



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Sam Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable Mani Tok 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. Ningark. Good morning. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 33-13(5): Review of Seniors' Programs and Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to report the progress achieved to date on the Review of Seniors' Programs and Services in the Northwest Territories.

The government began a review last spring, in partnership with the NWT Seniors' Advisory Council, to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of existing programs. The Seniors' Advisory Council was contracted by the Departments of Health and Social Services; Housing Corporation and Education, Culture and Employment to carry out the review. The Council has submitted a report to the government providing recommendations on program delivery to better meet the needs of our northern seniors.

Mr. Speaker, the social envelope committee, in reviewing the report, has identified three key recommendations to be acted upon.

First, Mr. Speaker, the report recommends that seniors be made more aware of government programs and services. In response, we have developed a brochure titled Programs and Services

for Seniors which has been distributed to seniors across the territories in both English and Inuktitut. A second document is also being prepared to supplement this brochure, and this guide will provide some detail on eligibility criteria for programs. This guide will also be distributed in both English and Inuktitut.

A second recommendation is to standardize the age of eligibility for seniors accessing programs. The social envelope committee is currently reviewing the implications and feasibility of standardizing the eligibility to those 60 years of age or older.

The third recommendation suggests developing a simplified and coordinated process of accessing programs and services for all seniors. The social envelope committee is reviewing the process to develop a common assessment form to simplify the process of applying for benefits.

My colleagues, Honourable Charles Dent and Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, and I will continue consulting with the seniors' advisory committee to further discuss the recommendations and to seek advice on the proposed action plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 124-13(5): Delivery of the Income Support Program

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in regard to the whole question about pay equity and the delivery of services between the small communities and the large centres. There seems to be a real misconception in regard to the service that we deliver in our small communities versus the larger centres. I talk, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the income support and the staff who presently deliver these programs in small communities. Presently as it exists that a full-time staff position is \$50,000 and encompasses 2,000 applicants in a community. In the case of Aklavik with a case load of 694 people, the individual is paid \$36,000 which is a part-time position.

In regard to income support in the smaller centres especially where you do not have an economic base, there seems to be a real demand on the individual and the program in those communities where you do not have the job opportunities and potential that a lot of the larger centres have. In regard to that we hear the debate regarding the pay equity question with the unions, but I think we are also finding ourselves that there has got to be equity in delivering programs in the communities on a similar basis to those in larger centres.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister in regard to the Income Support Program exactly why is this injustice being done. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 125-13(5): Arctic Winter Games Hockey Team Selection Process

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to rise to speak about a situation relating to the Arctic Winter Games and specifically the selection of the minor hockey team that occurred. In my constituency and in the South Slave I believe there are a lot of very unhappy parents and disillusioned and wounded young hockey players. Apparently trials were held and a tournament was held in Yellowknife. A team from the South Slave came up and won the tournament yet for some reason ended up with only one player on the Arctic Winter Games team. I understand that the team was picked by the coaches from Yellowknife which for some reasons ended up with eight or so players on the team. Needless to say, I have received letters and calls and a lot of issues were raised about this unfortunate incident. I have passed those on to the Minister. I can only hope that the matter can be resolved; that, in fact, the concerns are addressed and that the players involved are not going to be totally disillusioned about the process where they played their hearts out, gave their best, won the tournament and for some reason - being politics or what ever the situation was - did not get recognized for their victory.

I think we owe the people involved a clear answer. I know the families are very distressed. This is a situation that is not going to go away and

unfortunately adds a bad flavour or sense to the Arctic Winter Games which are going to be starting here in a month or so. So I will be asking the Minister for an update on this important issue so that the young hockey players in the South Slave and their families can get some satisfaction and some justice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 126-13(5): Analysis of Family Support Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my Member's statement I spoke about issues that concern families and children. I followed up with questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the Healthy Children Initiative which I referred to earlier as the Early Intervention Program. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I believe that if we are going to focus on families and improving the future we need to work on the whole family not just pieces of the family. I think that although we are moving in the right direction of trying to focus on earlier problems that occur in homes and the ability of children to learn in the school environment, I hope that we will be able to take some of the concerns being raised and input them into any changes that would be coming, as the Minister said, out of a review. Hopefully that review will happen sooner than later. We know, Mr. Speaker, at times once programs are established they are very difficult to change. I am hoping that any of the reviews that are done are done as soon as possible and that changes to the program can be made quickly so that we can definitely have a positive impact on families across the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement 127-13(5): Staff Housing Shortages

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled three documents concerning housing problems for our staff in the Baffin region and one document from the FAS/FAE volunteer group in Iqaluit. Over this past week when raising concerns, it would seem the

fall back position of the government is to say show us the proof that your concerns are legitimate. Mr. Speaker, for example, one of the documents tabled had been sent to all MLAs and Cabinet concerning problems with staff housing and yet the government said they were not aware of the concern. Mr. Speaker, I will later today, again, raise these questions and address the tabled documents for some clarity and now awareness of the issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Member's Statement 128-13(5): Recent Comments Regarding the Keewatin Region

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an observation. My Member's statement today is about how we work together in a consensus style government to make things better for the people in our constituencies. Our Legislative Assembly is unique in Canada and, indeed, the world. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, just because we have a consensus government does not mean that we always agree. There is room for debates and arguments in this House, but that is not my concern. My concern is how we are handling conflicts and how the media is reacting to them. We all know some leaders are taking advantage of these conflicts and using them to gain recognition through the newspaper, radio and television. Mr. Speaker, is it more important to get your face in the paper and on television than to prove your leadership professionally? This problem will only become worse as we draw near to the next election.

Recently we have been hearing a lot about the Keewatin. The Keewatin has been portrayed as a region in chaos and has even been referred to as having third world conditions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame, shame.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

I am very concerned that some of the statements that have been made in this House and in the media have been unfair to the residents of the Keewatin. Mr. Speaker, this humiliating label is unfair and insulting to the Keewatin residents and especially each and

every one of the health board members of the communities. They deserve an apology. Our region has always been well

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known for being pro-active and productive. I will challenge any one of the Members who have criticized the efforts of these community members to go and see them and repeat what they have been saying face to face. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Aivilik is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Do we have any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Nay.

MR. SPEAKER:

You do not have unanimous consent. Members' statements. Order, please. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 149-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Lease Agreement

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply to an oral question which was asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on January 29th to the Premier, but it has to do with my portfolio and so I have the information on the Lahm Ridge Tower lease agreement.

Mr. Speaker, when an agreement was reached on the extension provisions on the Lahm Ridge lease, the Department of Public Works and Services was aware that the owner was attempting to negotiate a sale to 974102 NWT Limited. The department was aware of the names of the owners of the new company.

With regard to the assignment of the lease, it is important to emphasize that the assignment is an instrument which permits the sellers of the building to transfer the existing lease to the buyer. The role of the GNWT at that point is to approve the assignment if the buyer complies with the terms and conditions of the assigned lease. In the case of the Lahm Ridge

Tower, the department assessed the assignment, determined that the document did not violate the existing provisions of the lease and, therefore, agreed to it. Although the assignment was agreed to by the department prior to the date of the sale, it took effect on the date the new owner took possession of the building. In this case the effective date was November 1, 1997. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce some young constituents from my home community of Arviat. They are from the Pathfinders and they are Michelle Illnik, Heather Main, Leah Muckpah, Sharon Owljoot, Fiona Main, Bernice Niakrok, Karen Panegoniak and Nancy Gibbons. Also their leaders are present, Martha Main and Belinda Carter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Yesterday I asked him a question regarding the Healthy Children Initiative and he answered me by saying that it is aimed at children. I would like to know if the Minister is aware of the concerns out there where families are the focus not just children and maybe he can give me more of an answer than I received yesterday. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good morning. Mr. Speaker, I reviewed my response to the Member in Hansard I have to admit that the response does make it appear as if the programs can only serve children. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify. In fact, the focus of the programs that are approved must be children from ages zero to six, but there is a clear recognition that families also play a role. Therefore there are a number of programs which have been approved that do serve parents as well as the children. I would say that there is a clear recognition that the whole family plays a part in dealing with children at risk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for the clarification on that. As I said yesterday, there was a proposal put forward within the community of Inuvik that focused on family situations. Could the Minister make me aware and Members of this Assembly aware that if a proposal is put in, what are the procedures when being accepted or refused? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, funds have been allocated on a regional basis or a community by community basis so that we have targets for each community to make sure that one area does not eat up all of the funding leaving none for others. Community groups submit their applications which are reviewed by an interdepartmental committee at the regional level. The

applications do not come back to headquarters, they are reviewed in the regions. This interdepartmental committee will then weigh the merits of each application, consider the amount of funding that is available by community and decide on which of the projects proposed will receive funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us the timing of proposals. For example, the upcoming year 1998, can proposals can be submitted as of April, 1st?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 152-13(5): Family Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the current fiscal year, packages were sent out to communities in June advising community groups how they could apply. We have had updated packages put together so that there will be a better understanding of what constitutes a good program. As well, we have embarked on some training programs and put regional staff in place to help communities develop their proposals. Communities can approach regional staff, as in our regional offices, for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for assistance in preparing applications. Applications can be submitted almost any time because the funding will be in place, assuming approval of the budget, as of April 1st for new programs. Since some may be continuing programs we would expect that there will have to be some process whereby applications can be reviewed prior to April, 1st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and it is in regard to the situation I referenced in my Member's statement about the midget hockey selection process which appears to have been badly manipulated and young hockey players' hopes and dreams trampled callously underfoot. I was wondering if the Minister could give us an update on this issue as I passed on to her some concerns clearly identified in letters from my constituents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you. It is my pleasure to be standing again. The Member for Thebacha has been coming to my office and raising this issue with me on a daily basis. I have contacted my department. I want to know all the details involved in the selection process and I do not have all the details yet. We are working on it. What I can say is that the Sport North Federation, under agreement with myself as the Minister of MACA, is responsible for selecting and managing the Team NWT for the 1998 Arctic Winter Games. For the selection process, I do not have all the information yet and I will get that as soon as I can have my staff bring it to me because I need to have a clear answer for what has happened here. I am concerned also, as is the Member and the parents, and we will get that to them as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues of big concern to me coming out of this particular incident is that, in fact, now that this one has come to light there

are comments and feedback that this is not an isolated case and that, in fact, when you start picking all-star teams, the system we have in place seems to be one that is manipulated. Would the Minister assure this House that she will take steps to ensure that this issue is addressed in its broader context so that it does not occur in other areas as well as I have been told that it does? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I will also have the people involved in reviewing this process meet with the Member so that we can talk about this face to face. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the other final issues I would like to bring up today in regard to this particular matter is the fact that prior to this tournament it was apparently agreed to that the winning team from this tournament would go to another Canada Cup game down south, but for some reason once the South Slave won the tournament the rules changed and the Arctic Winter Games team was, in fact, chosen to go on this tournament that was formerly agreed to have the winner go, which was, as I indicated, the South Slave. Could the Minister also ensure that she makes a special effort to get to the bottom of that

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particular issue as well? There has to be some reward for winning. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 153-13(5): Midget Hockey Selection Process

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education regarding income support. The question I referenced to in my opening statement is the injustice in the way programs are delivered in small communities especially when we talk about community empowerment where we allow communities to take on certain initiatives such as staffing the income support workers. In regard to the program itself and the access to the people it represents, these are only part-time positions where, in other cases, we have social workers, human resource officers, nurses and what not as full-time positions in these communities. The demand for these individuals is high because of the number of individuals who, in most cases, in small communities are applying for income support and the demand is high. Yet the funds are not equally distributed based on a formula that has been worked out. I would like to ask the Minister, has he taken into account these demands on individuals and communities in order to deliver the service more reasonably, has he reviewed it with a possibility of making changes to the program?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Income Support Program is delivered in many communities across the north now on a contract basis, wherein the department contracts with someone within the community to deliver the program. The funding for the position is one full-time equivalent for 2,000 cases per

year. We have found in almost every community this is an acceptable ratio and seems to be successful. I know I have talked to the mayor of Aklavik and to the Member and there is some concern about the formula working in their community. Part of the problem seems to be that the regional offices increased in that community. Funding in excess of the formula, approximately \$14,000 a year, is in order to provide some counselling and additional client support. I would say to the Member, if there is a problem with that part of the program, I would encourage the community to talk to the regional office and outline the problem to see whether or not there is some way to deal with it. We are finding that the one full-time equivalent for every 2,000 cases is working across the rest of the territories. Therefore, it is difficult for me to justify a change for one community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the whole question of only doing for one community, I do not believe I am speaking only for one community. We have the same problem in Fort MacPherson and also in Arctic Red. I believe, this problem arises in other small communities, not only the ones I represent. So, I would like to ask the Minister, who determines what is reasonable in regard to the context of who makes that final decision?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department came up with the formula in consultation with communities which had run the projects. The Members of the House will probably remember, we ran 11 pilot projects where we used community agencies to deliver the project before we offered the contracting out, or local empowerment option, to all other communities across the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me what will take to do another review. In context of the program being basically in its first year, could we somehow see exactly where the problem areas are in doing another indepth review of how the programs are running today?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That sort of review is an ongoing part of the process. We are quite prepared to work with communities and discuss whether or not changes need to be made to programs, to make sure that they are delivered adequately. I do think that in the case the Member is referring to, it is essential that if there is a problem right now, the community needs to discuss that with the regional office. The additional functions that seem to be causing the problems were ones that were negotiated with the regional office. They are not part of the Income Support Program per se. They are not part of the one FTE for 2,000

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cases per year. The additional funding that has been received is for counselling and other support, which appears to be the problem. Any problems need to be discussed between the community and the regional office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the Minister's last comments of recognizing there is a problem and how the regional offices are delivering this program, could the Minister file a report in this House regarding the review and how exactly the program is running once the review takes place and file a report in this House on the review of the Income Support Program?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 154-13(5): Delivery of Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to provide the House with a report on how the program is working. I want to make it clear that no group has been hired to do a formal report on this program. The review is an ongoing process that is done in concert with communities as the program is administered. Yes, I would be happy to file something in this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just going back to my earlier Member's statement. There were concerns with the tabled documents that were tabled yesterday. My first question is for Mr. Dent, the Minister of Education. It concerns the housing issue. Can the Minister update this House at this time if the department has been made aware of concerns and earlier concerns with housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do know that in conversations with the president of the NWTTA, there has been mention of the concern of the cost of

housing and how the association believes this concern in some communities is leading to problems with morale among teachers. I am not aware of any problems where teachers are unable to find housing in a community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the tabled documents before this House I tabled yesterday was sent to all MLAs. I think it was addressed specifically to Minister Dent concerning a broad scope of housing concerns, including as the Minister just stated, concerns with a lack of housing and affordability of housing. Can the Minister update this House at this time what the department is doing to address some of these concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, on an individual case by case basis as the department becomes aware of a problem in a community, we will work with the FMBS to try and address that problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think what we are saying here is, there are quite a few situations regarding problems with housing, not just specific individuals. For example, the cost of housing has been one that has been raised in several

communities. Has the Minister's department looked at the concern with the cost of housing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 155-13(5): Teacher Staff Housing Shortage

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I have already answered the question. We are looking at it on an individual basis. The Department of Education has no mandate to initiate a policy to provide housing. It would be a staff housing issue that the government would take a look at. As the Member is aware, it is our policy to get out of staff housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, in preparing for division, we have to deal with the Power Corporation. Several of my constituents have been asking questions on whether Yellowknife is actually

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subsidizing the rest of the territories. I would like the Minister to explain if he could, explain how power rates are set?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has asked me a relatively difficult question as power rates are set in a general rate application process which takes years. Stacks of paper perhaps ten feet high are brought before the Public Utilities Board. I assume the

Member means in fact, are the rates set so the costs are recovered on a community by community basis? The answer to that is, yes, following the last general rate application and approximately five years of work with the Public Utilities Board, communities and intervenors from across the North. The rates that the Power Corporation charges its customers are set so that each community pays its own way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are these communities, are their rates set in zones of some sort or are they just set individually?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, the Power Corporation had recommended to the Public Utilities Board that the rates be set in zones so there would be some sharing of capital investment across a range of communities. However, the Public Utilities Board decided that was not appropriate and has directed that the rates be set so each community pays its own way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister indicate whether one zone subsidizes another zone?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I stated in my previous answer, there are no zones. The Public Utilities Board did not approve a zone type of rate. In other words, each community has its own rate and it is intended that each community shall pay its own cost of service. The two areas left in the corporation are an eastern division, and a western division, which have been set up to track costs east and west. I can clearly say there is no subsidization, for instance, of power rates in Nunavut by the rates in the Western Territory.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Specifically, as I have said, constituents have complained that they feel that the Yellowknife residents subsidize the power bills of other northerners. There even has been mentioned of that in editorials and other areas. Can the Minister indicate whether Yellowknife residents subsidize the power bills of other northerners?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 156-13(5): Setting of Power Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have noticed today's editorial in the Yellowknifer, which does indicate that Yellowknifers subsidize almost all other northerners. I must say that I am deeply disappointed that a northern media outlet would publish such blatant balderdash.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Here! here!

HON. CHARLES DENT:

It is terribly disappointing that they did not bother to pick up the phone and ask me the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame. Shame.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

I would like to make it very clear, the people of Yellowknife do not subsidize the rates of power for any other community in the Northwest Territories.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Mr. Dent. It is on the subject of violence-free schools. I have been informed that on a daily basis, teachers are reporting incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the classrooms. Teachers are leaving the north because of violence. To date, there have been eight teachers that have terminated their employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories. I wonder if the Minister could tell us

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if this is posing a problem with recruitment of teachers to the north.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have talked to the president of the NWTTA about the issue and have agreed to work with the association to find ways to address it. I am not aware that, to date, violence in northern schools has led to a problem with recruitment. It would appear that our problems with

violence, on average across the Northwest Territories, are probably less than what you find in southern schools. In terms of what teachers would have to deal with in the north as compared to the south, it tends not to be quite as bad.

That does not mean that any violence is acceptable, Mr. Speaker. The thrust of our program working with the association and divisional education councils as our partners will be to try and find some way to ensure that the school environment is safe and conducive to learning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the department have an anti-violence policy or a policy to deal with violence in the class room?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every divisional educational council must develop its own policy. We, at the department level, are willing to work with them, hopefully, in concert with the association to develop these policies. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what the Minister indicated just now, I do not believe there is a violence policy in place. But the Minister said he would be willing to have his officials work with boards and the teachers' association.

However, my question is, if there is no strict and hard policy, then can the teachers use the zero tolerance policy for verbal abuse and violence, to be applied? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not say that there is no policy. I said, each and every divisional education council is required to have a policy on violence in the schools which must be followed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

MR. OOTES:

The Minister did not answer my question on the zero tolerance policy, whether it would apply in the classroom. I wonder if he could answer that and if I may have my final question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. You did get your final question. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 157-13(5): Violence in NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will repeat my answer. The teachers must follow the policy set by each divisional educational council. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 158-13(5): Winter Roads into Wha Ti and Rae Lakes

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer my question to the Honourable James Antoine, Minister of Transportation, regarding the fate of the winter road that is going to Wha Ti and if possible, if it is in the community, and is the other section to Rae Lakes, when it is going to be completed and when it is going to be into the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 158-13(5): Winter Roads into Wha Ti and Rae Lakes

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work by the contractor into the winter roads into Wha Ti and into Rae Lakes started in early January. There is some way to go yet. I am just waiting for some detailed information from my department on exactly the status of when these roads will be completed and when they will be going into the community.

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My information right now, roughly is depending on the work and the problems they are running into. It might be within a week or so that these roads will be operational. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 158-13(5): Winter Roads into Wha Ti and Rae Lakes

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies for calling you Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct the same question to the same Minister regarding the winter road and the possibility of going into Snare Lakes. I wonder if the government is looking into it to see whether the supplies may be coming into the community of Snare Lakes through the Colomac Mine road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 158-13(5): Winter Roads into Wha Ti and Rae Lakes

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the winter road into Snare Lakes is going ahead this year because the main section of road going into Colomac Mines. The information I have is Colomac will be putting a road to their mines to demobilize the material from their mine site. As a result, we as a government use that section and attach a 106 kilometre link from Colomac Road to Snare Lakes.

This section has been tendered out about three weeks ago. There are a number of materials from the Housing Corporation to petroleum products. Northland Utilities, MACA and the band have different types of materials which are going to go into there. As I understand it right now, this road will be completed sometime in February. Middle to late February is the timing for this road to be put in there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise this House whether there is any funding allotted for nursing graduates? I should say, nurses who are about to graduate that have to travel to Yellowknife or Iqaluit to write the final exams. Is there any funding available for travel for them to get from Arviat, for example, to Yellowknife? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding which is included in student financial assistance would not be specifically for travel to attend a pinning ceremony. The travel would be typically provided at

the beginning and end of semester. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just last week or so, we had a graduation or pinning ceremony here for the new nurses. I believe, these nurses come in to write their final exams at the same time they have the pinning ceremony.

My question to the Minister is, is he saying there is no funding available for these nurses? For example, they have to travel from Arviat to Yellowknife to write their exams. It is up to them. It is their cost as opposed to someone living in Yellowknife. There would be no cost for the travel, no airfare, no hotel costs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know that we would look at providing a change to the Student Financial Assistance Program. We are looking at funding travel to a graduation ceremony. There is a bit of a complicating issue here. It is that the students must also write the Canada Nurses' Association training services test to finish their program. It has to be written at the end of concluding their practicum which they can perform in Iqaluit, Inuvik or Yellowknife.

There has been some occasions, a gap in the time between the completion of practicum and writing of the exam, which has necessitated some travel. In that case, I would think we would have to take a look at redrafting the rules of the Student Financial Assistance Program to allow the costs of travel to write the test to be included. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if the Minister is stating there is no funding available for nurses to come in and write their final exam if they have to travel, for example, from Arviat to Yellowknife. If that is the case, will the Minister agree to look into this issue to ensure there is some type of funding available so that somebody travelling from Arviat to Yellowknife, their travel or flight is paid for. It does not seem fair that somebody in Yellowknife, Inuvik or Iqaluit would not have this extra fee or cost. I would ask the Minister if he would consider that.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 159-13(5): Travel Funding for Graduating Nurses

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I indicated previously was that in redrafting the Student Financial Assistance Program, which is under way right now following recommendations from the ministerial forum, we will take a look at that very issue. If students are required to travel following the end of their course to write an exam, yes, we will have to look at funding that. The current regulations do not allow it at present, but as we are changing the program. We will consider it.

The other thing that I mentioned is that each of these students will always have to conclude a practicum. There may be some way to make sure the exam could be written at the end of the practicum in the community in which they have performed the practicum which would avoid extra travel cost. That will be what we will try to do first, time things so there is no extra cost to the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. It is in regard to return to an oral question made by Mr. Picco. In regard to the conflict of interest in which you said there was an independent review to see if there was a conflict. My question to the Premier is, did the Premier address the conflict of interest charges by Mr. Picco with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Picco did not make any conflict of interest charges. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the questions raised by Mr. Picco in regard to conflict of interest, I would like to ask the Premier, did he address the conflict of interest by Mr. Picco with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier ask for the opinion of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner on this particular matter?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no requirement for that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier why there is no need for a request from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very clear from Hansard in my return to an oral question asked by Mr. Picco yesterday. I believe I made the return. Neither Minister is compensated either directly or indirectly for work activities associated with the Aurora Funds. Therefore, they are not in a conflict of interest as defined by the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Why will the Premier not ask the Conflict of Interest Commissioner for an opinion on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 160-13(5): Return to Conflict Question

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I already have an opinion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

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MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the interim review, the Minister in charge of the Power Corporation committed to this House to provide the results of the environmental audits carried out by the Power Corporation in January. I wonder if the Minister could update us if he is going to table that today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have that document available for tabling today, but it will be before the end of this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

MR. PICCO:

I would assume, Mr. Speaker, from that, then, the Minister has seen the document. I am wondering if the Minister could update us then, again, on what is happening with the environmental audits? What are the concerns here? How many liabilities do we have? It is very interesting and I would point out because we are, indeed, looking at the division of the Power Corporation. So, my supplemental question to the Minister is, could the Minister provide us with an update now, orally, on the environmental audits? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact I have not seen any such document yet, so I cannot respond to the Member's question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister indicating then that the question is taken as notice that he will not be answering that question right now or could I follow up with a supplemental question on the environmental audits?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the rules of this House quite well and I did not take that question as notice. My response was that I have not seen the report. In the previous answer I had told the Member that the report would be tabled before the end of this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Dent for that lesson in House procedure, I appreciate it. Mr. Speaker, my supplemental question then on the environmental audits is, can the Minister tell the House at this time, indeed, if there is any serious situation regarding environmental audits as outlined in this report that he has had briefing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 161-13(5): Results of the Environmental Audits

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, having not read a report that has not been on my desk yet, it is difficult for me to respond to a question asking if there might be some problems in that report. I have given my commitment that the report will be in this House before the end of session. That is the only response that I can give.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Honourable John Todd, Minister responsible for the Aurora Fund, in response to Mr. Todd's Minister's statement on the Aurora Fund which was recently presented here in the House.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is the report refers to approximately \$1.5 million which has been expended in marketing, sales fees and initial start up costs. Previously in the House my colleague from Iqaluit had questioned the Minister on the seeming lack of information that was available in the public regarding

this fund. I would like to know if the Minister would be prepared to outline for us what that \$1.5 million was spent on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can get a very detailed response for my honourable colleague but I will outline today some of the areas where the costs are. You have

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got costs on the front end for the agent, Mr. Lockyer, who goes out and sells the fund and travels all across Asia and the Middle East. That is significant. There are fees that we attach to the sellers of the fund. There is a fee we attach to the investment manager of the fund. There are travel expenses. There are some marketing dollars, et cetera. Most of the money, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, most of the dollars are really attached to the fees that we expend on the front end to the sales agents that go and market the fund. However, I will get a detailed response for my colleague and table it in the House later next week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister. That is wonderful news. I do not understand entirely what the relationship is between the liquid funds, referred to in here, that are held in investment, and it refers to the administering of liquid investments of both funds. What is the commitment on behalf of the fund with respect to liquid investments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the conditions of the fund that was set by the lender, Pacific and Western, was that 30 percent of the fund has to remain liquid, in bonds and in liquid assets. That is approximately 30 percent of the overall fund. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be aware of how much money that is that is held in the liquid funds by Pacific and Western at this time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have said on a number of occasions, that while we are fully subscribed to both funds, and there is a difference of opinion on fully subscribed, as the money flows from the immigrants who receive approval for their Canadian citizenship, as that money flows in, 30 percent of that money goes into the liquid fund and the other goes into escrow for investment in northern businesses. It would be difficult today to determine an actual amount, but all I can tell you is that whatever monies have flowed through the system, \$11 something million if my memory serves me correctly, 30 percent of that will be in a liquid fund and that is an agreement reached by all parties for them to back and to support fiscally, this Aurora Fund I and Aurora Fund II. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What kinds of things can this company that holds securities and escrow on behalf of the Aurora Fund, what kinds of things can they in turn invest this money in? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 162-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would imagine it would be blue chip investments because they want the ability to be liquid. The Pacific Western holds onto that. The escrow account is run by the Bank of Montreal. I think it is important to point out that it is not something that you just leave and sit there. Under the rules and regulations of the Immigrant Investment Fund, we have to get the money out within 75 days and lent to northern businesses. On the investment side that money has to be out within 75 days, I think it is 75 days on the liquidity side that remains in place until the fund is paid back in the fifth year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education regarding violence in the schools. I wonder if the Minister could tell us, this is a very serious issue in the territories and I wonder if outside of the policy area, if the department is working at addressing the concerns that teachers have with violence.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I said in my first response to the Member that I have in fact met with the president of the NWTTA and have agreed to work with her and our partners at the divisional education councils to address this issue further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what possible areas could be looked at in addressing this concern?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose I could say that we would look at all areas. We have agreed to work with the association and the divisional education councils. The door is wide open to look at the different options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has a zero tolerance policy, it applies both to the Legislative Assembly here and the territorial government. Have the teachers been made aware of this policy and have they been given a copy of that policy?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some familiarity with the policy. As I understand, it applies to the Members of this Legislative Assembly only, not to employees of this government. Since I introduced that bill in this House, I am pretty confident it only applies to Members of the Assembly. I do not know if teachers have been handed copies of that bill. They would not have been handed copies of that bill by my office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it applies to the Legislative Assembly, certainly we must have something that also applies within the public service, that the teachers can turn to. Could the Minister perhaps enlighten us on that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 163-13(5): Addressing Violence in Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I am not quite sure where the Member is going with this question. In a previous response to him today, I indicated the Education Act requires every divisional educational council to have a policy on violence in the schools. That policy is required of every divisional educational council in the Northwest Territories. That is the policy that must be followed by teachers in every classroom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier in reference to leases and extension of leases. Can the Premier tell this House if deputy ministers have a ceiling or a limit on what they can sign for, whether it is \$10 million or \$20 or \$200,000 in reference to any leases?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are guidelines for that. I would be pleased to table them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not quite hear the Premier. Did he say he was going to table these documents and if that is the case, when can we expect it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did say I would table those documents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier tell us when we can expect to have this document tabled in the House, this week, tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

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Further Return To Question 164-13(5): Authority for Lease Approvals

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would not be tomorrow because it is Saturday. Today is Friday. Possibly Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. As soon as I can get them, I will table them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is again for the Minister of Education. The zero tolerance policies that are in place in the boards is that reviewed and looked at by the department to look at consistencies across the board? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not say that zero tolerance policies are in place by every divisional education council. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether or not department officials have asked to have a look at the policies provided by DEC or boards as we used to call them. I would remind the Members that the divisional education councils are elected bodies, just as we are, made up of elected officials and we have some expectation that they have the capability to follow through on living up to their requirements under legislation. I do not think that we have to go out and check to make sure that every last

"i" is dotted and they have done every last requirement set out in the act. We have some faith. If it is found that something has not been done, then due process will take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that we would like to try and give some autonomy to boards, but we also have a responsibility to ensure consistency of application of rules and conditions. I wonder if the Minister will undertake to ask the boards to forward to the department their particular policies in regard to violence so that they can be looked at by the department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker perhaps we should repeal the Education Act and change it and take out the community empowerment that is embedded in it. Is that what the Member suggests? That we do not allow the elected local governing bodies to carry out their duties?

--Applause

Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence that the boards are doing as they are required by the act. It is an insult to say we should ask them to demonstrate on the basis that they are not. If the Member has any indication that there is one divisional education council that has not lived up to its responsibility under the act, then he has a responsibility to inform me as the Minister so that I can follow up on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, it is an emotional issue with the Minister. I wonder if he could answer my question. Will he ask the boards to send their policies so that we can see if there is some consistency or provide assistance to those boards in some way or another. That is all I am asking. I am not trying to say that the boards are not doing their jobs. Why would I criticize the boards. I am here merely to say we as a government have a responsibility to take care of our people. I am here to say to the teachers, look I am going to look after you, Mr. Speaker. My question is, will the Minister ask the boards to forward their policies so we can see if there is consistency. We do not need to get emotional about this.

--Applause.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I would like to remind again the Members about the rules of this House. A question must not be an argument or a debate. Mr. Dent, to the question.

Further Return To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have today stated on two or three occasions that I have agreed to work collectively with the teachers association and with the divisional education councils to strengthen the policies on violence in the Northwest Territories. I think that should address the Member's concern. If this government had intended to have one policy applied across the Northwest Territories, we would not have put it in the act that the boards themselves should set their own policies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

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MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could forward me the copies of the boards policies as soon as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 165-13(5): Consistency in Non-Violence Policies

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will advise the boards of the Member's interest in the issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 166-13(5): Policy on Zero Tolerance for Violence

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on Mr. Ootes' question. I understand this government operates on a zero tolerance policy. So I am wondering how could schools or school boards have a policy that is contrary to them.

MR. SPEAKER:

We did not get the recording on that Mr. Steen, can you repeat your question please?

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. I understand this government has a policy in place of zero tolerance as far as violence is concerned. My question is, how can the education boards or authorities have a policy that is contrary to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 166-13(5): Policy on Zero Tolerance for Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we should clarify again for the Member that the Government of the Northwest Territories does not have a policy of zero tolerance to violence. The zero tolerance policy is a policy of this Legislative Assembly only, and applies to the 24 Members of this Legislative Assembly. That is all that zero tolerance policy applies to. I did not say that the DEC policies would necessarily be any different from that policy. Each individual DEC is required under the Education Act to establish a violence policy. One that works in their region and in their communities. Each one is required to have their own policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary. Question period is over but I will allow you to conclude your supplementaries. Mr. Steen.

Supplementary To Question 166-13(5): Policy on Zero Tolerance for Violence

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that this government has a zero tolerance policy as far as violence is concerned in particular, zero tolerance for spousal abuse. We have heard that many times. I have also seen signs in health centres where it says zero tolerance. I have also seen signs in schools that say zero tolerance policy in this government. So, I am surprised to hear Mr. Dent say that it only applies to the Members of this Legislative Assembly. I was always under the impression that it applied to government wide. Could I have some more clarification in that Mr. Dent. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 166-13(5): Policy on Zero Tolerance for Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just conferred with the Minister responsible for FMBS just to confirm my understanding of the situation and he

concur that there is no policy at present for zero tolerance in the government. The policy that has been adopted applies only to the 24 Members of this House. The Minister for FMBS also tells me that he is in concurrence for a wider policy for zero tolerance but it is so far, not one that has been adopted. 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. Ms. Thompson.

ITEM 9: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Reply 1-13(5): Ms. Thompson's Reply

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

I am pleased to be standing again and I will say what I wanted to say previously and I will take the time to say it now without being nayed. I am a little disappointed that some Members choose to nay my request to conclude my Member's statement as I have always chosen to allow Members the opportunity to speak on behalf of their constituency. So although some Members may not agree with my statement, I have chosen to use my reply to the opening address to voice my concern on behalf of my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an observation. My Member's statement today is about how we work together in a consensus style government to make things better for the people in our constituencies. Our Legislative Assembly is unique in Canada and, indeed, the world. Mr. Speaker, as we all know just because we have consensus government does not mean that we always agree. There is room for debates and arguments in this House, but that is not my concern. My concern is how we are handling conflicts and how the media is reacting to them. We all know some leaders are taking advantage of these conflicts and using them to gain recognition through the newspaper, radio and television.

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Mr. Speaker, is it more important to get your face in the paper and television than to prove your leadership professionally? This problem will only become worse as we draw near the next election. (Translation) I would like to say this in Inuktitut. We have been hearing a lot about the Keewatin. Is it more important to get your face in the paper and television than to prove your leadership professionally? This problem

will only become worse as we draw near the next election. I think this is recognized all over and I just wanted to repeat that. (Translation ends).

The Keewatin has been portrayed as a region in chaos and has even been referred to as having Third World conditions. (Translation) I would like to define what I mean by Third World conditions, having a Third World condition portrayed on the Keewatin. It seems that people are looking at the Keewatin going through starvation and the third world conditions is a word I am using. I would like to tell the Inuit if they were watching television and you see programs about children starving, people living in hard conditions, not having the facilities that we have today like toilets and water and electricity, those are the types of conditions that we seem to be seen as. It seems as if people are looking at the Keewatin as children starving, people living on the streets and it seems as if we could be looked as having children that need to be adopted by the more fortunate. (Translation ends)

I am very concerned that some of the statements that have been made in this House and in the media have been unfair to the residents of the Keewatin. Mr. Speaker, this humiliating label is unfair and insulting to the Keewatin residents and especially each and every one of the health board members from the communities. (Translation) The people in our communities are trying to work with the health board. They are trying to work towards trying to make it better for the community. This is the way we are looked at in the region. This includes the communities of the Keewatin which consist of seven communities that have people who are representatives on the health boards and remain on those health boards (Translation ends) ... communities I believe, they deserve an apology. Our region has always been well known for being pro-active and productive. I will challenge anyone of the Members who has criticized the efforts of these community members, come on over to my communities, come on over to those communities, see those members yourselves face to face and repeat what you have said about them.

--Applause

Like every other region in the north, we have our problems. I would like to say today, the Keewatin region, they are strong individuals, strong leaders in each of those communities who have been embarrassed so much by statements, by rumours of people who do not understand their traditional ways of resolving conflicts. These people need an apology. You are working in a different system. There are two

systems here. It is a challenge to be a leader, an aboriginal leader, understanding both cultures. These people, these Inuit leaders, the Inuit elders who are not understanding what has been happening here, the chaos. It is a work of scam artists into our culture. That is the only translation I can say about this. These strong individuals, proud people from the Keewatin, they can work in a rational manner to identify and resolve issues. You do not know what you have done to a culture that can stand up to you face to face and solve these conflicts without spreading rumours. It has been to the advantage of those people who like to see their pictures in the papers, on the television. Do you think these elders pick up the newspapers and read what you say? We have an oral tradition. You have a written tradition. What you say orally means a lot more to me as an Inuk than what you say on paper. I am getting a little bit emotional here, but that is what I had to say. It is not because I hate anybody. It is because I wanted to make a point today. It has been going on too long. It just has been going too long. That is why I am a politician today because I wanted to say these types of things. There are two different types of systems here and you have to learn today that when you are an aboriginal leader, it is a challenge to try to balance two cultures.

Our traditional Inuit culture has taught us that it is better to work together to solve problems than just to criticize and criticize and criticize others spreading rumours for your advantage. It is also not acceptable to call attention to oneself or to use a leadership position to put down the efforts of others. Do you know how many times those board members sat down and tried to solve those problems? None of those people who criticized them ever actually sat down with them and tried to talk with them and tried to listen to what changes they were trying to make. Spreading rumours, untrue statements and negative criticism is childish in my culture. Be a man. It is immature. I, myself, was always taught by my elders, by my mom and dad, who are traditional that it is extremely rude to behave in this manner. This is part of my concern today,

Mr. Speaker, that we remain committed to a consensus style of government. One that reflects traditional values of cooperation and working together in mutual respect. When elders and people in communities see leaders, constantly criticizing for months at each other in the media without resolving their conflicts, they become concerned about their leaders. It is especially confusing for the unilingual people and elders to hear these things on the radio or

television. It is a system they are not understanding. It is no wonder they become concerned about the future of Nunavut.

I understand that there are different ways of doing politics. I understand perfectly. There are individuals who do politics differently. I do understand that and there are very good politicians that I have learned from or who I am still learning from and Members of this House who I am learning from. There are different ways of doing politics. It has been a challenge to be an aboriginal MLA and having to observe and understand both cultures based on different values and different ways of thinking. Mr. Speaker, we have very little time left before two new territories are created in 1999. We are the people that are making history here. We are the last government until this land divides into two. Let us work together for the collective good of all the people in the east

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and in the west. Let us strive to put personality politics behind us. Our people deserve better. This is what is expected of us leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I would like to thank the Members for letting me speak what I wanted to say on my mind. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Replies to opening address. Your point of order, Mr. O'Brien.

Point of Order

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order is, I believe the honourable Member is misleading the House in reference to comments that were made about Third World conditions. Mr. Speaker, they were made in relation to health and social services. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the 25 social services people or staff in the Keewatin, with only seven, seven in place, that is Third World. When you look at one nurse that has to serve 1,600 members over Christmas that is Third World...

MR. SPEAKER:

Can we have some order please. Your point of order, Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is, the honourable Member with her comments is misleading the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. You do not have a point of order. Replies to opening address. We will take a 15-minute break.

--Break

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on item 10, replies to budget address. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Reply 7-13(5): Mrs. Groenewegen's Reply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am taking the opportunity today, under replies to the Budget Address to speak to a number of things that I have been pondering for some time. Many of my colleagues have spoken to the specifics of the Budget Address and the details of various programs and initiatives, most of which I agree are positive directions.

I would like to focus my comments on the broader subject which is indirectly related to the way this government spends money. Mr. Speaker, listening to some of the comments made in the House by our leaders, one would wonder who they talk to, where they go and what they read. They seem oblivious to the fact that we have a very serious problem in this government. Everyone including myself would like to get on with the business of governing and look to the future.

Sometimes we have to stop and assess the way we are doing things. We have a fundamental flaw in our terms of reference, our game plan or the rules of engagement if you will. It strikes at the very credibility of the way in which we do business and brings into question everything that we do and say. I hear contradictions proclaimed almost every day with such resolve that I am starting to think that the person saying them actually believes themselves.

Let me give you a few examples and let us use examples from just this week in the House. For example, the Finance Minister in response to putting more money into food payments for income support

clients says and I quote, "we are working under very difficult fiscal conditions". Mr. Speaker, we know that at least one quarter of a million dollars was available for a PPD privatization report that no one wanted or needed. The Premier, for example, in response to concerns raised about health care in the Keewatin health situation, and I quote, "I believe the health care in the Keewatin is quite adequate and does its purpose". However, we know that shortage of staff, basic management deficiencies and shortages of supplies are putting northerners at some risk. The people impacted by these and many other issues must marvel at these detached decrees or maybe they do not even listen anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if anyone is hearing what I am saying, but let me say it again. We have a responsibility to uphold the confidence of our constituents in this government, and spouting platitudes about responsible and good government sometimes appears to fly in the face of reality and the serious concerns facing our constituents. Getting back to one of the most pervasive and systemic problems, there is an inordinate amount of suspicion, distrust and disrespect in the public when it comes to the credibility of this government. We must examine what this stems from. Much of the suspicion surrounding this government relates to the lack of transparency in contract awards, hiring practices and what seems to be very discretionary spending. Whether you are a frustrated business person responding to a request for proposal, who is unsuccessful and will never know why or you are a person seeking employment running into a seemingly endless invisible barrier, whether you are just an enlightened taxpayer, whether you are the recipient of programs and services delivered by this government or you are a front-line worker struggling to do more with less, people want a government that is accountable, transparent and a good steward of the public purse.

One might argue that all governments have been criticized because of unpopular decisions. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that this government falls into a different category. All we have to do is compare this Assembly with the previous 12th Assembly. I was a follower of the government for many years before coming to this House. Although, people did not agree with every decision the government made, they did not despair over the integrity of the government as they do now.

We have fallen down in the area of openness and communication. The constructive criticism I direct at

our leadership is purely on a professional level. On a personal

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note, going back two years, I came to this Legislature under the threat of being, and I will quote, "stuffed in a corner for four years if I got out of line". Mr. Speaker, I do not know if this was because some Members were traumatized by a female Member of the 12th Assembly and that they were still not over it, and since I am a woman, perhaps I would naturally cause grief. I think it was more likely that they knew that I possessed the skills to communicate and would not be particularly amenable to being too quiet, kissing too many, I do not know what word to use there, or being co-opted into any schemes.

I thought I should respond to this notice by standing up on the first day and facilitating a public process for selecting a Premier. I hope that I have established that I am not really a good person to threaten or try to intimidate. Like everyone else, I had to learn, but I confess that I am not satisfied anymore nor do I consider it to be an effective use of my privilege as a Member to stand up every day for two and a half minutes and state my opinion on a diverse range of subjects. Although I will continue to comment on subjects that I consider relevant to my constituents and northern constituents, my underlying mission is going to be what I have dubbed the truth and transparency commission.

I began to be approached almost from the beginning of my term with questions about issues, instances, innuendoes, irregularities that I was not able to respond to. I did not know the answers. I was not really sure how to get the answers and I was not assured that these were my problems. At the prompting of many of my constituents and continuing to receive questions, I made a commitment to get some answers to questions people were asking. We do not have an ombudsman or any central mechanism or process by which concerns can be compiled and measured other than contacting individual MLAs to make complaints or raise concerns. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to respond to these questions because in the big picture, what this government does affects us all.

Mr. Speaker, there is despair in the public and as a believer in the democratic process, this saddens me. The people wonder who will stand up. I am going to attempt to stand up for them and I know that other Members of this House are going to stand up as well.

I believe along with my colleagues, we will only be able to be strong advocates on their behalf of a more accountable transparent government if they hear from our constituents. This is actually a very good group of Ordinary MLAs. I know some people have been disappointed by the lack of cohesive effort on the part of the Ordinary Members' Caucus and there are a lot of contributing factors to this, not the least of which is our collective newness to the job. Also in our defence, I will reveal that there is very subtle intimidation techniques employed here.

For example, ridiculing a Member that takes exception to something the government does, it is a natural part of this style of government we have. It is very subtle. It is a constant little game of alienating, patronizing, criticizing, flattering and the tactics are endless. Sometimes it is carried out in the name of being responsible. For example, they will say, that is not a good thing to bring up right now because we are at a sensitive time in our negotiations with Ottawa or, if we bring that out in the public our credibility will be injured, and so on. For example, Mr. Speaker, a Minister, after recently returning from a meeting in Ottawa, informed some of the Members that someone in Ottawa, supposedly Ottawa hangs on to every word in our Hansard, referred to our mid-term review by Ordinary Members as a midnight seance with a bunch of jokers and clowns. Mr. Speaker, that even is a subtle form of intimidation.

Anyhow, back to my subject and in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we cannot effectively represent in a vacuum. The electorate also has an important role to play. The enemies of democracy are ignorance and apathy. People do not have the right to complain if they do not participate in the process. To combat ignorance, it is their duty to keep themselves apprised of the issues and how the government is responding to those issues. To battle apathy, they need to get involved, phone their MLA, write a letter to their local newspaper, talk to their friends, attend constituency meetings. We need to hear from the electorate. Not only about what we are doing wrong, but what we are doing right. I really appreciate the phone calls and faxes that I have received over the last few days in support to the questions that I have been asking in the House.

The choice is simple. I have heard our government called a banana republic. This conjures up a picture of an isolated dictatorship where might is right, the friends of the regime in power do well and the enemies of the regime in power are out in the cold. The alternative is an open transparent functioning

democracy where people feel welcome and are encouraged to participate, not only on election day, but at any time. In a democracy the leaders should be the humble diligent hard working representatives of the people. When any leader becomes caught up in the power or prestige of the job, begins to lose perspective and lets their sense of responsibility turn into vanity or a delusion of importance which feeds some egotistical bent, we are, indeed, in trouble and things begin to unravel.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, to northerners I say get involved, do not give up, do not get discouraged, get organized and get active. To my colleagues, I say, let us get organized, let us not let our words, our ideas and our recommendations go unheeded. To the Cabinet, I say, please stand up and be counted. Let us demonstrate the highest standards of transparency and restore confidence and be the most humble servants of the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. We are on replies to the Budget Address. Respond to the Budget Address, please. Mr. Rabesca.

Reply 8-13(5): Mr. Rabesca's Reply

MR. RABESCA:

Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the last Budget Address for this government for the combined Northwest

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Territories, I was reminded of the beginning of our term in office. We all came here knowing we had many hard decisions to make that would affect a great deal of our residents and staff members. It was our goal to realize a balanced budget by the end of our term. I would now like to congratulate the honourable Minister of Finance for his tenacity in staying on course and achieving our goals.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have suffered greatly throughout this process and now I feel the worst is over. However, we must remain focused and stay on course. Particularly during the last months before division. It was good to see the issues of funding for the two territories may soon be finalized. This, of course, will bring more stability to both Territories. Work is continuing on the division of assets and liabilities along with other important decisions in this

regard to ensure that all aspects of division are done in a fair and equitable manner. This, I believe, shows progress and true commitment from all of us, and also allows us the time needed to review everything prior to division. It is good to see the government is developing new and imaginative methods to assist the important small business sector that is now starting to expand. Small business is a very important sector of our community that over time can provide many new jobs in all of our communities.

The Northwest Territories Investment Tax Credit Program sounds at the outset a very interesting way to provide business with potential investment dollars. This is needed to assist our communities' growth and develop a long term, sustainable economy. From the Minister's statements on the Northern Employment Strategy, this program has succeeded during its first year of operation and I am glad to see that it is again in place and with even more dollars available. I hope this means there will be even more training, job creation and business development. This again is very good for our residents.

However, I would suggest that in order to succeed this program and any other business development programs that we have must be processed in a timely manner. We cannot have proposals coming in then waiting for months to be approved or not. Public/Private Partnerships do seem to be the way to increase our infrastructure and at the same time provide needed jobs and business opportunities. Again I feel we must step softly and carefully in this venture. I would like to be assured that projects that will be considered for this would allow, for smaller businesses and community businesses, the opportunity to be utilized. I do not want to see big businesses given free rein on this. If we are to provide trained residents for all aspects of our economy we must allow for smaller companies and community organizations to prosper.

Over the course of the past year, we have heard from many of my colleagues raising concerns about the lack of housing and the terrible condition of housing units in the communities. With the Accelerated Home Ownership Program, hopefully, we will start to put a dent in this very important concern. We have also heard many times how the cutbacks and downsizing has affected many of our residents. The restructuring of the social programs and the enforcement of income support regulations is getting residents to realize they cannot live by government alone. The introduction of the NWT Child Benefit will definitely help lower income families. It has been said that this money

should go directly to the children through a variety of programs. To this all I can say is, it is the parents who must take responsibility for their families. Lastly I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance again for this budget. I feel it shows we are on the road to rebuilding but yet conservative enough to ensure a balanced budget and a reduction to our overall deficit will take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. Replies to the Budget Address, Mr. Erasmus.

Reply 9-13(5): Mr. Erasmus' Reply

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to first of all start off by thanking the Premier for agreeing to reinstituting this government's central switchboard. I am sure it was due to the well reasoned and researched arguments put forth in this House by some of the Members in this House. Mr. Speaker, I will be following the format of the Finance Minister's Budget Address.

The first thing that the Minister touched on was the government anticipates a small surplus and a reduction in the accumulated deficit. Mr. Speaker, I think we should applaud this, but it is not only the politicians who have to take credit for this. The people of the Northwest Territories have been asked to and have taken cuts in programs and services as well as layoffs. We have to thank people for putting up with this.

Also the bureaucrats who have implemented our policies. We have to thank them as well. I know it is very difficult to say, no, to people when people have perhaps in their own mind, they have legitimate questions and requests. However, in order to achieve a balanced budget we have to toe the line. I believe this is a good way to end our budgetary relationship with our comrades from the east. This is the last budget that we will be working on and improving together. To have a balanced budget I think is a good way of doing it.

On the issue of the pay equity. This has been going on for a long time, but as the Minister has indicated we cannot agree to a settlement that forces further job loss or program and service reduction to our people.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we have already gone through program and service reductions and job loss and we cannot go any further. So I urge both sides to work together and to come to an agreement on a reasonable settlement.

In the area of the Formula Financing Agreement, the Minister indicated he has been working with his federal counterparts for financial arrangements based on the expenditure base of each territory which should be determined separately and based on

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each region's requirements. This, of course, is a good way of doing things, Mr. Speaker. We in the west have stated many times we support the creation of Nunavut and the aspirations of the people in Nunavut, but we cannot agree to implement this dream at our expense. Meaning that the programs and services in the west should not deteriorate because of implementing this.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize that most likely there will be several advantages because of the division. The main one being that both sides will be able to fully concentrate on their particular problems and aspirations. Although we have dealt with the aspirations and problems of both in the past, it will just make it simpler to not have to deal with the extra problems and aspirations from the other side of the territories.

The existing staff of the GNWT, Mr. Speaker, they are our most valuable resource. They have experience and knowledge that has been accumulated over the years. We cannot continue the brain drain as it is called. So we have to ensure that our current staff are treated fairly and have first crack at the jobs in the east upon division. I am glad to see that the Interim Commissioner agreed to implement the \$4.2 million human resource computer system and to pay their fair share. I am sure this will improve things dramatically. In the area of the investment credits, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to say I was part of the sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Government Operations that made some recommendations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Ed. Thank you, Michael. The Aurora Fund was instituted last year and is already lending money

to several businesses in the north. This new Northwest Territories Investment and Tax Credit Program will, I think, lay the ground work for many more investments in small businesses and it also opens the area for the common people. I should not say common people, but the working people so they can invest in northern businesses and get tax credits as well as RRSP credits at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern Employment Strategy, last year, through that there were several thousand full-time working weeks, 48,000 to be exact or the equivalent of 1,200 full-time jobs in the Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development area as well as 863 students. Mr. Speaker, I believe we have to continue this program. This was supposed to be a two-year thing, but we cannot end after this year. This is a very needed program, particularly for the students who often do not have any other means of supporting themselves when they go to school. Meaning they have no parents back home that can send them money whenever they run into problems. They have to rely on the student allowances that they receive as well as whatever money they earn during the summer. So this is a very worthwhile program.

In the resource development area, we have heard a lot of comments and speeches in the last while on how this government as well as the federal government have to work together in order to help us implement a secondary diamond industry in the north. I will not go into that, but I will just indicate that we do want to establish a diamond valuation facility as well as other value-added industry in the north here.

--Applause

This government should do whatever it can to facilitate this. The devolution of the mineral, oil and gas responsibilities and royalties from Canada is something that is long overdue. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is one way we can become self sufficient and at the same time help all northern people, including aboriginal people to take their rightful place in this economy. I would urge Cabinet to begin discussions with the aboriginal governments again to ensure the northern accord will become a reality.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, further along in the resource development area, of course, is the falling gold prices which has caused layoffs and even mine closures. Mr. Speaker, again this government and the federal government can do things to help the mines remain open, as well as to help the miners who have run into hard times. I believe it has been said quite a few times this has been done in other areas and I would urge both governments again to do whatever they can to assist in this area.

In the area of the P3, which has also had a lot of air time in here as well as on the radio and in the paper and what not. The Public/Private Partnerships Programs, it has to be recognized that this is not a new idea. It was used in many countries to generate revenue and partnerships. I applaud the Minister for coming up with the policy to implement in time for this year. Many of us have been supporting him in this endeavour. One thing, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to urge was that there has to be transparency in the delivery of this program, accountability and, Mr. Speaker, all partners have to share the risk. The territorial government cannot carry the risk alone. The last issue that I wanted to bring up on this particular area is, Ordinary MLAs have to be involved in selecting the projects as well.

--Applause

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree that this government should determine that each and every citizen north of 60 will have the same standard of living and quality of life enjoyed by other Canadians. I am glad to see there is going to be an additional \$40 to \$50 million over the next two years to meet immediate demands to homeownership assistance and I certainly hope this helps to cross the bridge so that we do not see homeless people wandering the streets looking for a place to eat and looking for a place to sleep at night. The Minister responsible for Housing was kind enough to indicate the other day when I was questioning him he would work with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to try and find a solution to this problem. I look forward to some meetings in the near future with them on this particular issue.

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The social program area, Mr. Speaker, we know that we have many problems with our birth rates and forced growth because of the birth rates. We have to do what we can to work in this area. One of the things, of course, that is being done is the National

Child Benefit Program by the federal government which is meant to improve the life styles and the way children are raised in this country. I like the way the Northwest Territories Child Benefit Program is being provided and that it encourages people to work while they are receiving this benefit. The way it was explained to us, it encourages people to work because your income is not influenced that greatly until you reach a certain level. Mr. Speaker, those are the areas the Finance Minister had touched on in his speech.

In conclusion, I have to make some comments, of course. No speech of mine would be complete without talking about education and community empowerment. We have heard from many MLAs, as well as the committees indicating, in order to properly implement community empowerment, community people need training. I think the problems that are being experienced today in the different regions are exemplifying the situation. We need training for community people. I am not talking about a two or three day workshop. Mr. Speaker, that is not training. It is just a start to peak people's interest, perhaps, just to keep things operating at a piecemeal rate. What we need are full-fledged training programs.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we develop, along with the college, a community development program. A one-year, perhaps a two-year community development program people can go to school for a full year and go back into the communities. This would help people in the communities from getting burnt out. We have very well meaning people in the communities and some of them work hard. They may or may not be educated; but in every community, Mr. Speaker, there are only a few people who seem to be doing all of the work. What we need is more trained and educated people to help these people and to implement the devolution of power to the communities. What I am suggesting, again, Mr. Speaker, is that we should develop a community development program along with the colleges and that this could be a one-year program. I would suggest that it could be the first year of a two-year program. Actually, the first year could be alone and the second year, you could specialize in a law program or an alcohol and drug program or a social work program, but the community development program should be a requirement so that people know how to deal with various social problems and address that in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the other area I wanted to touch on was the upgrading and the university/college entrance

programs. This government has supported upgrading programs for many years. The problem is, in order to go to upgrading, people need some type of program in order to live. They need an allowance of some sort. When we send students to university or college, we give them an allowance, but the people taking upgrading who have very similar costs and who may have the same or more children, do not get a similar allowance. This should be rectified. Similarly, the university and college entrance program is a piecemeal affair. We receive funding from the federal government for allowances, but I do not think that this government fully supports it by also making sure there are instructors and courses being offered in the communities where there are students who wish to take the university and college entrance programs. For instance, I know several students who had to go to Edmonton in order to take the university/college entrance program. Mr. Speaker, that is just a waste of dollars. Why should people have to fly down south, leave their family in order to take upgrading to get into university? We should be offering that here, especially in the larger centres like Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet, Fort Smith. I would urge this government to please look into this.

With that, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to say while I am glad we have produced a budget that is a balanced budget and, indeed, will save us a few dollars, we still have some work to do. I think we are all here to try and do that. So let us roll up our sleeves and try not to be too sarcastic and divisive. Let us be constructive and get the work done. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Just to remind the Members regarding conduct in this House. Members are not allowed to mention Members by their first name. It is in the rules and Rule 12(7) says Members shall refer to each other by surnames or as the honourable Member for and name the constituency or as the honourable Member so and so. Please follow the rules or review the rules if you are unclear on those. Replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, 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. Motion 12-13(5), Mr. Todd.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS

Motion 12-13(5): Approval of Formula Financing Agreement

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Formula Finance Agreement, made on November 28, 1997 between the Government of Canada, represented by the Minister of Finance for Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories, represented by the Minister of Finance for the Northwest Territories, has been laid before the Legislative Assembly pursuant to subsection 4(2) of the Financial Agreement Act;

NOW THEREFORE, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Legislative Assembly hereby approves Tabled Document 18-13(5) titled Formula Financing Agreement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ootes.

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MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to say a few words in regard to the Formula Financing Agreement. It has taken a number of years to get this approved and it is already into effect for three years. I would address the whole question of the timing of this particular document and I would certainly like to see that we address the next Formula Financing Agreement before it is put into place and allow some consultation. For example, I would certainly like to see us address the whole question of the imbalance that is taking place in our forced growth area which, in essence, does not give us the kind of money that we need for our social programs and in a way is taking away from other departments. The major concern being that this is a hefty document. It requires everyone's time to go through it and to ensure we digest it properly and have input into it properly. I would like to perhaps pose a question of why it has taken so much time to get this brought forward? Perhaps the Minister could speak on that? Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion

is carried. 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; Committee Report 2-13(5); Committee Report 3-13(5); Committee Report 4-13(5); Committee Report 5-13(5); Tabled Document 15-13(5) and Tabled Document 19-13(5). With Mrs. Groenewegen in the Chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We have a number of items before us on the agenda. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, that we proceed with Tabled Document 15-13(5) followed by Bill 8, Appropriation Act, and Committee Report 02-13(5) and 03-13(5), and that we continue once we are on Bill 8 with the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

When we recessed yesterday, we were on page 2-25 of your main estimates book. Financial Management Board Secretariat, program summary. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Sorry, Madam Chairperson. Just for clarification what was that page number?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

That was page 2-25 in your main estimates book. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chairperson, would it be appropriate to ask the Minister to sit in the chair over there?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Is the committee agreed that the Minister would be requested to take the witness table?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Minister please. Would the committee agree with Mr. Todd bringing his witnesses to assist him?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Todd would you like to bring witnesses?

HON. JOHN TODD:

I do not think there is a requirement Madam Chairperson because we were on the last item which was 2-25, which was the final approval or not approval of the budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. The Minister does not wish to bring witnesses. Program summary. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I have a question for the Minister. I pose it at this time as I am not sure where I would pose it. Could the Minister indicate in the program summaries whether it would be appropriate to address questions in regard to the overall policies of this government? I understand the Minister takes responsibility for this budget and therefore he could identify in here where I may question Cabinet on the policies.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. I am not sure if Mr. Todd is the appropriate person to question or not. In your remarks you say that you want to ask questions on overall government policy. I believe Mr. Todd is responsible for overall fiscal policy. I am not sure, not knowing what your questions are whether they are appropriately directed to Mr. Todd or not. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chairperson, the question to the Minister would be that since he takes responsibility for having produced this document, if it is not appropriate for me to ask questions in this particular activity summary, then could he indicate in this document where I might be able to ask these questions?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Maybe it would be appropriate if you asked the questions and then we could determine by the questions if Mr. Todd could respond or whether he is not the appropriate person to ask. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, yesterday the Minister did respond to questions

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in regard to the business incentive policy. So I presume it is appropriate for him to respond again today.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I need to get clarification here. Are we not dealing with the FMBS budget? Are we not on the final line of the budget? Should we not deal with that? If there is a question of policy, and this is a question, I am not trying to evade the question, could that not be asked during question period or could it not be asked when other Ministers' budgets come up. I think I need to get some clarity here because this is kind of a new angle, or a new switch, which is not unusual. If there is just some way I can get some clarity.

I thought we were dealing with the budget. I preferably want to answer questions in question period with respect to major policies or where it occurs within my responsibilities. However, I would like us to continue to conclude if you want the budget, my budget. I think that is what I am sitting at this witness table for. Now I will take direction from the staff, but that is what I understand.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. In response to Mr. Steen's question, the Premier chairs Cabinet and has the overall responsibility for policy, but the actual responsibility for the business incentive policy lies with Mr. Kakfwi and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development if that was what you wanted to raise questions on, Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Well then I would have to revert back to my original question. Since the Minister produced this document, this document governs all the spending of this government and I do not have opportunity to question him in question period because this document is in committee of the whole, therefore you cannot question him in question period. My question is, where in this document would I be able to question the government on their policies?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen, just for clarification then, the Clerks have advised me that the budget document, the main estimates document, is the only document that can be tabled in committee of the whole and have questions asked about it in the House at the same time. There is no conflict there. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, can the Minister indicate in this budget, this is his document, can he indicate in his budget now where under Executive offices, and I believe we are under Executive offices and Financial Management Board Secretariat is part of the Executive, therefore, where under the Executive can I question the government on their policies?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen, the appropriate place to question policies of the government would have been on page 2-12 under Cabinet Secretariat. I am sure with the concurrence of the committee, we could return to that page if Mr. Steen would like to ask a question, and Mr. Morin would have to return to the table. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. So therefore, I would have to request permission from this committee

to return to activity 2-12. I am not prepared to do that at this time. That is all I wanted to know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. We are on Financial Management Board Secretariat, program summary. Total operations and maintenance, \$42.460 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to the whole area of accountability of this department which oversees all the expenditures of this government in regard to the area of the Deficit Elimination Act which was put in place with regard to the Financial Administration Act where there has been changes to it to different percentages on expenditures, can the Minister state how the act is going to be implemented to ensure that accountability is there in regard to these expenditures?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am really sorry Madam Chairperson, I am trying very hard to answer the questions that have been asked by the previous Member and this one. I simply am at a loss to understand what the question is. I wonder if he can try and give me some more clarity so I can be clear in my response?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko, do you think you could rephrase the question for the Minister please? Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to the initiatives of this government in regard to the Financial Administration Act that is presently in place, to ensure that there is accountability and that there is clarity in regard to how this government operates and the people are accountable for the way they spend money and in regard to this department being the control mechanism that oversees the Financial Administration Act; what assurances do we have that with these new initiatives in this budget that those will be taken care of through this department?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I believe you are referring to the issue of transparency with regard to the P3 initiative? Yes, thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

All policies, fiscal policies of the government have to meet the Financial Administration Act, Madam Chairperson. We would put a system in place to ensure that is going to happen. The government's fiscal policy is governed, if you want, under the rules and regulations of the Financial Administration Act.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to some of these initiatives, they call for certain amendments to the Financial Administration Act to include these initiatives in the plans of this government through those changes. Will that have an affect on the ability of the Financial Management Board to carry out its responsibilities to ensure that has been done, in regard to these new initiatives.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Madam Chairperson, this government, how it spends its money and the way it is governed is under the Financial Administration Act. I do not know how else to answer the question for my colleague. I am trying the best I can.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Krutko was referring to proposed amendments to the Financial Administration Act to accommodate this initiative, the new initiatives in this budget. I do not know how to ask the question, but I think he is referring to the proposed amendments to the FAA. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

There is no suggestion of any more changes to the Financial Administration Act to accommodate the

initiatives that we have here within the budget at this time, Madam Chairperson. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is just one department that we have to look at, but I think out of all the departments within this government, this is probably one of the most key areas in regard to the accountability of the expenses of this government who monitors the day-to-day expenses that go on in this government. I think it is crucial that we somehow have the ability to be able to come back to that particular question because as we go through the budget there are going to be questions raised in regard to the whole accountability question. This is the department that oversees that, so that is why I am asking the question to the Minister now. What kind of assurances have we as we go through this? What he may be telling us here, we may hear a different version of it from another Minister or another department so I think that I do not want to ask the questions just to get attention or to make the newspapers, but basically to ensure everybody here. There are other concerns we have in the other departments but it relates to the accountability of this department, also, to ensure that accountability carries on in a manner which basically we have had the comfort of dealing with this, dealing with the deficit to ensure the expenditures of the different departments did not get out of hand. We want to ensure that continues.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think I understand where my colleague is coming from. I am just telling you that the current spending of the government is controlled under the Financial Administration Act. That is the checks and balances approved by this House on a department by department basis. We have a Deficit Elimination Act that we must maintain that contains the ability not to overspend. We have to meet the laws of the land. It is all there, the checks and balances are there. I do not know how else to explain it to my colleague. It is not my intention as the Chairman of the Financial

Management Board to take this government and future governments into debts that they cannot afford.

It is the intention of this government and the initiatives of this budget to bring about some economic stimulus through our leverage approach that is frequently spoken about to bring back the levels of funding we are accustomed to in the infrastructure of the territories, to meet the fiscal requirements of this government and of the future two new governments and in doing that to meet the Deficit Elimination Act that governs our overall spending, et cetera. I think there are sufficient legal and legislative checks and balances there to ensure that happens. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Financial Management Board Secretariat, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$42,460,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Total expenditures, \$42,460,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

Committee Motion 6-13(5): Motion to Defer Further Consideration of the Program Summary, FMBS

MR. OOTES:

Madam Chairperson, I would like to make a motion in regard to the Financial Management Board. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the program summary, Financial Management Board Secretariat, at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Out of order and unfortunately, the line items that were called were already agreed to prior to the Member being recognized. The motion is out of order, sorry. Does the committee agree that the Financial Management Board Secretariat is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

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MR. OOTES:

Madam Chairperson, could we do a count. I do not believe you had enough Members present to agree to it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. The Clerk informs me that it is based on the voice of what I hear when I ask agree and everybody said agreed. I only heard one person saying no. Mr. Morin.

Point of Order

HON. DON MORIN:

Madam Chairperson, with the greatest of respect, the honourable Member, Mr. Ootes is questioning the Chair. I do not believe we as Members have the right to question the Chair and with that I believe he should retract his statement. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Morin. To the point of order. Mr. Ootes, would you like to comment on whether or not you are in fact challenging the fact that the Chair recognized the concurrence of the committee?

MR. OOTES:

Madam Chairperson, I believe I brought to your attention that we did not have a quorum. That was my point. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes, we did have a quorum. Mr. Morin, Mr. Ootes was not challenging the Chair, so we do not have a point of order. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Could I have a motion to report progress?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is defeated. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Steen.

Point of Order

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chairperson, I think as a point of order here, could the Chair indicate where it would be proper for a type of motion that Mr. Ootes presented? Where it would be proper that type of motion be brought forward? I believe the Member was asking to the best of his ability with the understanding we were given. As a matter of fact, he had the assistance of the Chair to draw up the motion and of the Clerks. Therefore, maybe what is missing here is, where was the proper opportunity to present this motion?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. The total operations and maintenance, the total expenditures on the FMBS were already called and agreed to. The motion was out of order because it refers to deferring consideration of the program summary which was already agreed to. I believe we could still entertain a motion to defer concluding FMBS, Mr. Ootes.

Committee Motion 7-13(5): Motion to Defer Further Consideration of the Financial Management Board Secretariat

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the Financial Management Board Secretariat at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The motion is in order. We will have to take a five-minute break while the motion is translated.

--Break

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call the committee to order. Mr. Ootes has put a motion on the floor. I will read it for the record. I move this committee defer further consideration of the Financial Management Board Secretariat at this time. No need for a seconder. The

motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? Those opposed? Motion is carried. What is the wish of this committee? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I make a motion to report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is defeated. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

That we continue with Aboriginal Affairs, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Page 2-40. Minister Antoine, do you have opening remarks? Thank you.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Yes. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, my colleagues. I am pleased today to present the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs budget as proposed in the Main Estimates for 1998-1999.

The goals and related strategies of the ministry, for the next fiscal year and beyond, concentrate on three areas and are coordinated with those of other departments. The focus is on: the development of a system of government for the western Northwest Territories, acceptable to its citizens the conclusion of outstanding land claims, self-government and treaty entitlement agreements; and securing funding arrangements for the implementation of these agreements which will ensure the maintenance of adequate quality and level of programs and services for all residents.

Although I am pleased with the progress made in these areas over the past year, many challenges

remain and the workload will continue to increase until the goals are achieved. The

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federal response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples will generate a number of initiatives which the ministry will participate in partnership with the federal government, the aboriginal First Nations and the Inuit organizations.

The matter of future governance in the western Northwest Territories is a very high priority for aboriginal people as it is for this government. I would like to present a brief summary of the highlights of the Ministry's budget. The proposed 1998-1999 budget is \$2,765,000 and includes 21 positions. This represents an increase of \$382,00 and 3 positions which was approved last year through supplementary appropriations for self-government negotiations and will continue for one more year.

The continuation of contribution funding of \$202,000 to the Constitutional Working Group is also proposed. The ministry has no capital budget and does not generate revenues. The ministry receives \$588,000 in Vote 4/5 funding from the federal government to fund incremental costs related to obligations of land claims. Mahsi, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Would the Member of the Infrastructure Committee bring the committee's report and recommendations on Aboriginal Affairs? Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, the Minister informed the committee he had met with the Honourable Jane Stewart, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and had negotiated a federal contribution of \$500,000 to fund the Constitutional Working Group for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

Funding allocations to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: the Minister indicated that his ministry requires additional operating funds and staff to effectively represent the Government of the Northwest Territories at a large number of land claim and self-government negotiations. The committee encourages the Minister to quantify the Minister's resource needs and to pursue this matter with the Financial Management Board.

Overlapping claims: the committee is concerned with the potential overlapping of claims as this will slow the claim settlement process. At the request of the committee, the Minister provided additional information on the Makavik Offshore Land Claim negotiations and agreed to continue to provide updates on the developments related to the Makavik claim and the James Bay overlap negotiations. The committee anticipates similar updates will be provided as negotiations warrant. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses and does the committee agree to have the Minister take the chair at the witness table?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Antoine, could you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. To my right, I have Fred Koe who is the deputy minister of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. To my left, is Peter Bannon. He is the director for policy and coordination. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Are there any general comments on the departmental main estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs? General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to the comments on the overall Report from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples where there is a lot of recommendations in regard to the whole area of delivery of programs and services to aboriginal people to ensure the aboriginal people extend themselves which presently had been delivered by government to ensure there are employment opportunities and programs to fit the needs of the aboriginal people, the whole area of the aboriginal people treaty rights, the report identified in a lot of areas the condition aboriginal people find themselves in Canada. I think a lot of those problems originate in the Northwest

Territories, especially when it comes to the aspirations of aboriginal people to be successful in regard to job opportunities, education and the social health conditions our people live in, in regard to alcoholism, drug abuse and also, in regard to the opportunities for them to get that job and improve the quality of life for themselves.

It still seems to be a real problem, especially in a lot of the smaller aboriginal communities where there are few jobs, few opportunities and high dropout rates. Decisions made by other governments and this government affect the rights of aboriginal people, especially in the context of cuts we made for aboriginal people where before they thought they had certain rights protected under treaties especially in the area of education and health. In regard to this department which has the responsibility of aboriginal people, of ensuring the well-being of aboriginal people, what has this department done to look at the whole impact of decisions of this government in regard to cuts we have made, especially regarding the area of health and education, where people feel they have whole rights, which they thought were protected under the constitution regarding treaties, now being slowly eroded away by decisions of governments and this government? Has this department looked at that whole area of evaluation of the whole treaty rights and questioned the program cuts and delivery to those rights to aboriginal people?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Would the Minister like to respond? Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, that is one area where it has given us and Aboriginal Affairs a lot of concern as well in regard to the different type of rights that are out there for treaty people under

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the treaties and so forth and fiduciary obligations the aboriginal people have on and off reserves. As the government makes changes to their policies, the changes are affecting everybody. We are in the situation today where there are a lot of different changes which are causing all kinds of effects that are unanticipated at this time.

What we do is, we consistently try to monitor all the different changes that are going on in regard to treaty and fiduciary obligations for aboriginal people. There is social reform. On November 18th there was a meeting in Winnipeg where the Premiers had met with the aboriginal First Nations of this country along with Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. There is a call for Ministries of Aboriginal Affairs to meet with First Nations of this country and this meeting is to be convened by the Minister of DIAND, Jane Stewart, to look at all the social reforms that are going on in this country. My colleagues who are in the social envelope departments have been attending national forums on the social reform that is going on. With the decision made on November 18th, there is going to be a meeting to be convened fairly soon between Aboriginal Affairs Ministries and the First Nations of this country.

Our role is generally to just monitor what these changes have on everybody in the north. In regard to self-government arrangements, we are currently involved in negotiating with Beaufort Delta in regard to self-government arrangements on the programs and services. There is concern there by the Aboriginal Summit on the inherent right to self-government. As a result we have initiated the Inherent Right Working Group that is going to be looking at the federal government's policy on self-government and how programs and services should be delivered by First Nations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to the whole area of programs and service delivery, I am also talking about this government in regard to the cuts we have made and the effects that it has had on aboriginal people especially in regard to student financial assistance and the area of looking at the whole aboriginal justice committees that aboriginal groups were looking forward to being established in the community. It is a great idea, but there are limited funds to do it and carry it out. A lot of times we give the notion to aboriginal groups that we are on side, we are supporting them and everything else, but at the end of the day there are no financial resources there to do an adequate job to fulfil that obligation that we say we are giving them, especially where you talk about community empowerment regarding transferring authorities to communities.

I raised a question today in the House about the whole area of income support where a lot of bands have taken on that responsibility where at the end of the day it is costing them more to administer that program and they have to pay these extra costs which were not part of these agreements. They are finding themselves having problems keeping individuals because of the amount of work that these people have to take on and the amount of stress that these people are under. This job does not just stop after you work for hours. You go home. You get phone calls. People are threatening you on the street and what not because of decisions you have to make. With the limited resources to find somebody who can do an adequate job where you are seeing 40 to 50 people a day helping them fill out applications, reviewing people's reports, it is a stressful job as it is, but then the communities are left with a notion what did we get ourselves into. I think it is important that there is a watch dog within this government that ensures that for any programs and services that affect aboriginal people, there has to be a system in place, especially from this department, that monitors and ensures that it is carried out to be properly implemented with adequate resources.

I think a lot of times we find ourselves building up expectations especially in the aboriginal communities just to find out later that they fumbled because they basically were led to believe something and then, at the end of the day, they find out that the adequate resources are not there. I would like to ask the Minister what his department is doing to ensure that this injustice to aboriginal people is clarified and that when any programs are implemented, there is adequate resources there to carry them out.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This ministry is at the officials' level. It is involved in other departments. Whenever there is an initiative that is taken by other departments, then as Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs we are called to attend officials' meetings to look at changes to the way programs and services may be suggested for changing. The whole area, the treaty and fiduciary responsibility to aboriginal people, is taken into consideration at that level. So there is input by the officials in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs at that level. There is a standing offer by different departments to make sure the Ministry of Aboriginal

Affairs is involved in any decisions that may be developed that will have an effect on aboriginal people.

In regard to some of the comments that the honourable Member made in regard to responsibilities in the other departments like the student financial assistance, I know there has been no reductions in the Student Financial Assistance Program. I think there was some on the travel. The rules on the travel had been tightened up. I know that has happened. Other than that, there has been no drastic reduction in the student financial assistance. In regard to community empowerment, there too there is a question in the Western Territory here, especially in First Nations' communities where people are pursuing self-government arrangements. There is inter-departmentally a lot of concentration on looking at community empowerment and seeing whether it is conflicting or it is complimenting self-government arrangements. So in that area we are monitoring that as well.

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Then again, the biggest one of the bigger tasks of this ministry is that we have negotiators at the negotiating table especially in programs and services for self-government arrangements. Where there are negotiations going on, again specifically as an example in the Beaufort Delta, we are specifically negotiating with the federal government and the Beaufort Delta group programs and services, specifically like education, health and housing. So we are dealing in these areas at the table negotiating with First Nations on how these programs and services are going to be delivered. We are at the table and in terms of monitoring it, I think we are trying to come to an arrangement with the Beaufort Delta to come up with the best way they see to deliver programs and services at that level.

In all the areas we are, this ministry, quite involved directing and negotiating at a community level and regional level. At the officials level we are also monitoring how our programs and services may be changing by the departments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko, I believe that was ten minutes. I do have Mr. Picco, but I will ask him if in view of the clock he wants to proceed with his general comments.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Based on the time that is available and the cooperation of all the Ministers on the other side of the House, I will defer my comments at this time and recognize the clock.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Picco, are you moving a motion to report progress.

MR. PICCO:

That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Morin.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Is there a rule that you are not to say who is and who is not in the House? I would just like to clarify that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you Mr. Morin. I know there is for when the House is sitting and I do not know what the rule is for the committee, but I will just consult the Clerk. To Mr. Morin's question, I believe that Mr. Picco said recognizing the cooperation of the Cabinet on the other side of the House, and I think he may have been referring to the lack of support for motions to report progress just previously in the House. Mr. Picco, did you want to speak to the point of order? Was it a point of order? Just a question. I am going to recognize the clock, rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Good afternoon. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99 and Committee Report 03-13(5). We would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the

committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Seconded by Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The 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 the Management Services Board immediately after adjournment. For Monday at 9:00 a.m., there is a meeting of the full Caucus and at 11:00 a.m. of the Ordinary Members' Caucus.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 2, 1998:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. 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

18. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99

- Committee Report 2-13(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 3-13(5), Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 4-13(5), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates

- Tabled Document 15-13(5), 1998-99 Budget Address

- Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. This House stands adjourned to Monday, February 2, 1998 at 1:30 p.m. Thank you.

--ADJOURNMENT