



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

4th Session

Day 41

13th Assembly

HANSARD

MONDAY, JUNE 2, 1997

Pages 1239 - 1274

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Good afternoon. Before we start, I would thank the Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark for serving in my place during the last week. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 82-13(4): Report on the 1997 Western Premiers' Conference

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and welcome back. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to provide Members with an update on what I consider to be a highly successful and productive three-day meeting with my colleagues from the four western provinces and the Yukon Territory. The 1997 Western Premiers' Conference had a heavy but vital agenda that covered a range of issues affecting the people who live in western Canada, and even more importantly, who live in Canada's north. Overall, I am pleased to report, the other Premiers are in full support of the Northwest Territories becoming more self-reliant and a vital member of Canada's political and economic landscape.

All five Premiers have personally offered support in our attempts to gain northern control over northern resources, as they recognize that our resources and our land play an important role in the future development of Canada. All five Premiers have

agreed to support us in any way they can in our negotiations with Ottawa. More specifically, I have also gained their support in our efforts to convince the federal government to move Northern Affairs from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories. In my discussions with them, they all agreed it makes little sense to have people making key decisions on mineral rights and programs in the north based in the south. They see and support the overall value of the move in improving decision-making as well as the more immediate value of having these individuals contributing to the northern economy. With that kind of support, we have a stronger chance of being heard in Ottawa. Because now we not only are able to speak with the voices of the people in the north, we have the voice of the people of western Canada cheering us on and backing us up in our negotiations on issues and funding that affect our future.

I was also pleased to hear that the other provinces recognize the importance of economic development in the north and are directing their respective Ministers to meet to develop an action plan on northern economic issues. The Premiers acknowledge the constraints on northern economic development that result from lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities for program delivery. As they have at a previous conference, they also agreed that the federal government should fulfil its long-standing commitment to devolve remaining provincial-type responsibilities to territorial governments.

As part of our discussions on improving economic conditions in the north, we also talked about the importance of reliable, low-cost transportation systems to their economies. Overall, we all agreed the federal government, working with the provincial and territorial governments, should develop specific proposals for its National Highway Program. More importantly, the Premiers stated clearly that in developing funding arrangements for a National Highway Program, special consideration must be given to the needs of remote northern regions, which may have low traffic volumes, but which rely on the National Highway System for access, tourism and economic development.

The Premiers strongly support the Northwest Territories' efforts to gain federal support for a highway through the mineral-rich central Arctic or what we refer to as the Slave Geologic Corridor. Recognizing there is no surface access to the enormous potential that exists there, they agreed that it is in Canada's interest that this region be connected to the road, rail and port systems in the Northwest

Territories, Alberta and British Columbia. As well, priority was also given to the highway in the Mackenzie Valley Corridor and one through the Yukon connecting Alaska to the four western provinces.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine in three days of meetings, both formal and informal, we covered a variety of important topics, ranging from youth employment to health and social reform. However, no matter what the topic, we agreed the western provinces and the territories must continue to work together to ensure we are heard at the national level. We have a unique perspective and unique needs. We will be going forward to the First Ministers' Conference in August with a strong voice and with a cohesive position on a number of issues facing Canadians today.

Overall, while we reached consensus on a variety of issues and agreed to work together on a number of initiatives, I believe the meeting was truly a success because our colleagues in western Canada are now recognizing and taking action to help support and secure the future of the north. They share in our belief that all Canadians have a vested interest in

Page 1240

the future of the north and have pledged their support to work with us to help ensure that future is a strong one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 83-13(4): Ministers Absent from the House

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Kelvin Ng and the Honourable John Todd will be absent from the House today as they are attending to constituency matters in Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 84-13(4): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last session of this Assembly, a motion was passed to reinstate the Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program. The motion also made several recommendations about how to revise the program. Since that time, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has consulted with stakeholders to redesign the program so that it offers the best possible fit between the needs of NWT seniors and the financial constraints of this government. Today, I would like to again confirm to this Assembly that the subsidy will continue for this year, with a few changes.

Following the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Seniors Advisory Council, the fuel subsidy will be indexed. The indexing system will use three delivery zones, which are based on the income support food allowance areas. Zone 1 includes communities in which the cost of living is the lowest, while Zone 3 includes the communities in which the cost of living is the highest.

Eligibility for the program will now be based on a household income test, rather than income of the homeowner. Because of this change, there will be no distinction between singles and families when determining eligibility. In the past, the income limit for single people was \$12,972. The lowest limit of household income will now be \$30,744 in Zone 1. The limit for household income in Zone 2 will be \$35,000 and in Zone 3 it will be \$39,000.

The department is proposing to find funds from within the existing Income Support Program to continue this program, rather than introduce any further actions, such as increasing the rents in public housing. Following the direction of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is participating in the review of seniors' programs to ensure they are equitable and provide access to services for those who need them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 85-13(4): NWT Protected Areas Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 8, 1996, the Premier and the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development announced a joint commitment to develop a strategy for a system of protected areas for the NWT by the end of 1998. Through implementation of that strategy, a range of representative and unique areas will be protected to maintain the character and diversity of our land, while recognizing social and economic needs.

A conference in Inuvik was held in March which brought together over 100 representatives from aboriginal organizations, environmental groups, industry and government. They came to discuss the concept of a Protected Areas Strategy and to build partnerships. Generally those present supported the initiative and it became clear that although there is much to learn from the experiences of the jurisdictions adjacent to ours, the NWT must develop a plan specific to the needs and interests unique to northerners. Each region will have the opportunity to propose protected areas. Where claims are settled, the land use planning process will be the most effective tool to advance ideas. Where claims are not settled, we will work with individual communities to develop the necessary tools and skills.

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportune time to develop a plan to protect some of the land that provides so much to us. Much of the NWT remains undeveloped and there is currently agreement between parties to work together to provide opportunities for future generations that include the sustainable development of natural resources and protecting areas for their special values. The document I am tabling today summarizes the ideas and concerns expressed at the Inuvik meeting. These ideas and concerns will guide the development of the next phases of the Protected Areas Strategy. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 86-13(4): Mine Training Committee

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, late last year, I established the Mine Training Committee to provide me with recommendations on training and employment issues in the mining industry. One of the committee's mandates is to come up with ways that will get more northerners working in various aspects of the northern mining industry. The committee will also promote mining careers in schools and the colleges and will develop a promotional campaign to raise the profile and public awareness of mining in the NWT.

Committee members include the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, the Metis Nation, Yellowknives Dene Band Council, a

Page 1241

representative from the Kitikmeot region, BHP, Diavik Diamond Mines, Echo Bay Mines, Aber Resources, Women in Trades and Technology and the NWT Chamber of Mines.

The Mine Training Committee has been involved in planning Mine TAP every step of the way. I am very pleased with the initiative members of the committee have demonstrated through their work on the program. It is essential that in all our programs we match the employment needs of industry with training programs. I look forward to the continued success of the Mine Training Committee as it identifies and sets priorities that will translate into jobs for northern residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 363-13(4): High School Graduation Ceremonies

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you Mr. Speaker, welcome back. On Saturday, May 24, 1997 Natalik School celebrated its first high school graduates since the inception of secondary

programs in 1994. Several students who had previously dropped out of school returned to complete their high school education. The youngest graduates of the class of 1997 are 19 years of age and the two eldest are 29. The majority of the graduating students have already applied for post-secondary programs of study to begin in September. The community is very proud of these graduates and applaud the inception of a program which ensures a larger percentage of students will stay in school and go on to complete their secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, in previous years students were sent to Yellowknife for their secondary education. Because of the difficulties associated with living far away from their families and communities, most of these students dropped out of school. Very few graduated. With a local high school program, more and more young people are staying in school or are returning to school to complete their education. The Natalik School graduating class of 1997, on behalf of my colleague, I would like to congratulate those students and I would also thank Charlie Lyall for providing me the information. They are: Kevin Iitoolook, John Ikilik, Sarah Jayko, Jennifer Karoo, Jayko Neeveacheak, Elaine Panigayak, Dora Quayaut, Lena Quayaut, Sally Takolik, Bonnie Tucktoo.

I will provide the names to the Clerk here for the Hansard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 364-13(4): Aklavik Flood Damages

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to state that the flood conditions in Aklavik have receded in which the water is presently going down. The water is dropping, the ice has cleared out in the Husky Channel and in the East Channel. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is about the damage that has occurred in the Mackenzie Delta, to people's property, especially cabins, in areas of the West Channel and also in the Mackenzie River system where the water was high.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister a question later on about what type of relief is in place to assist hunters and trappers and individuals who may suffer

damage because of conditions such as floods and incidents like that, similar to areas of Manitoba where there was federal assistance to relieve individuals for property damage there.

I would like to ask the Minister at the appropriate time a question on that matter, especially in relation to the incident that just occurred in the Mackenzie Delta where property was damaged in relation to people's cabins and whatnot along the Mackenzie River system and also in the Mackenzie Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 365-13(4): Tribute to Mary Adele Sangris

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past week Detah suffered the loss of one of their respected and hard-working elders. Mary Adele Sangris lived a hard but rewarding life. She not only raised and supported her family of 15 children but also helped the community and supported her husband Joe who was chief of the community for over 30 years. Most of Joe's life was spent like most people of the day hunting and trapping in the bush and travelling far distances for caribou hunts. Mary Adele and the rest of her family were at his side most of the time. During times of celebrations and meetings, Mary Adele would be cooking and helping her husband's guests feel welcome in their home and make sure no one was left out or went hungry.

Over the years she worked to make her community a safe and good place for her family and friends to work and live. She was also very active in supporting local politicians that ran for all levels of government. I know when I was originally elected in 1971 she worked to ensure that I received Detah's vote.

Page 1242

On Saturday the community, friends and family said goodbye to this great mother, friend and community supporter. The Dogrib region wishes to send our condolences to her family and know that she will be missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 366-13(4): Opening Meetings to the Public

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As today is the day of the federal election, I would like to make liberal use of my Member's statement and...

-- Laughter

-- Applause

...and make a brief comment about open government. Mr. Speaker, 19 months ago many of us were on the outside of this building looking in and we complained about decisions being made in the back rooms and many of us ran on platforms of open, accessible government. Since the election of the 13th Assembly we in fact have tried to open up our proceedings. We have substantially revised the committee structure as one way to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we faced a very difficult first two years dealing with budget cuts and other personnel matters related to restructuring but we are beyond the cuts now. We still continue to get a certain amount of flak about how we make decisions. In the Constitutional Working Group, for instance, we found out that it would be most wise for us to open up our meetings to the public and the media. The House, Mr. Speaker, is one forum for discussion. It is good for final decisions but the rules tend to restrict the flow of discussion on several topics. Mr. Speaker, as I have done in the past and at other meetings, I would like to suggest that we try to open up committee proceedings as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion and from personal experience I can tell you that there is a lot of very good discussion that goes on in committees, the kind of discussion that would be very beneficial for the public to hear about the complexity of the issues we deal with and the very important matters that are before us. Clearly there will always be situations that are in camera, personnel matters, budgetary matters and other sensitive matters but a lot of things could be done and should be done that are open to the public.

Mr. Speaker, people tend to fear what they do not know and they tend to see bogeymen when they think things are done in secret. My experience is that once people know that things are open, the bogeymen tend

to disappear. In my six years on town council, we opened up our meetings and we found out that lo and behold, once they were open people did not show up. They came only for the major issues.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues are ruthless in their heckling on a Monday despite of the importance of this day. Mr. Speaker, most business in municipalities in committees is relatively routine, as it is in the Assembly. We talk about transparent, open government. As MLAs with the various issues we have dealt with and are continuing to deal with, we have found that one of the biggest issues is communication with the public and how we do that in an effective way. Committees provide one more way, in my opinion, to get information out and I think we are now ready to take that step. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 367-13(4): Northern Participants in the Miss Canada International Competition

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a minute today to congratulate two young northerners who have distinguished themselves in recent weeks. As you may have already noticed in today's issue of the News/North newspaper, we will be represented at the Miss Canada International competition next August by two people, Andrea Hansen of Inuvik and Karen McCaul of Yellowknife.

I am sure both of these young women will enjoy the pageant and will be excellent representatives for the Northwest Territories. As a side note, I would like to thank the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation for

sponsoring Miss Hansen's attendance at the competition. I would also like to thank BHP Diamonds Inc., Creative Paper and Office Supplies, NWT Air and Force One, all of whom made donations to help Ms. McCaul who is still working on her fundraising. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 368-13(4): Plan 2000 Housing Program

MR. PICCO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker, welcome back. Mr. Speaker I would like to speak a little today about Program 2000. When first announced I was in support of the goal to house 2,000 families by the year 2000. In my riding of Iqaluit we are short over 70 social housing units. I think that the program can still help alleviate that shortage of housing but the guidelines that are in place are too lax.

Page 1243

Mr. Speaker, the guidelines are so loose, they are probably loose enough to drive a truck through them. Many constituents in good faith, Mr. Speaker, have applied for the program and have qualified but because of the demand and the amount of funds available many may now be turned down. The Housing Corporation in Iqaluit has been under tremendous pressure with the number of applicants and all will not be able to partake of the program.

The program was announced in response to the shortage of housing and because the federal government has withdrawn support to provide financing for new social housing construction. Maybe we rushed the program before all the logistics were in place. Now we are in a no win situation. Applicants will be upset, so will contractors. Our staff will have to bearers of bad news. Is there any possible way to rebase the fund to allow more people access? Has the government tightened up the criteria for qualifying? What will happen to the applicants that qualified earlier and now will not qualify if the new regulations are passed? Are we changing the rules after the game has started?

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation is trying to alleviate the housing shortage but there have been some mistakes made. Later today I will be asking the Minister for Housing about the program and the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 369-13(4): Northern Employment Strategy

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you Mr. Speaker, welcome back and good afternoon, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, last week the government announced the Northern Employment Strategy. I believe this two year program is a step in the right direction. As the Chairman of the Social Programs Committee, I have seen many problems we have today. Our jails are full, alcohol and drug use is very high and abuse is common. Many problems come because there are not enough jobs and the people do not have enough education. People who are not leading productive lives seem to have more social problems. Without things to do, people get into trouble.

The strategy has helped all kinds of people:

- There is help for craftsmen or hunters who need some tools or equipment;
- Small businesses can get assistance to get started or grow;
- People who would like to work can get help with training;
- Communities can develop much needed infrastructure while providing jobs for local residents;
- Local organizations can get much needed help as they provide work for students.

The Northern Employment Strategy is not the only answer. There are many other things we need to do, however, Mr. Speaker, it is a good start.

Mr. Speaker, northern residents and businesses should take full advantage of this program and when we reconvene in October, I hope the Minister will be able to announce an overwhelming response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 370-13(4): Tribute to Mary Adele Sangris

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to speak about an elder, Mary Adele Sangris who passed away. It seems like every week we hear about another elder passing away. This generation will soon be gone. On Saturday, I did attend Mary Adele Sangris' funeral in Detah. She passed away on May 28. Mary Adele was the mother of Chief Jonas Sangris of Yellowknives Dene First Nation and she was also the widow of former Chief Joe Sangris. She had just turned 85 years old the week before she passed away. She was the daughter of Jimmy Keskorie who was the head counsellor of the Yellowknives. Head counsellor, of course, was next to the Chief and her mother was Julia Fishbone. Mary Adele is survived by her two sisters, Rosalie Paper and Georgina Drygeese and they were the only three surviving siblings out of ten children. Mary Adele and her late husband, Chief Joe Sangris had 15 children. Four daughters and four sons have passed away and she is survived by her three sons and four daughters along with 37 grandchildren and 33 great grandchildren. As her many friends will attest, Mary Adele was very hospitable and very generous. Many people from the surrounding communities would visit. They would always say that she was very kindhearted and always helpful. I suppose in a testimony to this was the church in Detah was overflowing on Saturday and many people had to stand throughout the service. Mary Adele's late husband was the Chief of the Yellowknives Dene for 32 years when he passed away, still in office. Her son, Jonas Sangris has now been the Chief of the Yellowknife's Dene for ten years. He was counsellor for five years prior to that. Jonas often said that he regularly consulted with her on matters. We can see that Mary Adele advised the leadership of the Yellowknives Dene for close to 50 years from looking at her late husband's and her son's leadership. She will be missed by the Yellowknives Dene leadership and her many friends and relatives. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 371-13(4): Empowerment Initiatives

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the dictionary definition of empowerment is to give official authority or legal power or to enable. The subject of empowerment has been brought up, debated and

Page 1244

conceptualized considerably by the 13th Assembly. There are three areas of empowerment that I would like to touch on today as they relate to the responsibilities and role of this government. Community empowerment has by far been the most focused on by our discussions. I still believe that we need to take a really common sense approach to how much and how fast we devolve responsibilities to communities. At a time when government's functions in other jurisdictions much more populated than our own are realizing the benefits of consolidating community governments, we must be cautious in how far we go in devolving authority to communities with small populations. We need to ask ourselves if there are intermediate forms of consultation and participation that would achieve quality input.

I was very impressed with a meeting that I had recently in Hay River with all the regional directors from almost all departments. I thought the regional authorities and offices had a very good take and handle on the issues in communities in their region and particularly for regions with numerous small communities, I believe there is merit in devolving a lot more decision making authority and discretionary latitude to the regional offices as a stage in community empowerment. Key premises for empowerment are the development of people and skills to allow them to take responsibility for themselves bringing decision making which may have been distant and inappropriate in the past closer to the recipients of the services, programs and infrastructure.

A recent article in the Nunatsiq News illustrates just how far we have to go yet in our northern society in another type of empowerment which gets talked about much less. That is the issue of individual

empowerment. The writer of the editorial is chastising the petition makers of Iqaluit for their outrage regarding a local librarian's future. The writer raises the issues of children falling asleep hungry because parents cannot buy food. The kids begging for loonies in front of the local store so that they can stuff their aching bellies with candy. Hundreds of people jammed into overcrowded disease-ridden houses or walking the streets with nowhere to live. If these conditions exist in Iqaluit and other northern communities given the amount of money that this government expends on every kind of program that you can imagine, it indicates to me that we have created a level of dependency on this government that we can no longer afford that can only be addressed by empowering individuals with the tools necessary to help themselves. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we can hopefully create the opportunities and encourage northerners to access those opportunities. I believe that when the issues of individual empowerment are addressed and talked about more, the other types of empowerment will begin to make a lot more sense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement 372-13(4): New Land Development and Pricing Policies

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement is about the new land development and pricing policy of the GNWT. At this time, my concern is with the land pricing policy particularly. Mr. Speaker, over the past two years land leases for residential lots in the small communities went from a minimum of \$100 per year to \$250 per year. Under the new pricing policy, this cost will rise to \$600 per year, minimum. The question is, why should the new pricing policy be applied to existing lots rather than only to the newly developed lots?

Mr. Speaker, I do not object to the present policy as it applies to the new lots. There was much discussion in the committees as to the new land development policy and the pricing policy being combined to work together where hamlets would be able to collect proper revenue in order to meet their payments for the loans that they would be purchasing. However, I object to the new policy as it applies to the old or existing lots in the communities because the new land pricing policy that we discussed, I was under the impression, did not apply to the old existing lots. I am not aware that this government had proper consultation with the communities before they put this in place.

I am also a bit concerned on one hand saying communities are empowered under community empowerment but on the other hand we say that the minimum you will charge for a lot is \$600. That is like forcing something on them rather than them agreeing to it themselves. Therefore, at the appropriate time today, Mr. Speaker, I will be directing questions to the Minister of MACA on this subject. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement 373-13(4): Negotiated Contracts

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to speak about the always controversial but often misunderstood issue of negotiated government contracts. There are some, Mr. Speaker, who argue that negotiated contracts between the Government of the NWT and third parties are subject either to real or potential abuse and that this should be avoided and the termination of this practice finished.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are problems with the existing process as associated with negotiated contracts but I also believe that there are those problems which exist can be rectified provided that those responsible commit themselves to making modifications that will seriously address the existing issues. Failure to come to terms with the identifiable problems, Mr. Speaker, could jeopardize a continued effectiveness of a contracting tool which if properly used can be a useful vehicle for achieving legitimate public policy objectives in a sound business context.

Mr. Speaker, if the negotiated contract process is to be restored to an acceptable level of credibility, two things would have to take place. First, Mr. Speaker, the key ingredient that will have to be established is the responsible and transferred process that will permit Members of this Legislative Assembly and more importantly, the public to have a high level of

Page 1245

confidence in the efficiency of negotiated contracts. The second ingredient and arguably the most important one, is the need to revise the guidelines to strongly reflect sound business planning and the establishment of a contracting environment which will generate consistently sound business arrangements which will withstand the test of time.

There is little point, Mr. Speaker, in facilitating negotiated contracts which do not make good business sense. This not only hurts the financial health of the government but also damages the long term viability of business enterprises which lack the discipline to resist the instant gratification of the short term gain.

Mr. Speaker, one of the products of the flaws in this existing system is bureaucratic indifference to making the system work efficiently. I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that I do not blame the program administrators for this. Having to administer a system which is inadequate to begin with and which is subject to abuse, leads to a situation where people just do not try as hard as they might otherwise to make things work. My point, Mr. Speaker, is that with proper, transparent guidelines and processes, we can challenge the bureaucracy to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? You have one nay, Mr. Henry. You do not have unanimous consent. Members' statements. Mr. O'Brien.

Member's Statement 374-13(4): Tribute to Winnie Pudnak

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of Baker Lake also suffered a death this week. The well respected resident from Baker Lake, Mrs. Winnie

Pudnak, died this week. I would like my fellow colleagues to join me in offering our sincere condolences to her husband, Paul, and for the family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 421-13(4): Impact of Digital Communications Contract

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Jane Groenewegen on February 28, 1997.

On February 28, Mrs. Groenewegen asked what arrangements have been made to ensure existing service providers are not negatively affected by the GNWT's contract for the electronic backbone. I want to assure Members that the process being undertaken to implement high speed telecommunications capabilities in the Northwest Territories has taken into consideration the implications the network may have for existing northern service providers. In fact, in many cases existing Internet providers will realize advantages from such a network.

The network will expand the opportunities for existing and new Internet service providers. They will have a very high speed, high quality network upon which to carry their data signals. Because of the capacity of this service, they will be able to offer a much larger range of services that depend upon higher speed communications. As a result of the extension of this service to every community in the Northwest Territories, they will be able to offer to their clients access to people and organizations in all communities. In addition, they will have the basis upon which to expand their scope of services to any other community, which today is only possible in the larger centres.

The contract negotiations currently under way with Ardicom Digital Communications Ltd. specifically deal with ensuring equitable access to the network for all entrepreneurs in the Northwest Territories. Unfair or anti-competitive pricing will in no way be supported by the government, and as well is subject to review by the Canadian Radio, Telecommunications and Television Commission.

As part of the negotiations, the government is ensuring that local and municipal level connections are separate from the backbone network that Ardicom will provide. In this way, local businesses will be able to compete for the opportunity to provide local connections, for example, using existing cable distribution systems or new wireless systems.

The government is committed to ensuring that high quality telecommunications are available to all communities and all residents in the Northwest Territories. We are attempting to do so with maximum participation from the private sector, and in a manner that provides benefits to all users in every community. Many opportunities will arise for local entrepreneurs to develop their business based upon the availability of this high quality backbone network.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would give me pleasure to introduce Mr. Al Brekke. Mr. Al Brekke is the new manager of Northlands Utilities in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are concerning my earlier Member's statement on Plan 2000. My question is to the Minister for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo. Can the Minister, at this time, update this House and the Northwest Territories as a whole on Plan 2000?

Page 1246

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows the government announced Plan 2000 during the last session as a way of trying to alleviate the severe housing shortage that we have in the NWT. The plan is to assist 2000 families by the year 2000 with this program. The Legislative Assembly, through various Members, had asked us to try to fast track the program and to get into as much construction as possible this summer. I am informed by the Housing Corporation that so far we have, in place, plans to assist over 500 families this summer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the concern here has been the regulations and the criteria for qualifying for the program. My supplementary question to the Minister, are the qualifying regulations and criteria being tightened up?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the criteria for qualifying under EDAP remains the same, which is that applicants have to be 19 years or older, must have resided in the NWT for five years one year of which is continuous, prior to approval. There are other things such as family size that is used when prioritizing applicants. The criteria has remained the same. The next step after applicants are qualified under the criteria is how they get on the priority list.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some applicants have qualified and then have been screened out because of the prioritization that the Minister talked about. I wonder if the Minister could outline what are the priorities placed on the applicants on behalf of the NWT Housing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that in most areas we have far more applicants than those that we can provide assistance to, especially this first year. For example, in the Member's constituency where we have more than 60 applicants we can provide assistance to just a bit more of a quarter of that. So we have had to prioritize who we approve. The first applicant that we will approve are families in public housing, immediately after that are couples in public housing. We will also put on top of the list families in poor need with suitability or adequacy problems, and so on. There are seven criteria in the priority list, which I will be pleased to provide the Member in more detail.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my riding, which is one of the fastest growing communities in the north with an 18 percent growth over the past five years, the demand has certainly outstripped the availability of the money for the EDAP. My question to the Minister is, for the community of Iqaluit, is there any possibility of rebasing some other funds from

other areas, which maybe have slippage in the EDAP program, so that the people in poor need in my community, where we are short 70 housing units, will be able to get access to this worthwhile program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 511-13(4): Benefits of Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday of this week I will be tabling the results of our latest needs survey. It would be a good idea for the Assembly to, whether it is through committees or through Caucus, to discuss the survey in detail between now and the fall. If I could summarize the results, there will be no surprises. The situation has not become better. It is true that in Iqaluit we cannot assist as many people as we would like, but that is the case all over the Northwest Territories. If there are any areas later on where we could adjust to other areas where there is further need, that will happen, but from what we can see right now, each of the districts will be using their full allotment this year.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 512-13(4): Sealift Schedule For Pangnirtung School

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. I have a question to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Jim Antoine. In Pangnirtung the new school to be built will be sealifted to Pangnirtung this summer. I wonder if the Minister of Transportation would be able to find out from the transportation company if these building supplies could be sent in July? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 512-13(4): Sealift Schedule For Pangnirtung School

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes the Department of Transportation will try to find out the shipping arrangements for the supplies for the school. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Enuaraq.

Supplementary To Question 512-13(4): Sealift Schedule For Pangnirtung School

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister is going to look into this transportation arrangement, would he be able to keep the community informed? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 512-13(4): Sealift Schedule For Pangnirtung School

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we will work with the communities and inform them as we find out the information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of MACA. As I said in my statement, in the small communities many of the residents are asking why the price of existing lots is being increased at this time rather than just the price for the lots of the new development areas? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of our business planning development and consistent with the government's community empowerment priority, MACA identified land reform as a major strategy change and the initiative involved devolving the responsibility for Commissioner's land within municipal boundaries to municipalities and recovering costs for land development and administration. There was a document I tabled earlier in the year, Finding the Right Balance: Options for Changing Land Development Practices.

I know that the department has been to the communities, consulting with the communities on this initiative and I realize it is hard to comprehend this initiative within the smaller communities. It was one of the initiatives when in our lands claims for Nunavut, Article 14, states that all the land will now be under the municipal government in the communities and now the communities have that authority, to fix the pricing of those lots. We are working with the communities in regards to how to do land development in their communities and I realize that some communities, even though they have been consulted, probably need to be consulted again, but that is the initiative that is going on in land reform. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it clear that I think the residents understand that any existing lots that are being developed by this government and any new lots that would be developed under our Land Development Policy. People enter into these types of leases with open eyes. They know what they are getting into. The prices are fixed before they make an agreement. What we are talking about here is land that was developed previous to this government, even. Land that was developed by Indian Affairs, but for one reason or another, was never sold to the person that

is residing on the lot, either a waterfront lot or band land. Therefore, my question to the Minister is, why would this government see it necessary to increase the leases for these lots if they, themselves, have no applicable costs to these lots? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you. This was one of the items that we discussed in Finding the Right Balance: Option For Changing Land Development Practices. In there we are talking about credit for previous lease payments. What we are saying is that for existing lots, previous lease payments made on a lot could be credited against the correct replacement costs, historic replacement costs or standard lot price in an equity lease. For example, if a leasee has made lease payments for ten years on a \$15,000 lot, \$2,500 would be discounted. That is ten years times \$250, leaving \$12,500 outstanding without interest. The outstanding balance is based on cost minus previous lease payments so there are options. The hamlet and the communities set the price on those lots. That is the option that they can look at. It is not that we are saying everybody has to pay a certain price, whether they are on old lots or on new lots. The hamlet sets the price of lots, not the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister indicate whether the hamlets would be able to charge less than \$600 a year per lot or could they charge any price they feel like for a lot, or is the price fixed by the policy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

Page 1248

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are trying to do here is work with the communities through a consultation process. We do have land administrators trained to deal with the community. We are trying to give the hamlets different options and work with them when they are setting the prices, so it is the call of the hamlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will waste my final supplementary on repeating the question. Will the hamlets be able to charge whatever they feel like for a lot, including less than \$600 a lot? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 513-13(4): Land Development and Pricing Policies

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that detail in front of me so I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions, Mr. Krutko.

Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in my opening statement I made reference to the flood conditions that the Mackenzie Delta find themselves in at this time of year but also in relation to the floods that have occurred in Manitoba and how the federal government

was able to come to their assistance to assist individuals to cope with the loss. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier a question in regards to has this government made an attempt to meet with their federal counterparts to look and see if there is such a program available to the residents of the Mackenzie Delta in regards to their loss in relation to the flood that is occurring there now and the damage that is caused to individual's property such as cabins and cottages and whatnot in the Mackenzie Delta? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier, Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no flood compensation for cabins. Compensation is only given if a primary residence is lost. This is the same as being offered in Manitoba today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the case of individuals who may have a cottage lease or something of a similar nature, are they covered in that case?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, federal compensation is for primary residences only, the main residence of the person. It is not for cottages, cabins, trappers' cabins. That is our understanding of it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to residence usage, especially around the Inuvik area a lot of individuals live down by the river and consider that as their residency because of the cost of living in Inuvik and also the privacy they would like to have. So there are individuals who live in their camps year round in the Inuvik area. Will those individuals be classified as residents who occupy those facilities year round?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any individual who lives in their cabin or their camp year round and they consider that their primary residence, we will be pleased to work with those individuals on a case by case basis to see if we can get them compensation through the federal government program. We will do our best to assist them. All we need are the names and the requests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 514-13(4): Compensation For Flood Victims

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier for agreeing to consider looking at those individuals. I would like to ask the Premier if he could also talk to the individuals in the region to assist people with processing of applications so they can get their claims in as soon as possible so the residents of the Mackenzie Delta will be able to identify those individuals and assist them in processing their applications? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 514-13(4):
Compensation For Flood Victims

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the honourable Member, I would like to just say that if any of his

Page 1249

constituents or people in the Inuvik region have been flooded out and they feel that they are eligible for compensation, would they please contact the local MACA office and the MACA employees will be pleased to assist them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 515-13(4): Fort Smith Regional Office

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It is in regards to the regional office for MACA in Fort Smith. Could the Minister confirm in this House that the regional office for MACA in Fort Smith will be remaining in Fort Smith and that there are no plans to move it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 515-13(4): Fort Smith Regional Office

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no plan to remove the position from Fort Smith. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and welcome back. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, is it normal practice of this government to allow

seven, eight, nine months to pass after the award date of a contract or tender has expired? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Member can clarify his question, I do not know what he is asking. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my question. I am asking the Premier, is it a normal practice of this government once an expiry date or a date has been set for the awarding of a contract to allow seven, eight, nine months to pass without awarding that contract?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Return To Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it is not a normal practice of this government to allow seven to eight months to award a contract after the closing date. It normally takes about a month to six weeks to do that, and in some circumstances it may, I do not know.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what conditions would have to exist in order for the awarding of a contract to be delayed by seven, eight, nine months?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member could be specific to a contract that is taking that long then I can find out what conditions would have to exist, but he would have to let me know what he is talking about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a situation exists in my region, the Keewatin region, where the awarding of a multi-million dollar contract, multi-year contract for the delivery of medevac services in the Keewatin. It is my understanding that the award date was sometime in October past, eight, nine months ago and it is my understanding also that to-date this contract has still not been awarded. Given the fact that it is a multi-million dollar contract, why has the contract not been awarded and what premium does this government pay with such a delay? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 516-13(4): Tender Closing and Medevac Contract Award

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be pleased to look into that issue for the Member and once I have all the fact I will make sure to give those facts to the Member. So I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question was taken as notice. Oral questions, Mr. Ningark.

Question 517-13(4): Taloyoak Runway Extension

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think Mr. Speaker, more so than any other Members of this House, I am glad to see you back.

-- Laughter

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the honourable Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of discussions, myself, the mayor of Taloyoak, and the SAO, with the Department of Transportation and Arctic Airports regarding a runway in Taloyoak. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister realizes we have had many discussions. The people of Taloyoak in this case have put effort into the request of extending the runway of Taloyoak. We should be planning ahead, not going backward. The runway of Taloyoak was shortened as a result of the new regulations of the Department

Page 1250

of Transportation of this country. The hamlet of Taloyoak is willing to put \$100,000 of their own money into the project. The hamlet of Taloyoak is willing to be negotiating the contract price per meter down. The community of Taloyoak is willing to provide hamlet equipment and staff at the base cost. The hamlet of Taloyoak, Mr. Speaker, is doing all the questioning and background research. Mr. Speaker, we have done our research at the community level. We have had numerous meetings with the Minister and his officials. My question to the honourable Minister is, what is the status of the request of the community of Taloyoak? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 517-13(4): Taloyoak Runway Extension

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the recent responses to the community Taloyoak, I have informed the community that over the next few months the department would undertake a review of the runway length issue and that this review would be conducted in consultation with the community and the carriers, the air carriers themselves. Once all these factors are considered, we will then decide on the direction that we are going to take. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of requests of the nature that my honourable colleague is mentioning. Not only Taloyoak has requested us to

look into it but other communities. As a result of that and because of the fiscal restraint that we have undertaken in this department, we have to review each request very carefully and then we would like to determine the strategy of some sort on how to move from here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 517-13(4): Taloyoak Runway Extension

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same honourable Minister. As the Minister is aware in the eastern Arctic, in the Taloyoak area, the only means of transportation during the winter months, ten months out of the year, is by air. We do not have any highways up there. We do not have any waterways open during the ten months of the year. Given the effort put by the community of Taloyoak, I believe more so than any other community that are requesting the same project, how soon will the honourable Minister make his decision regarding which community should be getting funding or go ahead with their projects? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 517-13(4): Taloyoak Runway Extension

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it will take some time. I cannot really say exactly when, what time we will be able to have this information available. Mr. Speaker, we will have to look into considerations such as the present runway extension is determined based on the requirements of the carrier of choice which is the scheduled aircrafts serving the communities. At the present time, we are told by the air carriers that all runways in the NWT communities are long enough to meet the requirements of the aircraft serving them now and for the foreseeable future. Based on that and at the same time based on the fiscal restraint that we are under, we wanted to look at this issue very carefully and determine all the factors that are there. Again, we would like to continue to work with the communities that have made these requests. At some point in time in the

future, once we get this information in place, we will continue with this whole process here and decide at that point in time what we are going to do next. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. We understand that many of the responsibilities that CMHC used to perform in the Northwest Territories have been assumed by the Government of the Northwest and particularly the NWT Housing Corporation. Could the Minister give us a little background as to what responsibilities, if any, NWT Housing Corporation will not have? In other words, could he tell us as to CMHC's responsibilities in the Northwest Territories now as opposed to GNWT's? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I plan to make a Minister's statement in the next couple of days outlining some of the details that are contained in the agreement that we signed with the Government of Canada some weeks back which basically transferred many of the CMHC files to the Northwest Territories. But to answer the Member's other part of the question, some of the underwriting of mortgages provided by CMHC was not transferred to the NWT as were some other minor areas. But most of the responsibility of administering housing, social housing especially, has been fully transferred to the GNWT.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that information and I certainly will look forward to his further details on that transfer. The Minister mentioned that some of the responsibilities that CMHC presently has and obligations which they have to private individuals or businesses, did the Minister tell me that those would still be in place and that those businesses or individuals would still deal directly with CMHC as opposed to the Housing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Page 1251

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I can confirm that the role of underwriting mortgages especially through the five percent downpayment assistance that the CMHC has carried out over the last few years will continue. As I told Members of the House before, CMHC is releasing its responsibilities of delivering social housing to us, to the NWT and to all the other provinces and the Yukon Territory. The role of underwriting mortgages has not been transferred to any of the provinces or the territories. It is something that they are keeping. So, people who presently hold mortgages underwritten by CMHC will continue under the current arrangement that they have and there will be no changes under that program.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the question of the \$90 million plus liability that GNWT or NWT Housing Corporation has with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, how will that be handled as far as the division of those liabilities between east and west? Has the department looked at ways of handling that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the Member is asking how we will handle the liability of the long term debt that the Housing Corporation has with CMHC when it comes to division of the two territories with Nunavut and the western territory. That is something that is part of the ongoing division implementation plan that we are doing. I guess to put it in a nut shell, the financing terms that we have are very favourable to the GNWT and to the Housing Corporation and it will be part of the overall division of assets and liabilities arrangements that we are able to negotiate between the GNWT, the western territory and the Nunavut territory and all the other parties. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would I be correct in assuming that the \$90 million plus liability that the GNWT through the Housing Corporation has towards CMHC is tied to residential homes throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 518-13(4): Role of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the \$90 million debt had come about from the building of public housing rather than private homes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for Minister Antoine as the chairman of the Western Constitutional Conference. I wonder if the Minister could tell us, a consultation process is scheduled for this fall, is it the hope and intent of the working group to have together by the fall a redrafted version of the constitutional proposal that they are going to consult the public with? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Northern Constitutional Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intention of the Constitutional Working Group is to meet soon, this week. We will then plan on what kind of work that we need to do in the next few months. Throughout the summer, hopefully, we will find some time to at least meet and carry on with instructions to our officials to carry on with developing some of the work that needs to get done. By the fall, hopefully, we will have a package that we would like to take back to the communities. The intention for the second round of community consultation is that there would be a package that is acceptable to the participants in the Constitutional Working Group before we take it back to the communities, something that is substantial that people could have a good look at it again and try to incorporate all the concerns that were expressed during the initial round of consultation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the reason for my question is that I note that also a Constitutional Conference is scheduled for next spring. I am just wondering if it is backwards. Perhaps, the Minister could explain this to me. I would have thought that we could have a conference at which more ideas would be presented, then to redraft the document, and then

present it to the public. But perhaps, there may be very good arguments for the process that is being used and perhaps the Minister could comment for me on that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would never admit to being backwards, but this whole constitutional process is a developing process. As different ideas come forward, we are trying to discuss them and accommodate these different ideas. The suggestion of having another conference came from the initial round of consultation and from the Constitutional Working Group members as well. We included that in the process to try to

Page 1252

have some sort of flow of discussion in the whole constitution where once we have developed a package again and take it back to the communities, if there are further directions from the people in the communities, we will further develop the package and present it at a conference some time next spring. For the honourable Member, the Constitutional Working Group meeting is open to the public and you have always participated when they are available. Certainly, your suggestions and your views will be welcomed at these meetings. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I was really pleased to see that the meetings will be open to the public and certainly I welcome, would invite people and encourage people to attend. It is very good to learn about the process and certainly get an insight into how decisions are achieved with regard to redrafting the constitution. On the constitutional conference that is planned, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if Mr. Antoine could

tell us, has it been envisioned yet who will be invited to the conference?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 519-13(4): Revised Constitutional Proposal

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have not got arrived at that stage in the conference. Certainly, offhand, everybody who has been involved in the whole constitutional process would probably be invited to the conference. This conference, here, we need to have further discussions in the Constitutional Working Group on how we are going to be planning this whole conference yet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 520-13(4): Southern Support For Northern Roads

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is not too often that we hear in this House any positive news. Although this may be early in the process, it is interesting to hear the Premier's statement on the 1997 Western Premiers' Conference especially in the area of roads. I would like to ask the Premier if he speaks of the support from the Premiers when it talks about the efforts that we need to establish once again the Highways Program and strongly look at the north for opening it up. If the Premier can inform us to what is the next approach in this is and how soon can we look forward to further discussion on this issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 520-13(4): Southern Support For Northern Roads

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the whole issue of the transportation strategy for the Northwest Territories, I have already directed Mr. Antoine as Minister of

Transportation to dust off the strategy that was presented at the 11th Assembly, 1991, and to revisit that and do the work necessary to update it. There is some initial work that has already been done and they are working, the transportation department, aggressively on the Transportation Strategy, specifically with the road from Wrigley to Tuktoyaktuk and the road from Yellowknife to Coppermine to the Great Slave's geological area. The initial numbers, so far, have already shown that it could mean as much 36,000 jobs to Canadians and it shows that they can be viable.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 520-13(4): Southern Support For Northern Roads

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the information, I understand you are preparing a document or dusting off the old one and revitalizing it, but the steps after this, once we have come up with a new version or revitalized plan, what would the process be then of forwarding this to the new Prime Minister, which will be selected today, and the time lines of developing some sort of a protocol or so with the federal government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 520-13(4): Southern Support For Northern Roads

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very important that we develop this document and develop it so it is presentable, not only to the Prime Minister I feel will be re-elected today, but also to the federal government, to the Minister of Indian Affairs, to our provincial counterparts and the people of Canada and more importantly, to all our constituents in the Northwest Territories, as well as the Members around this room today. But it has to be presentable and it has to be sound so they are working on that document and once we get it to a stage where it is presentable, which I hope is fairly quickly, so that we can get on the Canadian agenda fairly quickly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

Page 1253

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during this time when I was home I had a concern raised to me by a constituent who was renting a property to an income support client and ultimately went thousands of dollars into arrears. She contacted the Minister about it and subsequently contacted me. I was wondering if the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment could outline for us what the department's policy is with respect to providing funds to income support clients for basic needs such as shelter, food, child care, when these funds do not get spent on those and suppliers of those services end up being owed money? What is the official position or policy of the department? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, income support programs are provided to individuals. It is the individuals responsibility once they have received the support through the Income Support Program to fulfil their needs for food and shelter on their own. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where it is well known to the department that the client has difficulties with managing their money, is there a provision available for the department to handle those funds, pay those funds out on behalf of the client, as I said, if the

department is aware that this is not a function that the client can undertake successfully on their own? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that question is no. The department cannot assume the responsibility for taking over the care of an individual without them being put by court order or agreement into a custody situation. Unless somebody is institutionalized, this government is not responsible for them and their individual concerns. If I heard the Member's statement earlier today, I believe that she was making a case that individuals have to take on more responsibility for themselves in the north and I think that is the situation with income support programs. We provide the support to the individuals. In every community, the worker is available to work with people who need support by helping to set up budgets and planning how their expenditures should be undertaken. Ultimately, the responsibility for deciding how to make their expenditures is left to the individual. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a perfect world I suppose this would work and I do support income support clients seeking responsibility for themselves and the payment of their bills. However, I would like to know what consequences does the department enforce if, in fact, this is an ongoing and chronic problem with a client? Are there any consequences to spending money that was given to them on the pretence of paying for their basic needs on something other than that?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if somebody were found to be spending the money on gambling or other purposes, it would put in question their continued funding by the Income Support Program. In fact, the limiting of income support payments to an individual is the only recourse that we have. As I said, the individual is ultimately responsible. The government is not in a position where we can say to somebody, you are not capable of doing this; therefore, we are going to do it for you, without there being either a court order or some other kind of agreement that would move the responsibility to someone else. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a letter that was written to me by the Minister, he states that the Income Support Program attempts to identify those clients who experience money management issues and provide training to address the issue. What I am wondering, is there a standard training package that is distributed to the income support workers that is delivered at the local level and if so could the Minister please provide me with a copy of such training program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 521-13(4): Basic Income Support Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the income support workers are trained in counselling people in this area. I am not sure that there would be a standard package that would be in effect for all across the territories, but I will endeavour to provide the Member with some information on the counselling services that are available, particularly in her community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Page 1254

Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past several months I have continually brought up environmental matters. Not only will the cost of clean-ups potentially cost northern tax payers millions of dollars, but many of the environmental concerns are out of our hands because the multi-nationals and big business factories are located outside of the north. My question concerns the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program Symposium to be held in Norway on June 1st to 5th. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for the Environment, Mr. Kakfwi. Will the Minister or any of his departmental officials be attending this important conference in Norway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the federal government had originally asked through officials to enquire if I would be interested in heading the Canadian delegation since the present Minister, Mr. Irwin, would not be able to carry out that obligation. Subsequently, the Arctic ambassador, Mary Simon, has indicated interest in taking this over since the Arctic Council is the body which is going to take over from the Arctic countries the responsibility for this particular file. Ms. Simon is now going to be heading the Canadian delegation. As a courtesy, I was subsequently asked to co-head this delegation, or co-chair this delegation. I was grateful for this second opportunity, but have since declined to do that. At this time, no one from our government will be attending this particular conference in Norway. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is indeed disappointing to hear because the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program Symposium will be looking at items like PCB's and we know what happened with the study done in Broughton Island a few years back with the PCB's. My follow-up question to the Minister then is, if he is not attending and there is no one attending from his department, then has he forwarded on areas of concern for the Northwest Territories to the Arctic Council representative, Mary Simon, to represent and bring our concerns forward from the Northwest Territories at this symposium? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the last meeting of these Ministers took place in Inuvik a year and a half ago. We had taken the time then and the time previous to that to brief the Arctic ambassador, Mr. Irwin and Sergio Marchi, the federal Minister of Environment, on those concerns and issues that are relevant to this particular file. While the work is ongoing, certainly the Arctic ambassador, Mary Simon, is fully briefed on the concerns and interests we have in regard to this particular conference. The Polar Commission no doubt also is providing Mayor Simon with all the relevant information she requires to do a very capable job of representing not only the Government of Canada but certainly the people of the Northwest Territories and the Arctic in representing their interests and concerns at this conference. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is that I understand the

symposium participants will be focusing on threats by pollutants to the Arctic environment. I guess my supplementary question would be to the Minister. If he is not attending and we do not have any officials attending, will the Minister be requesting information about the conference from the Arctic ambassador, Mary Simon so this government can review the work that was done at the conference and hopefully have it available for Members of this House, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 522-13(4): Arctic Monitoring Symposium

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we certainly will be doing that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 523-13(4): Environmental Update on Power Sites

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I am on environmental matters, I have a question for the Minister of the Power Corporation concerning the announcement over the last couple of weeks with regard to possible environmental problems at NTPC power plants throughout the north. I wonder if the Minister could update us at this time about this situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 523-13(4): Environmental Update on Power Sites

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Member is referring to when he talks about announcements of potential problems. There have been no such announcements from the Power Corporation. The Power Corporation, since 1992, has embarked on a program of assessing all of the sites

that are operated by the Power Corporation and in the past by Northern Canada Power Commission because that work was never done before this government took over from NCPC. As a responsible corporate citizen, the Power Corporation has embarked on a program whereby a dozen or so sites a year will be assessed to find out whether or not there is a danger or if there exists any environmental contamination. In those

Page 1255

situations where the preliminary tests indicate environmental contamination, a further detailed study will be undertaken. Remediation programs will be proposed, should any serious contamination, be found with the communities and the regulatory agencies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 523-13(4):
Environmental Update on Power Sites

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe I was dreaming in technicolour and my ears were not working very well but I do remember hearing the public relations person for NTPC Power Corporation talking about the work that was already done, the environmental assessment of sites, including Inuvik and I believe Iqaluit. So my supplementary question to the Minister is, what seems to be the prognosis on the Iqaluit site in particular, which I understand has been completed?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 523-13(4):
Environmental Update on Power Sites

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, each year there are some investigations undertaken of the 12 sites that were investigated last year. I believe there were about four that required some follow-up work, the contracts for which should be out this month. The work will be completed by July and by August there will be an answer as to whether or not there is a problem. At this point it would be premature

without further investigation to say that there is a problem on any of the sites operated by the Power Corporation. The work will be done to determine any such problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. Written questions. Mr. Henry.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 30-13(4): Outstanding CMHC Debt

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question directed to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, as this House is aware, the NWT Corporation has an outstanding debt of approximately \$90 million with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Will the Minister please provide a list outlining, by region, the items or projects against which the \$90 million is secured? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Written questions. Returns to written questions, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return to Written Question 27-13(4): Grades of Fuel in Use

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Krutko on May 29th in regards to grades of fuel in use. The Member for Mackenzie Delta asked for the grade of fuel used by the Department of Transportation's ferries.

Grades of Fuel in Use

The Department of Transportation specifies a P50 grade of diesel fuel for the engines in its ferries.

The P50 fuel is a winter grade of fuel that performs better in below freezing temperatures. Heavier grade summer fuels tend to foul the diesel engine's injector tips and increase maintenance problems at the lower temperatures in which the ferries operate at the beginning and especially at the end of the season.

The department uses only the one winter grade of fuel throughout the operating season so as to avoid the additional expense and downtime of purging fuel tanks in converting from one grade of fuel to another. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to written questions, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, Return to Written Question 23-13(4) asked by Mr. Krutko to the Minister of Health and Social Services concerning alcohol and drug funding breakdown.

Return to Written Question 23-13(4): Funding For Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs

Alcohol and Drug Funding Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of funding for alcohol and drug treatment spent in the NWT and on southern referrals in the years 1994/95, 1995/96 and 1996/97. Not all the figures from 1996/97 are tallied, therefore budget projections were used.

In 1994/95 a total of \$9,257,638 was spent on alcohol and drug treatment in the north with the treatment centres receiving \$4,618,638 and the community projects receiving \$4,639,000. In that same period a total of \$1,265,827 was spent on southern referrals to treatment centres.

In 1995/96 a total of \$9,032,325 was spent on treatment in the north with \$4,484,000 going to treatment centres in the NWT and \$4,270,000 going to the community projects. In 1995/96 Tl'oondih Healing Society received \$278,325 from non-insured funds (traditionally used to pay for southern treatment). During 1995/96, \$879,046 was spent on treatment in southern centres.

In 1996/97, a total of \$9,418,000 was spent on alcohol and drug treatment in the north with \$5,143,000 going to the treatment centres and \$3,939,000 going to the community projects. In 1996/97, Tl'oondih received \$337,000 (again from non-insured funds traditionally used to pay for southern referrals). During this time period it is expected the \$889,717 will be spent on treatment in the south. Not all of the information has been received. Therefore, the figure used for the south is a projection at this time.

The regional health boards will receive the following amount for community projects and treatment allocation (money used to pay NWT treatment centre per diem as per the alcohol and

Page 1256

drug reform) \$3,939,000 for the projects with an additional \$1,511,000 treatment allocation.

The Tl'oondih Healing Society did not receive any funding from the department in the 1994/95 fiscal year. In 1995/96 the Society received \$278,325 from the department and in 1996/97 it again received \$337,000.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 7-13(4): Standing Committee of Government Operations Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management

Introduction

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, I am pleased to present the report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management. During the spring and summer of 1995, the GNWT undertook a public review of the Affirmative Action Policy. This review included extensive consultation with GNWT staff and members of the public. The standing committee waited for a government report on this review. Last summer we saw an initial draft report. It has some good general ideas but was lacking in specific recommendations. The government rewrote the draft but it still did not provide the concrete suggestions for action that we were expecting.

In an attempt to assist Cabinet on this issue, the standing committee created a working group. This group was given two months to develop some very specific recommendations to improve the Affirmative Action Policy and GNWT human resource

management. In making recommendations, the working group drew heavily from the results of the 1995 Affirmative Action Policy public review. They also reviewed the practices of other jurisdictions and various GNWT human resource statistics and practices.

The Cabinet has not yet been able to provide an initial response to the report, however, we expect that there should be general acceptance. Most of the recommendations can be traced back to the public consultations and the government's own draft report. This report takes the government's initial broad suggestions and provides specific recommendations to put those ideas into action. This report focuses on achieving a GNWT workforce which is representative of the peoples it serves at all levels and in all regions. There are a number of recommendations which will address the issue of representation, both at the hiring

Page 1257

stage and throughout an employee's career with the government.

As well, the working group looked beyond the hiring process to support and development of GNWT staff. It is not enough to hire northerners, we also have to provide an environment where they can find personal satisfaction and professional development. In tough financial times putting northerners to work means good value for money. Many individuals have a perception that the Affirmative Action Policy is really a native employment policy. We want to stress that when we say affirmative action, we mean support for all of the priority groups identified under the Affirmative Action Policy.

The report makes recommendations in four key areas:

- The Affirmative Action Policy
- The Hiring Process
- Human Resource Management
- Addressing the Future

Many of the recommendations are linked. While they may have a small impact individually, they will work best when implemented together. Most of the recommendations can be implemented fairly quickly. In developing the recommendations, the working group was also very aware of the current financial situation. Almost all of the recommendations in the

report can be accomplished with little or no additional spending. I would like to thank the other members of the working group for their efforts: Mr. Picco, Mr. Henry and Mr. Miltenberger were dedicated in trying to meet the deadline set for the group. Although they brought very different opinions to the table, they managed to find consensus on almost every recommendation.

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management. Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent of the House to have Committee Report 7-13(4) deemed read and printed in the Hansard.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to have Report 7-13(4) deemed read and printed in the Hansard. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Erasmus.

Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management

Introduction

The people of the NWT come from many different backgrounds. There are many First Nations people: the Dene, the Inuit, the Metis, and the Inuvialuit. There are people whose ancestors came from around the world who have made their homes in the north. There are also relative newcomers to the territories.

The GNWT Affirmative Action Policy has a goal of achieving a workforce which is representative of the people it serves. Unfortunately, the policy in its current form has not resulted in significant progress in achieving that goal. As a working group, we believe more can and should be done. It is time to stop saying why things cannot be done and to focus on why they can be done.

This report focuses on achieving a GNWT workforce which is representative of the people it serves at all levels and in all regions. We have made a number of recommendations which will address the issue of representation, both at the hiring stage and throughout an employee's career with the government.

The 1989 Affirmative Action policy for GNWT hiring is still in place. With less than 700 days to division, we

do not feel it is appropriate to completely replace the policy. However, we have found many areas where immediate changes could be made to try to achieve the goal of a representative workforce. There are options which could achieve results without reducing job qualifications or negatively impacting on the quality of service available to all residents.

As well, we have looked beyond the hiring process to support and development of GNWT staff. It is not enough to hire northerners. We also have to provide an environment where they can find personal satisfaction and professional development. In tough financial times, putting northerners to work means good value for money.

Most of the recommendations in this report are things we believe can be done in the short term prior to division. Some of the final recommendations will take longer to put in place. Work should begin on these recommendations although the actual implementation may be pushing division and beyond.

Many individuals have a perception that the Affirmative Action policy is really a native employment policy. We want to stress that when we say affirmative action, we mean support for all of the priority groups identified under the Affirmative Action policy.

Background

During the spring and summer of 1995, the GNWT undertook a public review of the Affirmative Action Policy. This review included extensive consultation with GNWT staff and members of the public.

In June 1996, the GNWT provided a draft report on the review to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Government Operations was very critical of the draft, saying it lacked specific strategies to address the problems with the Affirmative Action Policy. The Committee also suggested that the report should be expanded to include a northern employment strategy.

During the review of 1997/98 business plans, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment indicated he was working on a labour force development plan. This plan was supposed to be part of a larger northern employment strategy. The Standing Committee on Social Programs received a briefing on the plan and concluded that, while it could be a small part of a northern employment strategy, its focus was limited.

Throughout the fall of 1996 and early 1997, Ordinary Members pressed the Minister of Finance for the report on the Affirmative Action Review. The Minister assured the House that the report would be forthcoming.

On February 12, 1997, the government provided a paper to the Standing Committee on Government Operations which suggested that work could be done in three areas:

1. Northern Employment Strategy

- the report suggested that this would be a combination of the Labour Force Development Plan and an Economic Strategy. This was to be ready for consideration by Members sometime in the summer of 1997.

2. Government Human Resource Strategies

- the report said the government could complete a number of planning activities that are underway.

3. Affirmative Action Policy Review

- the report suggested that no major changes should be made until after 1999.

On February 18, 1997, the Chair of Government Operations wrote to the Minister of Finance, indicating dissatisfaction with the report provided. A Working Group was established to deal with four areas: affirmative action, student employment, a northern employment strategy and division.

On February 20, the Minister of Finance indicated that the government had a student program ready for summer 1997. The plan was presented to full Caucus on March 4th and announced publicly. Limited details on the program were available as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment had not yet fully developed the program.

On March 3rd and 6th, the Minister of Finance met with the working group to provide his vision for a northern employment strategy. The plan involved spending an additional \$13 million on existing economic development programs, using the approach employment by RWED in the Keewatin. This is a limited program, operating for two years.

In making recommendations, we drew heavily from the results of the 1995 Affirmative Action Policy public review. We also reviewed the practices of other

jurisdictions and various GNWT human resource statistics and practices.

The Corporate Culture

In most successful government departments and private corporations, there is a history of strong human resource practices. These organizations have systems in place to support employees from hiring through to retirement. Why do they bother - because they consider the time and effort they put into supporting their employees to be a worthwhile investment - one that provides returns year after year.

These successful organizations know that a person who is satisfied with their job is more productive. They know that a good relationship between a business and its employees means staff who are loyal and dedicated to making the business work better. They know there is a significant cost to high turnover of staff and staff who do not care about their jobs.

In order to be successful, sound human resource practices must be part of the fabric of the organization, from the bottom to the top. Hiring decisions which look at the long run bring new staff who will contribute to the operation. Regular evaluation and development of staff to promote professional

Page 1259

and personal growth allow employees to broaden their skills and interests. The best organizations also remember that people are more than employees and support employees in balancing home and work.

The Affirmative Action Policy is only one part of human resource management. We also looked for government-wide use of other components like performance reviews and career planning. We found there are weaknesses in key areas of generally accepted human resource practices. These weaknesses affect all employees and, in particular, have an impact on the retention and promotion of affirmative action employees. Strong human resource practices should be a part of the GNWT corporate culture.

The corporate culture is the accepted practices, values and norms which guide the day to day work environment. Good human resource practices are an important part of the corporate culture. Over time, those practices are revised to reflect the changing

patterns of the workplace and the people who make up the labour force.

As we move towards representation at all levels of the organization, there will be shifts in the corporate culture. The values and practices of aboriginal people, long-term northerners, the disabled, and women will be recognized and integrated with current practices, until we create an environment that is truly open to all northerners.

Recommendations

We have made recommendations in four key areas:

- The Affirmative Action Policy
- The Hiring Process
- Human Resource Management
- Addressing the Future

In developing our recommendations, we looked at the overall picture of hiring and promotion of staff. As a result, many of the recommendations are linked. While they may have a small impact individually, they will work best when implemented together.

Most of these recommendations could be implemented fairly quickly. Unless otherwise noted, we believe the following recommendations could be in place in six months to a year.

The Affirmative Action Policy

Affirmative Action Recommendation 1 - We recommend that the Premier and his Cabinet issue a public statement, making a commitment to the Affirmative Action Policy.

Since taking office in November 1995, the Members of the 13th Assembly have stressed the need to lead by example. We did this in the deficit management plan by reducing our pensions and eliminating automatic increases to our indemnities.

In the House, Members have repeatedly reminded the Cabinet that we must also lead by example in our senior management hiring. Theoretically, all hiring is subject to the Affirmative Action Policy. In reality, there appears to be some discretion in the hiring process for excluded employees and significant discretion for management, particularly at the deputy minister level. The more senior a position is, the more personal suitability plays a role in the hiring decision.

The Members of the working group believe that this discretion results in a continuation of the hiring practices of the past, hiring practices which have not been successful in moving towards a representative workforce.

During the public consultation in 1995, a common concern and perception was that the politicians and senior managers do not buy into affirmative action. The recent senior management hiring from southern Canada seems to send a silent message throughout the organization and to the public about the government's commitment to affirmative action.

The Premier's public statement should include a commitment to promote and develop northerners, from the top of the organization to the bottom. The statement should also be clear about the emphasis the government will place on employment equity. Without a strong public signal of support for the changes recommended in this report, significant change and progress is doubtful.

Affirmative Action Recommendation 2 - We recommend that the GNWT change the name of the Affirmative Action policy to Employment Equity.

The recommendations proposed by the working group represent a shift in philosophy. The proposals are based on changing the corporate culture. Ensuring a representative work force should not be something people have to do but that all managers and Ministers see as something they want to do. We believe strongly that investing in northern employees can only benefit the north. This is their home, they understand the environment and the cultures, and they are working to make things better for their own future.

If the government intends to make a fresh start in addressing the lack of northerners in the workforce, there is a need for a new name, such as employment equity, which will reflect a new attitude and more proactive, positive approach.

This recommendation is closely tied to the other recommendations in this report. A name change is not enough. It must be part of a broader package of changes to the policy.

Affirmative Action Recommendation 3 - We recommend that the following revisions be made to the Affirmative Action Policy:

1. Representation goals by occupational grouping and region should be set.

Page 1260

2. There should be an annual assessment of the hiring priorities. In occupational groups in a region where representation goals have been reached, hiring priority would not apply.

The current Affirmative Action Policy provides blanket hiring priority across the government. There are a number of concerns with this approach:

- This is a policy without focus - it does not have specific goals which could be addressed;
- There is no monitoring to determine when representation has been reached;
- The statistics do not show where representation has been achieved or even exceeded;
- It results in on-going priority where it is no longer needed; and
- Only reporting overall statistics does not show the true picture - a lack of affirmative action employees outside of entry level positions and trades.

The experience of other jurisdictions shows that while specific priority may be necessary to initially reach representation, affirmative action works best when it is done because managers want to rather than because they have to.

There has been some success with the policy. In entry level positions and trades, it appears we have not only reached representation but actually gone beyond. There has also been greater success in some regions than in others. A policy which had goals based on regions and occupational groups would allow the Assembly and the public to see the areas of success as well as those where more work is required.

Maintaining hiring priority where it is not required creates resentment among others interested in applying for work. There should be a way to measure specific occupational groups and determine when representation has been reached. At that point, the policy should no longer apply.

Occupational groupings currently in place could be used:

- management
- professional

- technical
- administrative services
- labour & trades
- program delivery.

Due to the need to have reasonably large populations, the following regional groups should be used:

- Keewatin
- Baffin
- Kitikmeot
- Inuvik
- Fort Smith
- Headquarters.

We have recommended that headquarters' staff should reflect the entire NWT because that is the population they serve. However, staff in Yellowknife who are in positions classified as regional or local should reflect the region they serve, similar to staff in other regions.

We believe that there must be a more focused approach to ensuring a representative workforce. Critical to the success of this recommendation is regular and accurate information. Based on our past experience, we know this will test the adequacy of the GNWT information systems.

We have a concern about departments falling back to old habits. If departments are not forced to hire northerners, will they? The policy should require regular reassessment. This would be the safeguard, ensuring that priority would be applied again as soon as employment levels of affirmative action candidates fell below the level of representation.

We discussed the concept of representation and whether it should be based on the general population or the labour force. There were good arguments for either approach. The majority of members believe that the GNWT staff should be representative of the people they serve. They argue that representation goals should be based on the general population which is the people the government serves.

The government will need to set representation goals. Those representation goals should take into account the need for a strong pool of candidates at each level for promotion to the next level within the organization. In a Human Rights case from the NWT, it was ruled that GNWT representation goals beyond representation based on population was acceptable because there was a need for a larger pool of potential affirmative action candidates. For example, representation may be 35 percent but the representation goal could be 40, 45 or even 50 percent. For many of the occupational groups, representation goals should be set higher than actual representation rates to ensure sufficient candidates for promotion.

One of the key factors which affects representation is education levels among affirmative action candidates.

NWT Highest levels of schooling (1994)

	Inuit/ Non- Metis	Dene	Inuvialuit	Aboriginal
Grade 9 or less	25%	40.4%	46.4%	4%
Grade 10 or 11	23%	17.0%	16.2%	13%
High school	15%	10.7%	6.7%	27%
Post-secondary	36%	26.2%	25.2%	56%
Unknown	1%	5.7%	5.5%	0%

Programs like grade extensions are starting to have a positive impact in many communities. Over time, this impact will be reflected in the GNWT workforce as well.

Affirmative Action Recommendation 4 - We recommend that the definition of long-term northerner be revised to include anyone who has been a resident of the NWT for at least ten continuous years, immediately prior to applying under this priority.

The current policy provides hiring priority for long term northerners. It identifies a long term northerner as someone who was born in the NWT or who has lived more than half their life here. When the definition of long term northerner was

Page 1262

added to the policy in 1989, this definition was, in part, an attempt to address young people who had grown up side by side with each other, aboriginal and

non-aboriginal. By including long term northerners in the policy, it recognizes the inherent value to the government in hiring people who have made a commitment to living in the NWT, regardless of cultural background.

One of the difficulties with the current definition is that it amounts to a form of discrimination against people who moved to the north as an adult. Although they make a commitment to the north and their communities, they are often at the end of their career before they qualify as a long term northerner.

We looked carefully at how to revise the definition to address this concern. We wanted to stick with the intent of giving priority to people who had made the north their home. There is no way to determine when someone moves to the north how long they will stay. However, looking at GNWT employment statistics, the greatest drop-off is between five and ten years of service. With this in mind, we decided that someone who has stayed for at least ten years is probably going to stick around.

While many jurisdictions give local hiring preference, this priority category has always been open to possible challenge under the charter of rights and freedoms. While the government can clearly demonstrate the need for specific hiring priorities for aboriginal people to address past disadvantage, demonstrating this disadvantage for long term northerners is more difficult. By greatly expanding this priority group, this may become more of an issue.

The title of this priority group should be changed from "indigenous non-aboriginal" to "long-term northerner".

Affirmative Action Recommendation 5 - We recommend that the definition of indigenous aboriginal person be revised to more clearly address southern aboriginal people.

Priority One should become "northern aboriginal person". We recommend that the definition of northern aboriginal person should be changed to be an aboriginal person who was born in the NWT or who has spent at least ten years in the NWT immediately prior to applying for priority.

We believe this is more consistent with the policy's objective.

In applying this definition, there should be a degree of flexibility. The definition could include some aboriginal northerners who were born outside the NWT because

their parents were attending school or had short term employment elsewhere in Canada.

Affirmative Action Recommendation 6 - We recommend that the GNWT back up the philosophy of affirmative action/employment equity with dollars to support training and other initiatives.

We have not recommended any new initiatives which would involve one-time new money. However, we have suggested areas where there is a need for funds to provide an on-going base. When departments had to reduce their budgets in the past two years, one of the areas affected was staff training and development. If we are committed to a representative workforce, we have to recognize that sound human resources practices are necessary and there is a cost associated with developing our staff.

For every manager dedicated to developing and supporting staff, there are times when they will need money to provide opportunities. If affirmative action is really going to work, there must be a reasonable allocation of funds for human resource management.

The Hiring Process

Hiring Process Recommendation 1- We recommend that, every time a position is to be filled, the position description be reviewed to ensure the education and experience required accurately reflect the demands of the job.

Across the NWT, people said employees should be hired on merit. We believe that is happening now. Merit means deserving consideration or to be worthy. Anyone who has the required qualifications and is successful in the interview process has merit and is worthy of being considered for the job.

To be eligible for a position, a person needs to be qualified and suitable. Qualifications are determined during the screening process. A frequent comment about affirmative action applicants is that they are minimally qualified. There is no such thing as minimally qualified. All applicants who meet the education and experience requirements are considered qualified.

Suitability is determined through the interview process. A person is suitable if they appear able to deliver the skills necessary in the workplace.

Through the Affirmative Action policy, the GNWT also applies priority to the hiring process. However, merit

is always the key factor in determining which of the priority candidates should get the job.

There are some occupations where a specific degree or professional designation is necessary. For example, certain projects require an engineer to sign off or a journeyman to verify the quality of work. Some documents must be signed by a lawyer.

However, there is also a strong element of credentialism in the education requirements of some positions. Requiring extensive educational background has been defended by some as necessary to preserve professional standards. Others see this as a way of using inflated educational requirements to prevent northerners from accessing positions in particular fields.

We need a balance. We need to ensure people are qualified for the positions they occupy. At the same time, we need to

Page 1263

ensure that job descriptions are fair and accurate summaries of the job requirements. A good time to review job descriptions is just prior to staffing a position. Having accurate, up-to-date job descriptions should continue to be part of the staffing process.

Hiring Process Recommendation 2 - We recommend that at least three qualified candidates be interviewed for every job competition.

Members of the working group are aware of competitions where only one person was interviewed for a position. We were concerned with this for a couple of reasons.

When only one interview is done, there is often a perception that the successful candidate was pre-determined and the staffing competition was only a facade. Not only does this bring the staffing process into question, it can also lead to questions about the successful applicant's qualifications.

We are also concerned about time management. Staffing is a lengthy process. If only one person is interviewed, it is possible that they will not accept the job, they will do poorly on the interview, or there will be a problem with references. If this happens, the interview process begins again.

Limiting the interview process to only one person places too much weight on the applicants' resumes. A resume only gives a snapshot of a person's

background. It does not tell you how they will deal with other people or how they react on the job.

Applicants called to an interview usually make an effort to prepare. Knowing this, we looked at the argument that, if there is only one affirmative action candidate, it is a waste of time to interview the other candidates. On the other hand, people applying on government jobs are aware of the affirmative action policy and can expect that final decisions may be made based on the policy.

We recognize that, on rare occasion, there may be competitions where there are only one or two qualified applicants. However, we also recognize that determining qualified candidates with equivalencies is not an exact science. In these cases, the staffing panel should use their discretion in determining who to interview. As a general rule, we believe a full slate of interviews is appropriate in all cases.

Hiring Process Recommendation 3 - We recommend that an appeals process be established for management and excluded positions.

Staffing is very difficult. For every vacant position, there are many people competing for the position but only one winner. It is, therefore, important that applicants can be assured that the staffing was handled according to the GNWT guidelines and in a fair manner.

For GNWT positions included in the UNW bargaining unit, people who apply and have a concern with the results of the competition can appeal the staffing decision. This process is a joint effort between the government and the Union of Northern Workers. It is one of the tools necessary to ensure that competitions are carried out fairly.

For excluded and management positions, there is no appeal mechanism. This leaves managers with far more flexibility in how they follow the staffing guidelines. It also leaves applicants with uncertainty about whether their application received equitable consideration. We felt that there should be consistency from the top to the bottom of the organization.

Appeals add time when staffing a position. However, having a staffing process which is as objective as possible is important and worth the slight inconvenience of a delay in filling the position.

An appeals process for management and excluded positions does not have to be identical to the process for bargaining unit positions. However, we believe there should be some remedy for applicants, to ensure that the staffing guidelines are followed at all levels of the organization.

Within the GNWT, there is a Personnel Secretariat which is responsible for establishing staffing policy and monitoring staffing practices. This secretariat is lead by an assistant deputy minister. We would like to suggest that appeals of excluded and management positions should be handled by the assistant deputy minister, Personnel Secretariat or one of his senior staff. This individual would interview the applicant and the staffing panel and review the competition file. They could provide similar remedies as available under the union appeal process.

Hiring Process Recommendation 4 - We recommend the use of directed hiring practices to increase representation in the workforce.

At the present time, staffing competitions are supposed to be open to any applicants and advertised publicly. One of the benefits of this approach is that the general public should be aware of all job openings. It is also intended to reduce the potential for favouritism and nepotism in the hiring process.

There are a few drawbacks to having positions filled through open competition. It limits the opportunity to promote promising affirmative action candidates. It is also a drawback in career planning. Sometimes, a manager will have an excellent employee who they would like to promote, knowing the employee would do the job well. However, the employee's education or experience may not be at the level required when the job is advertised.

In order to use the hiring process to increase representation, we recommend that two approaches be used for specific positions:

Page 1264

1. Advertising some positions as only open to all affirmative action candidates; and
2. Using the direct appointment mechanism to promote or give priority to affirmative action candidates for positions in occupational groups where representation has not been attained.

Other jurisdictions use restricted (closed) competitions to promote individuals from a designated

group. The use of these competitions is successful, particularly where the department recognizes a need to encourage affirmative action candidates in a specific occupation. Restricted competitions are often used for positions which are designed as training opportunities for affirmative action candidates.

There are positions which are filled without being advertised, through direct appointments and contracts. For example, some of the recent senior management appointments were done this way. While there is some concern about the use of direct appointments, this can be a valuable tool for promoting affirmative action employees who are ready for advancement. The GNWT hiring guidelines already suggest direct appointments can be used to support affirmative action. Managers should consider this as one option in career planning for their staff.

This recommendation is closely linked to Affirmative Action Recommendation 3. It provides one possible mechanism for achieving the representation goals.

Hiring Process Recommendation 5 - We recommend that a student employment office be established in each region, operated where possible by students.

In previous years, there was a student employment office run by students in Yellowknife and some of the other regional centres. This provided a central source of information for departments. It also made it easier for students, who only had to provide their application to one government location.

With the decentralization of personnel functions to departments, students must apply at a number of locations. They do not have a single person who can help them assess the availability of possible jobs. It also makes it more difficult for departments to know who is still available and who is employed.

Students have a very short time to find employment. They cannot afford to miss even one possible job because they did not get their resume to every location. A central registry of student applications would make things easier for both students and departments.

It is important to note that while this recommendation addresses student employment, these concerns apply to all casual hiring.

Human Resource Management Recommendations

Human Resource Recommendation 1 - We recommend that the GNWT develop clear

accountability measures in the area of human resources management for both Ministers and deputy ministers

As we mentioned earlier, most successful government departments and private corporations support employees from hiring to retirement. Career planning and professional development for staff are important parts of a manager's responsibilities.

The changes resulting from the GNWT's deficit management plan have had a severe impact on the morale of government employees. In order to achieve some sense of stability, to promote northern employees, and to maintain levels of service with fewer staff, it is critical that the GNWT place more emphasis on strong human resource management.

We see the need for greater accountability at two levels. Standing Committees should hold Ministers accountable for the human resource practices within their departments. As well, Ministers should place a greater emphasis on human resource management in evaluating deputy minister performance.

HR Recommendation 1.1 - We recommend that the departmental business plans should include specific human resource management information.

Responsibility for evaluation of the deputy ministers rests with the Ministers and there is no role for Ordinary Members in those evaluations. However, there is a clear role for the standing committees in evaluating the human resource management within each department.

We recommend that the business plans provided by the departments should include a new section addressing human resource management. This section should include elements such as:

- positions by community, pre- and post-budget
- affirmative action statistics
- departmental turnover
- retention rates
- performance evaluation completion rates
- exit interview completion rates
- summary of orientation available for new staff
- staff development opportunities

- number of internships/developmental assignments available to assist entry into professional fields

Departments should also provide interim reports with the same information to standing committees in early March each year.

HR Recommendation 1.2 - We recommend that human resource management should have a much greater emphasis in deputy ministers' evaluations.

There would appear to be three areas that should form the basis of a deputy's evaluation

- How a department's programs operate;
- How the deputy minister manages the budget; and
- How the people in the department are managed.

The Premier has repeatedly stated that deputies will be evaluated, in part, on their success with affirmative action. We agree that human resource management, including affirmative

Page 1265

action, should be part of a deputy minister's performance evaluation.

Currently, human resource management would seem to be a small part of the evaluation. We reached this conclusion because, while human resource statistics for departments are either unavailable or reflect a lack of success in developing and promoting our employees, we are led to believe that the deputy ministers are generally very effective in their work.

Therefore, we recommend that the human resource issues should have a much greater emphasis in a deputy minister's evaluation.

Human Resource Recommendation 2 - We recommend that the current guidelines requiring completion of performance reviews annually should be enforced.

Annual performance evaluations should be a valuable part of the staff development process. A performance evaluation is a concrete tool for staff development and training needs identification. It ensures regular feedback to employees and managers about each person's work. It also provides an opportunity for managers to meet with staff to identify areas where training or other development options would increase

the employee's ability to contribute to the organization and achieve professional growth.

Regular evaluations should also provide an opportunity to identify concerns of employees before they reach the point where the employee quits. Given the high rate of turnover, particularly among first year aboriginal employees, these evaluations can be used to catch a problem before it gets out of hand.

Performance Appraisal Completion Rates 1996

Executive	5.4%
FMBS	6.0%
Finance	61.0%
MACA	26.7%
Transportation	9.8%
Public Works & Services	8.0%
Health & Social Services	9.2%
Renewable Resources	4.3%
Justice	68.6%
Economic Development & Tourism	7.0%
Education, Culture & Employment	1.0%
Safety & Public Services	14.3%
Energy, Mines & Petroleum Products	0%
Legislative Assembly	0%

The completion rates may be slightly lower because departments finish the appraisals but do not bother to enter them on the Government's Human Resource System. However, our information would tend to suggest that many employees just do not get reviews.

In reality, many employees view the appraisal process as threatening. It is often used to document performance problems and is seen as part of the disciplinary process rather than as a positive review and plan for growth. This perception is in part because appraisals are the exception rather than the rule for many staff.

The performance development system guidelines in the GNWT Human Resource manual provide for yearly reviews of all employees. There are also requirements for a review when an employee or supervisor leaves a position. These guidelines should be followed by all managers.

Giving all employees regular feedback is important. The completion rates for these reviews should be provided to the standing committees as outlined in Human Resource Recommendation 1. They should also form part of the evaluation of deputy minister performance.

The current performance evaluation process requires the use of a generic form. Some managers ignore the forms and use letters or a checklist, some have trouble with the compatibility of the electronic version of the form, and most do not complete the appraisals at all. We discussed this at length and believe there should be some consistency in evaluation format. However, there should be flexibility to allow departments to work with the FMBS to develop alternate evaluation forms where there is a specific need.

Human Resource Recommendation 3 - We recommend that managers work closely with staff to provide career development for all employees.

Staff development and training is the key to creating a highly skilled and effective workforce. It provides employees with personal and professional growth so they have a chance to progress through the organization. It also provides the organization with employees better able to cope with changing demands and increased workload.

Career development is not a one-way street. Both the employee and employer have a responsibility to identify development opportunities. We need to ensure the government's corporate culture allows everyone to fulfil that responsibility.

In implementing the Affirmative Action Policy, the GNWT has concentrated on hiring. At the present time, once the government has hired someone, opportunities for staff development seem to be hit and miss. If affirmative action is to be successful, it is also necessary to support the professional development of staff. This needs to be done in a planned way, with the employee and manager jointly setting a course of action.

As the most recent statistics show, the government has not been successful in moving affirmative action employees up in the organization beyond entry level positions. There is a perception that these employees have less access to staff training and development. This may be because they are less

Page 1267

likely to be direct in asking for it. The corporate culture may support the "squeaky wheel" over those who are less forward.

While it is important to provide staff development to support affirmative action, these opportunities must

also be available to all staff. A good employee is one who is growing and learning on the job. Sharing these opportunities with all employees makes good business sense.

Managers and employees should be aware of and support the importance of career development. They should be reminded that it is much broader than training courses. It can include elements such as acting appointments, special assignments, lateral transfers, mentor arrangements, and on-the-job training.

Human Resource Recommendation 4 - We recommend departments develop on-the-job training positions in areas where there is currently a low rate of affirmative action representation.

The government has a history of on-the-job training programs. The most recent is the Public Service Career Training Program. However, the success rate has not been good for a number of reasons:

- Candidates were selected through an elaborate central process ;
- People were expected to train themselves out of a job;
- They were run as open competitions rather than being used for a specific individual in a department where the manager wanted to develop potential;
- Some people just were not good trainers, no matter how many train-the-trainer courses they took;
- The need for a balance between practical experience and formal education was not always adequately outlined; and
- Employees were occasionally required to complete parts of the program outside workhours.

On-the-job training is one of the only ways mature individuals will be able to enter the more senior levels of government without a strong post-secondary background. Until there is a generation who have post-secondary education supplemented by work experience, practical on-the-job training may provide the best opportunity to promote affirmative action candidates into professional and managerial positions.

On-the-job training needs to be one of the tools used by departments in developing staff potential. Each department should have a small number of positions

available for on-the-job training. Sometimes departments should develop training positions in areas where there is currently a low rate of affirmative action representation. Other times, they should be created to provide a developmental assignment for a high potential staff member.

The GNWT has offered different forms of training positions in the past and can build on the lessons learned. The most important lesson is that these positions should be developed and driven by departments, rather than through a central authority.

We recognize that this recommendation may take slightly longer to develop and implement

Addressing the Future (Post Division)

We mentioned early in this report that employment equity works best when people want to support it rather than because they have to. Over time, we hope that the government can develop a Northern Employment Policy which will recognize the benefits of a home grown workforce.

Post-Division Recommendation 1 - We recommend that the Affirmative Action Policy be changed to a Northern Employment Policy.

The current Affirmative Action Policy is narrow in focus. It is only used as a tool to provide hiring priority for specific priority individuals. We suggest there is a need for a broader Northern Employment Policy. This policy would provide support for the hiring and promotion of northerners in a way which was more consistent with the mobility sections of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There are a number of components which should be part of the Northern Employment Policy.

1. The policy should provide specific hiring priority (employment equity) for groups considered disadvantaged under the Charter (aboriginal people, disabled, women in specific occupations).
2. The policy should provide general hiring preference for all northerners, recognizing the advantages of putting local residents to work.
3. The policy should support the need for strong human resource management and outline the key elements and practices which should be in place in all departments, boards and agencies.

4. The policy should address possible links between government, private business, and non-government organizations for purposes of staff development.

The earlier recommendations in this report set the stage for a shift in the government's approach to human resource management. This recommendation will complete the shift.

Some work should begin on this recommendation over the next two years. Following division, each new government will then be able to finalize their own northern hire policies which reflect their goals with regard to representation and employment of northerners.

Post-Division Recommendation 2 - We recommend that a monitoring process be established to ensure affirmative action is actively supported throughout the organization.

We have made a number of recommendations to improve the GNWT representation. While we hope that the Ministers and GNWT managers will be active in supporting affirmative action and providing strong human resource development, past experience would show that there is also a need for monitoring.

As we plan for the two new territories, we suggest that consideration be given to creating an independent monitoring

Page 1268

body. We are not suggesting a Public Service Commission which has a broader role in most jurisdictions including elements such as staff training. Instead, a body should be in place which will allow for an independent, on-going evaluation of the hiring and human resource management practices of departments, boards and agencies.

Its role could include providing a panel of independent individuals to sit on all staffing competitions to ensure a fair process.

Prior to division, the personnel secretariat should play a much stronger role in monitoring the implementation of the Affirmative Action Policy and other human resource management practices. The secretariat should develop a clear plan and process for carrying out the necessary monitoring. This process should be in place and included in the report to the Standing Committee on Government Operations in September.

Follow-Up to Recommendations

We believe there are significant opportunities for positive change in the short term. The GNWT can and must improve its performance, both in increasing affirmative action representation and in providing sound human resource practices for all employees.

Follow-up Recommendation 1 - We recommend that the Premier provide a report to the Standing Committee on Government Operations by September 22, 1997, outlining the action the government is taking with respect to the recommendations in this report.

This report should also be tabled in the October sitting of the Legislative Assembly. The report should include an indication of the progress made by the government in implementing the recommendations of this report as well as future plans.

APPENDIX A

Other Suggestions

During our review, we looked at a whole range of human resource management areas. We tried to identify those which we felt were most critical in achieving a representative workforce.

However, in the course of our review, we identified a number of other options for improving representation and overall human resource management. While we did not spend a significant amount of time on these options, we feel they may be worth a second look and further consideration. The government or individual departments may wish to consider the following suggestions as part of the toolbox available to managers.

Some of the suggestions would be easy to implement while others would take longer to establish.

Suggestion 1 - Progression within a specific occupational group should be based on merit and experience rather than on waiting for a vacancy at the next level.

Most jobs are fairly unique, requiring a specific set of skills. You learn the job and become proficient at it. In time, you may wish to broaden your experience or move to something new so you apply for a promotion or a transfer.

However, there are some positions within the GNWT which have a number of levels. The difference between the levels are the degree of authority and responsibility. Examples of this type of position would include:

- CSSW

- Renewable Resource Officer

- Economic Development Officer.

Currently, the only way for someone who is a RR officer I to become a RRII is to apply on a RRII position. This means waiting for a vacancy or possibly transferring to another community. This causes a number of problems. Often an officer has gained the skills necessary to carry out the additional duties. However, the department is not able to recognize that increase in expertise and knowledge in a formal way. There can also be restrictions on the amount of authority and responsibility that a department can assign the individual. This has resulted in communities losing good workers just because they had to move in order to progress to the next level within their field.

There are some positions where the job is discrete and the various levels only reflect increasing levels of responsibility and authority. In these cases, departments should be given the latitude to move an employee from one level to the next. This should happen as part of the annual performance review process when the employee has attained the skills and experience required for the next level. For example, when a CSSWII is ready and able to assume the responsibilities of a CSSWIII, the employer should be able to make this change simply by reclassifying the position.

We acknowledge that there is a potential cost to allowing this type of progression. However, that cost must be weighed against the cost now for replacing and retraining individuals because their opportunities for advancement are limited.

Suggestion 2 - Departments should actively explore temporary transfer arrangements for strong candidates for management or senior management.

In the House recently, a Minister praised the broad background and experience of a newly hired assistant deputy minister. Northerners often have to make a choice between working in the north or obtaining a broad work background with extensive post-secondary education. We want to encourage northerners to apply their skills and talents at home. In order to let these individuals become truly competitive for the most senior positions, we need to create opportunities to allow potential

directors/assistant deputy ministers/deputy ministers to broaden their experience.

Departments should actively explore temporary transfer arrangements for strong candidates for management or senior management. These transfers would create a developmental opportunity at a level of the organization where there are often limited avenues for growth. As well the GNWT could look at

Page 1269

options like creating a pool of positions which could be used as a training ground, including assistants to deputy ministers.

It is also the responsibility of individuals to explore options for their own professional development. Where a manager and an employee agree that the employee shows the potential to rise within the managerial ranks, the employee should also feel free to identify areas where they would like to gain additional experience. In these cases, the manager needs to be supportive.

This needs to be done very carefully. The selection of individuals for these opportunities must also be seen as fair and open.

Suggestion 3 - Aurora and Nunavut Arctic Colleges should be encouraged to offer a one-stop information service identifying bursaries and scholarships.

The need for more education has been emphasized repeatedly in the Assembly. As we noted earlier in this report, the average education levels in the north, particularly among aboriginal people, are quite low. The government offers student financial assistance to encourage northerners to attend post-secondary education. Despite this assistance, many students find it difficult to survive financial at school. Many mature students attending post-secondary institutions are doing so in order to find work - they do not have savings to draw on for living expenses. With limited summer employment opportunities, younger students are in the same situation.

There are a number of bursaries and scholarships available through government departments or private organizations and businesses. If we are serious about supporting northern students, we should ensure information about scholarships and bursaries is easily accessible in a single location. We understand that Aurora College has developed a partial list of this

extra financial assistance. The two colleges are the logical organizations to have this information.

Aurora and Nunavut Arctic Colleges should be encouraged to offer a one-stop information service identifying bursaries and scholarships. It should be available through an internet site and a written summary available to all schools and career centres. There needs to be adequate publicity about the information so that organizations remember to include their scholarships and so students, parents and teachers are aware of it.

We understand that the North Slave Career Centre does prepare a written booklet outlining scholarships and bursaries. This is a good start but the information needs to be tied into the colleges and available in an electronic format.

Suggestion 4 - All GNWT scholarships/bursaries should have at least a three year residency requirement and should apply the GNWT Affirmative Action priorities to ensure these funds benefit northerners.

As a working group, we believe strongly that the GNWT should be encouraging the education and employment of northerners. GNWT scholarships and bursaries should be one of the supports available to northerners as they try to improve their education.

A quick review of GNWT scholarships and bursaries reveals a range of eligibility criteria. Some require one year's residency while others require more. Some use affirmative action but not all. We would like to see some consistency. With limited dollars available, we would like to see those dollars helping northern students.

Suggestion 5 - We recommend that each new hire be assigned a mentor/buddy within the department.

It is not enough to hire the right people. You also have to keep them. Often, a new employee can feel very isolated in a new job. They do not know the routine or how they might fit. In addition to the job, they have to learn the social matrix which exists among the staff. Success in a job sometimes depends on how well a person becomes part of the social structure rather than on their actual job performance.

To ease the way for new employees, each new hire should be assigned a mentor/buddy within the department. This person would show them the ropes and be available to answer questions or help out in

any number of ways. This would have a double benefit. It would make the transition to the new workplace easier for the employee. It would also allow other employees to take ownership in the work done in the department and to share their knowledge with someone else.

Suggestion 6 - The GNWT should encourage employee groups for designated individuals

Affirmative Action candidates entering the GNWT workforce often run the risk of being isolated. In addition to learning the actual job, there is also a complex social structure in every office. There can be a sense of isolation from the less formal, working relationships that people in the same office form with each other. Other jurisdictions have created groups or committees of designated individuals which give employees a sense of belonging. These groups can help employees address questions about corporate practices which they may not understand. They can also identify practices which make employment for specific individuals more difficult or uncomfortable. Much of how the government operates has evolved over the years. It needs to continue to evolve to reflect the people it serves.

For example, the Yukon government has a group of 17 women representing all parts and levels of the organization. They provide advice and identify areas where there are concerns for women in the Yukon government. They also suggest focus areas for each year such as harassment and try to provide opportunities to address these areas.

Within the GNWT, the Department of Government Services had a successful support group of aboriginal employees. This group's success came in part because it was employee initiated and actively supported by the employer.

These types of groups work best if they are initiated by employees. However, the responsibility to provide a environment which will allow these types of groups must be established by the employer.

Suggestion 7 - Bridging programs should be implemented for two areas:

Page 1270

- college/university graduates into first jobs
- women and aboriginal people into management positions

In the workplace, there are certain types of barriers which people have difficulty with. There are a number of reasons why they exist. In order to reduce the barriers, it is sometimes necessary to provide a helping hand for specific groups of people through a bridging program.

A bridging program acts as an intermediate step. It places people in a new job situation while giving them access to a support system. Bridging programs recognize that not only is the employee in an area which is largely foreign to them, the employer may also need to provide some accommodation.

Looking across the country, there are two areas of transition which have been identified as particularly difficult. Looking at GNWT employment statistics, it appears that they are also difficult for northern employees. A bridging program for these two areas seems appropriate.

One area where bridging has been useful is for introducing new college or university graduates into their first jobs. These individuals bring a wealth of academic background but are often missing practical work experience. As well, the workplace is significantly different from a post-secondary institution. Graduates are used to a fair amount of autonomy, self-directed work, and generally a fair amount of flexibility in work hours. This contrasts with most offices where those in entry-level positions have limited autonomy, seldom make major decisions, and hours of work, appearance and behaviour are quite important.

Bridging is also very effective for assisting women and aboriginal people successfully enter management positions. When women and aboriginal people become managers, they are seldom surrounded by peers. There is often an adjustment period as the existing management group adjusts to having a new and different presence in their midst. There is also an adjustment for the new manager as they establish their place in the organization. Studies show that women and aboriginal people generally have management styles which have strong elements of consensus-building and teamwork. This contrasts with more traditional management which is based on power. In order to allow different styles to exist comfortably side by side, a bridging program can be helpful.

Suggestion 8 - The government should work with the colleges to develop co-op programs in a number of fields of study.

A common complaint is that graduates cannot get jobs because they have no experience and they have no experience so they can get a job. This problem could be addressed in part by a partnership between the government and the colleges. This partnership should provide co-operative programs of study.

A co-op program at a university or college consists of a combination of academic study and practical on-the-job application of the concepts being learned. It is similar to the work/study rotation in many apprenticeship programs. Typically, students are not paid or receive only a token reimbursement during the work placements.

In addition to helping students develop practical experience, a co-op program could also address some of the negative public perception about the quality of the colleges' graduates. By working together, the employer (government in this case) would be able to provide direct feedback to the educational institution about the quality of instruction.

The government work with the colleges to develop co-op programs in a number of fields of study. For example, co-op programs in renewable resources, social work and management studies might be a good place to start.

The potential of co-op programs is not limited to the public sector. We should also encourage the colleges to develop these programs in conjunction with the private sector, such as mines.

Suggestion 9 - The hiring process should be revised to actively support flexible work situations.

Many governments and private corporations are discovering the value of a commitment to flexible work. Work is, and should be, only one part of a person's life. Often, an accommodation in the workplace which helps an employee's personal situation will also benefit the employer. For example, studies show that the productivity of two employees sharing a job is greater than that of a single employee doing the same work. They also show that a parent who can shift their hours by 30 minutes to get their children to school are more content and productive on the job.

In the north, there are many individuals who wish to maintain part of their traditional lifestyle and there are also many young parents in the workforce. Flexibility in working hours and arrangements can help them become happier employees.

The corporate culture and the union are only marginally supportive of flexible arrangements. For example, there are still managers who believe people will not work unless they are being supervised. As well, the staffing process makes it difficult to support flexible work arrangements. As a result, although options like job sharing and flexible hours are available on paper, in reality they are seldom used.

Creating a flexible workplace which still ensures the job gets done and the public is served requires openness and creativity on behalf of employees and managers. As a starting point, the hiring process needs to be reviewed and revised to more actively support flexible work situations.

Suggestion 10 - A pool of funds should be available in each department to support managers in working with new hires.

As a result of the Legislative Assembly's commitment to maintaining a balanced budget, departments are being asked to do more with less. With downsizing, managers and their staff are usually carrying a heavier load than they did in the past. When there is a vacant position, employees already putting in a full day try to pick up the duties of the position. This puts pressure on managers to hire employees who have

Page 1271

the shortest learning curve possible. They need every position filled with someone who can do the job quickly.

There are affirmative action applicants who would do an excellent job but they are missing one particular piece of the necessary background. Although they have many equivalencies, they may be missing some specialized training or specific work experience. The manager would like to hire the person and give them the extra attention needed to get them up to speed on the job. Unfortunately, managers often do not have the luxury of time to provide this attention. As a result, managers have two choices:

- Consider other candidates who may have more of the required skills up front; or
- Hire the person and hope they can make it (a sink or swim approach).

The affirmative action applicant either does not get a chance at the job or is set up to potentially fail.

In order to encourage managers to work with promising affirmative action candidates, they need some support. They need things like

- Overlap time between the previous person in the job and the new;
- Training funds to support the new employee; and
- Casual backup support for a short period of time.

The idea is not to double fill positions but to give a new employee and their manager the opportunity to make it through the learning curve. There should be a small dedicated pool of funds available in each department to support managers in working with new hires. This would allow departments to hire someone with potential but slightly short on specific skills and provide training and support early on.

Suggestion 11 - Departments should develop programs for secondary students which will give them practical experience with potential jobs, particularly at the professional and technical level.

True success in representation will come with the next generation. If students are encouraged to stay in school and pursue jobs at the professional level, we will have our own northern engineers, lawyers, nurses and managers.

We need to expose students to the range of possibilities. An occasional career day helps but it is not enough. If young people are not aware of what a job is and what it involves, they are unlikely to choose it as a career. The government needs to expand the range of hands-on opportunities for students to experience various public service jobs.

Programs like the Introduction to Engineering, Architecture and Computer Technology are showing results. These programs provide students with practical exposure to possible careers. Unfortunately, similar programs in other departments were cut as part of the deficit management plan.

Students need the opportunity to see a range of careers first-hand. Even with very modest budgets, departments are only limited by the creativity and imagination of their staff in finding ways to highlight specific jobs. If we are to achieve representation, we need to help students see the range of possibilities ahead of them.

APPENDIX B

Minority Opinion

Most of the recommendations and suggestions in the report were supported by all members of the working group. Given the divergent opinions of the four members, we are pleased that we were able to reach consensus on most items.

There were a few areas where Mr. Henry felt a different approach should be taken. They are outlined as follows:

Affirmative Action Recommendation 3

Mr. Henry agreed with the overall recommendation providing that Cabinet places an emphasis on secondary and post-secondary education for NWT youth. He felt representation should be based on the labour force rather than on general population.

Affirmative Action Recommendation 4

The member felt the length of time to qualify as a long-term northerner should be five years.

Hiring Process Recommendation 4

The member does not support directed hiring practices to increase representation. He feels hiring priority, along with an increased emphasis on education, is sufficient.

Human Resource Recommendation 1

Mr. Henry suggested there is a need for a clear process for accountability. He is concerned about tying the hands of managers.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. I would then move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha that Committee Report 7-13(4) be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole for consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent to waive rule 93(4) and have the report moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to waive rule 93(4). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. Committee Report 7-13(4) is moved into committee of the whole. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Enuaraq.

Page 1272

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act and wishes to report that Bill 16 is now ready for consideration in committee of the whole, and request unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5) to have Bill 16 ordered into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Bill 16 is ordered into committee of the whole for today. Mr. Enuaraq.

Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Act

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act and wishes to report that Bill 17 is now ready for consideration in committee of the whole, and request unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5) to have Bill 17

ordered into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Bill 17 is ordered into committee of the whole for today. Mr. Enuaraq.

Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act No. 2

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act No. 2 and wishes to report that Bill 18 is now ready for consideration in the committee of the whole and requests unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5) to have Bill 18 ordered into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to waive rule 70(5). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. Bill 18 will be ordered into committee of the whole for today. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a package of information I received from the Minister of Transportation in response to my question during the 1997/98 main estimates review in committee of the whole, Tabled Document 83-13(4). Mr. Speaker, this is detailed information pertaining to the number of NWT residents who were employed on 1996 Highway 3 construction project, which is comprised of the employment report of four separate construction projects awarded for Highway 3. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, Tabled Document 84-13(4), Working Together Towards a Protected Areas Strategy for the Northwest Territories. This is a summary report of the meetings held in Inuvik, March 4th to the 6th, 1997. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Ms. Thompson.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amending Act No. 2

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 4, 1997, I will move that Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amending Act No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Ms. Thompson.

Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 4, 1997, I will move that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 17-13(4): Establishment of Parks

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the following motion. It is an establishment of a natural environment recreation park and certain outdoor recreation parks.

WHEREAS, the Minister may pursuant to subsection 5(1) of the Territorial Parks Act on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly by order establish a natural environment recreation park and an outdoor recreation park,

AND WHEREAS, the Minister wishes to establish a natural environment recreation park and certain outdoor recreation parks in the Northwest Territories,

AND WHEREAS, the Minister has consulted with the representatives of those persons or groups who reside in or

Page 1273

near the location of the proposed parks and who may be effected by the establishment of the proposed parks,

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Legislative Assembly recommend that the Minister, by order, establish the following parks as a natural environment recreation park and outdoor recreation park respectively:

a) Natural Environment Recreation Park.

Hidden Lake Territorial Park situated in the North Slave Region approximately 40 kilometres from Yellowknife on the Ingraham Trail on the shore of Hidden Lake and bisected by Cameron River and more particular, described in tabled document 79-13(4);

b) Outdoor Recreation Parks

1) Blackstone Territorial Park situated in the Deh Cho region along Highway No. 7, midway between Fort Simpson and Fort Liard at the junction of the Liard and Blackstone Rivers and more particular, described in tabled document 80-13(4);

2) Gwich'in Territorial Park situated in the Inuvik region on the Dempster Highway approximately 25 kilometres south of Inuvik on the east and south shores of Campbell Lake and more particular described in tabled document 80-13(4).

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour. All those

opposed. The motion is carried. Motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Minister's Statement 77-13(4), Bills 16, 17, and 18, and Committee Report 7-13(4), with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the committee to order. We have a number of items here. Minister's Statement 77-13(4), the Northern Employment Strategy, Committee Report 7, Bills 16, 17, and 18. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that we consider Bills 16, 17, and 18.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree then, we consider Bills 16, 17, and 18? Thank you. The bills that we referred to are in your green binders on your desk. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I propose that we start off with Bill 17 and 18.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Does the committee agree we deal with Bills 17 and 18 first and Bill 16 subsequently? Agreed. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng, I would like to introduce Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act.

The Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act is legislation that ensures that all residents of the NWT are eligible for insured services. It authorizes the Minister of Health and Social Services to establish boards of management for health facilities and programs. It makes employees of hospitals and health facilities members of the public service. Schedules A and B of the Public Service Act also make boards of management employees part of the public service.

The proposed amendments would exempt doctors from the public service. Because the physicians on staff with boards has increased significantly as a result of the 1997 increase in the employee contribution rates under the federal super-annuation plan for employees earning over an excess of \$98,600. The increased cost to boards has adversely effected their ability to employ physicians.

As well, the Federal Special Retirement Arrangements Act provides for a retirement compensation arrangement where the 1997 contribution rate for employers is 15 times that of the employee. The net result is the annual contribution will cost boards an average of an additional \$65,000 for each general practitioner and \$145,000 for each specialist working for a board. With these amendments, the boards and physician staff will be able to enter into another compensation arrangement that would significantly reduce the cost for the boards and address the unique needs of physicians who hold staff positions and operate a private practice at different stages in their careers. The NWT boards of management and the NWT Health Care Association are supportive of these amendments.

In closing, I want to emphasize that these are necessary amendments that will allow boards that employ physicians to reallocate significant amounts of money. The physician will have adequate benefit packages outside the federal systems. The public will also benefit as more money will be available for health care. I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Deputy chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, Mr. Miltenberger, are you prepared to make a committee's comment? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, I would like to report on our review of Bill 17, An Act To Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act.

This bill should increase the ability of health boards to retain physician services within their budgets without impacting on the individual physicians. On June 2, 1997, we held a public hearing on the bill with Minister Arlooktoo filling in for Minister Ng. No public stakeholders expressed concerns with the bill. During

the review, the Members received reassurance from the Minister that these changes will not negatively effect the

Page 1274

boards ability to recruit physicians. The Minister also indicated that the boards will continue to follow the government's hiring policy. The Standing Committee on Social Programs has completed its review and has no major concerns with the proposed Bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Before we get into the general comments I would like to ask the Minister to bring in the witnesses if he chooses to. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, if the witnesses are here, I will ask them in.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the Members attention to the time we have left before we call it a day. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to go ahead with the Bill at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments from the floor? We are considering Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. Does the committee agree that Bill 17 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. Bill 17 is now ready for third reading. Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services, I am pleased to introduce today, Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act, No. 2

As I said previously, this Act is legislation that ensures all residents of the NWT are eligible for insured services. It also authorizes the Minister of Health and Social Services to establish boards of management for health facilities and programs.

The amendments in this Bill will allow boards of management to operate, manage and control social services, programs and facilities such as children and

elders group homes, child protection, adoption wellness and adult and young offenders programs and services. It will also eliminate the legislative barrier to the consolidation of Health and Social Services at the regional level, as approved in the department's 1997 main estimates.

Finally, changing the name of the Act to better reflect these main responsibilities, the new name will be the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act. These amendments are consistent with the GNWT desire for communities to assume greater authority for programs and services. By expanding the powers of boards, the regions and the communities can have direct input on how health and social service facilities are operated.

Programs may be delivered and designed according to local needs and priorities. These amendments will also ensure that all board members can operate social service programs and services legally. The statutory protection that exists for current boards of management and operation of health facilities and programs can extend to these boards for all programs and services.

It should be easier for these boards that apply the necessary insurance coverage. I would be pleased to answer any questions of the Members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Member for Standing Committee on Social Programs. Mr. Roland, do you have opening remarks?

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Report on review of Bill 18 and Act to Amend Territorial Hospital Insurances Services Act, No. 2. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, I would like to report on our review of Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act, No. 2.

This Bill provides the Legislative Assembly authority for the amalgamated Boards of Health and Social Services. On June 2, 1997, we held a public hearing on the Bill, with Minister Arlooktoo filling in for Minister Ng. No public stakeholders expressed concerns with the Bill. Members did express a concern to the Minister that under the amalgamated boards, there was still a need to maintain an equally strong roles of both health services and social services. There was

an indication that this would be addressed through the core needs each board would have to provide.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has completed its review and has no major concerns with the proposed Bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments? Are we ready for general comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the powers that we seem to be giving to the regional health boards

Page 1275

and these amalgamation - an example I would like to use is the mental health workers position that has been eliminated in Fort McPherson. There was no consultation whatsoever with the community. It was a board decision. I would like to know exactly where in this Act it allows that there will be that insurance that the communities which are affected by the decision of the bureaucrats and the people on the board, will have an avenue for public consultation, a mechanism so that when these decisions are made, they are accountable to the people they are making them for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister. Do you want to respond now or do you want to bring in the witnesses before you can reply?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I understand the witnesses are ready to come in the Chamber, so if I could have the permission of the House to bring them in so they could assist in answering that question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Members, do you concur with the Minister that we bring in the witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Proceed with the witnesses please, Sergeant-at-Arms.

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you please introduce the witnesses? This is for the record. Thank you.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me is David Ramsden, the deputy minister of Health and Social Services and Bronwyn Watters, the director of policy for Health and Social Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Welcome to the committee of the whole. Honourable Minister, do you remember the question or can you confirm it with your officials who will respond to the honourable Member? Thank you.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the issue or the question was whether the Act would ensure the public is consulted on important matters such as change in its structure. I would ask that Mr. Ramsden respond to that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Deputy minister, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. The key issue that we are striving for here is to make sure the board trustees are closely linked to the communities they represent so when there is discussion around key decisions that are being made at a board table, there be an opportunity for board trustees to take a lot of the information and discussion back to communities. The Minister has taken several steps to ensure in fact now communities and political organizations signal their wish in terms of the trustees they want to have on the boards of management. I think the latter part of it is as much some growing awareness on the boards' part that if they need to make key shifts in policy they have to work as hard as people elected or working at a territorial level to make sure they effectively work with and discuss with residents of communities, the implications and effects of changes that are being proposed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the way the board decisions are made, the powers seem to have come from the headquarters level, given to a regional board, in which they have established regional specialists on some sort of a committee, that suggests what they think is good for the communities.

I do not know what the link is between the regional specialist and the people in the communities, in that they are the ones that made the decision to remove the mental health worker from Fort McPherson, with no consultation with the community or the health workers in the communities, to make that decision. It is left with the group of people, which consist of a regional specialist group or a committee, to make decisions on behalf of individuals and the communities. So I would like to know what the role is of these regional specialists, with the regional health board and how they consult the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Through the honourable Minister, I would like to recognize Mr. David Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the changes in staff that the Member is referring to, there was advice given to the board trustees on how they needed to change the staffing because the scope of the mental health pilot project in the Inuvik region had changed.

Over the previous years there have been three key contributors to that project. One of the key players could not maintain their financial support for the pilot project for this fiscal year. So the board had to make some decisions on how to reduce the overall staffing complement. The specialists gave advice to the trustees in that case in terms of supporting the staffing changes. This was not done purely at a staff or a specialist level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is exactly what we were trying to get away from in order to empower communities and also allow communities to take on more responsibility in regards to the well being of the residents of the communities. Now we are back to

leaving the power to a committee to make recommendations to what they see fit on behalf of those people we are trying to maintain the service for.

The mental health workers in the communities are there because they have been identified because there is a problem in the community to deal with mental health either in relation to suicide or sexual abuse or alcohol and drug related incidents. They are there to support the community. When you take that support mechanism away, where else do you go? In my region, we might as well say come in with the bulldozer and plough everything away all that related to treatment facilities such as the TI'oondih Healing Society program, also Delta House and now the mental health workers in the communities. It seems like the power we understood was there to empower communities and give more responsibilities to the region,

Page 1276

seems not to have touched home base. It is flowing down but it has not got that far yet. There is a lack of consultation with the communities to ask exactly what the caregivers want or what the community band council or hamlet council feel about these programs. That process did not take place. It was left to a special committee to state what their views were, which was a few individuals out of Inuvik. They did not even make an attempt to go into the community to consult the people on what decisions they are making.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame, shame.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

The situation in this case here was simply there are dollar pressures around what could be afforded. The kind of implications in terms of which communities need to be impacted are taken, I am sure, seriously by the board. They attempt to measure the relative impact. What we know is the board was unable to secure funding from all of the partners that were part of that pilot project and they had to make some choice around how they cope with the reduced funding. The board of management consists of representatives from the key political groups that are based in communities as well as the two major communities in

that region. It has certainly been the Ministers' view that that group is capable of measuring both the community impact as well as engaging the community in discussions before key decisions like that are made.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Krutko and Mr. Ootes. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems we are always using the excuse that it is lack of money, but we are able to fund a Regional Specialist Committee, which must take money to run and operate. I mean we are putting the money where our mouth is. Why do we not put it where the people will benefit the most, which is having mental health workers to assist people in need rather than having a committee in place to make decisions on behalf of those people to say what is good for them? If communities are demanding a mental health worker than I think that community should have the resources to do it versus having the money being spent at the regional office in relation to having specialists which should be in the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I also have Mr. O'Brien on the list. I have Mr. Krutko, then Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the board is given the authority to try to balance a number of decisions in terms of which resources can be supported or work in each individual community and which resources need to be shared by all the communities in the region. It is our view in this case that they made the best decision that they had given the range of options that were open to them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I will now recognize Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I move that we 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 of the motion, please signify. Down. Thank you. Opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress to the Speaker. I would like to thank the witnesses.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 17 and Bill 18 and would like to report that Bill 17 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, 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 Caucus at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, of the Ordinary Member's Caucus at 11:00 a.m., and of the Western Caucus at 12 noon.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 3, 1997:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions

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

Page 1277

18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Ministers Statement 77-13(4), The Northern Employment Strategy
 - Committee Report 7-13(4), Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the NWT Housing Corporation Act
 - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act, No. 2
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Hospital Insurance Services Act

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 3, 1997 at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT