



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

5th Session

Day 8

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Good morning. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 20-13(5): Northwest Territories Child Benefit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, in his budget address, the Minister of Finance announced yesterday the new Northwest Territories Child Benefit, which will come into effect this July.

Ensuring that all our children have a strong start in life is critical to the future of the Northwest Territories. By making children everybody's priority, we can help build a better future for our children and for our society.

Recognizing this, federal, provincial and territorial governments came together to work on behalf of Canada's children. At the First Ministers' Meeting in June, 1996, the Prime Minister and Premiers made tackling child poverty a collective priority. They identified support for low-income families as critical in helping parents to better meet their children's needs. In 1997, the federal government announced the National Child Benefit.

This is an innovative and progressive approach for investing in children, designed by federal/provincial/territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services and coordinated by the Council on Social Policy Renewal.

The National Child Benefit requires the participation of both the federal government and provincial/territorial governments. As its initial contribution to this initiative, the federal government will provide an additional \$850 million per year to enhance the National Child Benefit as a common income platform across the country. This commitment, which takes effect in July, 1998, will increase income support benefits for all low-income families with children. The territorial government is obliged to reduce income support payments equal to the amount paid by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance indicated in his budget address, this saving of income support money and \$2 million additional monies from the territorial government will be invested in additional benefits to children in the north. With this funding, nearly 60 percent of NWT children will receive some benefits under the joint program. For example, a working family with four children and an annual income under \$20,921 will receive \$5,900 per year or almost \$500 per month in addition to their regular income.

--Applause

This program, a joint initiative of the Departments of Finance and Education, Culture and Employment, is an initial step towards a more comprehensive agenda for children and youth that will be developed over the coming year.

The National Child Benefit, together with the reinvestment of income support funds, which are freed up, as well as additional monies from the territorial government, represents a substantial attack on child poverty in the north. Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we continue to place the highest priority on improving living conditions - now and in the future - for our children who are, indeed, our future. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 3: MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 67-13(5): Morale of Pangnirtung Teachers

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good morning. Mr. Speaker, the morale of the teaching staff in the community of Pangnirtung is at an all time low. There has been an increase in enrolment but not an increase in funding to school programs. For the last three years, there has been a drop in funding for education programs in Pangnirtung. This puts pressure on teachers to make do with very limited resources, students are not able to use programs that they were entitled to in the past. The recent contract signed between the GNWT and the teachers has put extra financial pressure on our teachers. Total income has gone down, living costs have gone up, for example housing costs have increased from 15 percent

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to over 50 percent in some cases. Rent that used to be \$370 is now \$1,500 or even \$1,600. It is hard to maintain good staff when their salaries are not going up but their living costs are. Local staff has been the hardest hit. Some of the local staff told me, it is better to go on welfare than teach for a living. Mr. Speaker, education is important to the success of our youth. We need qualified, motivated and well paid teachers to instruct our youth. There must be enough teaching staff and enough money to pay them what they are worth. If the government does not pay them well, then they will be forced to go elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, I say again, the teaching staff in Pangnirtung are underpaid and overworked. This situation is not acceptable. Our children's education must not be compromised, they are our future. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 68-13(3): Congratulations to Nursing Graduate Laureen Angalik

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize and congratulate Ms. Laureen Angalik of Arviat. Laureen will be the first Inuk from Arviat to graduate as a registered nurse this week. Mr. Speaker, also to be congratulated are her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Aero Pameolik for all their encouragement and support. We are all very proud of her. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 69-13(5): Fundraising Efforts of Taloyoak Adult Training Students

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, in November of 1997, I had the honour of attending the Adult Community Training Program in Taloyoak. At that location we talked about the government structure, and I found the students to be very enthusiastic and very willing for preparing for Nunavut come 1999. At that time, I was approached by the teacher and by the students of their interests in attending the Legislative Assembly. I have a letter here from that group dated November 26, 1997. Sometimes I am a little slow to respond to things. This was misplaced in my office, I apologize to the group. Their goal is to observe the Legislature in session and secondly to work in a legislative office as an extension of our practice. The method they wish to do this thing and to accomplish our goal, we are planning a trip to Yellowknife, March/April, 1998. We are involved in fund-raising to help cover the costs. We are approaching our council, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, First Air and other organizations that provide services within our community for financial aid. We know there are times, even though we approach many organizations, bodies and such and stuff like that, there are times we are not able to get all the help that we may require. By that, I would like to solicit Members and the government and other business groups in the business community to help out as much as possible in making this trip a dream, a realization for the people/students of Taloyoak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 70-13(5): Passing of Fred Henne

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a former Yellowknife resident and Mayor, Fred Henne passed away. Fred Henne first came to Yellowknife in 1947. He arrived in the city as a mine union organizer. Later, he bought Frame and Perkins - a local bussing company which is now known as Arctic Frontier Carriers - and, with his partner Mike Piro, expanded operations to include a Ford dealership, an Imperial Oil dealership, a car wash and a number of other enterprises. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Henne was an active entrepreneur, but he was also very involved in municipal politics. He served as mayor of the City of Yellowknife several times, from 1956 to 1957, again from 1968 to 1973, and finally from 1976 to 1979. Fred hired me to work for the city in 1976, so I got to know him pretty well over the three years that I worked for him.

Mr. Speaker, Fred was a colourful character - like many successful people in a booming frontier town - and you either loved him or you hated him. Fred had a vision of where the city should be headed. He was quick to look at an issue or a situation, choose a position and then work his heart out to achieve what he thought to be the best solution. He was blunt and straightforward and very effective in arguing a case whether it was with a contractor, planner or someone from the territorial Department of Local Government.

Fred used to talk about the early days of municipal government in the north and how tough they had to be with Ottawa early on. He was particularly proud of the role he played in the early days of the first elected government north of 60 - since the Town of Yellowknife had an elected mayor and council way before the territorial government was elected. He also contributed to the development of our city through his dedication and commitment to the community. He was an active volunteer and a charter member of the Yellowknife Rotary Club. Fred was particularly supportive of sports in Yellowknife and fought hard for new facilities. It is appropriate that the Fred Henne Territorial Park, located within the City of Yellowknife, is named after him in honour of his contributions and service to the city.

Mr. Speaker, after Fred retired to Peachland, British Columbia, he continued to come back to Yellowknife for several years to run charters with his beloved boat the Nauti-Gal. Because of the small population of the territories and the role he played in the capital city, Fred was well known to many northerners. Mr. Speaker, I am sure they join me in extending deepest sympathy to his wife Helen and his family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Member's Statement 71-13(5): Pelican Rapids Inn Reopening

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year in Fort Smith, the local hotel, the Pelican Rapids Inn was destroyed by fire and since that time it put a very serious damper on the town's capability to host conferences and meetings. I am glad to be able to stand up today and announce that, in fact, the Pelican Rapids Inn, under the ownership of Don Ferguson has been rebuilt and is now open for business. It has many new well appointed rooms, air conditioned, all the amenities that discriminating travellers are used to. I would like to encourage all my colleagues and Cabinet to make sure that they let their departments know that Fort Smith is back in business in the hotel sector, and we look forward to many more conferences and government people coming to town, along with any other folks to take advantage of the fine services we have to offer. I would like to congratulate Mr. Ferguson for his involvement and commitment to the Town of Fort Smith. Thank you very much.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement 72-13(5): Assistance to Ice Storm Victims

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ice storm in southern Canada, particularly Quebec and Ontario, has been the focus of many news stories over the past few

weeks. The power outages have caused some disruption with flights and freight schedules in the Baffin region because most of our goods and services as well as transportation routes south connecting either Montreal or Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, many of us here in the north can sympathize with our neighbours in the south who are dealing with the continuing serious problem. It has taken lives, caused millions of dollars of damage and lost businesses as thousands of people are still without power.

Mr. Speaker, the upside to this story is how Canadians from British Columbia to Newfoundland to the NWT have chipped in with donations of blankets, money, food, wood, et cetera. Staff at the Iqaluit NTPC office took the initiative to offer a spare portable industrial generator to the Red Cross emergency workers last week. With the offer of free freight from First Air, the machine was sent down to the Montreal area last weekend and was hooked up for usage at an emergency shelter in Ville de Marieville. It is supplying between 400 and 500 people with heat and light in an area that has not yet had power restored. The unit will be returned when it is no longer required.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask Members of this House to join me in thanking our Iqaluit NTPC employees as well as all northern businesses and individuals who have chipped in to help our fellow Canadians dealing with the effects of that winter storm. A special thanks to First Air who facilitated the delivery of the generator free of charge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 73-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members will recall that on the opening day of this session I made a Member's statement on the absolute need for the MLAs of this Legislature to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of integrity. Mr. Speaker, I have sat in this House and listened to the various Ministers talk about the need for transparency in all government dealings and I strongly agree with this need of transparency at all levels. However, Mr.

Speaker, this transparency must also be apparent to the people of the Northwest Territories. I have listened over the Christmas break to concerns from my constituents about the issue of government officials allegedly being investigated by the RCMP Commercial Crime Division and the circumstances surrounding the sale and leasing of the Lahm Ridge Tower by this government. Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have to complete their investigation into the alleged transgressions before I would comment on that. I do, however, Mr. Speaker, have serious concerns about the perception of transparency with regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower deal. Given the well-known public perception problem and difficulties with this particular transaction; it alludes me why this government has not taken the initiative on their own to clarify the issues surrounding this deal without having to be asked to do so. The circumstances leading up to the sale and lease renewal present a picture to the average person who could hardly be blamed for making the assumption of collusion at the highest levels of this government.

Mr. Speaker, this is my understanding of the facts. We start with the previous owner who is attempting to secure refinancing for his property and is encountering difficulty because he only has month to month leases. The owner is approached by a local real estate agent saying they have an interested buyer for the Lahm Ridge Tower. The owner for whatever reasons decides to sell his building for almost \$2 million less than the appraised value to a numbered company controlled by a former senior bureaucrat of this government and a local businessman with known ties to our Premier. The government signs leases for a total gross revenue of \$1.2 million per year. The sale goes through and the new owners have a lease extension for eight years with a total revenue from that lease extension of almost \$9.5 million. At the very least, Mr. Speaker, the circumstances are one of more incredible string of coincidences than I have ever seen, but if there is more to the story or a perfectly reasonable explanation why this government has not publicly come forward with it to clear suspicion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what it is and, Mr. Speaker, I intend to seek specific answers to these questions regarding the Lahm Ridge Tower in question period. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Member's Statement 74-13(5): Financial Support for Students

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as leaders we always speak to the people we represent on the value and importance of education, achieving a higher degree of education in regard to post secondary education and university degrees. However, Mr. Speaker, this vehicle that we have in place in regard to education system of supporting our students seems to always find itself running into road blocks in regard to the organization and the process that students find themselves in when trying to achieve those goals.

I would like to elaborate on some of these road blocks from one of my constituents who is attending the Teacher Access Program at Aurora College here in Yellowknife. She has barely made it through the Christmas season to start. When she first applied to the Nurses Program her forms and money orders were lost or misplaced. Then she had to find her own accommodation as the college was unable to provide one. After paying for her damage deposit, bills and buying furniture; most of her savings have been used up. Mr. Speaker, in January after arriving back in Yellowknife to continue her education, she was told that the financial assistance for January would be postponed because the position of the Department of Education was they did not know which students would return in the New Year so there was a hold back. She was also told by the Department of Education to go to the food bank or apply for a funding loan.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable in regard to the credibility and the high priority we put on education. I think it is critical when students do arrive for school from the outlying communities... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for the Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? We do have one nay. I am sorry, Mr. Krutko, you do not have unanimous consent. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 75-13(5): Stickhandling in the Political Arena

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to send greetings back to my wife and children.

--Applause

Mr. Speaker, being Friday, I would like to do something a little different and speak of an issue that I am fairly familiar with. Mr. Speaker, I think many people in the north are familiar with the game of hockey. I have played this for quite a few years now. At times I am accused by certain Members that I give the game away, but the issue in a game of hockey, there are certain things that you learn to do or you try to do better than others. I have seen many games and I have seen many players. I have seen some who can mesmerize us on the ice. One of the things of this game is stick handling. The better you can control that puck on the end of your stick, the more you are able to go through the opponents team and possibly score a winning goal. If it so happens that members of the other team have a better player than you and they can take control of that puck, you are sometimes left standing and wondering where were you when he scored the goal.

I will refer to a specific game sometime maybe another Friday in the future, but I wanted to make reference to stick handling. Some of the best stick handling I have seen recently comes in a different arena than I was accustomed to. The arena I refer to is this Legislative Assembly. The stick handling I have seen done has been superior. I must say Mr. Todd would win a number of awards for his ability to manoeuvre and get by the defence of others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 76-13(5): Private/Public Partnerships

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today on Public/Private Partnerships. This is a great idea and I think it is worthwhile for us all to consider.

There are many examples regionally, nationally and internationally of such projects, City of Toronto, British Columbia, United Kingdom, Australia, California, Toronto. I just mentioned Toronto twice there. In order for us to undertake this expenditure a lot of homework must be done by all of us. We need time to ensure that we study the policies, the legislative and regulatory issues in detail. We must also ensure that projects must irrevocably benefit the public at large. We must review in detail the decision making process to ensure maximum competition with the lowest cost possible to this government. Rather than relying on just the Coles report which is just one of such many documents available, we should have a task force to investigate the P3s.

--Laughter

In BC just such a task force was formed and released in October, 1986. Included on the task force were members of industry, union, government and academia. The task force was established to assess the feasibility and applicability, select a few projects that could be used on a pilot basis, offer strategic advice on critical factors that create barriers, review national and international experiences with P3s, commission a study on the risk analysis, review public sector versus private sector financing. All northerners would benefit if we had such a task force.

Some of the recommendations of the BC task force were the establishment of a public/private partnership advisory board, pilot projects, comprehensive framework to guide implementation, guidelines to use in planning and budgeting capital projects, development of detailed project action plans and procurement guidelines, a review and assessment of legislation such as the Municipal Act. The above would be a worthwhile endeavour for us to consider. There are many

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strengths and there are limitations and risks attached to these P3s. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 77-13(5): Passing of Erasmus Family Patriarchs

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The past month has been a difficult one for my family with the passing of a couple of patriarchs in our family. First of all was my wife's uncle, Albert Lafferty. The Member for Good Hope mentioned some very kind words yesterday. The other was my uncle, Peter Erasmus, who also passed away late December at the age of 89. Peter was a very independent person. He was still working in his late 70s actually until he had a stroke which severely restricted his movement afterwards.

Peter was born in Wrigley to a family of 12 and grew up in Fort Rae. He did a lot of things in his life, commercial fishing, hunting, trapping, drilling. He looked after mines in his later years as a caretaker, but I know my Dad often tells me of the time when he and his brother Peter went to Norman Wells during the second world war and the Canol pipeline was being built to Whitehorse. Peter was delivering mail for the army there and he was going down the road with his dog team and apparently this army truck went by and they did not see him, ran right over him and he was very, very severely injured, but he survived and did a lot of things afterwards. One of the things that we always remembered about him was that he would never get mad at people and he always had kind words about everybody. He seemed to always try to find the good things in any situation. He is remembered and loved and missed by his family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 78-13(5): Comments of Mr. Miltenberger

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the Hansard, I cannot help noticing the remarks made by the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger, about what we were feeding the bankers. I too am a bit embarrassed to note that we are concerned about the shrimp and smoked char that they were being offered. I tend to agree with the government, Mr. Speaker, in particular Mr. Todd that shrimp and smoked char are a small investment if in fact we do benefit from these people opening their purses. From my perspective and I am sure from my constituency's perspective, shrimp and smoked char are not the preferred food. It is just something you offer visitors, but it is not the best food.

--Laughter

So I, along with Mr. Todd, do feel that the comments were quite out of order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

That is not a point of privilege is it? Thank you, Mr. Steen. Members' statements. Point of privilege, Mr. Ng.

Point of Privilege

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege under Rule 20(1) to clarify a misunderstanding that has been created by a recent CBC Radio news report.

Mr. Speaker, upon hearing of this report, I was immediately concerned because I had not conducted any recent interviews with the CBC, nor had I made any direct statements relating to any new programs or initiatives that may have been included in the 1998-99 budget. As well, the budget contains no such funds and we are not planning any kind of campaign.

Upon investigation into the matter, I was informed the basis for this story was an interview I conducted with the CBC's Dave Miller in the first week of November, 1997 - almost three months ago. The focus of the interview was the unique demographics of the Northwest Territories - including population growth and the demand that these demographics place on the resources of the Department of Health and Social Services.

In that interview, in responding to a question on how the GNWT might be able to assist regional health boards who might want to tackle the issue head on with a communication campaign, I responded by referring to the strategic investment fund Cabinet had approved and the department was planning to establish, targeted at positioning health boards to develop health promotion initiatives and programs.

The story on January 16th used these comments and placed them in an improper context. This causes me great concern. I was not in Yellowknife on January 16th, nor was I contacted by the reporter to update or comment on this issue. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion the reporter's actions on this story were irresponsible and consequences of his actions have been far reaching and harmful. I have personally suffered from

being misrepresented on the eve of the Finance Minister's Budget Address. The Department of Health and Social Services was caught completely off guard, and officials placed in a position of defending a program that does not exist. Members of this House have been misled about the plans and activities of our government, and the public has been left with the perception we have some solution to the rapid population growth.

As I recall, the original story on which the interview was based was well done. However, the subsequent actions of the reporter have overshadowed that initial work. This is not a

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wound that will easily heal, but hopefully with this point of privilege, we have set the record straight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to welcome to the House a visitor, Mr. Derrek Konrad, the Member of Parliament for Prince Albert. He is also the Reform critic for Aboriginal Affairs and sits as vice-chair for the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. Another point of note is that his riding is also the former riding of Mr. Diefenbaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the questions I have to ask today I ask because I believe that the people of the Northwest Territories have a right to know. Decisions that are made in private, sometimes have to be defended in public and explained in public, thus my questions. To the Minister of Public Works and Services, can the Minister please tell me who made the decision to lease the Lahm Ridge Tower on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Antoine. The Deputy Premier.

Return To Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue that was asked about in the Standing Committee on Infrastructure meeting back in November/December. I am aware the Member asked me a question as a Member of that committee. I am not sure if she was present, but I do know that the deputy minister of Public Works and Services went through the detail of the business transaction. As I understood it, the committee was satisfied that everything was above board. What I can do is get the transcripts and information that we passed on at that meeting and provide it to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Deputy Premier indicates that I asked questions, but he was not sure if I was there so I am not sure what he is referring to myself. If the committee was satisfied with the response they got, I would have to ask my colleagues on the committee to respond to that, because that was not my understanding. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories loves the use of request for proposals; could the Minister tell me why or if there was a request for proposals issued regarding this need for a substantial quantity of office space in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the type of detailed information that the Department of Public Works and Services would have, but if my memory serves me correctly, the issue had to do with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Transportation, whose offices reside in that building, looking at its long-term needs and an extension of a lease as provided for in the contract. Those are the type of details that I can recall, but as I said I will ask the Minister of Public Works to collate that information and pass it on to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my final question then, just to confirm then, that the Minister will provide a concise chronology of the events surrounding the Lahm Ridge Tower lease and table this chronology in the House for the Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 81-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Transaction

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can certainly do that. As I confirmed earlier, the chronology and the information have already been put together, it has already been provided to a standing committee of the House late last year and we will certainly put it together and provide it to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 82-13(5): Funding Efforts of Taloyoak Students

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Earlier today I made a

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statement regarding the trip of the young people who wanted to come to Yellowknife and experience first hand how the government operates at this level, in this House and in the offices within the building. I think we have talked about the future of young people. We want to ensure that once we are divided we will have manpower at respective regions. I think the willingness and enthusiasm of the young people of Taloyoak and the Taloyoak Community Training Program indicates they are willing to work at their community for the benefit of that region. My question to the honourable Minister, will the Minister endeavour to provide some funding for this initiative for the people of Taloyoak? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 82-13(5): Funding Efforts of Taloyoak Students

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think it would be appropriate if the Department of Finance would provide funding. It does not have actually funding for this kind of venture that my colleague says the people of Taloyoak are wanting to undertake. I will, however, as an influential MLA, assist him in anyway I can with respect to discussions with the airlines and hotels in an effort to reduce the costs of subsidization, et cetera for that group. We are not in a position to fund those kinds of things at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 82-13(5): Funding Efforts of Taloyoak Students

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression yesterday, when the honourable

Member, our Minister made an eloquent statement during the budget address, I thought the honourable Minister was in a position to help all he can with the help of his colleagues to help the young people who are enthusiastic about the government to be, who wanted to go ahead, who are willing to do anything to learn something new. Will the honourable Minister, perhaps talk, in his capacity, to a department that deals with this kind of initiative and let me know what is available within the government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 82-13(5): Funding Efforts of Taloyoak Students

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you for those kind comments, my honourable colleague. I will talk to the Minister of Youth, Mr. Dent later on today and see if there is anyway at all possible that we can assist this group. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 83-13(5): First Air Routes in the Eastern Arctic

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for Transportation. First of all, if I can give you some information, I think last month on December 12th, the Canadian Transport Minister from the federal government was supposed to come to Yellowknife. He was supposedly going to meet with the manager of First Air. I wanted to be represented by my committee and I was not able to come here on December 12th for that committee meeting and I could not attend the transportation committee. We have had a lot of problems with the transportation system around Hall Beach and Igloolik. I wanted that message relayed to the Minister. I just wondered whether the Minister of this government attended this meeting and what happened at that meeting about what I wanted to say? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 83-13(5): First Air Routes in the Eastern Arctic

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is talking about December when we had a meeting with the NAV Canada president, Mr. Crichton, here in Yellowknife. I believe that is what he is making reference to. The meeting was between myself and Mr. Crichton along with the MLA's that were able to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about the NAV Canada fees that NAV Canada has imposed on us. Perhaps I would like to reply to the honourable Member in this matter. Thank you

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Do you have a supplementary, Mr. Evaloarjuk? Supplementary, Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Supplementary To Question 83-13(5): First Air Routes in the Eastern Arctic

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Perhaps maybe the honourable Member did not understand me properly. I realize there is not really much of a response that I can get from the Minister, but I am going to be asking about this question because we have had some problems with the transportation systems through First Air. Mainly about the scheduling of First Air. I wanted to be represented at committee level by relaying to my colleagues that we have problems with scheduling by the airlines. I wonder why it was not discussed. Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine, I did not hear a question. Would you like to respond to the comment?

Further Return To Question 83-13(5): First Air Routes in the Eastern Arctic

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the honourable Member could clarify his point, I understand that in the past he has had concerns about his constituents in Hall Beach and Igloodik and the air transportation route in that area is not suitable for him and his constituents. This is what I

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recall from meetings and presentations that he has made to me in the House here as well as in the committee hearings. That responsibility lies with the air carriers themselves. First Air is the carrier in Igloodik and Hall Beach. If there are going to be changes to the way the airline schedules this in his constituency, then it is really up to First Air to make those changes. The department had contacted First Air, and we are told that if there is going to be an increase in transportation for passengers in that constituency then they will look at changing the air routes. I guess that is what we can do as a Department of Transportation is contact First Air and pass on the request and I think that is what we have done. If the honourable Member is asking us to continue pursuing that, then we will continue to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier this morning about shortage of teaching staff in Pangnirtung. My question is to the Honourable Minister of Education, Charles Dent. What action will the Minister take to ensure the community of Pangnirtung will have enough teachers and funding for the upcoming school years? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken many times in this House about the pupil/teacher ratio in the Northwest Territories. This year the average pupil/teacher ratio across the territories is 18.2 to 1. The budget that the Finance Minister tabled yesterday does not envision any change in that ratio for the next fiscal year. The ratio should stay the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Department of Education consider an increase in funding for school programs in Pangnirtung? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned, the budget which has been tabled would not show a further decrease in the pupil/teacher ratio, but Mr. Speaker, there are no additional dollars in that budget to allow for improving the student/teacher ratio. The answer to the Member's question is the money is not in the budget to allow for that ratio to be improved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister. Will the Department of Education consider the Income Assistance Program or an increase in pay for teachers to help them cope with the higher living costs common in most remote communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 84-13(5): Pangnirtung Teacher Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to think of a situation where a teacher might qualify for income support. My understanding of the limits of income support qualification makes it virtually impossible. Anyone in the Northwest Territories is able to apply for income support. It is a simple process where if a person's income does not exceed a set amount given their situation, they will qualify for income support no matter what their job is.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent. In regard to my opening statement I made reference to a constituent of mine who is presently taking the nursing program in Yellowknife through Arctic College. She seems to be having a problem with funding, and also the treatment she feels she is being dealt with is inadequate. Can the Minister tell me what action he will take to improve the delivery of post secondary education for students?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has advised me that the Member's constituent has now received all of the cheques that she should have received. I am meeting with the Member's constituent at 3:00 this afternoon to discuss her situation and see if we can come to some resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to my supplementary is the question about being told to go to the food bank by the Department of Education. I would like to know why should a student have to access the food bank program when they are sponsored by the Department of Education?

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to ask the Member if he can rephrase his question because the Minister would not know unless he knows the circumstances. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister is for students who are presently being sponsored by this government, do you think it is appropriate that they basically have to access the food bank to be able to carry out their education, especially here in Yellowknife.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a small point, but I think I should make it. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment does not sponsor students. Students can apply for student financial assistance which is part of our Income Support Programs. The Student Financial Assistance Program is intended to be just part of a total package where the student, the family, the community are all expected to contribute towards the cost of a student being able to support themselves. In regard to the Member's question about the food bank, the policy is not to refer students to the food bank, but in a situation where somebody goes to a worker and says I have an emergency, I do not have any food right now and I cannot get any assistance and I need it today, suggestions may be made such as the Salvation Army, the food bank, the women's centre in order to make sure that kids are not going to go hungry that night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary is in regard to students who are taking post secondary education programs in Yellowknife through Arctic College, that is, once an individual from the Department of Education tells a student to go to the food bank in regard to in this case, is that acceptable to this government? I mean we have other clients out there who are homeless and who are living off the streets in which the food banks are there to contribute to those people. Students who are presently being funded through student financial assistance, but not through the Department of Education, are told by an employee of this government especially in the Department of Education to go to the food bank. Is that acceptable to this government?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 85-13(5): Improvements to Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated, I do not think that it is a situation where the government refers people to food banks. If an individual comes to a government employee and says I have an emergency. I have no food for my kids, how do I deal with it? Here are some of the options that may be presented to that person. The employee will then call upon their knowledge of the local resources and advise some options to consider in order to make sure the kids do not go hungry while we try to solve the problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance in relation to his budget address yesterday, specifically on page 9 on the Public/Private Partnerships and the figures he makes reference to, specifically once again up to \$200 million, that may be in fact leverage because of the new public/private partnership initiative. A figure that has been mentioned would be \$24 million annually to be able to pay the lease cost or interest cost related to that type of new initiative. The concern, Mr. Speaker, is where will that money come from? Can we get assurances that in fact it will not come out of the O and M budget and programs and can the Minister indicate how he intends to deal with that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is only one issue of a larger issue when it comes to P3s. Mr. Ootes referred to it earlier today and Mr. Picco referred to it yesterday. On this question, it would be our intention that if you have an uptake of x amount of dollars in terms of the public/private partnership and the requirement is \$10 million to fund the cost of those Public/Private Partnerships that would come out of the capital dollars that we have assigned to the government for \$140 million. There will be no impact on the programs and services that we currently provide. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

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Supplementary To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so that I can make sure that I have this clear in my mind. You make reference to the fact, for instance, that we have a \$140 million capital budget. You are saying that you will take, for example, \$24 million out of that \$140 million and use it to in effect leverage the \$200 million. Is that what you are telling us? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

HON. JOHN TODD:

That is correct. It is more broad than that. We are hoping that in the exercises that are under way right now with respect to the identification of projects that we think that can be done by P3s, you know one of the criteria is urgent need but the other one is, is there going to be some cost savings to government? Is there going to be an economic spin-off? We have to quantify those as well. From a fiscal perspective, a money perspective, we will take the monies that are required out of the capital budget to leverage, you say, the \$200 million. I am also saying that in our evaluation we are going to look at things like is this an economic initiative, is it going to create jobs, are there some cost savings, et cetera on these projects and build that all into the equation. I think this gives me an opportunity to reassure my colleagues because I know that there are some legitimate concerns about where we are going with this project. I think it is all legitimate.

I will provide to the House as much clarity as I can on the policies and regulations that are going to guide this policy, as soon as we get most of them finalized. As I said yesterday, we intend to learn from the experiences in other jurisdictions, whether it is in BC or whether it is in New Brunswick. There is an inordinate amount of knowledge out there and there have been some pitfalls in other provincial jurisdictions. Mr. Coles, while he is one expert, Mr. Ootes is right, there are a whole bunch of others. I have chosen to use Mr. Coles and I believe he has the overall level of experience to be able to incorporate into our policies and procedures the necessary safeguard that all of us, myself included, need whether it is on the fiscal side, the political side or on the transparency side. If you just give me a little time, I am fairly confident I can reassure you and provide you with all the information you require that will satisfy you that these P3s meet the political and infrastructure and fiscal needs of this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that assurance. Would the Minister also include in the policy and procedures he is talking about, would it be considered to include, an amortization formula or schedule that would allow us to, in fact, ensure that this is a sustainable initiative and that we do not, in fact, spend \$200 million right up front and then find out we cannot afford to finance any new projects for, say, five or ten years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

HON. JOHN TODD:

I mean that is a concern that I have actually raised from the very beginning when the proposal, you know, you still have to have some checks and balances. That certainly would be our intent that once the projects are identified, once the scope of how we are going to do it is undertaken. I think there could be a variety of ways in which we can do the P3s. I do not think there is just one sort of way of doing it. We need to, no question. We need to amortize, if you want, the costs of the project, the net cost to the government, and show to myself as the Finance Minister and to my colleagues in Cabinet that this policy has a declining balance, if you want as we move forward -- as I said -- when we get to the fine detail of how we are going to ensure it is affordable and transparent. I mean, I said these words yesterday, deliberately, because I wanted to reassure everybody that it is going to happen. I will be prepared to share them with the Members, the committees and the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister indicated, this is in fact, a fairly complex broad issue and it speaks to the fact that the moves we are making with this Public/Private Partnerships and things like, changing how we are recording our assets and starting to value them. The whole capital planning process, as we now know it, is going to undergo some structural change and will the Minister be, in fact, looking not only at the P3 but that process in a broader context as well? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 86-13(5): Lease Costs of the Public/Private Partnerships Initiative

HON. JOHN TODD:

Well, clearly, we need to ensure that the House and the Members through committees, or however we structure it, are directly involved in the process. I mean, otherwise, we will get what we normally get, and that is the accusations as we frequently see from others out there of political favouritism, pork bellying - a favourite word by some I understand - et cetera. So, I mean, I want to be clear, and I have said it before, this is not a panacea for our economic woes. This is not going to solve all our infrastructure problems.

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This is just one small way of trying to regroup and find a way to get back up to where we were historically in our spending, so we can maintain the kind of levels of infrastructure that the constituency at large expects of us. What will drive this whole policy, certainly while I am here as the Finance Minister, will be affordability and transparency to ensure that everybody understands what is happening, why it is happening. Projects, I hope, will be selected on need, and as I said, return on investment. Those discussions are underway right now; and again, once we have some clarity on all the questions that have been asked, not only by this House, by others, advocacy groups I met with, we will provide it to the House and we will hopefully give you the comfort you need to answer some of the essential questions that are currently being asked. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I questioned the Minister of Health, Mr. Ng, on checks and balances that would be put in place for the health boards as a way of checking on the performance of these boards, whether or not there was a policy in place, whereby the Minister would step in if things were getting out of hand. I would like today to address my question to the Minister of the Financial Management Board concerning departmental responsibility overall of the departments in regard to performance of these departments. My question to the Minister of Financial Management Board is, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the amount of money that is involved which has been turned over to these boards, in particular, let us deal strictly with the health board at this particular time. We are talking \$172.5 million over 97-98. I would like to know what the Minister of the Financial Management Board, what sort of checks and balances the Financial Management Board has to ensure that these boards are performing their overall duties and staying within budget?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board.

Return To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will refer that question to the Minister of Health.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in respect to the financial controls that the department deals with our funding agreements with the regional health and social services board; they report to us on a quarterly basis on their financial activity so that we can continue to monitor them. What I would also like to say, as I have indicated last fall, is in respect to some of their program operations, not the financial aspect, the department has structured a monitoring and evaluation unit as a result of some of the issues that were brought up last fall in some of the program

changes that some of the boards were contemplating. We had set up that evaluation unit to make sure that we would not potentially get into the situations of boards running programs that might be contrary to what we thought were in the best interests of their constituents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that response, but that is not what I was looking for. What I am talking about here, Mr. Speaker, is the overall performance of the departments, through the Financial Management Board's point of view. I believe that the Financial Management Board is the overall watchdog, if you may, of all the government departments. That is my understanding of the responsibilities of the Financial Management Board. Now, they seem to have responsibility for not just the financial management of these boards, but the overall performance of the departments, rather than just the boards. So, therefore, my question is, did the Financial Management Board get involved at all with the Department of Health in regard to the particular situation that was developing in the Keewatin region. That was the question I had.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance. Could you repeat your question, Mr. Steen?

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Financial Management Board Minister, Mr. Todd, regarding whether his department got involved at all in the performance of the Department of Health in the Keewatin?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the Financial Management Board. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

HON. JOHN TODD:

My department, the Department of Finance, would not get involved in the program delivery. We get involved in the fiscal accountability of how government monies are spent and we work closely with all departments to do that. Our responsibility and role is one of good fiscal management of government dollars, and we play a role in that with my honourable colleagues, Ministers who are responsible for the program. We do not get involved directly in the programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, if we read the budget of 97-98, you will find in there that it outlines the duties of the Financial Management Board of not only

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financial, but human resources and the overall performance of departments. Therefore, that is why my question was directed to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board. I believe that there must be some watchdog group at the Cabinet level which assures that departments do perform their responsibilities. Therefore, if problems start surfacing in a particular department, in a particular region, at what level is this thing discussed? Is there a policy in place whereby the government moves in to assure that the problem does not expand?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, I apologize to my colleague. I did not quite fully understand the question. I do now. The Financial Management Board, which is made up all of my Cabinet colleagues, myself as the Chair, has the responsibility and makes decisions on how the government spends its money and its policies, et cetera. Cabinet deals with issues like the overall

performance of government, a particular department or a particular Minister, et cetera. We have the fiscal responsibility, the Financial Management Board, to protect and spend and authorize, and so on, the fiscal framework of government. Cabinet, chaired by the Premier, has the overall responsibility for programs, policies, et cetera. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now my final supplementary would have to be the original question, did the Financial Management Board get involved at all with the problems surfacing in the Keewatin region in particular those problems surfacing in the Department of Health whereby there were overall problems and concerns with the operation of that particularly board?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 87-13(5): Management Board Performance

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to get clarity from my honourable colleagues. No, the FMB did not deal with this issue, as I said, that would be a Cabinet issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 88-13(5): Nursing Assistants' Program

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, there is a concern in my community with the nursing shortage that a mentorship program that has been proposed that would enable recent graduates to obtain some training prior to pursuing their career is in jeopardy because of this shortage. I would ask the Minister if

he would agree to look into this to ensure that this program will continue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 88-13(5): Nursing Assistants' Program

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, most definitely so. As we know, we are trying to cultivate, develop a northern-based workforce particularly in the nurse area. So, yes, I will check into that to make sure there are no problems in there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 89-13(5): Treatment of Continuous Employees

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time will be directed to the Minister responsible for Finance. Mr. Speaker, I have, on a number of occasions in the past, made contact with Mr. Todd, the Minister of Finance, regarding concerns raised to me from employees who were considered to be continuous. This impacts those especially who have to take the time off or have to work during the Donny Days. Now, the concern, Mr. Speaker, is that a continuous employee versus a non-continuous employee is that although the reduction that was given out to all employees equals 6.25 percent, continuous employees are impacted in a different way because the formula for reduction is different, and it affects them in their superannuation and overtime pay. So two people doing the identical job if one was considered as a continuous employee his superannuation and the rate of overtime pay would be less than that of someone who was non-continuous.

I have raised this issue on a number of occasions with Mr. Todd. I would like to know if he has or if there has been work done or if they have recognized this and made the necessary corrections to truly treat employees in a fair and equitable way. I would like to see if he has the ability to stick handle this issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 89-13(5): Treatment of Continuous Employees

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to shoot the puck but I cannot this morning. So, what I would say to my honourable colleague is that this is recognized, clearly recognized. We are at the bargaining table as we speak, I think, yesterday. It is on the table, I believe, and I am optimistic that we will come to a satisfactory arrangement with

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the UNW to accommodate those workers who Mr. Roland so eloquently and frequently speaks about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 89-13(5): Treatment of Continuous Employees

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd, if he could maybe send a more positive message out to those people who have been impacted negatively by this. It has been two years now that they have endured this inequity. I would like to know if he is prepared to send a message to them that that is indeed being looked at as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 89-13(5): Treatment of Continuous Employees

HON. JOHN TODD:

I would like to be able to say unequivocally today that we are going to resolve the problem, but I cannot circumvent the current discussions that are underway between the negotiators for ourselves and the UNW. I am sort of hoping that we can come to an agreement on all issues with respect to the collective agreement by the end of March. That we will be able to as much

as possible satisfy those workers who Mr. Roland frequently talks about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There were not only bankers listening to the budget address yesterday. I had some calls after the Minister's comments, in particular, about the pay equity issue. I think that it is fair to say the Minister has, on a number occasions, said that he was presently in negotiations and hoped to have those negotiations completed with the UNW prior to the end of March. I think it is fair to say, too, that all Members of this House wish that this item would be resolved. I would not be the only one who has concerns as to how the final settlement will look. My question to the Minister responsible for FMBS is, most governments and chambers of commerce continually say that money in the hands of residents is usually better spent and better for the economy than government expenditure. Is there a chance that we could turn this, which sometimes has been thought of as a negative issue, to a positive issue in the fact that this money that will come from the resolution of the pay equity issue will be in the hands of residents of the Northwest Territories and better enhance some of the initiatives that the Minister is proposing for residents of the territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

HON. JOHN TODD:

Two things, I have to say first of all. First of all, as the Minister of Finance, I was the one who said bring the parties to the table to try to reach what I call a negotiated settlement.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear! Hear!

HON. JOHN TODD:

I do not think that other people should be making those kinds of decisions for us. I have also said clearly on numerous occasions it has to be affordable. I am not prepared to recommend to this House and my Cabinet colleagues that we layoff any more staff or we cut any more programs. So affordability is the issue. Yes, if we come to a reasonable settlement that is affordable, it will be new dollars in the hands of northerners, but it will also be a substantial amount of money in the hands of former government employees who no longer live in the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I was recently happy with the comments that the Minister made. I am a little bit concerned just on his last comment. I would like to have some clarification. The Minister alluded to a large percentage, and maybe he can clarify that, of this money not going to residents of the Northwest Territories. Could he maybe, if his department officials have some numbers, say what percentage of this money will be in the Northwest Territories as opposed to outside of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

HON. JOHN TODD:

Well, we are doing a number of research right now to determine what we think that will be. I can say that a substantial portion of the retroactive payments could end up with employees who are no longer GNWT employees and are no longer in the north, and that the current NWT residents will be paying the bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate if the Minister might have or his officials must have a better breakdown, and I would like if the Minister would make those numbers available to the people of the territories so we can better understand a lot more about this issue. I have very definite concerns if we have asked the residents of the Northwest Territories to take hits for the last two years as Mr. Roland talked about this morning about the stick handling to be done. I would certainly wonder how the Finance Minister of the government can stick handle around that when we have asked the residents of the territories for the last two years to

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endure these cuts, to potentially ask them again to take more cuts. So, will the Minister commit to providing those percentages of monies that would be made available to the residents of the Northwest Territories and the percentage that would be going outside of the territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 90-13(5): Pay Equity Resolution

HON. JOHN TODD:

Well, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I do not conclude the negotiations. I understand where my colleague is going with this questioning and frankly I agree with him, but I cannot determine what the dollar value will be if that is under negotiation. What I can determine and what we are trying to determine, on the retroactively side, is how many people are no longer territorial residents and are living in the south. I will have to check with my deputy minister to see if that is not privileged information. If it is not, I would be prepared to provide that to the public and to my colleagues here in the House because I think it has serious consequences if we cannot come to, and I stress if, and I am confident that we can come to a negotiated affordable settlement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance on the P3s. A lot is at stake as I mentioned earlier in my remarks. We are in a sense mortgaging much of our future if we go for this program. The Minister has stated that he has talked to many people in the public. He hired the Coles Group to produce the report. There is a lot of information out there as I understand, Mr. Speaker. Lots of examples for us to take a look at. The Minister stated earlier there is a necessity to avoid accusations of political favours. I wonder if he would entertain my earlier remark to form an independent task force to look at the P3s.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

HON. JOHN TODD:

While I can appreciate my honourable colleague's concerns and as I said we have been in intense discussions - for example, I had four meetings with the NWT Construction Association, its management team, its elected president and companies - we have had significant discussions with the NWT Chamber of Commerce. Coles has brought to the table a Canada-wide perspective on public/private partnerships. I think there is adequate information out there. If my honourable colleague just gives me the time to bring forward the policies and regulations which I think will assure him that the concerns he has, I frankly, at this time would suggest that there may be no requirement for a task force. He has to give me the chance and the opportunity to answer some of the legitimate concerns that he has. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear what he is saying is no. He will not establish an independent task force. Will he entertain and establish a public/private partnership advisory board composed of members

from industry, unions and the government academia?
Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

HON. JOHN TODD:

You know, I thought I was extending to my colleague... I do not believe I did say we would not do that. I mean, maybe he just chooses to ignore my response. He should take the time as he should have done yesterday to read Hansard. I am saying to you that we are having significant discussions with industry. We have got general support for it. I am prepared to look at bringing forward a whole variety of safeguards that are necessary in this public/private partnership, and it may include some form of council as they do in BC and they do in other places. It may include that, but I am not going to say today, one guy asks a question about this, am I going to do that. One guy asks a question, am I going to do this? I want to come forward with a comprehensive strategic plan as to how we are going to deal with the P3s. I have made a commitment to do that. I will say again. I have made a commitment to do that. It may include some of the legitimate concerns that my honourable colleague raises. I am not going to answer today, am I going to do this, am I going to do that, the next thing.

This is a government policy that requires further fleshing out, requires further discussion with the advocacy groups out there. We will come to the appropriate compromises and safeguards that everybody wants, present it to committee and to the House and away we go. I am not going to commit today on an ad hoc basis to some of the requests that my honourable colleague is asking. I would ask him to give me some latitude, to give me an opportunity to provide him, as well as others, with the plans that we intend to put in place, the policies and regulations to monitor it and the safeguards that are critical to ensure there is transparency and there is affordability. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

MR. OOTES:

Just to correct the record, Mr. Speaker. I was listening intently yesterday. The Minister keeps speaking of we. All I have on my desk is a report from the Coles Group. Could the Minister tell us, did he seek out other organizations

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to possibly do the research in this area? Was this project tendered, was my second question?

MR. SPEAKER:

There were two questions there. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 91-13(5): Public/Private Partnerships Task Force

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss. I would have hoped my honourable colleague, that I have demonstrated over the last two years the capability when you put forward a significant initiative like this that we would have looked at Canada-wide regulations and the ways in which this policy is enacted normally in this country and others. Yes, we have done that. I am saying again, I only announced it yesterday. If you will give me the latitude to provide this House and everybody else with the answers that he is asking for and which I will do. As to the second question, no it was not tendered. I selected Mr. Coles myself. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 92-13(5): Funding for Community Firefighting

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently there have been fires that have been happening in the communities I represent. The fire last year took a life. I am going to ask the question to the Minister of MACA who is responsible for emergency measures. The last fire that happened in Arctic Bay, we were lucky not to lose any lives because the people went out on time. We found out that the equipment was not up-to-date. The apparatus froze on the fire brigades. The fire truck was frozen, so we had to use an ordinary water truck to put out the fire. My question, is there funding for equipment to be used in

the small communities for firefighting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 92-13(5): Funding for Community Firefighting

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. In the community of Arctic Bay when there was a fire, it is regrettable that there was no ready emergency response. Training is provided through MACA for fire emergencies and how to respond correctly as well. People have to be responsible when handling fires and when responding to fire emergencies. Apparatus, such as fire extinguishers should be inspected and ensured that they are in up to date form, whether it be fire preventative clothing. These are all issues of concern, and as far as the fire equipment goes in Arctic Bay, if the equipment is not adequate, then these things should be reported to the Assistant Fire Marshal who is in charge of the communities in the Baffin region. These things should be reported immediately to this person so that they can be looked after as soon as possible. We will look at the concern the Member raised and I will ensure that my officials look into this problem in his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends).

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 92-13(5): Funding for Community Firefighting

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not only in Arctic Bay, have I seen the facilities that fire trucks and fire equipment are in. The facilities are poor. In regard to Arctic Bay, the doors are not always not working properly. The facility in itself is not heating much. Due to that fact, the fire truck was frozen because there was a lack of heat in the facility. I have also seen pictures, in other communities; the facility is so poor that the building is damaged. Is there other funding available to renovate these facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 92-13(5): Funding for Community Firefighting

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the responsibility of the local municipalities to maintain the fire equipment and also to make sure that their fire equipment and buildings are in good working order. If they need assistance, my staff is available to go and assess the community with their fire equipment with their fire facilities because this is a very important part of our department to make sure that the people in the communities are safe. It is unfortunate that individual communities the Member has seen, have not contacted our department right away to have their community's fire equipment or their facilities assessed right away. My department is always willing to help the communities maintain their equipment and also their facilities. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As for the communities that the Member is referring to and the incidences that he has witnessed, I will ensure that my staff pays immediate attention to the circumstances regarding their fire equipment and I will ensure my staff look at this immediately. (Translation ends). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. We will take a 15-minute break.

--Break

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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Committee Report 2-13(5): Government Operations
Committee Report on the Review of the 1998-99 Main Estimates

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

The primary focus of the Standing Committee on Government Operations is to review issues that have territorial-wide implications. It is also charged with examining the budgets and financial management of boards and agencies that are outside the responsibility of any other standing committee. As a part of this mandate, the standing committee reviewed the main estimates for the Office of the Legislative Assembly. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has always appreciated the high level of cooperation we have received from the Speaker and his staff in reviewing the main estimates and are confident that this cooperation will continue.

The committee also recognizes the long hours and considerable work involved in preparing the material required for the main estimates review process and extends its thanks to all involved, particularly the staff at the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

The committee will provide specific comments in relation to the main estimates for the Legislative Assembly at the appropriate time in the committee of the whole.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations also considered items referred from other standing committees of the Legislative Assembly and reviewed issues with government-wide implications.

The issue of human resource administration costs was identified by other committees and referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. The concern is that there have been no savings realized by the government as a result of the dismantling of the Department of Personnel. The committee is of the opinion that the departments have been forced to take on the human resource function without an adequate level of funding from the government and that because of this shortfall in funding, the departments have been required to use program delivery dollars to deal with the increased burden.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time in committee of the whole we will be moving the following motion:

The committee recommends that an analysis of the transfer of human resource administration functions to

the departments from the Department of Personnel be undertaken to quantify the net results in terms of expenditures and efficiency. This analysis should include the following:

1. A comparison of the funding required by all departments to administer the human resource function in relation to the funding previously required to operate the Department of Personnel;
2. A list of the responsibilities that were transferred to the Financial Management Board Secretariat from the Department of Personnel;
3. An analysis of the additional funds now being spent by boards and agencies as a result of this change in service delivery;
4. Information as to the present number of employees by department and region required for the human resource function compared to the numbers previously employed by the Department of Personnel. This should include employees at the board and agency level.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations also wishes to comment on the capital spending priorities of this government. Committee Members received briefings from the Minister regarding the Public/Private Partnerships initiative and, if the initiative is implemented, the committee looks forward to working with the government further and reviewing proposed projects.

The committee wishes to restate its position on capital spending priorities. During its review of the 1997-98 capital estimates and business plans, the committee indicated that it would be supportive of capital projects which are essential to serve the basic needs of the communities. This would include projects such as school, hospitals and health centres, housing, basic water/sewer and primary transportation links such as main roads and wharves necessary for supplies.

The committee's position has not changed. Any proposed project will have to serve the basic needs of a community as outlined above and should be subject to review and meaningful consultation by Members. Projects that do not meet these criteria will not merit serious consideration by Members of this committee.

The committee discussed the Keewatin Infrastructure Transfer Proposal and Members have serious concerns about its implementation. Committee members feel that this proposal to transfer capital

funding and associated operations and maintenance funding to the Keewatin Mayors Group essentially moves toward creating another level of government. Some of the committee's questions, such as the amount of consultation done with stakeholders like Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Interim Commissioner's office, remain unanswered. The committee's major concern is that this initiative, which is a profound change to the way the GNWT conducts its business, is being proposed far too close to the time of division. There are too many other issues before this government without bringing new and potentially disruptive issues to the table. The committee recommends that this proposal be postponed until after division.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on our review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

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Therefore I move, second by the honourable Member for Kivallivik, that the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 2-13(5) moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 2-13(5) moved into committee of the whole for today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Erasmus, you have unanimous consent. Committee Report 2-13(5) will be moved into committee of the whole. Reports of standing and special committees, Mr. Picco.

Committee Report 3-13(5): Infrastructure Committee Report on the Review of the 1998-99 Main Estimates

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

The departments in the infrastructure envelope fall within two categories. The Department of Public Works and Services and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs which provide services to the government, to municipalities and to individuals.

Other departments in this envelope include the Executive, Aboriginal Affairs, Finance and the Financial Management Board Secretariat. These last four departments are central organizations which serve the entire government and provide central direction.

The issues that were of most concern to Members include matters relating to division, block funding to regional bodies and the public/private partnership proposal. A major concern and recurring theme of the committee's review was that the government should wait until division is implemented prior to any large commitment or significant change, such as the privatization of the Petroleum Products Division and the Keewatin Resupply Project. Both have been understandably postponed until after division. These projects may be addressed by the next Legislative Assemblies, as recommended by Members of this committee and other concerned Members. Overall, the committee was concerned with the incremental and transitional costs of division and until there is definite political direction by the affected parties, there should be a halt on any further commitments unless they are absolutely necessary.

Committee Members have examined the proposal for block funding to the Keewatin Regional Airport Authority. The block funding comprises both capital and operations and maintenance monies. This proposed transfer represents a profound change in the way government conducts its business. There has never been a block transfer of capital and operations and maintenance funding to a regional authority. After further discussion, the committee feels this proposal should be postponed until after division.

Revenue generation is a significant challenge for departments within the infrastructure envelope. There are many infrastructure deficiencies that need to be addressed by the government, and funding sources

are dwindling. The government recently proposed the public/private partnerships initiative, which is intended to address some of these deficiencies through partnerships with the private sector and to reduce the government's potential financial burden. Other possible sources of revenue generation were discussed, including a highway commercial truck tax and an increase in corporate income tax. The committee will provide more detailed comments in relation to the main estimates for each department in committee of the whole.

Finally, the committee appreciates the assistance of the departments within the infrastructure envelope during its review of the main estimates, especially given the tight timelines and the requests involved in this process. Mr. Speaker, this concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee of Infrastructure on our review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

THEREFORE, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that the report of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-13(5) moved into the committee of the whole for today.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Iqaluit is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-13(5) move into committee of the whole for today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Picco, you have unanimous consent. Committee Report 3-13(5) will be moved into committee of the whole. Reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Krutko.

Committee Report 4-13(5): Resource Management Committee Reports on the Review of the 1998-99 Main Estimates

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

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The 1998-99 main estimates form the final budget of this government. The standing committee reviewed the draft 1998-99 main estimates for the Departments of Transportation and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. For the upcoming 1998-99 fiscal year, a total increase of more than \$4.5 million is proposed. Committee Members noted that most of the proposed increases were in operations and maintenance expenditures.

This committee has dealt with severe budget reductions to departments within the resource management and development envelope during the last few years, and Members now feel that there should be a government focus on supporting and promoting programs in this envelope. Such a focus could be expected to benefit other departments and the Northwest Territories as a whole in the future, and is sorely needed.

Committee Members are aware, for example, that there was a loss of approximately 900 construction jobs in the Northwest Territories during the past year. These losses have serious consequences for our people and our government. There is an increased dependency on social programs, existing infrastructure is deteriorating and there is a severe shortfall in the infrastructure development that is needed to support northern business. The committee feels that more emphasis should be placed on programs and services within this envelope to promote economic and infrastructure development.

During its review of the main estimates, the standing committee requested additional information on some matters from the departments within this envelope. The issues for which the committee requires more information have been communicated to the appropriate Minister, or will be referenced in our comments on the main estimates in committee of the whole.

The committee appreciates the assistance of the departments within the resource management and development envelope during our review, especially

given the time constraints and requests involved in this process.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development on our review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kivallivik, that the report of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. KRUTKO:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-13(5) moved into committee of the whole for today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) to have Committee Report 4-13(5) moved into committee of the whole. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Krutko, you have unanimous consent. Committee Report 4-13(5) will be moved into committee of the whole. Reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Enuaraq.

Committee Report 5-13(5): Social Programs
Committee Report on the Review of the 1998-99 Main Estimates

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since being elected in mid-October of 1995, Members of the Legislative Assembly have developed a more effective way of conducting business. This new process started with revising the standing committee system, allowing the Members of the committees to review department business plans and budgets.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs was charged with the following mandate for the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment,

Justice, Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation:

-to review legislative and policy proposals, multi-year plans and budgets, bills, boards and agencies, public accounts and division issues;

-to review departmental performance, and

-to consider any other matter referred by the House.

A true consensus government system demands that all partners are involved in the decision-making process. As a result, a recurring theme of committee involvement is evident throughout this report.

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs are encouraged by the level of cooperation shown by the government and are optimistic that this working relationship will continue to evolve. The committee appreciates the assistance of the Ministers and departments within the Social Programs envelope during the review of the 1998-99 main estimates, and recognizes that the review process requires considerable effort by departmental staff. Thanks are extended to all those involved.

The committee will have specific comments in relation to the main estimates for each department in committee of the whole. Mr. Speaker, this concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on our review of the 1998-99 main estimates.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the review of the 1998-99 main estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 5-13(5) moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 5-13(5) moved into committee of the whole. Do we have any nays? There are no nays? Mr. Enuaraq, you have unanimous consent. Committee Report 5-13(5) will moved into committee of the whole for today.

MR. SPEAKER:

Reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99, and Committee Reports 2-13(5), 3-13(5), 4-13(5) and 5-13(5). With Mr. Steen in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee to order. For consideration by the committee today we have Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99 and Committee Reports 2-13(5), 3-13(5), 4-13(5) and 5-13(5). Could I get some direction on how you wish to proceed? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We have a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on Item 21, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the committee met and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of all Members at 1:00 this afternoon. Meetings for Monday morning, an all Members briefing at 9:30 a.m., at 11:00 a.m. Ordinary Members' Caucus.

Orders of the day for Monday, January 26, 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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, No. 2
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 9, Loan Authorization Act, 1998-99
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, January 26, 1998 at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT