendation. Based on this, the committee requested that the Department of Transportation provide, in written form, detailed information on the Rankin Inlet Marine Resupply Terminal Project, including the following:

One, a year to year expenditure break down;

Two, a detailed description of what exactly this project entails;

Three, the criteria used by the department to substantiate both the 1996/97 expenditure and the proposed 1997/98 expenditure;

Four, an update on the current status of this project.

The Standing Committee went on to make the following recommendation.

The Standing Committee recommends that the Department of Transportation remove any and all capital projects related to the Rankin Inlet tank farm, until such time as the final report of the Keewatin resupply steering committee is made available.

Under staffing positions, the proposed '97/98 main estimates suggests the elimination of 29.5 positions. Upon closer examination, Members noticed that 14.5 of these positions are currently filled by staff. Members were not supportive of the department's plan to eliminate these 14.5 staff positions and felt that this move would only further demoralize a now already devastated public service. It was therefore recommended the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development recommends that the Department of Transportation not removed the 14.5 staff positions during the 1997/98 fiscal year. It was further recommended that the funding required to maintain these positions to be found in other departmental areas, or that the funding be taken out of the projected 1997/98 budget surplus. Further to this issue, members were disappointed that the Minister had, at the time of the meeting already provided notice to these employees of the government's intent to eliminate these positions.

Members felt that this notification was premature as it did not allow for committee approval.

Under airport lighting. the Arviat airport:

Members know that this project had been scaled back by the department from an overall expenditure of \$530,000 to only \$50,000 from 1997/98. This reduction had taken place without the involvement of the local MLA. Based on this the committee made the following recommendation: The Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development recommended that the funds originally scheduled for the airport lighting project be re-directed to other projects within the same riding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. With a couple of minutes to spare, I feel that we will not be making considerable progress. I will rise and report progress. Thank you. I recognize the clock. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on item 20, report of committee of the whole.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. NINGARK:

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Committee has been considering Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1997/98, and Committee Report 3-13(4) and Committee Report 4-13(4) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Good evening to you. Seconded by Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion has been carried. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, meeting of the Western Caucus immediately after adjournment this evening. Meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs as well at 9:00 a.m., of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, at 10:30 of the Ordinary Members' Caucus and 11:30 of the Nunavut Caucus.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 13, 1997:

1. Prayer
 2. Ministers' Statements
 3. Members' Statements
 4. Returns to Oral Questions
 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 6. Oral Questions
 7. Written Questions
 8. Returns to Written Questions
 9. Replies to Opening Address
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10. Petitions
 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 12. Report of Committees on the Review of Bills
 13. Tabling of Documents
 14. Notices of Motion
 15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 16. Motions
 17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 10, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 3, 1996/97
 - Bill 11, Loan Authorization Act, 1997/98
 - Bill 12, Student Financial Assistance Act
 18. Second Reading of Bills
 19. Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1997/98

- Committee Report 2-13(4), Standing
Committee on Government Operations, Report on the
1997/98 Main
Estimates

- Committee Report 3-13(4), Standing
Committee on Infrastructure, Report on the 1997/98
Main Estimates

- Committee Report 4-13(4), Standing
Committee on Resource Management and
Development, Report on the 1997/98 Main Estimates

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned
to Thursday, February 13, 1997 at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT