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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

--O Canada

ITEM 1: PRAYER

Drum Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

(Translation) Before we begin, I ask Members to offer their prayers for John Todd and his family. As many of you might have heard, Mr. Todd's son, Ian, died tragically this past weekend. I also ask Members to join me in sending best wishes to Mr. Antoine and his family. Mr. Antoine's father is doing well after a successful operation last week. On your behalf, I thank Amber LeMouel for her beautiful singing of O Canada, also the Detah Drummers.

Welcome back Members to this special session of the Assembly. If Members will permit, I want to make a few remarks about the significance of the debate which you will be having today. Over the last 30 years, Canadians have had to deal with difficult situations where the unity of this country and its future have been threatened. These pressures go beyond what Canadians have come to expect when governments or people do not agree on a particular problem, and it takes time to work out a solution.

In the recent past, some Canadians have expressed their doubts about whether it is worthwhile to keep a united Canada, made up of all provinces and territories, including Quebec. On the other hand, on the eve of the October, 1995, Quebec sovereignty referendum, there were thousands of Canadians who took the opposite view and expressed their love for this country. Today Members will have the opportunity to debate a report and resolution on national unity.

I understand that Members have carefully considered the Calgary framework and have consulted with their

constituents on how improvements could be made to reflect the interests and

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status of the Northwest Territories and its aboriginal peoples. I look forward to the debate on how Members believe a resolution from this Assembly should be worded and (Translation ends) what its objectives should be from a territorial and aboriginal perspective. I would also encourage Members to use this debate to state their views and the views of their constituents on what it means to be a Canadian. This is just as important because we all need to take time now and then to reflect upon the diversity, compassion, generosity and potential of this country and how fortunate we are to be Canadians, despite our problems. Canadians across the north and, eventually in the south, will be viewing this debate which is the first on any jurisdiction in Canada. I know Members will take this large viewing audience into account when making sincere and eloquent statements about national unity and this great country of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to stand down orders of the day to enable the House to engage in a special debate on national unity with order being reports of standing and special committees followed by motions and further that Rule 44 be waived for the National Unity Motion. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, upon the question being called and the vote taken on the resolution on national unity that the House then revert back to the orders of the day and proceed with routine orders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Premier is seeking unanimous consent to stand down the orders of the day to enable the House to engage in a special debate on national unity, the orders being reports of standing and special committees followed by motions. And further, that Rule 44 be waived for the National Unity Motion and further, upon question being called and vote taken on the resolution on the national unity that the House then reverts back to the orders of the day and proceed with the routine orders. Do we have any

nays? There are no nays. Mr. Morin, you have unanimous consent.

COMMITTEE REPORT 1-35(5): Report of the Special Committee on National Unity

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present the Report of your Special Committee on National Unity.

Mr. Speaker, on September 14, 1997, the Premiers of all provinces and territories, except Quebec, met in Calgary to discuss measures which could be taken to promote national unity and the strength of Canadian federation. The meeting was prompted, in part, by a concern about yet another Quebec referendum on separation and the implications which secession could have for Canada.

Premiers unanimously agreed that the first and most important step was to conduct grassroots consultations with their constituents to determine their views on national unity and strengthening the federation, including the issue of Quebec's status within a united Canada.

Premiers also agreed on a seven point framework to help focus the consultations, although provinces and territories were given the opportunity of including additional topics and issues to accurately represent their constituents' interests and circumstances. Guidelines for consultation were also adopted. (Appendix 4)

Mr. Speaker, following consultations in their respective jurisdictions, Premiers agreed that they would have a debate on the results and a resolution which reflects the views of their constituents on national unity and strengthening the federation as laid out in the Calgary consultation framework with revisions to reflect special issues of interests.

In response to the commitment made on behalf of the Northwest Territories in Calgary on September 14th, the Legislative Assembly established a Special Committee on National Unity to oversee and monitor a Northwest Territories, consultation process, provide updates and analysis on the national consultation process, prepare a report on Northwest Territories' consultations and recommend a resolution for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

The purpose of this report, Mr. Speaker, is to provide the Legislative Assembly and Northwest Territories' residents with information on how consultations were

conducted in the Northwest Territories, the results of these consultations and recommendations on how the Legislative Assembly can express the position of the Northwest Territories through a National Unity Resolution.

The report also provides some background on national unity consultation initiative, including the latest account of what is taking place in other jurisdictions, how aboriginal interests are being taken into account and the role of the Northwest Territories in previous national unity and constitutional reform initiatives.

The Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly is the first in Canada to receive a report on national unity consultations and debate a National Unity Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it is the special committee's intention to allow Members of the committee to present parts of our report. To that end I will now hand over to the Member for Hay River, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in addition to obtaining the reaction of Northwest Territories' residents to the seven points of the Calgary framework, the special committee confirmed three fundamental themes to serve as the basis for consultation on national unity and strengthening the federation. It should be noted that these three themes also served as the Northwest Territories' delegation's objectives when Premiers met in Calgary to develop the national unity consultation framework.

First, promoting national unity and strengthening the federation must take into account the everyday needs and a secure lifestyle for northern residents and all Canadians. A strong and united Canada is a country where its citizens have access to quality education, health care, housing and other social services. A strong and united Canada will provide productive employment for its citizens, such as support for its elders and a prosperous future for its children and youth. Mr. Speaker, these important features of a strong and united Canada are undergoing change as governments consider social policy reform and renewal including how governments and Canadians can pay for these programs and services.

Second, national unity and strengthening the federation must take into account the historical and current realities of Canadian aboriginal nations, their status as founding peoples of this country and the special land, treaty and self-government rights that they have under our Constitution. The special committee agrees that while the Northwest Territories can make an important contribution on these historic and current aboriginal realities, it will also be important for aboriginal peoples and their leadership from throughout the country to provide their input to the consultation process and have it reflected in resolutions from the provinces and territories. The special committee, Mr. Speaker, is pleased that an agreement was reached in Winnipeg on November 18th between Premiers and national aboriginal leaders to have a framework document on relations between federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal governments referred to the national unity consultation process.

Third, national unity and a strengthened federation must take into account that Canada is comprised of provinces and territories, and that the northern territories comprise a unique region of this nation. Canada is by its nature in geography a northern nation. Its northern territories, including the two new territories which will be created in 1999, need to be recognized in a National Unity Resolution and guarantees provided that territorial governments and their residents will continue to be partners in national unity processes.

To date, it appears that the federal and provincial governments support a role for northern territories through their territorial governments. The Premier and Ministers have participated in all formal national unity meetings of political leaders and GNWT officials are involved in all formal meetings with their provincial and territorial counterparts. Mr. Speaker, this is a welcome change from the past when the territories were excluded from important national unity and constitutional reform initiatives by Ottawa and the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to ask my colleague from Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark, to continue with our report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Madam Groenewegen. In developing an approach to consultation on the Calgary framework with the Northwest Territories residents and the aboriginal leaders in both the east and the west, the special committee has taken into account a number of factors. For example, Northwest Territories' residents are already being consulted on a wide variety of measures relating to creation of two new territories and aboriginal issues like claims, treaty entitlement and self-government. A comprehensive national unity consultation campaign may only have served to make an already complex environment more confusing.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the special committee has to take into account the costs associated with an elaborate campaign at a time when program and service funding is being reduced as well as the schedules and priorities of the Legislative Assembly and Members at this crucial time leading up to the creation of two new territories. With this background in mind,

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the special committee recommended that MLAs should take the lead role in consulting their constituents on national unity and strengthening the federation. MLAs were provided with an information kit to help in their consultations and a questionnaire was advertised in papers. MLAs were encouraged to hold public meetings to obtain input.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the special committee made arrangements for constituents to send their comments and questionnaire replies to the Legislative Assembly's toll free phone and fax numbers. Input could also be provided through an e-mail site and through regular mail. Finally a special national unity page was established on the Legislative Assembly's web site for information on the Calgary framework and the special committee.

Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Antoine was assigned responsibility for consultation with the NWT's aboriginal leadership. In addition to correspondence with Northwest Territories' aboriginal leaders, the Minister met with the Aboriginal Summit on November 12th and by conference call on November 26th. Deputy Premier Arlooktoo assisted Minister Antoine in consulting with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on November 28th.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to ask the Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus, to assist with presenting this report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Ningark. Replies to the special committee's questionnaire was one source of reaction from Northwest Territories' residents to the Calgary consultation framework. As replies continue to be sent to the special committee, the following provides a preliminary assessment of the input received to date.

In response to the question, "Overall, do you support the framework?", the majority provided qualified support as outlined below.

When asked, "What are the elements of the framework that you particularly like?", there was support for elements of points 1, 3 and 4 of the framework which make reference to equality of Canadians and equal rights; Canada's diversity, tolerance, compassion and equality of opportunity and Canada's diversity of peoples and cultures, languages and multiculturalism.

Reaction to the question, "Are there any elements in the framework that concern you?", focused on the need for stronger references to territories as a unique region of Canada and their role in the national unity process. A number of replies also expressed concern about the need for references to aboriginal peoples which reflect the historical and current realities of their status in Canada, including their rights and interests.

Other concerns expressed opposition to recognizing the unique characteristics of Quebec, the need for more emphasis on the social welfare of Canadians and that the end product of the consultation process may not produce meaningful change or progress.

Mr. Speaker, next, northern residents were asked, "Are there other elements that should be included?" The replies confirmed concerns raised about the need for more references to aboriginal peoples and the territories in a National Unity Resolution.

In response to the question, "Do you think the interests of northerners are reflected in this framework?", two-thirds of respondents said yes while a third said no. In interpreting these results it is

important to note that most of the support for the Calgary framework was qualified, while most of those who opposed the framework felt that it needed some fundamental improvements.

The question, "What does it mean to you to be Canadian?", resulted in a wide range of replies from residents who both supported and rejected the Calgary framework. In addition to the characteristics stated in points 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the framework, replies made reference to Canada as a land of opportunity where there is freedom, freedom of expression and freedom from oppression; where Canada is the best place in the world to live because it is vibrant, healthy, tolerant, compassionate and diverse in its population; where Canada is respected by the rest of the world because of its generosity, sincerity and ability to be unified in one of the largest and most diverse countries in the world and because it is a nation which respects, honours and affirms aboriginal peoples' rights and institutions.

The questionnaire, Mr. Speaker, also asked, "Does the framework reflect aboriginal views and values on national identity? If not, how should these values be reflected?" In the replies received to date, the response is split. However, it is important to note that there is a general consensus among those who both support and reject the framework that aboriginal references need to be revised to reflect the historical and current status of aboriginal peoples in Canada, including their rights and interests.

Mr. Speaker, the special committee continues to receive replies to the questionnaire and will be preparing a more detailed review for presentation during the Legislative Assembly's session early in 1998.

Community meetings hosted by MLAs were another approach to collecting reaction to the Calgary consultation framework. Meetings were held in Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith. MLAs from these communities will provide more detailed accounts of their constituents' views in the debate on the special committee's report and its recommendation for a National Unity Resolution.

With respect to consultations with Northwest Territories aboriginal leaders, Minister Antoine was advised by the Aboriginal Summit that they considered the consultation and resolution process to be rushed. However, they provided some proposals for the content of a resolution. They also respected that this is a Legislative Assembly initiative and that

western residents and organizations should express their views and concerns through their MLAs and the special committee. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated indicated their support for the resolution.

Overall, the special committee acknowledges that Northwest Territories' residents have not responded in large numbers to

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the national unity consultations. Nevertheless, the questionnaire replies and reaction at community meetings have provided an important contribution which has helped to confirm some of the special committee's concerns with the Calgary framework and provide direction on the approach to a Northwest Territories National Unity Resolution. The special committee will continue to monitor and assess more input which is expected in the future. Mr. Speaker, if you would permit I would hand over to the Member of Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Before I move on to Mr. Antoine I would like to recognize several students from Fort Providence who came here to listen to us. They have also had dinner with me and their teacher is Margaret Field. I believe they will be going back to Providence before it gets too dark. So, I just wanted to recognize them. Thanks for coming.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the special committee has developed its recommendations in response to the following considerations:

Northwest Territories' aboriginal leaders were unified in their belief that the reference to aboriginal peoples in the Calgary framework needs to be revised. References in the Calgary framework to the status of Canada's territories and their role in the national unity process need to be strengthened, especially with the impending establishment of Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, as the Legislative Assembly will be the first in Canada to adopt a resolution, the Northwest Territories' positions will be taken into account when the

provinces and territories are preparing their national unity reports and resolutions.

The Calgary framework and resolutions adopted by the province and territorial legislatures will need to accurately reflect the spirit and intent of provisions of the Canadian Constitution respecting the rights and freedoms of Canada, the rights of aboriginal nations and the status of federal, provincial and territorial governments. An early response from the Legislative Assembly will also provide a strong message of support for aboriginal participation in the national unity process and the need for National Unity Resolutions which more accurately reflect the aboriginal characteristics of Canada, including aboriginal rights and interests.

The special committee anticipates that the profile of national unity consultations will increase as the provinces and aboriginal nations finalize their positions and debate resolutions. Mr. Speaker, it is too soon to predict what will take place after the process has been completed. However, the product could become the basis for an amendment to the Canadian Constitution relating to the status of Quebec within Canada and other measures which will promote national unity and strengthening the federation. As the debate on national unity and strengthening the federation unfolds in the coming months, it will be important for Northwest Territories' residents to know the Legislative Assembly's position.

A resolution by the Assembly will provide the Premier, Ministers and GNWT officials with the mandate they need in ongoing consultations with the federal government, provincial governments and aboriginal nations on measures required to promote national unity and strengthening the federation. For example, the Prime Minister and Premiers will be meeting on December 11th and 12th to consider reforms to Canada's social policies and programs. The special committee has identified the future of Canada's social safety net as a major factor in contributing to national unity and the strength of the federation.

Your special committee, Mr. Speaker, believes that its mandate is not concluded with the presentation of this report and consideration of a National Unity Resolution. As in previous national unity and constitutional reform rounds there will be further work required in monitoring how the national unity process unfolds in the coming months, reporting to the Assembly on developments and making recommendations on protecting and promoting the Northwest Territories' objectives. An early response

by the Legislative Assembly will help guide the special committee's future work.

Based on these considerations, the special committee recommends the following:

Recommendation One

That the Legislative Assembly debate the National Unity Resolution contained in its report.

Recommendation Two

That the resolution serves as direction for the Premier, Ministers and GNWT officials in further deliberations on national unity and strengthening the federation involving the federal and provincial governments, Yukon and aboriginal nations.

Recommendation Three

That the mandate of the Special Committee on National Unity be extended for the purpose of monitoring the national unity process, keeping the Legislative Assembly informed and making recommendations on NWT participation and objectives in the process.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the special committee's recommendations to the Assembly and I would ask that the Chairman, Mr. Morin, conclude the report. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The following is the text of the National Unity Resolution recommended by the special committee.

WHEREAS all Canadians and their governments have a responsibility for preserving and promoting a strong and united Canada for the benefit of all Canadians in all regions from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic;

WHEREAS the peoples, lands and institutions of Canada's Northwest Territories, including the future territory of Nunavut, comprise a dynamic and vital region of Canada;

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WHEREAS efforts to promote and preserve national unity require the meaningful participation of all territorial governments in any processes directed at achieving unity;

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories' Legislative Assembly supports the negotiation and implementation of self-government for aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories and elsewhere in Canada, to secure their aboriginal and treaty rights and aboriginal peoples' full participation within the Canadian federation;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories has a unique character and status within the federation and expects a fair and equal opportunity to achieve the status of a full partner within the federation on equitable terms as referred to in the Quebec Resolutions of 1864 and the London Resolutions of 1866.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories supports all efforts to secure the commitment of the people of all provinces and territories to the unity of Canada in accordance with the principles set out below:

1. The aboriginal peoples of Canada, being the first peoples to inhabit and govern this land, have the inherent right to self-government to safeguard and develop their lands and resources, languages, cultures and traditions and to ensure the integrity of their societies.
 2. Canadians are committed to a united country to ensure a society in which all Canadians and their children have access to the benefit of Canada's prosperity, including quality health care, social services, education and employment opportunities.
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3. The rights of Canadians are secured equally by the rule of law and should be implemented in a just, broad and liberal manner taking into account the spirit and intent of guarantees under the Constitution.
 4. All provinces are equal under the Constitution, and together with the territories, have equality of opportunity to develop their unique characteristics in partnership, while respecting each other's jurisdiction.
 5. In the Canadian federal system, where respect for diversity underlies unity, the unique character of Quebec society, including its French

speaking majority, its culture, its institutions and its tradition of civil law, is fundamental to the well-being of Canada. Similarly, the well-being of Quebec is ensured by the Legislature and Government of Quebec having the ability to protect and develop the unique character of Quebec society within a united Canada.

6. A strong national government for Canada, and the historic flexibility of Canadians and their governments, remain essential elements of our ability to modify, adapt and renew our institutions and arrangements for the benefit of all Canadians.

7. Each government and legislature has, in a manner appropriate to each, a responsibility to ensure that these principles and precepts remain enduring features of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the special committee, therefore, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North that the Report of the Special Committee on National Unity be received and adopted by the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MOTION 7-13(5): NWT National Unity Resolution

WHEREAS all Canadians and their governments have a responsibility for preserving and promoting a strong and united Canada for the benefit of all Canadians in all regions from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic;

AND WHEREAS the peoples, lands and institutions of Canada's northern territories, including the future territory of Nunavut, comprise a dynamic and vital region of Canada;

AND WHEREAS efforts to promote and preserve national unity require the meaningful participation of all territorial governments in any processes directed at achieving unity;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories' Legislative Assembly supports the negotiation and implementation of self-government for aboriginal peoples in the territories and elsewhere in Canada, to secure their aboriginal and treaty rights and aboriginal peoples' full participation within the Canadian federation;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories has a unique character and status within the federation and expects a fair and equal opportunity to achieve the status of a full partner within the federation on equitable terms as referred to in the Quebec Resolutions of 1864 and the London Resolutions of 1866.

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories supports all efforts to secure the commitment of the people of all provinces and territories to the unity of Canada in accordance with the principles set out below:

1. The aboriginal peoples of Canada, being the first peoples to inhabit and govern this land, have the inherent right to self-government to safeguard and develop their lands and resources, languages, cultures and traditions and to ensure the integrity of their societies.

2. Canadians are committed to a united country to ensure a society in which all Canadians and their children have access to the benefit of Canada's prosperity, including quality health care, social services, education and employment opportunities.

3. The rights of Canadians are secured equally by the rule of law and should be implemented in a just, broad and liberal manner taking into account the spirit and intent of guarantees under the Constitution.

4. All provinces are equal under the Constitution, and together with the territories, have equality of opportunity to develop their unique characteristics in partnership, while respecting each other's jurisdiction.

5. In the Canadian federal system, where respect for diversity underlies unity, the unique character of Quebec society, including its French speaking majority, its culture, its institutions and its tradition of civil law, is fundamental to the well-being of Canada. Similarly, the well-being of Quebec is ensured by the Legislature and Government of Quebec having the ability to protect and develop the

unique character of Quebec society within a united Canada.

6. A strong national government for Canada, and the historic flexibility of Canadians and their governments, remain essential elements of our ability to modify, adapt and renew our institutions and arrangements for the benefit of all Canadians.

7. Each government and legislature has, in a manner appropriate to each, a responsibility to ensure that these principles and precepts remain enduring features of Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Just a correction here in regard to the seconder, it should be the Member for Natilikmiot. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to rise in this House today to say that I am Canadian and I am proud of it. We as Canadians sometimes think that we do not have a perfect country. We think that there is a lot of problems with the constitution as it is today; but if it is such a failure, I think we are a pretty good success as well. Anybody that has had the opportunity to travel abroad to visit other countries are awful happy to get back home to Canada. Because once your feet touch Canadian soil, there is a sigh of relief and there is then, an ability to appreciate what we do have as Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, in early September we met with other Premiers in this country to discuss Canadian unity. We felt it is time that Canadians took the time to express from their hearts what they feel about this country. Is it worth saving? Is it worth fighting for? Is it worth working for? I think so, Mr. Speaker. I think we all should put that extra effort into working to save our country.

Mr. Speaker, some think that this process is a Quebec process. It is a process for Canadians and northerners to reach out to Quebec. It is not that at all. It is a process for Canadians and northerners to reach out to Canadians and other people in this country. It is a process where we can stand as leaders of the Northwest Territories and say to other jurisdictions throughout this country why we are so proud to be Canadians and why we are so proud of the country we have and to be a part of it.

Mr. Speaker, in September in Calgary Premiers agreed to kick this process off, but it is a people process. It is driven by the people, not only of the Northwest Territories, it is driven by all grassroots people throughout this country. We have the ability today, as 24 Members in this Legislative Assembly, to send a clear message to the rest of the country. I personally, Mr. Speaker, feel that Canadian unity starts at home, a united family. That is what it starts with. If your home is united then you move on to your community. We all know and we have all experienced what can happen at a community level if they are bickering amongst each other. They do not move ahead; they do not prosper; the communities stay stale; they do not move ahead economically and ultimately all the residents of that community do not have the same opportunities as others do that do work ahead together.

As a Northwest Territories, we know our only future, the only future that we can have is the ability of northerners to work together. If we can all set aside our differences as northerners and work together, you will see the north grow strong and free as it says in our national anthem. Recently, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to speak in southern Canada just to give some people a small snapshot of the Northwest Territories. I advised those people to look north because the north is the shining light of this country. The north is the last frontier in this country. We, as northerners, are very fortunate. You can walk or you can move around the Northwest Territories in any direction and see the beauty of our land, see the beauty of our water and see the friendliness of our people, as a Canadian, a Canadian ability that Canadian people can do. As the north, we are the last frontier in this country and we have a lot to offer southern Canada. We have a great opportunity in the Northwest Territories as being the first Legislature to pass a resolution or move forward on a resolution to set the tone.

As Members see the number one issue brought forward is on aboriginal people. The majority of Members in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, are aboriginal. The majority of the population in the Northwest Territories is aboriginal. So to us it means very much that aboriginal people have to be at the forefront and aboriginal people have to have full participation in any issues or Canadian constitution amendment in the future. Aboriginal people and northerners working together will make the Northwest Territories a better place to live.

Some say that you should not take the time to debate or raise the issue of Canadian unity or constitution. I know that Canadians have constitution fatigue, northerners have constitution fatigue. We all know that if you do not raise that issue, if you do not have a unified country, you have nothing in the end. You do not have the jobs. You do not have the social programs. You will not have the health programs. You will not have the educational programs. A country that no longer exists will not be able to offer that. Nobody should fool themselves, thinking that if for some unrealistic reason, Quebec decides to separate from this country, do not any Canadian fool themselves and think that it will stop there. It will not stop there, Mr. Speaker. It will continue and pretty soon you will have no Canada.

We recognize the unique characteristics of Quebec, their language, their culture. We embrace them and we want them to be part of this country. We want Quebec to be part of Canada. We will respect their culture. We will respect their language. We will respect their institutions. We will respect

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their government. All we ask in exchange is for them to have respect for us.

The federal government as well has a very important role to play, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister stood in this Legislative Assembly when we opened this building. He stood in our House, and he promised the people of the Northwest Territories that we are an important part of this country, and he promised that we would be treated equal in this country. He promised to the Northwest Territories' people that we will have the devolution of powers to give us the tools so we can contribute to the country. We still wait today for those promises to be fulfilled. I have full faith in the Prime Minister and the federal government that they will fulfil those promises. The same as they will fulfil their promises to other Canadians. That is what makes our country great. That is what makes Canada, Canada.

We are unique in the Northwest Territories. We have a lot to offer this country. We are willing to work in partnership. We are willing to respect them and we will do it, Mr. Speaker, in a fashion that has mutual respect to us. Any future consideration, any future work on the constitution of this country, Mr. Speaker, has to have and will have full meaningful role for the Northwest Territories as well as aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on and speak about Canada because it is the greatest country in the world. We live in this country with mutual respect for other jurisdictions. I am a lucky Canadian. I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to travel from one end of this country to the other. I know people living in eastern Canada. The maritime provinces are unique in their own way. So are people living in the Prairie Provinces. So are people living in British Columbia. We all know we are very unique living in the Northwest Territories. So with that, Mr. Speaker, in closing I say we have mutual respect for each other and we work together as Canadians. We will continue to build a good country, a vibrant country, a better country for our children and grandchildren. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the name of the seconder of the motion was called, it was Mr. Steen from Nunakput. I am sure it could have been anyone from this House and anyone would have been more than pleased to second the motion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest things that we have in this country that I am proud of - I am sure everyone in the country, everyone in the Nunavut area and everyone in the western area of the northwest area of the NWT is proud of - is their freedom, a freedom to move around, a freedom to be a part of any party you want to be in a country, a freedom to follow a religion of your choice, a freedom to choose the community where you want to live without having to use the passports.

One other thing that I talked to people from my area that we are concerned about of this country is what happens if Quebec separates. Would I be able to visit my brothers, sisters and cousins from northern Quebec without the use of passports? I do not know. Mr. Speaker, when I travel to three of my communities, there are times that the young people come to me and talk to me about the country. There are times when the elders come to me and talk to me about what we saw on the television, what is going on in the other countries. Mr. Speaker, when I talk to my grandchildren, my kids and my family, we talk about how lucky we are to live in a country such as Canada. As Mr. Premier, indicates we can move around the

country freely. Freedom, there is nothing I will not compromise my freedom for anything else. I am sure that no one from this country would. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the family, in the unity of a family, there is strength. In the unity of a family there is understanding. In a unity of a family there is a freedom to move around your community to another community to another jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, every year we celebrate the 1st of July. What makes me proud to be a Canadian is that during that time of celebration, the 1st of July, I will see a little one, the youngest person in a community, able to hold a Canadian flag, from that to the oldest person in the community. Does that little child understand? Perhaps not because he is too young to understand. It is the eldest in the community to understand what it means to be Canadian. Perhaps that person is a little forgetful during that time, but they are holding that flag.

In most cases in our community, we talk about the country during the 1st of July. Every person who talks about the country appreciates being a part of the country. Mr. Speaker, before this session when I travelled to Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven and I am from Pelly, I was on the radio about what was to take part in this special session. I am sure because I spoke the languages of the three communities, I am sure people understood. There were times walking down the street that people told me they are proud to be part of this country.

Mr. Speaker, come 1999, we in Nunavut area, will have a Nunavut government. We will remain part of the country. We will be Canadian. We will be part of the country we call Canada. I am not going to make a long speech because I could go on and on, like Mr. Premier said. You know what really made me understand how I am proud to be Canadian? I had two occasions to travel abroad. One was to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and one to Denmark in Copenhagen. There were many people travelling with us. When we produced our Canadian passports, I could see the reaction of the customs official, hey Canadian move on. That is how appreciated people are from another country. We have provided assistance to third world countries. We have seen how the Canadian people will work together, not only to help the people in Canada but to help the people in other countries who are suffering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking in favour of the resolution. Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat frustrating that national unity remains such a pressing issue to Canada and to Canadians. After all, Mr. Speaker, this country, forged by the dedication and hard work of its citizens, has each year for the last four years been ranked by the United Nations as one of the best places in the world to live. We are truly blessed with a rich environment and a diversity of cultures and heritages.

For example, residents of my constituency alone represent various parts of the North, Canada, and indeed other countries. Some were born in bush camps across the north while many grew up in our northern communities. Some have

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came from the outports of Newfoundland and still others come from the cities of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Some have travelled to this country making a choice to leave their homes and immigrate to Canada. But, despite their varied origins, my constituents believe in this country. It provides them the independence, safety and security to live and raise their families.

(Translation) We have not become a nation without facing many challenges. Building and maintaining a country is not an easy process. Indeed, debate of important issues must continually occur if we are to identify our weaknesses and renew our nation based on our strengths.

In the Northwest Territories, we know the challenge of diversity. We can say with pride that we consider and respect cultural differences. The unique nature of this Assembly itself is a prime example of how we have adjusted our practices to reflect the cultures which make up our communities.

We need to build this country on the foundation of commitment. Commitment of personal growth to the development of our economy and our society, as well as to the goal of continuing to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. (Translation ends)

In 1999, we will again change the face of this country. The establishment of two territories, effectively replacing the Northwest Territories, is a direct example of the continuing development and change which can occur within Canada.

(Translation) Over the past few centuries Canada has adjusted its internal borders to reflect social and political change. This has occurred in a peaceful manner and with a strong interest of citizens clearly in mind.

My vision of Canada is one in which all parts of the nation participate effectively charting the future. My vision of Canada includes Quebec. It also includes strong northern territories working towards greater self-sufficiency. It includes a recognition of First Nations and defines a government structure which is effective and representative of the people it serves. (Translation ends)

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to participate with my fellow Yellowknife MLAs in a joint constituency meeting on unity. I heard residents say that they too believe in a united Canada. People presented extensive and considered comments which showed me that Canadian unity matters to Yellowknifers. I have also heard from some of my constituents in writing. Generally, Mr. Speaker, most believe, as do I, that the Calgary Declaration, as it has been called, provided a good starting point for discussions. In general, people told me that they supported the intent of the Calgary framework, but some considered some of the content divisive, rather than leading to unity. There was feeling that the framework was so general that it might not trigger any change, but all agreed that we must continue the dialogue on our national constitution. While this is important for all Canadians, most felt that we must especially reach out to the people of Quebec before another referendum looms.

Mr. Speaker, the National Unity Resolution which we are considering here today incorporates elements of the Calgary Declaration while at the same time, more accurately reflects the Northwest Territories position on national unity and strengthening the federation. It will be essential that the national consensus resolution contain clear content regarding the important and unique character of Quebec within Canada. As well, Mr. Speaker, it is my view that proposals by Canada's aboriginal leaders in the national unity process must be addressed in a manner which is acceptable to them.

Mr. Speaker, we must make no mistake. Canadian unity is essential to northerners' future. The next century will bring new challenges for the whole country. We must understand what we stand for and we must have a clear purpose. We should use our diversity, our experience and our resources to build

an even stronger nation for ourselves and for our children.

This is an important time in our history, Mr. Speaker. Building Canada for tomorrow must be a high priority. We are part of a great nation, one which is compassionate and caring. We must join together and face the future with pride in and commitment to our great country. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to speak on behalf of my constituency, the residents of Baffin South in the communities of Sanikiluaq, Kimmirut and Cape Dorset are proud to be Canadians. I am proud to be a Canadian. I would like to say thank you to Members of our Special Committee on Unity. I support strongly the contributions of our Legislative Assembly in sending a message to the rest of Canada and especially Quebec that we believe in a united Canada. Many of my constituents have told me that they are proud to be part of a country with so many different geographies and cultures, where health care is available to all Canadians, where there are social programs to protect the vulnerable and a national government that is working to meet its historical obligations to aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency have a special relationship with the residents of Quebec. We share health services, educational facilities, transportation links through air and marine shipping. These are critical services that are necessary for my constituency and we have many years of good working relationships with the province of Quebec. There are also family, marital and personal ties between the communities I represent and the people of northern Quebec in the Nunavik region. I was in a meeting two weeks ago in Cape Dorset where an agreement was reached to co-manage several islands in the Hudson Strait. The Islands of Nottingham, and Salisbury south of Cape Dorset are rich in polar bear, walrus and beluga and will be managed 50 percent by Nunavut residents and 50 percent by the residents of Nunavik, northern Quebec. (Translation ends)

Mr. Speaker, my closest neighbours in Baffin South are not the Keewatin or the Kitikmeot, but the people of Nunavik in northern Quebec. Nunavik covers the top third of Quebec and part of Labrador. Eight thousand fellow Inuit live in these 16 communities. As their leader, and my friend, Mr. Zebedee Nungak has said many times, the people of Nunavik want to live in a united Canada. In two consecutive referendums the

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Inuit of Nunavik have voted 95 percent in favour of staying in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when the inevitable next Quebec referendum happens, I hope that resident in that province vote once and for all to stay in Canada. We do not want to see our brothers and sisters of Nunavik living in another country. In the past there have been suggestions of joining Nunavut and Nunavik to make one Territory in the event of separation. Although this idea is appealing to me, personally, it is premature to discuss at all at this point. Let us not assume that Quebecers will decide to leave Canada, rather let us put our energies into trying to convince them that this important part of Canada has a critical and welcome place in our national family.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this Legislative Assembly is now deeply involved in division of the Northwest Territories, the creation of Nunavut, the final realization of our homemade government for the people of the eastern Arctic. This is a great example of how strong confederation can accommodate a range of historical and cultural realities. I believe we need a strong unified country to face the challenges ahead in creating a new territory and taking our place as one of the best countries in the world and with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be most pleased to vote in favour of the resolution.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I do not know how long Members will be talking to the motion, but how soon do we get to the orders of the day, I do not know, I would like to recognize in the gallery, Chief Rita Cli of Liidli'Koe First Nations. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also wish to support this resolution because I am proud to be a Canadian. I think it is the best country in the world to

live in. Our children can grow up healthy and get a good education and our elders get pensions and are looked after in their old age. Whether a person is aboriginal or non-aboriginal, it does not matter because we can all be united in our pride of being a Canadian. We, in the north, know that the community is stronger than the individual, that by working together we are stronger as people. Mr. Speaker, to the people of Quebec, stay with Canada, stay part of the Canadian community. We Inuit are going to get the government we want in Nunavut and stay in Canada. I know that Quebec can do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day I thought, what if we held a meeting and no one came. Well last week, my fellow Yellowknife MLAs and I nearly found that out when we called a constituency meeting to discuss national unity and only seven people showed up. It was not a stunning show of interest or support for nothing less than the future of our country. Maybe Yellowknifers are constitutionally burned out. You know, God knows, we all had a chance to talk about the constitution over the past ten years or maybe the idea of one more round was more than most folks can bear. Still, it was a disappointing turnout that showed a remarkable lack of concern for this country's future, and that is a crime because there is no doubt in my mind that Canada is the best country in the world. Personally, I find it utterly ridiculous that anyone or any group would ever want to leave this country or tear it apart. Sometimes you have to come in from the outside to realize the beauty of a situation, to appreciate what makes that situation so unique and wonderful and so it is with Canada. Like so many Canadians, I was not born here. I was born in Holland, but 45 years ago, my family made the difficult decision to leave the war-torn and war-ravaged and move to some place new, somewhere that promised opportunity, equality and a fresh start in building a new future.

It was a gut wrenching decision to immigrate. I remember very well one particular evening as my parents, talked late into the night about a letter they had received from a friend. He had written from Canada about this magical country of great opportunity for anyone willing to work hard could make a fortune and have a wonderful life. The letter

urged my parents to immigrate. The person stated he would sponsor us. My older brother and I lay in bed, perfectly still, listening to my parents as they made their decision and finalized their plans. It was a momentous decision to leave our birth place, the small town where countless generations of our family had lived.

We came, not by jet plane, as so many immigrants do today, but by immigrant ship, *Uscania* of the British Cunard line. Our only possessions were packing into one crate, contained a Dutch bicycle, an easy chair, a change of clothing for each of us and some bedding.

As countless thousands had before us, in immigrant waves, from Ireland, Germany and from throughout Europe; we set out by ship with our meagre possessions for our promised land. The journey took seven days, a week marked by endless sea sickness as we sailed across the north Atlantic, before docking in Halifax. From Halifax we travelled by coal-fired train with wooden benches to Montreal, on to Ottawa and then Renfrew in the Ottawa valley where my father's friend and his family met us.

We lived on their farm until my father found work and we could afford a house of our own. The good life was readily apparent. During our first trip into town, we were mesmerized by the communities affluence. As the years passed, our lifestyle improved. My father bought what was practically a brand new car, an unheard of luxury in Holland. Our ice box was replaced by a refrigerator. We acquired a washing machine, and in 1958, a television set.

While we were not rich by any means, we sure thought we were. My father used to say, "this is the greatest country in the world and someday, people from around the world will want to come here". How right he was. This is the best country in the world. Since 1992, it has been formally recognized as number one in an annual United Nation's poll of about 174 countries.

Canadians are the healthiest, best educated, most technologically advanced people on the planet. We occupy an enviable role in the world.

Today, Canada continues to draw unprecedented levels of immigrants. Who, although they came from desperate backgrounds the world over, are united in their vision of the future. They seek a safe haven where they can earn a decent living, raise a family without fear and enjoy a stable, political environment.

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Canada offers them all this and more. Yes, we do have a stable political environment, despite 30 or more years of discussion about Quebec's place in the federation of provinces and territories. Where else but in Canada would two generations of people peacefully discuss their differences and keep trying to find a way of bridging their understanding?

Now with our Declaration and the Calgary declaration, we turn our attention once again to the issue of national unity. It is the latest attempt to find a way for all partners in this country to work together.

Over the past five weeks we have asked our constituency to tell us how they feel about Canada, about unity and about this declaration of national values. As I said earlier, I and my fellow Yellowknife MLAs had a special constituency meeting on this subject last week. We had a disappointing turnout, but those that did come supported the idea of the declaration but not the content. They felt the wording emphasized our differences, not our similarities. It was divisive. But everyone agreed that continuing discussions were critical to the long-term well-being of our country.

They emphasized that we must find common, non-partisan goals for all Canadians to work towards. The fact that we are discussing the subject of how to strengthen the Canadian federation is a good starting point. Some of our constituents pointed out that aboriginal people have constitutionally protected rights. Aboriginal people must therefore be a part of this redefining process.

Separation from Quebec would mean a fundamental change to Canada, they said. We would be affected economically, politically, socially. All Canadians would lose. It was their belief Quebecers would lose the most. We certainly do not want to wake up one day with three or four big chunks instead of one country. They said that this declaration states that Quebec is important to Canada, but it must also state that Canada is important to Quebec.

Our ancestors understood that Canada would embrace all peoples, regardless of background and differences. It is time for us to finally learn from their example and move forward, united into the 21st century.

I learned as a small boy, in a war ravaged country, not to take peace and security of my home for

granted. While my constituents may be suffering from constitutional fatigue, I think they expect me, as their representative, to continue to participate.

By voting in favour of this resolution, I feel I will be doing my small part to make sure my Canada stays number one in the world's eyes. I urge everyone here to do the same. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity for the people of the Northwest Territories to give our views on the Calgary Declaration and Canadian unity comes at a unique time. In less than 500 days, this territory will be divided into two. The dreams and aspirations of the people of Nunavut will at long last be fulfilled.

Within this context, the Calgary Declaration and the national unity question becomes opportunity. On April 1st, 1999, the map of Canada will be redrawn for the first time in 50 years. It will have been 50 years ago that Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada and created a country from sea to sea to sea.

I have always been proud of my roots. My family was originally from the Island of Jersey. We are of a Norman-French background. My family has lived and continues to live in the same community, Portugal Cove, Newfoundland since the 1700's. My wife is an Inuk, from Clyde River and her ancestors have lived here for thousands of years. At our home in Iqaluit, we fly the Canadian, the Northwest Territories and the Newfoundland flags to demonstrate and celebrate our roots.

Iqaluit, my home and constituency, where my three children were born is unique. It has a large and active Francophone population. It is the largest Inuit community in Canada. The diversity of Iqaluit and our sense of community is a good model that Canadians could take a lesson from.

Mr. Speaker, the national unity question has been a political football in this country for most of the past 30 years. The election of the PQ in Quebec in 1976, the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords and the recent referendum in Quebec have held national attention. Many non-Quebecers asked, "What does

Quebec want? When will the question of national unity be finally be put aside?" The apathy surrounding the responses to the Calgary Declaration demonstrates that the Canadian public, I feel are becoming tired of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, bread and butter issues of affordable housing, of jobs and our standard of living are first and foremost on much of the Canadian electorate and residents of the Northwest Territories' minds. That does not mean we are not concerned or interested in a national unity question. The Calgary Declaration agreed to by the nine premiers and the two territorial leaders, tries to give a framework of understanding of the question. However, the issue of the status of aboriginal peoples and their part in the Canadian federation seems to have been overlooked. The majority of the responses from my constituency and the territories as a whole, indicate this. Even though the Northwest Territories takes on almost one-third the land mass of Canada, main line Canadian thinking tends to be east-west and not north-south. Our motion has addressed this issue.

As a Canadian, I have had the opportunity to visit many areas of our beautiful country. I have visited Quebec and enjoyed the hospitality and friendliness of Quebecers.

Mr. Speaker, the Quebec fact in Canada should be celebrated and acknowledged. It has a unique character and culture. It is, I believe, recognized coast to coast to coast. The Canadian federation allows for this diversity and it is demonstrated everywhere you look. If you travel to Grise Fjord, the north-most community in the country, if you travel to St. John's, if you visit Vancouver as examples; all foods, general goods, et cetera, are in French and English. That is unique.

During the second world war at one of the notorious prison camps, refugees were forced to turn over their worldly goods,

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which was piled in a section of the camp. Mr. Speaker, the refugees, the interned people, called that pile of goods Canada. The reason being, it represented the best, something to strive for and achieve. Let us as Canadians, keep our country together without favouring a region or people over one or the other. All Canadians should and do have the same rights and responsibilities. As Canadians we are unique and we do not need declarations to tell us

so. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a Canadian and a northerner and from the feedback from my constituents from Iqaluit, they also demonstrated that fact.

The Calgary Declaration does have some shortcomings, but, hopefully, it will move the national unity debate to the next stage. Finally, as a country, we will be able to move ahead, united from sea to sea. I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. To the motion. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. I am also proud to be a Canadian from the Northwest Territories and an aboriginal. I am representing people from two communities who are originally from northern Quebec and I believe they would be affected by the separation of Quebec. If they wanted to go and visit their relatives in northern Quebec, they would be affected, where they would have to use passports to visit them.

The people that were transferred to high Arctic...(Translation ends).

The people from northern Quebec and people from the high Arctic area have to be united in order to survive in the harsh country of ours, especially in the northern high Arctic because there are no trees and of the way they are living was different. Because they were moved into the high Arctic, Mr. Speaker, the recognition of Canada is of a vast majority in the high Arctic, a massive land included in Canada.

I am sure if there is a border for Canada or if Quebec separated, the people from my riding would live in a really hard place, socially, economically and family-wise. Mr. Speaker, in Canada we live in a very peaceful, united country. For example, when we listen to our federal government Cabinet and when they are discussing wars, we recognize all over the world, internationally, Canada is recognized as a peace-Canada. They are always awarded for providing peace in the world. If Quebec is separated, I do not think there would be a harsh, I think there would be a lot of problems in Canada, especially for my representatives.

Mr. Speaker, (Translation) I too, would like to say that I would like to see Quebec stay in Canada and work together with Quebec and work in unity. For instance, we have worked together in Canada and if Quebec separated, this unity would be destroyed. For this reason, I will support this motion and I would like to thank the special committee that worked on this national unity, who had prepared the questionnaires and work that had to be done. Thank you.
(Translation ends)

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. To the motion Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I like other Members of this House conducted a constituency meeting in my riding of Hay River to hear from my constituents on the subject of national unity. An interesting feature of this meeting was the representation at the meeting by members of our community who are classified as senior citizens. I observed this with interest, and I took it to mean that perhaps, national unity was an issue of grave concern to people who had perhaps lived through or close to any era when our country and the freedoms we enjoy were threatened from external circumstances and forces.

This year, as I attended the Remembrance Day services at the Royal Canadian Legion, for the first time I was struck by the fact that when you are a child, you hear stories of your parents' childhood and their circumstances in life and sometimes it does not sink in. This year, I realized that my mother's two brothers were not much older than my two sons are now when they headed off to Europe with the Canadian Armed Forces.

One of her brothers returned and the other was buried in a field along with scores of his comrades in France. All they got back was a letter of thanks from the Canadian government and a Union Jack tied up in a package. This arrived at their door as thanks for the sacrifice of the life of their son. I also love this country and the freedoms we enjoy and I hope we never take these for granted. To that end, I do not fully understand what drives the agenda of Quebec sovereignty. I believe we would be remiss if we did not try better to understand what past offences

perhaps that had been committed or what has caused some of the regional misunderstandings and feelings of marginalization in our country.

Another strong message which came out of my constituency meeting was the need for greater understanding of each other's issue. Not only understanding but mechanisms of communication and expression, ways of expressing appreciation and friendship. How we address these shortcomings is an area we need to challenge our citizens with, maybe even particularly our young people. Coming up with ideas as to how, we as Canadians, can create a better understanding amongst all regions of Canada. Some at the meeting attributed Quebec's need or desire or agenda for sovereignty to the leaders of the day in that province, and as the leadership changes perhaps there will be a difference in the mood in Quebec. Having said these things, I do not want to duplicate what other Members have already addressed in their statements. I want to state that for myself. I am committed to optimism in relation to the future of our great country and its leadership. I believe there is hope of a resolution of the outstanding issues and the promotion of meaningful and a fulfilling place for everyone within the context and the boundaries of Canada as we now know it. I am also very proud to be a Canadian and I would like to commend the Premiers for their efforts for embracing this very important subject.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the resolution before us today. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Rabesca.

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to support the National Unity Resolution. Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to the challenge of unity for our great nation. In my constituency, we have a number of individuals who have over years fought in the two world wars and numerous other peace initiatives across the world to ensure our way of life in Canada is preserved. We, as a community, are proud of their efforts and feel this is what helps to distinguish us as Canadians from every other nation.

Locally, we do not talk about national unity every day. It is one of those issues that we take for granted. Being Canadian means freedom. It means being flexible. It means to be open for discussions. It means to compromise. We have strong values but at the same time, able to listen and learn. We are the peacekeepers of the world. This provides us with the great abilities to go where no other country can go. Because of the vast distances between our communities, both territorial and nationally, we do have problems. We hear eastern Canada talking about their problems, Quebec talking about theirs and the west talking of theirs. This makes for a very effective country as we have today. We need to use our skills that have proven throughout the world to make peace at home. The time is right. Let us go forward in the spirit of unity to provide a united country that speaks in one voice to our nation and to the world. To ensure our children have the same freedoms and the way of life we have today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. To the motion. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of this Assembly were asked to host meetings in their communities on the issue of national unity, following the Calgary Declaration adopted by the Premiers of Canada. Along with my fellow MLAs in Yellowknife, we hosted a well publicized meeting of constituencies to gain their views on this declaration. While we did receive valuable input and opinions from the handful of people who attended, it was a disappointing turnout. The turnout reaffirmed my opinion that national unity is not an issue of urgent relevance, at least not to the people in my constituency. There are currently other issues facing the people of the Northwest Territories which will have a direct impact on their future.

The main ones being the division of the territories, the creation of jobs, the price of gold. These are issues that effects their lives on a daily basis. The question of national unity seems much further away, and there is a commonality among the opinions of my constituency that people are together on national unity.

Mr. Speaker, I came to this country 27 years ago. Like me, a large percentage of present day Canadians were born elsewhere. It is from that perspective I wish that all Canadians from coast to

coast to coast could say plain and simple, "I love Canada".

Mr. Speaker, I do not find it acceptable that I should have conditions on that love. Love is or should be unconditional. It is not an acceptable position to love Canada if I need something in return for that love. The late John Fitzgerald Kennedy's statement, which stated, "Ask not what my country can do for me but what I can do for my country."

Mr. Speaker, we can learn from that statement. It applies equally well to Canada as John Fitzgerald Kennedy's statement applied to the United States. Mr. Speaker, Canada gives each one of its citizens a quality of life that is the envy of the rest of the world, which is why we were voted the best country in the world to live in for a number of years. All Canadians have the obligation to ensure that Canada continues as it is today, a strong, free and vibrant prosperous community. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I love Canada. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. To the motion. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Canada is a huge country. There are ten provinces and two territories. April 1, 1999, a new territory will be created of Nunavut and we are speaking today on Canadian unity. What I would like to say is that Quebec, Quebec would like to separate. I would like to say something on that. They are speaking of a referendum so they could separate. We are trying to gather all the information about how Canadian citizens feel about Canada.

There are many lands in Canada. Canada is the envy of a lot of people. They respect Canada and Canada is a good place to raise your children. I have travelled overseas and I am anxious to return to Canada. When I return to Canada, I am overjoyed to come back. The Northwest Territories is a good place to live but there are many things that we have to work at yet. It is only by working together that we can overcome these difficulties. (Translation ends)

Canada is a very good place to live, although there are problems within our country, and I would like to believe that in Canada, we try to resolve our internal problems. That requires cooperation and

coordination internally to try to resolve the existing outstanding problems we are trying to deal with. With that in mind, one of the major objectives of the NWT Resolution is to make sure that aboriginal people and their rights and interests are recognized. From the NWT's prospective, a key element of promoting national unity and preserving the federation is recognizing the aboriginal character of Canada. This means that aboriginal people were the first to inhabit and govern this country and they have special land, treaty and self-government rights that are protected by the constitution to date.

Recognition also means that aboriginal people and their governments or organizations need to be part of any process relating to national unity and the strengthening of this federation. On November 18th, the Premier and I attended the meeting between premiers and national aboriginal leaders representing the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Metis National Council, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the Native Women's Association of Canada. The aboriginal leaders were very forceful and effective in making a case for aboriginal involvement in the current national unity process. As a result, Premiers agreed that a framework prepared by the aboriginal leaders to govern

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the relationship between the aboriginal governments and peoples in the federal, provincial and territorial governments should be referred to the national unity application processes. Agreement was also reached to hold aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial meetings to discuss social issues relating to aboriginal peoples.

Finally Premiers agreed to support an Aboriginal First Ministers' Meeting to address the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The framework presented by the national aboriginal leaders is a far reaching document dealing with the need for aboriginal people and their governments to work in partnership with federal, provincial and territorial governments. Aboriginal leaders said this partnership must be based upon the primary judicial obligations of the Government of Canada to aboriginal peoples, the inherent right of self-government and the recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights.

The Special Committee anticipated early in its mandate that the reference in the Calgary framework to aboriginal people as one part of Canada's gift of

diversity would not be supported nationally or in the Northwest Territories. The Resolution being recommended to the Assembly gives more profile to the status of aboriginal peoples as the founding nations of this country and recognizes their right to self-government. The Resolution reflects the input we received in responses to questionnaires about the Calgary framework. While most Northwest Territories' residents were satisfied with the way in which aboriginal issues were addressed in the Calgary framework, this support was qualified. Many people felt that an Assembly resolution needs to put more emphasis on the aboriginal characteristics of Canada and their rights and interests guaranteed in the constitution.

The Special Committee also gives special consideration to receiving reaction from the Northwest Territories aboriginal leadership. Although Aboriginal Summit leaders felt that our process is too rushed, they preferred some amendments to the National Unity Resolutions which the Special Committee has agreed to.

The leader of Nunavut Tunngavik supports the Assembly's Resolution as well as the Dene of the Deh Cho First Nation and as a Canadian, I firmly believe that the aboriginal characteristics of Canada are an essential element of the national unity package. I also believe that the Northwest Territories can play a strong role in ensuring that aboriginal characteristics of Canada are reflected in the national unity package. Finally, I agree with the Premier, that we have to move early and quickly to have maximum effect on the resolutions of other jurisdictions. In my constituency, many residents have said that they do not want to see Quebec separate. They have also said that all people and all governments including Quebec and aboriginal nations need to work together for our future generations.

I also heard that the Calgary framework does not accurately reflect the historical and contemporary status of aboriginal people in Canada. Aboriginal people are unique in this country because they were the first to inhabit and govern what is now Canada. This is why aboriginal peoples have special rights under the Canadian constitution. Dene and Metis people have struggled a long time to get where they are today and I am pleased that the Northwest Territories Resolution recognizes the struggle and their special rights and status.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in this House to speak about how they and their

constituents feel about our great country and to unanimously support in the vote of the National Unity Resolution before the House today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. To the motion. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I think of Canada, I do not imagine a large geographic mass consisting of different regions or provinces such as Quebec. I think of Canada as people, their friendliness, their compassion, a sense of fairness and the desire to share with those who have less. Our various regions naturally have different concerns, but as Canadians we will work them out by listening and not by using force or intimidation. Canadians have always been a family. We do not blame people for their place of birth, instead we welcome them into our extended family and as a result of that diversity a respect for others has earned us an enviable reputation around the world. Like all families, Canada has some bullies. But as a family, we must stand up and remind other Canadians that no one member has the right to more of a share than the other. We have moved on and perhaps up, since the statements, like, "let them freeze in the dark". Canadians as a whole have never stooped to the level of wanting anyone, whether they live in Cape Breton Island or in Arviat in the Northwest Territories, to freeze or to be without. Mr. Speaker, Canada is about sharing and remaining together as one. Vive le Canada! Mahsi cho, Monsieur le President.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, would like to speak in favour of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the people of the Northwest Territories do not see unity as a priority at this time. Unfortunately, a lot of people are looking at putting bread and butter on the table and at issues that are more closely dear to their hearts. However, this is not an easy issue that we have to deal with.

Should this country split? There could be serious ramifications. First, of course, there would be economic ramifications which would affect us socially. There would be less money for programs, less money for the type of government that we want.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great country. Yes, things are not perfect, but I think we have it pretty good. We have constitutionally protected rights. We have freedom of speech, freedom of mobility, people can travel anywhere they want in this country without being stopped. We have protection against discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability. Our constitution also recognizes and affirms aboriginal and treaty rights. Those rights of course are not defined, but they are

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protected. There is still a long way to go in this area, but I do not believe there is any other country in the world that recognizes and affirms aboriginal treaty rights in their constitution.

Yes, we do have many people who are disadvantaged, but we have the network, the social network. There is social assistance for people who need it, which supplies basic food and shelter. In the north we also provide housing, social housing and homeownership programs. Those homeownership programs go a long way further than they do in south. People are guaranteed education. We have free education up to grade 12. In fact, it is against the law not to go to school up to the age of 16. After 16, I suppose you are on your own. In the area of post secondary education, our government provides grants, loans, forgivable loans for long-term residents and that used to be Canada Student Loans are repayable loans as well. We also have minimum wages, in fact every province in Canada has minimum wages based on their cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, Canada was voted the best country in the world to live for the past four years. This was done by the countries in the United Nations. One Francophone person I know said he has travelled out of this country and people asked him if we were crazy. We were trying to split up the best country in the world to live in. He said he did not know what to respond to people who asked him questions. He feels very strongly that this country should stay together. As I said, we still have a ways to go. Aboriginal people in particular have a long way to go to bring their standards of living up to the rest of Canadians.

Aboriginal people have the lowest education rates, highest drop-out rates, highest unemployment, highest rates of social assistance and depending on which statistics a person uses, aboriginal people live six to nine years less than non-aboriginal people. We also have high mortality rates for babies, high suicide rates. We have long outstanding land and treaty claims and we are still negotiating self-government.

Recently the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples put out the report. This commission took a long time to look into these issues. They did many studies. They have made many recommendations to deal with the problems of aboriginal people that I have mentioned. They have recommended that the federal, provincial and territorial governments pour millions of dollars into education, to housing and to help with social and health problems. This is so aboriginal people can take their rightful place in society.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report is a long report and it has taken a long time to respond from the federal government. Having a federal election recently did not help matters, but I understand the federal government is poised to respond in the new year and this government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to help the Government of Canada to respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations to help improve education, to help improve economic, health and social conditions of northern aboriginal people. Mr. Speaker, if we could do it alone, we would, but we cannot. We need federal dollars.

At a recent constituency meeting that all the Yellowknife MLAs had here at the Great Hall, there was a small turnout on the unity issue, but there was good discussion. The other Yellowknife MLAs have already touched on this meeting. I just wanted to indicate that there was general support for the intent of the Calgary Framework for keeping Quebec within this country of Canada. There was the feeling that perhaps the clauses in the framework were divisive rather than unifying; could be taken as divisive by Quebecers, but in general, people said they want Quebec to remain. I agree. It was not the best wording in the world, and it still is not, but the intent is to show Quebec that we want them to stay in Canada. The intent is not to analyze how every word is put together and to obtain perfection.

Mr. Speaker, I have not travelled out of Canada that extensively, but this is a world of instantaneous communications and I do know world conditions. I

have seen many times on television people travelling hundreds of kilometres because of drought or other natural disasters. You see people, dusty people, on foot, carrying their children, carrying their belongings. Other times, you see children starving in their mother's arms. Other times you see rampaging tribesmen wiping out whole villages because of religious tribal warfare. Other places, like China, you see tanks rolling over demonstrating university students. South America, Indian people in the rain forests are hunted down and killed, so that people can develop their land. We hear people testifying that street children are killed at night because they are bothering the street merchants. In many places of the world, you see elected governments overthrown by the military soon after they are elected. For decades, we have seen a country where bombing their innocent countrymen has become an everyday affair.

Mr. Speaker, yes, Canada has its problems, but when we look at the situation in other countries that I have described, our problems are nothing, nothing. We basically have a good life. What we are striving for is to make that life better and I do not wish to see it get worse. Mr. Speaker, if Quebec leaves Canada, life in the Northwest Territories and Canada will get worse. There will be less money for education, health, housing and our other problems. Our people will be worse off. The Northwest Territories will be worse off and Canada will be worse off. Mr. Speaker, I do not want Quebec to leave Canada, rather, I want Canada to remain to be the best country in the world to live in. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to speak in support of the National Unity Resolution. I would also like to start first by commending the work of the Special Committee on National Unity. They did, I think, a fine job in a fairly short period of time on what is a very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution they have come up with is a distinct improvement on the Calgary Declaration. Calgary Declaration was a good starting point, but the message I got from the people when I had a constituency meeting on this issue is reflected in this document; that northern and aboriginal issues had to

be better reflected; and the resolution had to, in fact, go from coast to coast to coast and not just east-west.

The one comment that I heard in my constituent's meeting that has stuck in my mind is that this is the latest constitutional vehicle before the Canadian people. It is the vehicle that we

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now have before us that we have to take down the constitutional road and see if, in fact, we can translate the fine audible sentiment I have heard around this House, about what a great country Canada is and how proud we are of the fact to be Canadian and to be northerners.

Translate that into a workable, and hopefully final constitutional arrangement. Those of us from the western territory know exactly how difficult the constitutional arrangement can be to reach. We have been plugging at it for 20 years and we still have work to do. Mr. Speaker, I fully support this motion, and I hope in fact it will be a step closer towards a resolution to this problem in this constitutional arrangement that is much needed.

I, as well, do not want to see Canada split. I have in fact, relatives in Quebec, and I would like to be able to visit them all as Canadians. Mr. Speaker, I have heard many fine words today from all points of the compass and from all perspectives, but all saying the same thing. I think we have much to gain by this process. If we do not do it right, much to lose. So, I commend this special committee and I will be giving this motion my full support. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this unity resolution. I believe it is only a small part of what needs to be done. Mr. Speaker, in the community of Inuvik I brought the questions to the Samuel Hearne Secondary School. The group of students responded from junior high class. I see that in the committee's report, some of their concerns have been addressed because their concern was that the Northwest Territories was not in the Calgary Declaration. They wanted to see more of that and some of the aboriginal issues as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is a day that we have set aside, as Legislators, to do our part for Canada. The day itself is like many others. It is the issue that will make this day different for us. We, as representatives of the Northwest Territories, can let the rest of Canada know how we feel.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we live in the best country. I am happy that I was born in the land that is strong and free; that my children were born in this great land - for the future is full of opportunity and the freedom to speak is still a cornerstone of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, today it is we that set the direction for the future. It is our example that will lead our children into this future. You see, it is not how we legislate or govern. It is how we live our lives that will be the key to leading and building a strong country for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we cannot legislate how Canadians feel about one another. I believe if we are to have a true idea of unity, it will come from within. Mr. Speaker, I say acceptance starts at home and through acceptance, we will have unity.

In closing I would like to say that I am an Inuvialuit; I am a northerner; I am a Canadian. To the rest of Canada, I say I invite you to come and learn about the north and its people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too will be speaking in favour of this motion. Mr. Speaker, people in my riding did not overwhelmingly respond to this survey as well, but I believe it is because it is a very complex issue. It is not something we can expect the average person in the street to be able to respond to in such a short time. That may have been one of the reasons. But as to whether or not the people in my riding are proud to be Canadians, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is a question. I believe on June 6, 1984, when the Inuvialuit land claim was signed with the federal government, the people were proud at that time to become part of the Canadian society and to be accepted as full Canadians.

The people were proud they were finished dealing with a country that was honourable enough to recognize their claims and felt obligated to fulfil those

commitments, under the claims. Mr. Speaker, Inuvialuit on their part did their share as far as contributing towards Canadian unity.

I believe Inuvialuits felt at that time they were bringing a portion of Canada into Canada because they brought their lands with them, when they signed the claim. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of public who are not aware there were some restrictions as to what could be negotiated at these claims, during the claims process. Inuvialuit and I believe other aboriginal groups had been told we could not consider separation and we could not consider to claim any lands that had proven oil and gas reserves or mineral deposits on them. Those were the restrictions put onto what they could claim, during the claim process. I believe that was the result of the federal policy at that time. It therefore brings to mind a question to the Inuvialuit as to why the government would consider separatism with anyone else at this point in time or any time in the future? Because we were told, as Inuvialuit that we do not have that option of sovereignty, we could not be a sovereign nation within Canada. We would have to be part of Canada. We accepted those terms, Mr. Speaker. So therefore, the question of Quebec separatism, the overall question of Canadian unity, seems to come to us as an odd statement or request that would be honoured by anyone, in particular the federal government because we were told we would be treated the same as all other groups within Canada.

We were also told the sharing of resources, in particular those resources we could not claim, would be shared by all Canadians, including Inuvialuits. We were also told that the opportunity for economic development and jobs would be given to all of us as Canadians in particular, if the development was in our area, we would be given preferential opportunities to take part in these resource developments.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the federal government has some commitments yet to fulfil in order to meet the requirements of a claim and we feel as aboriginals we are short of. The federal government will be honourable enough to fulfil those commitments under the claim.

In particular, we would like to see the federal government assure that Inuvialuit in my riding first, if development is in that area, in particular, mining or oil and gas opportunities, would

be shared with Inuvialuit. We would also like to see this followed through with this government. This territorial government would have a share of the resources, within the Northwest Territories.

We would also like to see the federal government take responsibility in assuring that other aboriginal groups have a share in the resources from their area. This would assure all Canadians that we, as Canadians, have an opportunity and a right to share in the resources that are taken from our area. This would in turn show unity because it would discourage separatism. That is what I believe, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak on the issue of national unity. This legislature is the first one in Canada to consider the national resolution. This resolution is a result of the Committee on National Unity, consultation with people across the Northwest Territories. With that, I would like to thank the committee for their efforts.

We, as Canadians, as northerners face a challenging role as we enter into a new millennium. We are here to promote national unity and on the other hand, create two new territories. Division is not an easy process or an easy answer. Division of the Northwest Territories is a milestone for the residents of the Northwest Territories and Canada. The creation of Nunavut recognizes and affirms aboriginal peoples' inherent right to govern themselves.

It is important that the aboriginal people continue to make a contribution in an active role in any constitutional process, not only in Northwest Territories, but the rest of Canada and to the national constitutional process we have undertaken. People of the Northwest Territories have already faced a number of constitutional processes on a wide variety of issues such as division of the Northwest Territories, aboriginal issues, treaty entitlement, land claims, self-government and finally the long Royal Commission process in regard to aboriginal peoples and the report that was tabled with the federal government.

For myself as an aboriginal person, I feel strongly that the whole aboriginal agenda has to be seriously

looked at along with any constitutional process in Canada, especially in regard to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report and the recommendations that went along with that report. Canada is a land of opportunity and we enjoy the right of freedom to express it. However, Canada has not always been open in regard to when it came to aboriginal people and their freedoms. Historically the door has not always been open in regard to participation of aboriginal people in Canada. The history of Canada is not one of democratic participation. The door has just recently been opened to aboriginal peoples' participation in the constitutional processes in Canada. It has been through our desire to continue that process and historical work that the fathers of confederation and the goals that are not to be undone but to recognize and affirm these processes.

Aboriginal people have come a long way and the division of the Northwest Territories is proof Canada now represents and honours rights of aboriginal people, the inherent right of self-government in recognition of section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. Our future with the result, generation upon generations of Canadians making the difference by working together and not apart. We are here to rekindle a sense of national pride and commitment that all Canadians have. However, it does not end there. It is an ongoing process that strives to come together and work together for a national agenda for all Canadians, one that includes all Canadians, the aboriginal peoples and the Quebecers. I am proud to be an aboriginal person and a Canadian, with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

(Translation unavailable) Mr. Speaker, to translate.

--Applause

Mr. Speaker, friends, I took the opportunity to speak my own language briefly. I know that you did not understand what I said but to recognize the greatness of our country, I believe millions of Canadians would have understood what I said. Canada gave my parents the opportunity to afford themselves a living, to raise a family. Myself as a first generation

Canadian of Chinese descent, it gave me an opportunity, and again to recognize the diversity of our country to move from Vancouver, a city of approximately two million people, to Cambridge Bay, a community of approximately a thousand people approximately 20 years ago. It gave me an opportunity to work, to live and to raise a family and ultimately be accepted by the community and the opportunity and the honour of representing that community as their Member in this Assembly.

Our country Canada is the only one, I believe, that affords us the opportunity to voice our freedom of speech to the level that we are allowed, to give us the mobility rights to work and to live wherever we want in this great country. It has one of the highest levels of social safety net to protect those residents, those citizens, who need help in the area of health and social services and providing one of the best education levels in the world. In this country as we all know, it is comprised of millions of Canadians, many, of many ethnic backgrounds. One only has to look at the reflection of this in our small Legislature, one of the smallest in Canada, but I believe it has one of the most diverse backgrounds. We have people of Inuit decent, of Inuvialuit decent, of Dene decent, of Metis decent. We have immigrants to this country of Scottish decent, of Irish decent, of Dutch decent. We have Canadians born and raised in the country whether they are from the west coast originally like myself or from the Prairies or from the east coast like some of my honourable colleagues. I think that is just a reflection of the greatness and the diversity of our country. So, I am proud to be Canadian, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to be able to support this motion and I am proud to support this great country that we are all part of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

To the motion. Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mrs. Thompson.

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HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be making a brief comment. I agree with all the comments that have been put out by the Members and I am very proud to be a Canadian as well. I just want to indicate that being an aboriginal person and being a founding person of this country, I am very proud of it. When the first non-aboriginal people

came to our country, we did not even have a geography at the time or any mappings, and yet there were some aboriginal people who were living in Keewatin, Kitikmeot and Dene regions. Manitoba, Yukon or Quebec or even the provinces at the time were not even listed in our maps of Canada. However, aboriginal people were still in existence in our great country and they were scattered all over this country. They were supporting themselves and hunting for themselves, for their people. They had their own customs and laws which governed them.

Even though they were scattered and had their own systems, they did not have such party politics. However, they would communicate with each other and come up with solutions to their problems. However, just recently when we started talking about Nunavut territory, our elders finally understood that our country and that our land was our land, that we could govern the land as we wanted and as we wished. So, the people who were negotiating the land claims at the time had a very hectic job to do. However, we will be beginning our government within Nunavut and having said all that, although we have political parties within Canada and have provinces, we can still live together as a whole, as a people because we are all from Canada and we are proud to be Canadians. Those of us who are Inuit being in Canada, we always see on TV other countries fighting amongst themselves and we even see little children carrying guns so that they can shoot other people. But we do not see that within Canada. We do not let our children carry guns around so that they can shoot other people down. Because we are living in Canada, we can speak about anything that we want to speak. Thank you. (Translation ends)

Different types of people come from different parts of Canada and regions. My husband is from Ontario. My son, Trevor, is from Baffin. My son Randy is from Keewatin. I have a sister-in-law from northern Quebec, Pasha. I have a sister-in-law Marilyn from New Brunswick. I have a sister-in-law Trudy from Manitoba. I have a brother-in-law from southern Quebec. I also have a friend here who speaks Chinese.

--Laughter/Applause

My Mom's father, Jimmy Tom, was from Scotland. I strongly feel that family unity is very important and so is National Unity. The NWT Resolution and the Calgary Declaration recognize what makes Canada unique, and this is our respect for diversity, the value of our social programs, our different languages, the

equality of our people, and of our provinces and territories and the right of our people to govern themselves. Mr. Speaker, I am supporting the NWT Resolution and would like to thank all the Members of this special committee for their efforts in the national unity process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing the debate on this House's Resolution on National Unity, I would just like to thank Members for their speeches of today and for entering into this debate in a good frame of mind and a firm commitment to this country. I just got word from our staff that the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador have unanimously passed the Calgary Declaration with one amendment at approximately a little after 4:00 p.m. Atlantic time zone time. So, that would be approximately 4:00 p.m. December 2, 1997. So, I will not speak long because we are going to pass our Resolution before 4:00 p.m. December 2, 1997, Mountain Standard Time.

--Laughter -- Applause -- Hear! Hear!

But it is only fitting that the last provincial government or the last provincial Assembly that ever joined this country was Newfoundland and they did unanimously pass their Assembly's motion, and we will be the next to join this country as a full partner so we will next pass our resolution, as number two. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all Members. I would like to thank Northwest Territories' residents for telling us their views, and I think that we have taken the time and opportunity to send a clear and strong message to the rest of Canada that our Canada, the future Canada includes Quebec and it also includes the Northwest Territories. So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Morin, Mr. Arlooktoo, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Steen, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Mr. Barnabas, Mr. Picco, Mr. O'Brien, Mr.

Krutko, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Henry, Mr. Ng, Mrs. Thompson, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. All those against, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Thank you. Recorded vote is 21 for, none against and none abstaining. This motion is passed unanimously.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to thank all the Members for participating in this special unity session. After we take a 15-minute break, we will resume normal orders of the day.

--Break

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to call the House back to order. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 10-13(5): Condolences to Finance Minister

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with deep sadness that I rise today to offer condolences to Finance Minister, the Honourable John Todd and his family on the death of his son Ian, this past weekend. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more tragic than the loss of a loved one, especially at a relatively young age. There is nothing worse for a parent

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than the death of one of their children. On behalf of the Members of this Legislative Assembly and all the people of the Northwest Territories, I would like to offer the deepest sympathy to John and his family. Our hearts and thoughts are with them all at this difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 11-13(5): The Report of the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I will table the report on the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance. Although a number of changes have been made to the Student Financial Assistance Program in recent years, it has not been reviewed in depth since 1980. Since that time, the number of students using the program has grown considerably. In 1994, the Auditor General of Canada raised concerns about the program's objectives, results and the management of the program's costs. To find out what northerners thought about the program and to gather their ideas on how to make it sustainable, I established the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance earlier this year.

The forum carried out consultations in Iqaluit, Inuvik and Yellowknife during the summer. Representatives from all northern communities were invited to participate. Discussions focused on four areas; access, shared responsibility, sustainability and delivery. People who could not make presentation to the ministerial forum were able to mail in their comments. In all, the forum heard from more than 225 people and organizations.

I presented the report, Mr. Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Social Programs on November 27th and invited comments on it. The forum's report includes 50 recommendations for making the Student Financial Assistance Program more responsive to the needs of students. The department will start working on options for revising the program based on the forums' recommendations. Communication with the standing committee, students, parents and communities will continue as we move through this process. The department plans to make some changes that will respond to the forum's recommendations and improve the delivery of the program by September of 1998. For example, the department will enhance support services to students by providing better orientation and preparation sessions, as well as personal followup during the initial phase of their post secondary education. The process of applying for student financial assistance will also be simplified. Long-term changes will be considered for implementation in April of 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the forum for their hard work and dedication to this project. The level of detail in the report shows the

effort they put into ensuring a wide range of ideas and opinions represented to the government for consideration. Mr. Speaker, the members of the forum were Judy Anilniliak of Iqaluit, Ruby Jumbo of Trout Lake, Wendy Colpitts of Yellowknife and Jason Lepine of Fort Smith. The forum was chaired by Louise Vertes of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 12-13(5): CWG Meeting with DIAND Minister Stewart

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 24, 1997, the Constitutional Working Group delegation met with the DIAND Minister, Jane Stewart, in Ottawa. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss continuing federal support for the CWG process and the development of the constitution for the new Western Territory. The delegation included Mr. James Wah-Shee, myself and the CWG's executive director, Mr. Steve Iveson. In addition to discussing ongoing federal support the meeting was also an opportunity to provide Minister Stewart with an update on the progress made to date on the CWG, how western Northwest Territories residents have responded to the western constitutional development issues and what we are planning for the future.

I am pleased to report that Minister Stewart expressed her support for the western constitutional development process and agreed in general with the CWG's guiding principles and objectives which form the basis for our western constitution. She expressed confidence that with good communication and effective consultation among western residents, the aboriginal leadership and the federal government's approach will emerge with respect to the values of all parties.

I can also report that the Minister supports continued involvement by the federal government in the western constitutional process. DIAND officials will continue to take an active role in the CWG meetings and the second round of consultations they will participate as observers, offer technical advice and provide the federal perspective. Finally, Minister Stewart confirmed that the Government of Canada will contribute \$500,000 to the CWG process for the

remainder of this fiscal year. This contribution along with the \$266,000 from the Government of the Northwest Territories will be targeted for CWG's second round of consultation. The CWG's proposed budget and work plan for fiscal year 1998/99 are already under review by the federal, territorial and the CWG officials.

Both governments are to be commended for their political, financial, technical support for the Constitutional Working Group process. The Constitutional Working Group can now devote its full attention to the second round of consultations which are scheduled for February through May of 1998. The Constitutional Working Group will hold a constitutional conference in the fall of 1998 where a proposed constitutional package will be considered subject to further consultation. A plebiscite on the western constitutional package is tentatively scheduled for early 1999.

On the same day, I was able to meet with Minister Stewart in my capacity as Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. We discussed a number of Northwest Territories' issues and initiatives including self-government which has implications for federal and territorial governments and aboriginal people. We established a good dialogue on these matters and have agreed to continue working closely in the future. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Minister's Statement 13-13(5): St. John Ambulance 25th Anniversary

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the service offered to northerners over the past 25 years by a dedicated group of volunteers, the St. John Ambulance Council of the Northwest Territories. The Council is celebrating its 25th anniversary. St. John is the oldest charity in the world. It began in Jerusalem almost 1,000 years ago. The organization reached Canada in 1882. At that time, high accident rates among construction, mining, forestry and railway workers meant there was a need for first aid training and followup after hospital treatment. In 1972, Commissioner Stu Hodgson said that the territories

should have its own St. John Ambulance organization to meet the growing need for first aid training in the north.

Since that time, the NWT St. John Ambulance Council has issued over 74,000 certificates to northerners qualifying them in health care, safety and emergency first aid. It provides instruction to over 3,500 hundred people in the NWT each year. Courses include first aid, babysitting, child care and home health care.

Last year, St. John volunteers logged 1,400 hours covering events such as the Caribou Carnival, Dry Grad functions, Canada Day events and the Folk on the Rocks Festival in Yellowknife. Over the years, this organization has made efforts to provide services that meet the special needs of the Northwest Territories. St. John has translated its training materials into aboriginal languages and has an Aboriginal Instructor Qualification Program. This program is credited with training 5,000 northerners in health care and first aid. St. John has placed survival material along travel routes in the High Arctic. These materials are available to anyone who needs them while out on the land. For ten years, St. John operated the air medevac service in the western Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, the members of St. John Ambulance provide these services because they see a need in their communities. They are working to improve the quality of life for all northern people through training and first aid service. I would like to congratulate them on their first 25 years in the Northwest Territories and wish them the best in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 31-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was looking forward to today's sitting and preparing a statement dealing with a matter of concern to myself and my constituents. However, Mr. Speaker, given the theme of our one day sitting, national unity, not wanting to detract from that very important issue, and also the

tragedy this past weekend, I have elected today instead to use my statement to send my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to our colleague and friend from Keewatin Central. None of us knows when heartbreak and grief may come our way through a tragedy such as a loss of a child. As a parent I believe that the loss of a child in the prime of their life is one of the most painful circumstances that one could be expected to endure. It is so final and no amount of effort, reasoning or longing can reverse or change it. I hope during the next few days, weeks and months, that John and his family will find comfort in their memories of Ian which will be so vivid at this time, and they also find comfort in knowing that friends who care very much about them are sharing their burden of grief. I want John to be assured today, Mr. Speaker, that he is in our thoughts and our prayers. As this is the last day of our sitting prior to Christmas, I would also like to wish my other colleagues as they travel and have been away from home for extended periods of time a very happy and safe holiday season and Christmas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement 32-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. NINGARK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to offer my condolences in the loss of a close relative. Having gone through a similar time, I can sympathize. On behalf of the people of the NWT, we are representatives of the people in our communities, and I think sometimes we are seen as cold hearted or unfeeling, but I would like to remind the people of the NWT that as elected Members to this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, we have to be reminded of our constituents that they, too, have feelings and they have compassion. As the Member for Natilikmiot, my friend John Todd, our friend, his relatives and people in his community, our thoughts are with you and you will be in our prayers. I wanted to express that condolence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 33-13(5): Diamond Sorting and Valuation Facility

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say how profoundly disappointed I am with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and their response to our efforts to establish a diamond sorting and valuation facility in the NWT.

The federal government is in the process of dropping the diamond valuation ball squarely on its own foot. I have spoken about the need to locate a diamond valuation and sorting plant in Yellowknife. It means jobs, money and renewed prosperity for the city.

Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife is in trouble. We have lost 800 government jobs in recent years. Plummeting gold prices have rendered our gold mines unprofitable and layoffs have already started. We are in the middle of a terrible economic downturn. Now our potential salvation is bungled by Ottawa.

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Recently the City of Yellowknife assembled a diamond task force of 20 people to lobby for value-added benefits from the diamond industry. I had hoped to come today with news from my task force meeting last Friday, but instead I can only report how we were profoundly insulted by federal officials. Joe Lazarovich is Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is director of mineral and resources. He is the person who advises the Minister on northern diamond mining industry and the rewriting of the mining regulations. A month ago, the Yellowknife task force set up a meeting with Mr. Lazarovich, set up for last Friday. He came to town for the geoscience forum and on Thursday he made his speech and then left town without warning, presumably under the instructions of his bosses in DIAND.

We are appalled to have been treated so poorly on so important an issue, Mr. Speaker. We are also angry the feds appear to be back peddling now on issues relating to BHP's mine that should have been resolved a long time ago. We are now learning that Ottawa made a mistake. Under international trade agreements, it cannot insist the sorting and valuation plant even be built in Canada, let alone the Northwest Territories. This does a great disservice to all Canadians.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Ootes, you have unanimous consent.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This does a great disservice to all Canadians, this move. It has the potential to diminish Canadian royalties and reduce jobs in Canada that would normally be available in the value-added industries like detailed sorting and valuation.

DIAND's Minister Jane Stewart department is responsible for northern development and as such, she is responsible to ensure we maximize our economic opportunities. Issues of interprovincial trade and NAFTA should have been flagged by the department a long time ago and agreements worked out with BHP and Dia Met before their permits were issued. As a matter of fact, this government, the Government of the NWT and this Cabinet raised the whole issue of diamond valuation and economic benefits with the federal government a long time ago, during discussions of what conditions companies would have to meet, before licenses would be issued.

The federal government did not pay any attention to our concerns and went ahead and issued licences without ensuring these economic issues were addressed. Now they realize they made a mistake. One, northerners will have to pay for very dearly.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the companies, especially BHP, have more than lived up to their obligations and are meeting their stated commitments. It is the feds who are repeatedly letting us down. The NWT stands to produce 10 percent of the world's diamonds, eventually. Ottawa will take \$4.4 billion in royalties over 25 years. The NWT will only collect a very small fraction of this. Canada will be exporting jobs and economic development opportunities to other countries. There will be no lasting benefit from the diamond development for Canada, nor the NWT, out of the spin off benefits.

Minister Stewart and her team have to find a way to make sure that any future diamond valuation or sorting centre does stay in Canada and furthermore, that it does stay in the north. It would be helpful if the

Minister would bother to have her staff honour their obligations to meet with those commitments are made with, instead of pulling them out, without warning or explanation.

The people of the north deserve better from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 34-13(5): Local Internet Service Providers

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the last two days the local Internet service providers, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Ardicom consortium have been meeting at the Explorer to try to iron out concerns and difficulties surrounding the digital network and the role the Internet providers would provide at the community level.

I would like to thank the government for honouring their commitment to, in fact, bring all these people to the table. I think it has been a very fruitful meeting. I managed to attend some of the sessions, both yesterday and today. I can report to this House there was very frank discussion. Though there was, I believe, tempers raised at some points, everybody did stay at the table. There will be a final report with recommendations coming out to the government and to those MLAs who are affected who have constituents that are service providers. So I would hope we could move forward from this very important meeting and that the government will see this as an investment to further develop a strategic plan for delivery of communication related to data base and Internet services across the north for all people.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, if I may ask the liberty to wish all my colleagues and the people of the Northwest Territories in my constituents a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. As well, my own personal heartfelt condolences to the Minister of Finance on the death of his son. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 35-13(5): Wha Ti Housing Shortage

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I rise to inform the House of the dire need of housing in all the north. However, I would like to focus my statement on the communities being Wha Ti. Mr. Speaker, I have received a letter from Wha Ti showing that they do, indeed, have housing problems. You are aware that in Wha Ti 88 percent of the housing in Wha Ti are having problems. This 88 or 82 percent are housing in core need. This means that 82 percent of all houses in Wha Ti are either unsafe to live in or they have to have too many people living in them. These are the hard facts.

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The committee has many letters on file from doctors and nursing stations and other groups saying children's health is being compromised because of the conditions where they have been.

This is an important issue for myself and my constituents. I hope the Department of Housing will come up with some type of solution. I believe this is an important state that we are now approaching 1998, and yet we have people in this kind of condition within a country I would live in, not only sub-standard housing but unsafe and crowded conditions as well. For people to live a productive life, they must have suitable housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 36-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to send condolences on behalf of the people of Iqaluit on the sudden death of Ian Todd. He had been living in Iqaluit for the past few years, working for First Air, he was training to be a pilot. Ian was always smiling. He had a good sense of humour and was well liked in Iqaluit. The Honourable John Todd and the family, Amanda, we extend our sincere condolences. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement 37-13(5): Christmas Greetings

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this is the only opportunity before Christmas, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the people of my riding at Holman, Paulatuk, Sachs and Tuktoyaktuk as well as my colleagues here a safe and joyous holiday season. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 38-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will forego my prepared statement. Instead Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my sincere condolences to my fellow Member, and sparring partner, Mr. Todd, on the tragic loss on his son, Ian. Mr. Speaker, four years ago, I, too, lost a family member in a tragic accident. I know the feeling of emptiness, loss, disbelief and the nagging question of why. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, time is the only healer. Mr. Speaker, the thoughts and prayers of the people of the Kivallivik are with John and his family at his time of loss. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 39-13(5): Christmas Greetings

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seeing it is our last opportunity to come together in this forum before the Christmas break, I would like to wish everybody here a happy and joyous occasion. I especially wish the Ministers good eating at Christmas. Enjoy your turkey because when we come back in January, I am loaded for bear. Thank you.

--Laughter

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 40-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to apologize. I would like to offer my condolences to John Todd and wish my fellow Members a Merry Christmas and have a good rest. I would like to express to my constituents in Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, happy Christmas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Member's Statement 41-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to express my sincere feeling towards a person who has lost a family member and especially to John Todd. On November 14th I left Igloodik to Pond Inlet. I came to Yellowknife from Pond Inlet and while I was away from home, we have lost community members that committed suicide. I would also like to send my condolences to the family members of these people. Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 42-13(5): Condolences to John Todd and Family

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I would like to send my condolences to John Todd and his family and my constituents, my thoughts and prayers will be with them. At this time I would like to wish my constituents a very happy and joyful Christmas, also a safe and secure New Year, also to my colleagues in this House and other residents in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ng spoke earlier today about the 25th anniversary of St. John Ambulance here in the Northwest Territories. I was associated with it in the early days and proud to have been so. Today, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce several members of that organization who are in the gallery. First, I would like to introduce Haigh Carthew who is President of the NWT Council of St. John Ambulance and Valorie Kenny who is one of the new generation of St. John volunteers. She is a cadet and was the youngest ever in Canada to every receive the Grand Prior Badge, which recognizes her outstanding achievements and

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commitment to the Order. I want to congratulate both of those members of their 25th anniversary, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 39-13(5): Purchase of Housing Unit in Gjoa Haven

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents and NWT Teachers Association, I would like to ask the Premier a question. In the name of a constituent, if you will allow is Mike V. Ellsworth. If my wish has been able to be recorded, I spell Ellsworth of Gjoa Haven. The gentleman has endeavoured to purchase a government unit in Gjoa Haven. According to the information I have here, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has moved to Gjoa Haven in 1996, under a term position. Then within May 1997 the position was upgraded to indeterminate. Since the job that he had was secured, he wanted to purchase a government unit in Gjoa Haven and went to different levels to try and purchase, but no avail. Mr. Ellsworth has indicated, he wrote me a letter on October 29, 1997, but I have not received the letter since I travel

from October 24th to Iqaluit, Igloodik, Pelly Bay, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak. So I apologize.

My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is, will the Premier look into a procedure used to sell government units to private contractors and to try and help the gentleman in Gjoa Haven who is in dire need of a house. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 39-13(5): Purchase of Housing Unit in Gjoa Haven

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have agreed on a process of disposal of surplus government units. We have agreed already to offer units for sale to employees then to communities, private sector. I thank Mr. Ningark for raising this issue, and I will get back to him in writing prior to Christmas so that he can tell his constituent if the proper process was followed. If not, what happened and I will look into it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks NTI has passed a resolution to form a shadow cabinet to help the Ordinary Members keep the Cabinet accountable. Mr. Speaker, on several occasions I have tried to raise questions in this House on article 23, article 24, Nunavut Infrastructure and numerous Nunavut issues to try to keep the Cabinet accountable. Again, I will raise the question to demonstrate to my friends at NTI that this Member is trying to do that. My question is to the Minister responsible for Division, the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo. Can the Minister update this House at this time the status of article 24 on this implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I should first clarify that Mr. Todd is the Minister responsible for Division. I have the responsibility for transition planning for Nunavut and Mr. Dent has a similar position for the western regions. I do appreciate the question by the Member for Iqaluit. It is true that the Member has raised the issue of article 24 and article 23 on several occasions here in the House and privately with me. I do appreciate the fact that we do try to iron out some of the problems in dealing with those issues. The Government of the NWT has approved implementation measures for contracting in the Nunavut settlement area in accordance with our obligations under the Nunavut Land Claim. This was approved by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated this past fall and is now in effect.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform this House and the people of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in particular, if indeed that article 24 which has been passed, as he said, which is in the Nunavut Land Claim and is in effect if the agreement in principle that the Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is using is in actuality being used by NTI. Do they know about it? Has it been explained to them? Are they in agreement with them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has had two documents in relation to article 24, one was that I introduced almost two years ago, called Interim Measures on Article 24 and more recently The Measures on Article 24. On both occasions we

consulted with NTI and got their formal approval before announcing them publicly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are concerns that this government has not followed the intention and the intent of article 24. I would ask the Minister has there been any recent cases where Inuit firms bidding on contracts have actually brought this issue forward to the Minister? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

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Further Return To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot recall any. As Members are aware, the intent of article 24 is to increase the number of Inuit firms and Inuit persons in getting work, doing government contract, et cetera. The Government of the NWT has done two things. One is they have made sure we have formally complied to all the requirements and the other one is that politically I have made sure that our department and other departments are well aware of the intent of article 24. I believe that we have been doing the best job that we can within the rules to increase the number of Inuit participating in government projects. The one issue that we have received complaints on, on article 24, is not our procedures overall, but on negotiated contracts the fact that as per NTI's request, before any negotiated contract we have to advertise for 21 days and open up the process if anyone else is interested. That has made negotiated contracts pretty much obsolete in Nunavut and that does raise concern with some of our Inuit-owned businesses.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to updating article 24 implementation with our partners NTI before the next sitting of this legislature?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 40-13(5): Status of Article 24 Implementation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have fairly regular communication between officials of the GNWT and NTI mostly on division issues. I have been communicating fairly regularly with the president of NTI, twice in the last ten days about other issues. I will make sure that this issue is brought up with them to see if they have any outstanding concerns. Another point of interest is that the NTI board is meeting in Iqaluit today and the next couple of days and they should have article 24 and negotiated contracts on the agenda from what I understand.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 41-13(5): Appointment to Keewatin Health Board

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and concerns the Keewatin Health Board. Mr. Speaker, approximately two months ago Mr. Gordie Main of Arviat was approved by the Hamlet Council to be their representative on the Keewatin Health Board. Can the Minister tell me as to the status of that approval through his office? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 41-13(5): Appointment to Keewatin Health Board

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the appointment notice has been signed off and I believe the information item went to Cabinet this morning. It has gone through Cabinet so the official notification will be going out shortly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 41-13(5): Appointment to Keewatin Health Board

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as of a few days ago it was my understanding that Mr. Main had not been approved through Cabinet and that he could attend the next meeting on the 10th of December in Rankin only as a spectator and as an observer. Can the Minister confirm that Mr. Main will be approved through his office so that he can attend the meeting, the first meeting on December 10th, as a full participating member with voting rights? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 41-13(5): Appointment to Keewatin Health Board

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if all the approvals have taken place, then I will ensure that the member gets full voting authority prior to that meeting, and if not, I will see what has to be done to finalize that to allow that to happen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 42-13(5): Concerns with the Education Act

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Honourable Mr. Dent, the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, a concern surfaced in two of my communities as to why the Education Act does not allow for religious classes any more. Perhaps the Minister could explain why and when this act was amended to disallow religious classes in schools? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 42-13(5): Concerns with the Education Act

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Education Act was passed by the 12th Assembly, I believe in the spring of 1995, and came into force on July 1, 1996. That act reflects the Canadian Charter of Rights which prohibits the teaching of a specific religion in schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 42-13(5): Concerns with the Education Act

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MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does this mean that religious classes cannot be held in any way in the local schools?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 42-13(5): Concerns with the Education Act

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what that means is that religious classes could not be held during the school program. If the local community feels that a religious program should be offered after school hours, for instance, that is still possible. It does not prohibit teachers, during a course of study, teaching about various religions, but it does prohibit the teaching of a specific religion during school hours. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 43-13(5): Fort MacPherson Teaching Requirements

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. It is in regard to the statements that we have been hearing in regard to the incident in Fort MacPherson where there was a teacher supposedly run out of town in which he had to live in a tent. Basically, the statements we are hearing on the radio sound like a real novel in regard to where things were at and what was happening with myself being involved in a situation where I was talking with people at the local education council, the teachers, the president of the teachers federation in regard to what was happening there. I think that in light of the incident that did occur, there is still a shortage of teachers in the community, and there is still a need to assist students who may be having some tough times in regard to violence that is occurring in the classrooms. It is not only happening in the Mackenzie Delta, but it is happening elsewhere in the Northwest Territories. My question to the Minister is, what has his department done to alleviate the problem in Fort MacPherson to assist the community with the incident that did occur? Also, the filling of those vacancies in Fort MacPherson at this time?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, I think I heard two questions.

Return To Question 43-13(5): Fort MacPherson Teaching Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the individual who is named in the press reports left the Northwest Territories without following through on some of the comments that he had apparently made. So, we were not able to verify both sides of the story. I do not think it would be appropriate for me to respond to questions relating to that particular incident. However, in response to the question about what the department has done regarding supporting the community and trying to deal with the situations of violence, it is a policy of the department, and it is contained in the Education Act, that every divisional education council shall have a policy relating to violence in the school. I would expect that the education council will have asked the district education authority to follow through on their policy. We have not been approached, as far as I know, by the divisional education council, who are responsible for hiring teachers in the region, for any special assistance at present. I am not aware

that they are having a problem filling the vacant position. If they are, I will look into it and will get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral question. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 43-13(5): Fort MacPherson Teaching Requirements

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the vacant positions, I think it is crucial and probably critical that those positions be filled as soon as possible because of the incident. Not only what happened recently, but in the last two years in which the school burned down, then basically, the children had to be put into make-shift classrooms. I think the frustration that the community had to go through, it seemed like we were going through these ups and downs and just recover from one instance where we are running into another. So, I think if there is a way with yourself, as the Minister and working along with the Beaufort Divisional Board of Education and the community to try to alleviate these problems and I think it will hopefully make for a very great Christmas present for the Mackenzie Delta at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 43-13(5): Fort MacPherson Teaching Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I am not aware that the divisional education council is having a problem filling the position. They have not approached me nor have I heard from the chair of the board advising me that they are having a problem. I will ask my departmental officials to check with the board and find out how they are progressing with filling that position and if necessary, see if there is some way we can assist them with finding personnel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for Mr. Kakfwi, the Minister of Renewable Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development regarding the diamond issue. As I spoke earlier, we were taken aback by the move of Mr. Lazarovich not appearing before the Yellowknife Task Force on looking at the diamond valuation and sorting facility to be established in Yellowknife. I understand that the Minister and the Minister of Finance met with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's Minister and the federal Minister of Finance, and I understand that there were some discussions taking place that there may be further action on their part to be made with regard to attracting and putting the diamond and valuation sorting facility here in the north. Could the Minister tell us what action is being taken on the federal/territorial level? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Return To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal Ministers, Paul Martin and Jane Stewart, met with myself and the Finance Minister, Mr. Todd, last month in Ottawa. At that time we proposed, because time was of the essence and it was our impression that Canada and the federal government were not getting as substantive and thorough advice and information as they should regarding the emerging diamond industry here in Canada, that we should work together through a task force that would allow us to combine our resources and our efforts to prepare Canada and northern people for all the opportunities that can be identified and realized from the emerging diamond industry. To that end, they agreed to set up a task force to come up with a diamond strategy to look at development of a policy on diamonds for Canada, and looking at how we can maximize the economic benefits of the diamond industry for Canadians and for northern people.

Mr. Speaker, we drafted a first set of terms of reference and this week, the deputy minister, Mr. Joe Handley, is in Ottawa. The draft terms of reference

have been accepted by the federal government, as far as we know, by the various federal departments. The first meeting of the task force is set for tomorrow morning with a following subsequent followup meeting to be held in the north in about two weeks time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier in regard to this issue, about the fact that the federal government has really overlooked an important area and that was to arrange with the company, BHP/Dia Met, to ensure there would be value-added industries possible within Canada from this diamond mine. It appears that the federal government has overlooked that and made an error. I wonder if the Minister could tell us if one of the discussions is, or will be, that the federal government will own up to responsibility for this oversight and ensure that they provide assistance, support, whatever is necessary in order to ensure that this facility is maintained here in Canada, first of all, and in the north, that is our demand in the north here, but additionally that we maximize employment for Canadians in this whole end. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that people will take credit for all the good things that have happened to date and no one will rush to take the blame for the areas where we have been less than diligent and able to maximize benefits on. Our primary objective with the federal government has been to point out the concerns we have had regarding the ability of ourselves and the federal government to articulate what are the maximum economic benefits we want to realize and if there are reasons for us not to try to take certain actions, then to prepare for explaining to Canadians and to northern people why we are not; that is, arguably the federal Ministers and ourselves recognize that both the federal government and

ourselves are perhaps relying too much, at least in the case of the federal government, externally it appears that on some minor federal official, by the name of Joe Lazarovich, for some reason he seems to be the lone ranger speaking and advising the federal government on diamonds.

He is the only name that comes up in discussions with people in the diamond industry in Europe. On our part it seems people are aware in London and Antwerp and elsewhere of our Ministers, certainly Mr. Todd, Mr. Dent and other Members of the Legislature who have taken the time and the effort to make themselves well known and acquaint themselves with the people in the diamond industry in the international community.

The federal government has recognized that we need to get more outside advice, perhaps less advice from the likes of Joe Lazarovitch and more from people who actually deal with diamonds, in the selling, marketing and the manufacture. So, both of us have agreed that we will largely rely on outside expertise, international expertise from the diamond industry, from the diamond dealing community, to help us in our deliberations in that task force. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would venture to say that the federal government has failed to do its due diligence and to ensure, maximize northern benefits, Canadian benefits, for that matter. Next week a group of Yellowknife, from the Yellowknife Task Force will be going to Ottawa. But I am wondering if the Minister could tell us, if the CSO were to be involved in this - I know that they would, and they have spoken to us on that - that they would ensure that detailed sorting and valuation would be done here in the Northwest Territories. It would involve many jobs. But under the circumstances, we cannot blame BHP or Dia Met. They have been permitted. They have met their obligations. My concern is, will the federal government now commit to encourage support, whatever needs to be done, to ensure that BHP/Dia Met do establish a detailed sorting plant and detailed valuation plant here in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has relied almost solely on the advice and views of one official, and I think the establishment of the task force suggests that perhaps we should look for other sources of advice and expertise and that time will tell how valid the advice given to the federal government by this sole official has been. It is my view that the official has not given the best advice to the federal government in the past; that we can do better; that the idea of locating facilities off site, of looking at

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detailed sorting, of a country like Canada making certain demands on the diamond producing companies is both desirable and legitimate; that there can be compelling arguments made to argue otherwise and that the task force is established to provide just that. So, hopefully, that will show more room for more thorough, well-based advice in the future that will get the federal government and ourselves working together for the benefit of all Canadians and, in particular, for northern peoples. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Timing is critical, as we have always been informed. One of the problems with timing that we have continually been advised about is that the mining regulations are being changed and Mr. Lazarovitch, I understand had a great deal of input into the formulating of the mining regulations. It is my understanding that these are now with the Department of Justice for final consideration and then there will be a 30-day consultation period with the public. But, knowing how things usually go, we may be already too late with respect to a diamond valuation sorting facility for

BHP/Dia Met. Would the Minister ask the task force to address this question of the mining regulations immediately, so that we can buy ourselves some time to ensure that this question is addressed properly and that we can have the time to inform Ottawa politicians, Ottawa decision-makers that this is an essential Canadian need? This valuation sorting facility means royalties. It means jobs for Canadians. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 44-13(5): Northern Diamond Sorting Facility

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has, as far as I am concerned, agreed to work with us in good faith. I believe that they are sincere in their efforts to work together to see what we can do, still do in the time available to us to maximize the economic benefits from the emerging diamond industry.

It is my view, I think, it is evident that at the end of the day both the federal government and ourselves will have to explain ourselves as to why we have taken certain positions we have. If we have missed certain opportunities then we will have to explain those and account for ourselves to Canadians and to northern peoples. It is my view that we still have an opportunity and opportunities to find ways in which to maximize the economic benefits to the country and to northern peoples that the idea that diamonds will just come out of the ground at Ekati Lake and fly straight to London and Antwerp is something that I think is just a possible looming nightmare right now. There are still possibilities to avert that, to find ways in which diamonds found in this country, that belong to this country, will create additional jobs and that economic benefits will flow to people in this country. That is my hope, and I just want to assure the Member that agreeing to this task force is done in a sincere effort, and if we believe for one moment that we are just being conned and compromised, then we shall take appropriate action at that time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Would the Premier agree that currently we have a central public government system in the NWT with a mandate for providing governance and programs to all residents of the NWT?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would agree with the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier envision the current central public government system continuing for the foreseeable future, in the west, unless there are changes agreed to through the constitutional development process now underway in the west?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not only the vision for the future. It is a reality. This current government structure will continue into post 1999 until amendments or a new constitution for a western government comes into place.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier agree that our current central public government system has a clear legislative mandate that covers Justice, Health, Child Care, as well as many other areas?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

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MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Premier is this. Does the Premier envision our current legislative mandate continuing for the foreseeable future in the west unless there are changes agreed to through the constitutional development process now underway in the west?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 45-13(5): Central Public Government System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have made a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories to make sure the transition to Nunavut and the new Western Territory would happen as smoothly as possible. We have made a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories that there will be no disruption in services. We fully intend on living up to those commitments and that the new western government will govern basically the same as this government does until we have agreement on the process we agreed to, until the new constitutional development process comes up and gives us a new government.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 46-13(5): Housing Concerns in Wha Ti

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question for the honourable Minister of Housing. In light of my Member's statement earlier today and concerns raised by the community of Wha Ti, would the Minister consider going to Wha Ti in the near future to see for himself the condition of these housing units and discuss the concerns they have? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 46-13(5): Housing Concerns in Wha Ti

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have recently seen the condition reports and the needs survey from the North Slave Region, including Wha Ti. I fully realize the level of concern the community and the Member has. I do not see in my schedule any opportunity in the next few weeks. However, I would be willing to send a senior official of the Housing Corporation up to Wha Ti at the earliest opportunity, even during the month of December.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to Mr. Kakfwi, the Minister for Renewable Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Kakfwi informed the House earlier on this afternoon about the progress he has made with the task force set up to look at diamond valuation, sorting and the benefits that could be accrued to the people of Canada and the people of the Northwest Territories, in particular. My question to the Minister is will these terms of references that are being produced by, I understand, a joint committee of joint chairmanship of GNWT and

Minister Stewart's DIAND Department be made available to the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The draft terms of reference, as far as I know, report from the deputy minister this afternoon, from Ottawa, in large part, agreed to by the various federal departments. I believe, as I said at the first meeting, the task force is slated for tomorrow morning. Following that, I believe the draft terms of reference will be finalized and will be available to Members.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister how difficult he thinks it will be to convince the officials within DIAND of the need to provide this facility in the north? I believe last week we had, as the Minister referred to, one official, and I take it that was Mr. Lazarovitch here in Yellowknife telling delegates at a conference that we should not get too excited about the possibility of having diamond valuation and sorting. If this is the view of the department, as it has been in the past, how difficult is it going to be for the Minister's staff to try and convince that size of a bureaucracy that they should look at this from the perspective of changing their minds and attitude? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Can I ask the Member to rephrase his question? I do not know how the Minister can respond to your question. It is hypothetical.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I will probably take that opportunity, or at least I hope I have the opportunity to ask the task force or make that comment to the task force at the time. Maybe I would ask Mr. Kakfwi, will he inform the House as to the dates this task force will be available for northerners to have input into it, so they can have the opportunity to advise the task force on how they feel about it along with getting outside expertise to make our view known? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The task force is going to be comprised of two co-chairs, Mr. Handley from my department and someone from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs will be co-chairing this on behalf of the Government of Canada. The task force members will be, again, the Department of Finance from our side, my department, and the federal department of Finance, Indian and Northern Affairs, and Natural Resources Canada. We know the views expressed by the band officials so far to date is not necessarily shared or supported by everyone in the various federal departments. It is my view that the task force

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is primarily set up to review existing information and advice both governments have received to date and to share them to make sure they are of some substance and merit and further, to see what we can do together as governments, to get ready to account for ourselves to the Canadian public for the day when we will be asked, for instance, why did we not insist that as a condition of licence that diamonds be sorted and possibly sold in this country? Why did we not, like other countries, insist that valuation for government purposes be done off site in an adjacent community? What are the views that have compelled Dr. Lazarovitch to argue so strongly in favour of the business interests of BHP and so little in favour of promoting and protecting the public interest? We will have time to review that in substance. As a government and as a Minister, I would be prepared to find ways in which to make as much of that information available as possible. Of course, we

would have to get agreement from the federal government on that as well, but I am sure there will be no substantive objections to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister consider writing a letter to Minister Stewart expressing concerns that his government has its officials coming to Yellowknife expressing opinions that we should not get excited about having diamond valuation and sorting and the jobs that that could bring, not to get excited about that at the same time his own department officials were working on terms of reference to receive input from the people of the Northwest Territories. Will the Minister consider writing that letter to Minister Stewart? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 47-13(5): Diamond Task Force Terms of Reference

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that we have concerns about the advice the federal government has been receiving in the past and the amount of time that has passed since the federal government should have been doing its planning and the strategic work preparing for the diamond industry. It is late in the day, and I think they are aware of that. We have said that we will, in good faith, work with the federal government together to do what we can to ensure that every possible economic benefit that should rightfully flow to Canadians and to Canadian people and northern people will be examined and maximizing every means available to us. That is where we focus our attention. A letter expressing our consternation with the views and the behaviour of certain officials could be fitted in there somehow, I am sure. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 48-13(5): Nunavut Transition Costs

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Transitional Planning. Mr. Speaker, recently there has been a fair bit of talk about the transitional costs associated with division. I wonder if the Minister responsible can update this House as to where these talks are to date? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 48-13(5): Nunavut Transition Costs

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The file on transitional funding negotiations is with Mr. Todd. What I will do is pass on the requests for information to him and then have that information passed on to all Members.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return to Written Question 1-13(5): Information on Keewatin Resupply

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a reply to a written question asked by Jane Groenewegen on October 24, 1997, on information on Keewatin resupply.

This detailed written question asked for responses on a variety of issues associated with the Keewatin Marine Resupply Strategy. The questions focus on the details of how the Government of the Northwest Territories would implement this strategy for the Keewatin region.

On November 27, 1997, I announced that changes are being made to the implementation schedule for the Keewatin Marine Resupply Strategy. These changes result from a recent round of public consultation in Keewatin communities. This change in schedule means that the Government of the

Northwest Territories will not be proceeding with the proposed \$7.5 million worth of extensions to the shore receiving facilities in the Keewatin and will not be inviting proposals from companies interested in delivering fuel to Keewatin communities using ocean-going tankers. Decisions on these matters will be made by the Nunavut Government after they take office in 1999. The Government of the Northwest Territories will complete all the hydrographic work to chart Keewatin waters by the end of the 1998 shipping season. Research on the impacts of tanker resupply of fuel and the dry cargo system will be completed in 1998 and a report with detailed implementation recommendations will be submitted to the Nunavut Government for their consideration. In the meantime, in 1998, the GNWT will tender government requirements for petroleum products in the Baffin and Keewatin regions. This will likely be a two to three-year contract.

I remain committed to the need to reduce fuel delivery costs in the Keewatin region and throughout Nunavut. The Keewatin Marine Resupply Strategy has the potential to save millions of dollars for the new Government of Nunavut. However, to ensure the concerns of Keewatin residents are adequately addressed, we will delay the implementation of the strategy to allow the Nunavut Government to make this decision for the benefit of their constituents.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three documents to table.

Tabled Document 9-13(5): Nunavut Arctic College Annual Report, 1996/97

I wish to table the following document entitled Nunavut Arctic College Annual Report 1996/97. Mr. Speaker, if I may continue.

Tabled Document 10-13(5): Aurora College Annual Report, 1996/97

I wish to also table the following document entitled Aurora College Annual Report, 1996/97.

Tabled Document 11-13(5): Report of the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Report of the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Ng.

Tabled Document 12-13(5): Northwest Territories Law Foundation 15th Annual Report, June 30, 1997

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation 15th Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1997. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Morin.

Tabled Document 13-13(5): Northwest Territories Liquor Commission 43rd Annual Report

HON. DON MORIN:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission 43rd Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents.

Tabled Document 14-13(5): NWT Legislative Assembly Pension Administration Report, Year Ended March 31, 1997

MR. SPEAKER:

In accordance with section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowance Act, I wish to table the Pension Administration Report for the Year Ended March 31st, 1997, and the Retiring Allowance and Supplementary Allowance Act.

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 8-13(5): Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Tuesday, December 2, 1997, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Kitikmeot, that this Legislative Assembly, by virtue of section 3 of the Elections Act recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of David M. Hamilton as chief electoral officer for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motion. Mr. Ng.

Motion 9-13(5): Extended Adjournment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Tuesday, December 2, 1997, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre that notwithstanding Rule 4 that when this House adjourns on Tuesday, December 2, 1997, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, January 21, 1998;

And further, that anytime prior to January 21, 1998, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the motion concerning the appointment of a chief electoral officer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Thebacha is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion on the appointment of the chief electoral officer. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Miltenberger, you have unanimous consent.

MOTION 8-13(5): Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to be able to make the following motion.

WHEREAS, the Constitution Act provides that every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of Members of the House of Commons or a Legislative Assembly;

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AND WHEREAS, eligible residents of the Northwest Territories have the right to exercise their democratic right of franchise;

AND WHEREAS, the Legislative Assembly has ensured that all residents have the ability to exercise their constitutional right of franchise by enacting the Elections Act;

AND WHEREAS, the Elections Act provides for the appointment of a chief electoral officer who has the responsibility to exercise general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of an election and enforce on part of all election officers fairness, impartiality and compliance with the act;

AND WHEREAS, the Northwest Territories is now in a position to appoint a chief electoral officer; and

NOW THEREFORE, I MOVE seconded by the honourable Member for Kitikmeot, that this Legislative Assembly by virtue of section 3 of the Elections Act recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of David M. Hamilton as chief electoral officer for the Northwest Territories.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today on the extended adjournment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Kitikmeot is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion on extended adjournment. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Ng, you have unanimous consent.

MOTION 9-13(5): Extended Adjournment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that notwithstanding Rule 4 that when this House adjourns on Tuesday, December 2, 1997, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, January 21, 1998;

AND FURTHER, that anytime prior to January 21, 1998, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. Motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Item 19, report of committee of the whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Wednesday, January 21, 1998:

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
 - 5-13(5), Deferral of Request for Proposals for Keewatin
 - Fuel Delivery Pipelines
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act,

- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court
Act

18. Second Reading of Bills

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of
Bills and

Other Matters

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I would like to thank the Pages, the staff,
all the Members. I wish you all a very Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year. This House stands
adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 21,
1998.

--ADJOURNMENT