



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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Sam Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable Maniok 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. Ng. Mr. Dent, your point of privilege.

Point of Privilege

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege under Rule 20(1) to clarify a story by reporter Dave Miller that aired on CBC Radio earlier today.

It is my duty to note that the news item on the NWT Child Benefit contained a few misinterpretations and omissions of fact and subsequently left a wrong impression about how this program will work.

I would therefore like to take a moment to repeat the explanation of this program that the Finance Minister made in his Budget Address on January 22nd, and that I elaborated upon in a statement to this House on January 23rd.

First, and most importantly, I would like to point out that the news story focused exclusively on the reallocation of funds from the Income Support Program and omitted any reference to the fact the Government of the Northwest Territories is also contributing an additional \$2 million to create this new program. That is \$2 million in new money this government is investing as part of our commitment to put more money in the hands of low income families across the Northwest Territories.

Second, I would also like to clarify the reallocation of income support funds, and explain where that money is coming from. The NWT Child Benefit is designed to work hand and hand with the new National Child Benefit Program. Under the National Child Benefit, starting in July of this year, the federal government is committing \$850 million across Canada to increase income support benefits for all low income working families with children. Because of this new federal funding, the territorial government is required to reduce its income support payments equal to the amount being invested by the federal government.

As a result there is an overall savings of about \$2.2 million in the territorial government's income support budget. Under the terms of the National Child Benefit, we are committed to reinvesting those savings to programs and services for low income northerners. We chose to do this by implementing a NWT Child Benefit, and, as I have just reminded the House, by adding an extra \$2 million to put more money into the hands of northern families.

The net result of the two programs is that all families in the Northwest Territories earning less than \$42,000 will receive more money than they are receiving now.

--Applause

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the news report also stated that the government revealed this information yesterday. That is incorrect in that this is not new news. Detailed information on the National Child Benefit Program, and how it will work was made available to the public, and distributed widely, as early as September, 1997. As I have already stated, information on the NWT Child Benefit was included in the 1998-99 Budget Address, and I have made a statement and responded to questions in this House over the past two weeks.

In closing, I want to stress once again, this program is good news to the people of the Northwest Territories. All families earning a household income of less than \$42,000 will receive some benefit from this program. As a result, in our estimate, we will affect 60 percent of the children in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the inaccurate report on the CBC this morning is, to say the least, disappointing as it does an injustice to this initiative and to the people of the Northwest Territories. I would encourage this reporter to, in future, double check his facts before reporting on issues raised in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Your point of privilege has been noted. Also, your point of privilege should be based on response to the report on CBC. Just to remind the Member he might have gone on a bit too long.

--Applause

Good afternoon. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 38-13(5): Workers' Compensation Board Corporate Plan 1998-2000

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for the NWT Workers' Compensation Board, it is my pleasure today to table the board's corporate plan for 1998-2000.

The corporate plan provides a template which will guide the WCB's operations over the next three years. It represents the first step in a comprehensive planning process that translates into an action plan for management and personal objectives for staff.

Once again, this strategic plan is based on very solid footing. Responsible board management decisions and strong investments have allowed the NWT Workers' Compensation Board to make plans with the assurance of a fully funded accident fund.

This strong financial position enabled the WCB to reduce the average employer assessment rate in 1997, and again in 1998. Only three years ago, the average rate was \$2.54 per \$100 of assessable payroll. It fell, this year, to \$1.87 per \$100, the fourth lowest in Canada.

By the same token, this House approved a bill last fall to increase the year's maximum insurable remuneration (the YMIR) to \$52,000. This will enable the WCB to fully compensate 75 percent of full-time workers who are injured in the Northwest Territories.

A supplementary pension increase of 1.82 percent was awarded to WCB pensioners last year and a further increase of 1.78 percent was approved for

1998. These adjustments will allow pensioners to keep up with increases in the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, these are tangible measurements of the WCB's success. It follows that many of the strategic directions identified in past corporate plans are reaffirmed in this document.

Improving workplace safety will remain an important objective. The board will continue to focus its efforts on those industries and sectors with the highest accident rates and on promoting partnerships with workers and employers.

The WCB will also continue to strive for the highest possible level of service. Alternative methods of program delivery will be explored and existing initiatives will be evaluated to ensure they meet their stated objectives. Communication with stakeholders will continue to be a top priority.

Mr. Speaker, while this document reflects the WCB's current level of success, it also acknowledges that the WCB must respond to a rapidly changing environment.

In the next three years, the WCB will work hard to clarify its roles, responsibilities and accountability. The development of an effective board governance structure is crucial to ensuring that the financial, Legislative and program challenges facing the board are dealt with in a responsible manner.

Most importantly, the board must work to project the interests of its stakeholders during the creation of the two new territories. The WCB will co-operate with representatives of the west and Nunavut to facilitate a smooth transition. In the end result, I am sure all Members want a Workers' Compensation Board which will provide efficient and cost effective service in both jurisdictions after April 1, 1999.

Mr. Speaker, the WCB's Corporate Plan for 1998-2000 reflects the combined dedication of the board of directors, management and staff to meet the challenges of workers' compensation which will face us going into the twenty-first century. I encourage my colleagues to read this document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Ministers' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Minister's Statement 39-13(5): A Celebration in Gjoa Haven

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my very great pleasure to rise today in this Assembly to congratulate the community of Gjoa Haven.

Last Friday I flew into the community, along with the MLA for Natilikmiot, Mr. John Ningark and senior staff of the Housing Corporation, to sign the agreement transferring the management and administration of the Social Housing Program from the Housing Corporation to the hamlet. Although my visit was brief, it was a pleasure because the whole community was proud to be taking a major step toward accepting more responsibility for how local housing decisions are made.

Mr. Speaker, I believe transferring more program authority for housing to the community level is the way to go in the future. It is an opportunity for communities to take greater control of their own destiny. I believe the mayor of Gjoa Haven, Michael Angottitauruq Sr. and council should be commended for their vision, as should the members and staff of the former Housing Association, because it is only through their cooperative approach that this transfer was possible.

As the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I wish to sincerely thank the mayor, hamlet council and all of the community for being our hosts on Friday night. The community events, including the formal signing ceremony itself were very enjoyable and demonstrated the warmth and friendship of a community which was very proud to be taking greater control of their own lives. I hope that more communities will follow Gjoa Haven, and the example set by other communities, by working with the NWT Housing Corporation to assume greater local control over social housing.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should reflect on the positive outcome of our community empowerment initiative. Through hard work and cooperation between the GNWT and communities, everyone will benefit from the investment in community self-reliance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 138-13(5): Gjoa Haven Social Housing Transfer Agreement Signing Ceremony

MR. NINGARK:

I will speak in my first language, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Goo Arlooktoo on behalf of Gjoa Haven for attending the social housing transfer signing ceremonies. We were made welcome by the people of Gjoa Haven and the people of Gjoa Haven were very happy to see the Minister in their community. The Minister indicated earlier what we did in Gjoa Haven, but I would like to thank Mr. Arlooktoo personally because he had asked me to accompany him to Gjoa Haven. I did not pay my airfare myself, Mr. Speaker, so I would like to thank the Minister.

--Laughter

I would like to thank Mr. Arlooktoo very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 139-13(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy on Lump Sum Payments

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to raise an issue in relations to the WCB. I have a constituent who had his hand severely injured in a chain saw accident a number of years ago and he lost some fingers. He is a very hardworking gentleman who gets by on seasonal employment and part-time work. He has been after a lump sum payment for his disability. This is not argued or disagreed with by the WCB, and they, in fact on the face of it, say they have a policy for lump sum payouts. However, I have the policy here and the strings and conditions that they attach on lump sum payouts, I would consider to be draconian and onerous. Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind, that this gentleman is a part-time, seasonal worker, the WCB has seen fit to institute policies that require verifiable, independent stable source of income. If you do not have that, you have to show a stable employment history for five years. You have to

be willing to put the lump sum payout towards a mortgage, a business venture or into a financial institution. In the most condescending fashion of all, the WCB insists that the applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to manage his or her financial affairs. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the WCB sees its mandate so far beyond looking after injured workers, where they would play the role of a social worker or a patronizing parent. In fact, this is his money. They are earning interest on his money. He has a legitimate request for a lump sum payout, yet this institution, which is rolling in money as we are told, will not even give this poor gentleman the money that he has earned his right to have. This is the 21st century we are going into. We are not going back into the 19th century. I would hope the Minister would look at this situation and this poor, hard-done-by gentleman who has asked very simply; give me the money that I earned that I paid into because of my injury so that I can put it to the use that I see fit. He does not need a corporation that is patronizing, intrusive and controlling withholding his money that is rightfully his. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 140-13(5): Recognition of Thomas Ubluriak

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a very special individual from my home community of Arviat. Thomas Ubluriak is known as Arviat's unofficial weatherman. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the weather can be very unpredictable. It is almost as unpredictable as politics. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that when Environment Canada has trouble forecasting the weather, they call on my friend Thomas for advice. Ninety-nine percent of the time, Thomas' weather predictions are accurate. He shares his knowledge of the weather without using any modern technology, without any formal training in this area. In addition to being Arviat's unofficial weatherman, Thomas also helps out at the Roman Catholic Church as one of the lay presiders. He is employed at the hamlet of Arviat as a water truck driver and his favourite pastime is dog mushing, a tradition which he continues to enjoy and promote. Mr. Speaker, hats off to Thomas Ubluriak.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 141-13(5): The Need to Maintain Economic Stability

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start, I would like to send greetings back to my wife and children. Mr. Speaker, I believe we have come a long way in the past two and a half years. One can say much has been accomplished. We can now focus on where we would like to go as a government. This alone sounds like good news. We should be sending a positive message out to the people we represent. After all, the people of the north have for far too long had to make due with much less than everybody has become accustomed to in the past two and a half years. It is time for some stability. It is time to mark out a path that we will travel in the upcoming months and year. Once a path has been marked out, we should follow it through. This after all Mr. Speaker, is how the people of this great country measure our accountability. They watch to see if what we say as a government is the same as what we do.

For two and a half years, we have been sending a message out to the people of the north that we must operate in a more efficient manner than was done before all this done to protect the future of our children and grandchildren. Many have

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accepted this, and many still question the route chosen but all watch to see if we practise what we preach. Mr. Speaker, I was chosen to represent the people of Inuvik and for two years much of the info and news I brought back to the people of Inuvik was not good news. For two years I was a messenger of this government and just when it looks like we have good news to share with the people I represent, they start asking, why did we go through all the reductions for the past two years.

Mr. Speaker, recent decisions of this government have been scrutinized by Members of this House and by the press. Now the people we represent are asking or questioning, why did we go through all the reductions and changes, just to see things go back to the old ways of doing business. Mr. Speaker, it is time to set the record straight, line-up all the cans and

clear the air. In closing, Mr. Speaker, let not the seed of doubt grow like a weed for once it surfaces, it soon takes over all the good work of the gardener. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement 142-13(5): Non-insured Health Benefits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have raised the issue of non-insured health benefits before in this House. The NIHB has recently had some major changes. I understand that approximately 640 previous prescription and off-the-shelf drugs are no longer listed or covered under the NIHB. To my knowledge, there was no press release, communiqué or media advisory to let the general public know about this. Most people only found out about it when they went to their local pharmacy.

Mr. Speaker, was our territorial Department of Health advised of these changes prior to them coming into force? Was our government consulted on the changes? The federal government continues to download costs to the residents and we seemingly roll over on the issues. I am of the understanding that the changes made to prescriptions and drugs were because there are cheaper substitutes available in the marketplace. That may be, but are they available at our northern pharmacies here in the north?

For example, Mr. Speaker, if hypothetically hydroxyl is available and is under the NIHB, why would a pharmacy stock an equivalent drug, for example, amberflin. Our doctors probably prescribe the drugs or prescriptions that are readily available, not necessarily what is cheaper or a substitute. The approximate 640 over-the-counter and prescription drugs that are no longer under the NIHB should have been listed and supplied to our medical practitioners. Has that been done?

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that our Minister for Health will and has addressed these concerns with his federal counterpart and later today, I will be asking the Minister some questions on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 143-13(5): Lahm Ridge Tower Leasing Arrangement

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about the Lahm Ridge Tower leasing arrangement that was recently made. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to many statements and questions made in this House and also had people call me and talk to me about this, a lot of them, because of things that have been raised in here I have taken the time to talk to several people that were involved and, Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied with the explanations that I have received. However, there still seems to be Members and the public who have questions, and of course, they deserve answers to those questions. There was a document tabled on January 28th which attempted to answer the questions that are being asked. The problem is that document was not detailed enough. I would urge the Minister responsible for this area to provide us with a more detailed explanation, a more detailed chronology of events with reasoning, more reasoning, as to why each step was taken. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of questions that have been asked and a lot of answers given. People need to see all this in one document, explanation with dates and reasoning. Mr. Speaker, I believe this would help lay this issue to rest, and let us get on with proactive work such as dealing with the budget, and improving programs and services and making government more efficient and effective. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 144-13(5): Broughton Island Request for an Access Road

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, the community of Broughton Island would like to have an access road to Old Broughton Island. An access road is important to the community. Old Broughton Island needs a more sheltered location from the community that allows for a longer boating season. This will allow the community to hunt and fish for a longer period of time as the water around Old

Broughton Island is open longer than the water near the community. Hunting, trapping and fishing are important to the economy of Broughton Island. It is also the only form of income for many people. Hunting, trapping and fishing also puts food on the table for the community. If you do not have a skidoo or an ATV, it is difficult to get to Old Broughton Island, not everyone has a skidoo or an ATV. Mr. Speaker, the community of Broughton Island needs an access road to Old Broughton Island. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 145-13(5): Stanton Regional Hospital Foundation Fundraising Efforts

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the fundraising campaign organized by the Stanton

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Regional Hospital Foundation. Many of Stanton's patients come from smaller northern communities, people who in another area would have been sent south to Edmonton for treatment. The hospital was built ten years ago, and much of the equipment is old, rendered obsolete by technical advances. Although the GNWT continues to support some of the equipment needs, the needs far exceed available government funding. So the Stanton Regional Hospital Foundation is trying to raise \$2 million to buy state of the art gear. This involves everything from a CAT scanner to a mammography unit.

Although buying this equipment is initially expensive, it will eventually reduce costs charged to our overall health care system. For example, many women are currently screened for breast cancer down south due to the frequent breakdowns of the obsolete mammography machine currently in use at Stanton. In 1996, over \$600,000 was spent sending northerners to Edmonton for CAT scans. Investing in new equipment for Stanton will save hundreds of thousands of dollars for this government annually. The Foundation's fundraising campaign is now in full swing. Many people are dedicating their time to the foundation. In particular, I would like to single out Allan Hathaway, as chair of the foundation, and Cappy Elkin, chair of the campaign committee. There are many other northerners dedicated to this effort:

Dr. Hassan Adam, Ric Bolivar, Darrell Donylynn, John Ferguson, Margaret Hawkins, Bill Graham, Joe Auge, Dennis Cleaver, Doug Witty, Gary Walsh, Gord Van Tighem and Greg Merrithew, just to name a few.

So I salute them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statement. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 146-13(5): Pay Equity Negotiations

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about the comments I heard this morning made by the president of the UNW. Firstly, however, I would like say, for the record, that I do believe in pay equity along with fairness and equality of all government employees. Listening to the president's talk this morning made me wonder as to how we will ever reach an agreement on this issue. In her interview, in my opinion, she is refusing to look at anything this government is attempting to offer. It is no wonder we continue to fight to achieve our goals of a balanced budget. During these times of restraints and deficit reductions, we must work together and both sides must compromise to a degree. One cannot expect this government to give them the world, when we only have a small territory. This, in my opinion, is what she is after.

I do realize that the UNW is not the only group at fault, and this government should do its part to ensure this important issue is resolved. I do think it is her responsibility to her members to ensure a fair deal is done, and it is also her responsibility to her members to finalize this issue. To start negotiating is the way to finally bring this to rest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statement. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to recognize two of my constituents from Hay River, Mr. Terry Camsell, who is the director of the Eastern Arctic Operations for Northern Transportation and Mr. Rick Connors, director of Mackenzie Western Arctic Operations for NTCL. Welcome to the House.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. KRUTKO:

I would like to recognize Ms. Pat Thomas of the NWTTA. I would like to thank Pat for showing up every day. I would like to see Pat during the week and have some shrimp with her.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 180-13(5): Reimbursement for Lost Hunting Equipment

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. My question is directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In Pond Inlet in June, 1997, hunters who were temporarily employed took some students out on a field trip. There were 11 students, along with the five hunters and their teacher. They got stranded on some ice and got carried away from their travelling equipment. They lost their snowmobiles including their sleds and tents. They had to leave everything behind. Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that each adult individual lost at least \$10,000 worth of hunting and camping equipment that they owned. The hunters did not endeavour the trip on their own as they were employed by the Education Department to take the students out. Can the Minister give us an update as to what has happened since their safe return? Has the department received any claims for coverage for their loss and, if so, are the hunters being considered to receive compensation for their equipment? I would

appreciate an immediate response from the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 180-13(5): Reimbursement for Lost Hunting Equipment

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HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the hunters were hired by the divisional education council and not by the department. When the Member expressed some concern about this, I asked for information. I found that the divisional education council has investigated the situation with risk management of the government, and the hunters are not covered because they were contractors that were hired by the DEC. Contractors are expected to have their own insurance. That would be the mechanism whereby they could put in a claim through their own insurance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 181-13(5): Public Housing Rent Scales

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall be speaking my native language. My question will be directed to the Minister of Housing Corporation, the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo. Last year, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of houses that were occupied through the public housing arrangement. Last year the rent scales were not increased and this was good for the tenants. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation is, the houses that are being rented by the tenants, do we expect the rent scale to remain the same or do you anticipate an increase in their rent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 181-13(5): Public Housing Rent Scales

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the housing rental scales occupied by tenants was reviewed and we put an end to any further increases at that time. However, I can say that we are close to finalizing the review and we will make a decision in the next week or so as to what we want to do with the rental scales. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 181-13(5): Public Housing Rent Scales

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for NWT Housing Corporation. I have a supplemental. Perhaps the Minister can indicate to me as to whether there will be an increase and, if so, will they be applied in different levels to the tenants, but will the rental increases be uniform across the territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo, I heard two questions.

Further Return To Question 181-13(5): Public Housing Rent Scales

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid I cannot answer the questions in detail at this time, but I can say, however, that when we readjusted the rental scales a year ago, we tried to make them uniform in all the communities. The only differences being the cost of living and the fluctuation of the food basket rates, Mr. Speaker. Those were the only factors that we had to consider in applying the rental scales. Once I receive the information, I will make an announcement to the MLAs in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reference to my earlier statement on the NIHB. My question will be addressed to the Minister for the Department of Health. Was our Department of Health aware or privy to discussions surrounding deletion of the approximately 640 over-the-counter drugs and prescriptions being dropped from the NIHB? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Non-Insured Health Benefit Program is administered by the GNWT on behalf of Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada. It is a specific program for aboriginal peoples throughout the country. I can say that some discussions on the changes took place, but those discussions took place directly between Medical Services Branch, the Health and Welfare Canada officials and the aboriginal organizations who received the benefits on behalf of their constituents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, are the drugs that are no longer available under the NIHB that have been and can be replaced by substitutes readily available in the north? Has the GNWT checked to see if this is, indeed, the case? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak on specifics on every individual item that is listed and whether it is or is not available. Suffice it to say, I think the pharmacies in the Northwest Territories do stock quite a number of drugs for dispensation. I cannot answer that question because of the level of the detail that the honourable Member is asking about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if, for example, I am in Iqaluit and go to the pharmacy to get a prescription written by the doctor, if it is no longer under the NIHB and the doctor was not aware of that, when I go to the pharmacy, I have to pay for that drug. As an example, if hydroxyl is available under the NIHB, that would be paid for. Mr. Speaker, my question is, there is approximately 640 over-the-counter prescription drugs that are no longer under the NIHB, has that list been sent to our medical practitioners here in the Northwest Territories so they know what drugs are under the NIHB?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the answer with me as well. I can find out and advise the Member accordingly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is strange, Mr. Speaker, that we do not know which drugs are available and which ones are under the NIHB. I would follow up then with the Minister and ask him a supplemental question. I would request that his other commitment just now that it comes back so I can make reference to it. Has the GNWT tried to communicate with the public on the changes if there is any implication to them on the drugs that have been taken out of the NIHB? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I heard two questions. Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 182-13(5): Changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no we have not. As I indicated at the start, quite frankly, this is a federal Medical Services Branch, Health and Welfare Canada program that they provide to aboriginal peoples across the country. We administer the payment aspect on behalf of Health and Welfare Canada. We are not privy to making the decisions of what is or is not covered. That is totally at the discretion of the medical services branch. They directly consult with the aboriginal organizations as to the impacts and which services are provided and which services and coverage are or are not to be provided. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the WCB and it is in regard to my statement and the Workers' Compensation Board policy on lump sum payments. I am posing this question to the Minister who is also a board member, I understand, on the WCB and an entrepreneur of

some repute in the east. Would the Minister comment on the intent of this particular policy especially in relation to the fact that if an injured worker is entitled to money for an injury, would it not be in the corporation's or compensation board's best interest, to give them that lump sum payment, thus limiting their liability?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate what my honourable colleague is saying and I did look into this matter when he had, rightly so, been investigating it for his constituent. There are rules and procedures that the WCB board of directors have put in place and there are some conditions set for lump sum payments. I think the only thing I could say to my honourable colleague is, it is a quasi-independent judicial board, with limited ministerial involvement. I think I would be prepared to sit down with the new chair of the board, Ms. Joanne Deneron, and see if they would be prepared to once again take a look at the policy they have in place for lump sum payments and see if there is some way in which they could not only consider this particular instance, but others. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that offer and commitment. I would also like to ask the Minister when he is sitting down with the chair, could he also engage in what may be possibly a philosophical discussion. When they say an applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to manage his or her financial affairs, what could possibly be the intent of the WCB on that issue? How could they possibly think that they could measure that? They are not social workers. Thank you.

Return To Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would be only too happy to have a discussion with the new chair, Ms. Joanne Deneron, of the Workers' Compensation Board with respect to the comments raised by my honourable colleague in relationship to the concerns his constituent has. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that I have a commitment for this type of meeting, I would like to ask the Minister to commit to a time period so that I have an idea of when this issue could possibly be addressed so that I can report back to the constituent involved, where this is on the priority issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 183-13(5): Policy on Lump Sum Payments

HON. JOHN TODD:

As I always do, Mr. Speaker, when I am asked important questions and I am unable, which is not that often in this House by my honourable colleagues, I will move expeditiously to deal with the issue and report back to my colleague, as I frequently do, some time earlier in the morning, later on next week. I would not want to imply that I am going to be able to give him necessarily the answer he wants. What I have said is, I will discuss the matter with the chair of the board, and ultimately, really, the board makes the decision on what the rules and regulations and policies are in the manner related to cash payouts on pensions. I will bring forward, as quickly as possible, the concerns raised by my colleague that I raised actually, many years ago when I was sitting on the Workers' Compensation Board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. I understand that the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association has filed a bad faith bargaining complaint against Yellowknife School Board District 1 with the Canadian Labour Relations Board. I wonder if the Minister could confirm that for us?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister might be aware of it. Do you wish to respond? The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I had been informed that the NWTTA did file a complaint about bad faith bargaining with the Canada Labour Relations Board.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell us what the complaint is about? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

There has been a petition filed through a judicial body and I do not know how much of this the Minister wants to respond to. On this, I would be careful. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of the conventions of sub judicae, I can say no more than what has been put out in a press release. As I understand the

situation, there is a disagreement over whether an agreement had been reached at the negotiating table and should have been presented to the board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell us what the process is from here on?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 184-13(5): Bad Faith Bargaining Complaint

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Canada Labour Relations Board will investigate the complaint and determine whether or not there are grounds to make a ruling. Beyond that, I cannot advise.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation, Mr. Todd. Earlier today, my honourable colleague from Thebacha referred to this legislation as being draconian. Mr. Speaker, I would add the word archaic also. My question to the Minister is, when was this legislation last looked at? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Todd.

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Return To Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, maybe I missed something on the way to the Assembly today. Is this not the same WCB that has a fully-funded accident and pension fund? Is this not the same WCB that has reduced the rates to an all-time low in the Northwest Territories to the employers?

--Applause

Is this not the same WCB that has increased the benefits not only to the workers but to pensions? Archaic? I would probably say it is state of the art in terms of its ability to function.

--Applause

In response to my honourable colleague's question about when were the last changes made to the Workers' Compensation Board legislation, I do not know. I will have to look into it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is nice to hear a nice, calm Minister for a change. I am not sure if he referred to state of the ark or state of the art. Mr. Speaker, my reason for asking the Minister about how long it has been since this legislation has been revised, he talks about this organization that is financially healthy. No one can dispute that. It is in great shape. Mr. Speaker, it seems to be able to collect finances from employers and also, it seems it can also get finances from employees. When I refer to the legislation as being archaic, this is the only legislation in the country which allows the Workers' Compensation Board, an organization set up for the protection of workers, to take members that it is supposed to protect, to court. I am wondering, will the Minister consider giving direction, as he had earlier on today, for his board to take a look at this act from the point of view of trying to bring it into the 21st century where it is meant to protect the people it is set up to serve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Just a warning to the Members, I have been requested to start applying the rules of the House more stringently. Just as a warning that I intend to do that. I will ask the Members that when they do ask their question, that they have a preamble and then, three supplementaries to that preamble. I will cut-off the Members if they continue with their preamble into their second, third and fourth questions. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the Workers' Compensation Board has been looking at legislation and clearly understands the need for significant changes because there has not been change, I suspect, for close to ten years. I want to be accurate in responding to the crown jewel of the Northwest Territories government. They have a significant amount of money, and a certain amount of work on the need for legislative change. However, as my honourable colleague knows, there are 14 months left. We have some important legislation that we have to get through on that. Sure, a major change, if it was significant in legislative change to the WCB, would be able to get on the legislative agenda at this time because of other priorities. I can tell my colleague, and I am prepared to share with him if he wishes, some of the changes that the WCB have recommended to me that they feel are required to bring the Workers' Compensation Board legislation into the 21st century.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

--Laughter

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister did give a lot of information, but I am not sure whether he insisted or suggested he would have the board take a look at that legislation. Could I ask the Minister to clarify if he would, indeed, have the ministry look at the legislation as a whole from the points that the previous Minister asked?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 185-13(5): Changes to the Workers' Compensation Board Act

HON. JOHN TODD:

To cut a long story short, Mr. Speaker, in fact, the board of directors have looked at the legislative change that they feel is necessary to bring the Workers' Compensation Board into the 21st century. What I was saying was, given the short time left in this Legislature, and given the Legislative agenda that we have that is choked right up, it has been my decision at this time not to bring it forward. I will discuss the matter with my honourable colleague. Frankly, given the time we have left and given some of the serious priorities - and I am not suggesting this is not one - but there are other ones that are of greater priority we have had to leave this one in abeyance. Certainly, if there was the will out there to move forward, the desire to cooperate and the time available; we would only be too happy to move that legislation forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 186-13(5): Union of Northern Workers Position on Pay Equity

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question would be directed to the Minister responsible for FMBS. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Minister's statements yesterday, both in a news conference as well as in the House on the issue of pay equity, there are some concerns being raised. For example, one of the replies we have heard from

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the union president is that the \$25 million Mr. Todd speaks about on the retroactivity of the pay equity is a down payment or represents 10 percent on the dollar. If that is the case, I am quite concerned as to where this will lead to. We have talked about pushing for a negotiated settlement. Will the Minister inform us if what they are saying is accurate, that this is indeed, what they see as 10 percent on the dollar? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Can I ask the Member to rephrase his question. The question is asking the Minister to confirm or deny a report that was heard on the radio this morning. Perhaps you can rephrase your question. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, gladly. Is the Minister aware of the position put forward by the union on the issue of pay equity? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 186-13(5): Union of Northern Workers Position on Pay Equity

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I would like to answer it this way. Yesterday, I tried to clearly point out to the public, the UNW and to northern residents what this government thinks is a fair, affordable settlement that puts money in the hands of our employees that rightly belongs to them. It is clear as far as I am concerned anyway if, in fact, \$25 million as has been stated is ten percent of what the union believes is an appropriate settlement, then they are talking \$250 million. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, it is just simply not on.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 186-13(5): Union of Northern Workers Position on Pay Equity

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the amount that was presented yesterday by the Minister, for example, we do not have that in our document in our budget. Where is that money that he is saying that this government will put forward, and where will it come from? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 186-13(5): Union of Northern Workers Position on Pay Equity

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important, first of all, to say to the UNW to challenge them, to bring forward what they think is a fair, affordable settlement. We have put ours forward. I think it is fair; I think it is affordable and I believe with careful fiscal management of this government we can find the dollars, the \$25 million in retroactivity and the \$9 million on ongoing costs to our wages and benefits package. I challenge in a serious way and in a professional way instead of the kind of rhetoric words like insulting people, et cetera. I have spoken in this House frequently in a professional way, in an honest endeavour to reach a negotiated, fair, affordable settlement. I say to you today that what we have put on the table is what we can afford, nothing more, nothing less.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 187-13(5): Manitoba Trade Delegation

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, there is a trade delegation that will be travelling to my communities and also, I believe, to Yellowknife and Iqaluit from Manitoba. I would like to ask the Minister if the memorandum of understanding that was signed, I believe a year and a half ago by our Premier and the Premier of Manitoba, if that will be discussed during this visit? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 187-13(5): Manitoba Trade Delegation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has assigned the job of coordinating and receiving the delegation to the Deputy Premier, Goo Arlooktoo. Mr. Arlooktoo will respond to the question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I passed on an information item to the Member yesterday indicating that the trade delegation from Manitoba including some of the political and business leadership would be in the Northwest Territories on the 16th, 17th, 18th and would visit Rankin Inlet, Yellowknife, Iqaluit and Arviat and extending an invitation if the Members so wish to attend these meetings.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 187-13(5): Manitoba Trade Delegation

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not recall seeing that, but is the Minister saying that the Members will have an opportunity to meet the delegation and sit down and discuss various issues with them? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 187-13(5): Manitoba Trade Delegation

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member looks on his desk, I did send two packages over yesterday morning. I know that the Member from Iqaluit did receive one because he commented on it. I did send another package, but I do not have a copy of the one that I had right in front of me. The answer is yes if other MLAs wish to attend the meeting or the other functions that are planned. As I

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understand it most if not all of the events, will be public and available for MLAs and others to attend. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 188-13(5): Problems with the Access Program

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Last year and within this year, the access program has run into problems. Apparently the homeowners are having difficulties building these homes. I am wondering what the situation is really like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 188-13(5): Problems with the Access Program

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the Member indicated last year that there were some concerns regarding access programs, some homeowners were complaining that their homes were not being built properly and not being on par with fire codes and standards. I told him I would look into this matter, and if there were some deficiencies within buildings, then we would have to go back to the contractor and get them to do the work again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 188-13(5): Problems with the Access Program

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The homeowners who will have these access homes do pay the contractors, and if the contractor has to go back in there and fix it some more, does the price go up a little bit more and cost more for the homeowner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 188-13(5): Problems with the Access Program

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of homeownership units through the Housing Corporation that are built by private contractors is governed by safety codes and regulations which govern all other house building laws and rules. If the contractor is at fault and not doing acceptable workmanship, there is a process of finding out whether the contractor or others are liable, but that would very much depend on each particular situation. As I had indicated, we did look into several cases that the Member told us about last year. I do not have the information in front of me, but I will get it and provide an answer to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 189-13(5): Assistance to Taloyoak Group

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment who is also responsible for Youth Initiatives, Youth Leadership. Several days ago, I asked the honourable Minister about the request of adult community training program of the hamlet of Taloyoak. The group of Taloyoak young people is endeavouring to make a trip to Yellowknife some time in March or April. They are requesting some financial assistance through me from the government in the area of \$16,500, but they are also trying to raise funds in the community. I think we should recognize that group for their effort. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister prepared to provide funding for this group? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question has already been asked to the Minister. Again, according to the rules if a question has been asked in that session, it cannot be asked again during that session, but it was asked to the Minister of Finance so I will allow the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to respond to the Member. Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 189-13(5): Assistance to Taloyoak Group

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would join the Member in saluting the young peoples' initiative in their efforts to raise funds for travel. I would have to say that I am unaware of any funds that are left in the department's budget that could be applied to this kind of travel. All the monies to be used for travel for young people was put into the formula and distributed to the divisional education councils previously. We have no funds left at the centre for disbursement. All of the funds are handled at the regional level for travel, and I would encourage the students to approach regional offices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 190-13(5): Broughton Island Access Road

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Jim Antoine. As I indicated in my Member's statement earlier wanting to have an access road from Broughton Island to Old Broughton Island, I will make my preamble as short as possible. When we are talking about an access road in small remote communities, we are not talking about paved roads or anything like that. We are talking about getting a trail from communities to the hunting grounds. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transportation is, can he have his department look into this matter? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 190-13(5): Broughton Island Access Road

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community access road is a very popular program in the

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Department of Transportation. The request from the honourable Member, I take it very seriously. However, the department has not received a proposal from the community on the access road program for Broughton Island as yet. We encourage them to do so. With this program, it is a community initiated

program, and we encourage them to approach us and send us a proposal. Then the regional superintendent of the Baffin will assist the community with this project. Yes, I will forward to the honourable Member, my colleague, a copy of the community access roads, transportation, the facilities contribution so that he is aware of the process that we follow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 191-13(5): Screening Process for Clinical Psychologist

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question concerns a question I had raised yesterday when the Minister of Justice informed the House that indeed the clinical psychologist in Iqaluit is no longer employed. Now media reports indicate fraud and so on. My question, Mr. Speaker, is in this case, how could this person, who seemingly impersonated another person, like The Great Imposter starring Tony Curtis, Mr. Speaker, how could this happen? How could the person get through the screening process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I must rule the question out of order. It is now in the process and you have to allow the process to be completed before you react or ask questions about it. I must rule the question out of order. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It is in regard to the unfortunate incident in South Slave regarding the midget hockey selections. I am concerned that the hockey establishment will try to minimize the concerns raised or possibly have them shuffled off under the carpet until after the games. I would just like to ask the Minister when will the report be done that she has requested by her officials of the concerns raised? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have directed my staff to look into this process and I know they are reviewing it right now. I will get the information to the Member as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister be more specific, if possible? Would she commit to having that prior to the end of this session which is initially targeted for the end of February?

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will get some feedback from my department by the end of this week to be updated on this issue and I will let the Member get briefed also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister last week also made a commitment to, in fact, having been briefed by her officials. Would the Minister consider, in fact, having her officials or one of her officials, even in Fort Smith, meet with the concerned hockey parents and players? They are the ones with the personal

investment and significant concerns on this issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 192-13(5): Selection of Midget Hockey Team

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will discuss that with my staff. I truly believe in the process of people talking together. I will have somebody talk with the parents in Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 193-13(5): Commitment Re: Cost of Medevacs

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Honourable Kelvin Ng. Mr. Speaker, on November of last year, the Minister, while he was attending the Beaufort Delta Leadership Meeting, committed to supplying the leadership meeting with specifics in regard to the Kitikmeot and other regions as to the cost of medevac. I wonder if the Minister recalls that specific commitment he made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 193-13(5): Commitment Re: Cost of Medevacs

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, November seems like such a long time ago. I honestly cannot recall that commitment, but if it was made, I will follow up on it and ensure that the information is provided. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 193-13(5): Commitment
Re: Cost of Medevacs

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, the committee requested from the Minister the expenditures for medevacs in different regions, specifically in regard to the Kitikmeot and Inuvik regions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 193-13(5): Commitment
Re: Cost of Medevacs

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for that clarification.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to the alcohol and drug programs in the Northwest Territories. As he knows, in the history of the questions I have raised in this House about the closure of Delta House and the Tl'oondih Healing Program, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is, my estimates, since April 1, 1997, and it cost the government in the range of \$200,000 to send 62 people from the Inuvik region south for substance abuse treatment. Those people could have received treatment in their own home town and region. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister reconsider the options that may be available to ensure that substance abuse treatment is available to people in the Inuvik region?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we continue to review the economics and affordability of providing programs. Our main priority, of course, is to make sure that programs are accessible to all residents of the Northwest Territories and if possible as close to their home community or home region as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is great to send people to the closest detachment, but I see we are still sending people to Edmonton and High Level which is, I believe, south of us in Alberta which is the next jurisdiction next to the United States. In regard to his comments that the closest place possible which the cost of sending these individuals to southern institutions is in the range of \$11,000 per individual. I would like the Minister to tell me exactly why is this practise continuing, yet we can offer the same service in the Inuvik region?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not say that this practise is continuing. In fact, I believe that the out-of-territories treatment has dramatically been reduced. The boards continue to have the responsibility for designation of the referral for their clientele. They have the funds for the travel and for the treatment within their budget. So they determine where the most economical way of providing treatment to their constituents is and they determine best way to provide those services, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the commitment by the federal government to look at the whole question out of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples on the whole area of health and healing, will the Minister consider to reopen and look at the Tl'oondih Healing Society Program in light of the possibility of federal funds at this time?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that these are federal funds, and the federal Minister has made a commitment to aboriginal organizations that they will be directly involved in the allocation of these funds. It is not within this government's mandate to tell aboriginal organizations or the federal government on where their priorities are in financing these healing programs, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the responsibility of this government, I believe there was a motion

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passed in the committee of the whole in support for Tl'oondih Healing Society. Also, I have, I believe, a verbal commitment from the Minister and the Premier to work with the society to try and find ways to resolve it. Regarding the commitment the Minister made, is he still fulfilling his obligation to that commitment?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 194-13(5): Options for Drug and Alcohol Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we still stand by that commitment. There was, as you know, a meeting with the honourable Member for the Mackenzie Delta, the Premier, the Finance Minister, myself and representatives of the Tl'oondih Healing Camp. We did take a look at some options, I believe. There were some requirements for some information from the Tl'oondih Society which I do not believe was received and the situation kind of laid stagnant, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 195-13(5): Emergency Power Measures

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Dent. I think we are all very well aware of the plight that the people in Ontario and Quebec have been suffering through for the past month going without power. A number of constituents of my own in Yellowknife have been talking a lot about that, and they were concerned that if a similar situation could happen to the community I live in. My question to the Minister is, what steps are in place to ensure that in the event of a similar disaster in this area such as the ice storm in Quebec, how would power be delivered to the residents of Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 195-13(5): Emergency Power Measures

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, historic weather patterns give us some assurance that a freezing rain storm like the one that occurred in Quebec and Ontario would not happen in the Northwest Territories or around Yellowknife. Having said that, I am sure that Hydro Quebec officials were

also saying that before their storm struck. A similarity to our system is that all of our hydro power comes along one set of lines from the Snare system to the city of Yellowknife, and if an ice storm were to cause those lines to collapse, it would mean a significant amount of work, probably months of work to get that line back up. The one area that is different about the Yellowknife power source is that we have almost the same capacity in diesel generation available to us here within the city. Thirty-two megawatts of power is available by diesel at the Jackfish generating station that is sufficient to provide all of the needs of the city for power on a mild winter day down to, say, ten or 15 degrees below. Should the problem occur and then the temperature drop, we would have to bring in extra generators and transformers to deal with the situation. Apparently discussions have taken place between Northland Utilities and the Power Corporation. Northland does have access to generators in Alberta that they could ship in within 24 hours to have available to make sure that there was sufficient power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 195-13(5): Emergency Power Measures

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I believe there is some solace to be taken out of the Minister's comments. I understand that the revenues of the Power Corporation are down somewhat this year. I also understand that the maintenance program normally attributed to these diesel generators at the plant is not going ahead. Can the Minister give some assurances that, in fact, these diesel generators are in good shape even though service and maintenance may be cut back at this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 195-13(5): Emergency Power Measures

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the maintenance schedule with me in the House, but I would assume that given the reduction in load this

year, the Member is right, the load is down significantly. I understand that the diesels are not being operated very much. In fact, most of the power that Yellowknife uses can be provided by hydro. Therefore, I would expect that any reduction in the amount of maintenance is because there has been a reduction in the number of hours that those diesels are running, but I will confirm that and inform the Member if that is, in fact, the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 196-13(5): Compensation for Dogs Destroyed in Gjoa Haven

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the honourable Premier of this government. The recent outbreak of rabies in Gjoa Haven, Mr. Speaker, made it necessary to destroy some of the dogs in the community. Unfortunately, some of those dogs, I was told, belong to hunters and trappers who make their livelihood by hunting and trapping and, in some cases, guiding. The gentlemen of the community asked me if there is any form, Mr. Speaker, of compensation if the dog is found not to have rabies that was destroyed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

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Return To Question 196-13(5): Compensation for Dogs Destroyed in Gjoa Haven

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for raising the issue. I know it is an important issue to the constituents as well it was an important issue to the people of Repulse Bay. I understand fully that the people, the hunters and trappers of that area depend on dogs to guide for hunting polar bear and the Department of RWED is involved right now with this community to look at ways of helping alleviate that problem. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 196-13(5):
Compensation for Dogs Destroyed in Gjoa Haven

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the Premier. I understand that sometimes it is necessary to just treat animals in the community like dogs. How soon will we have the answer from RWED if, in fact, some of those hunters can be compensated for their loss? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 196-13(5):
Compensation for Dogs Destroyed in Gjoa Haven

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that officials from the department are working with the Member's community to look at ways of solving this issue. I fully understand that you do not go out and just find a good sled dog. I know that people have to put many hours, even years, into training their teams and it is not going to be an easy solution to solve. Hopefully, with the community, the hunters, the trappers, the guides, working with RWED, they can solve it fairly soon. The government is not interested like the people of his community, in losing any revenue from potential tourist hunts and polar bears. Hopefully, they can resolve it fairly quickly. I do not know how available sled dogs are of that type in other parts of the Northwest Territories. I know in this area, they breed fairly small dogs for racing, but hopefully, there are some in the north that can be used to replace them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. I would like to recognize some people in the gallery at the request of Mr. Barnabas. Two people, Sandy Kusugak and Joe Adagataluk. Welcome to the Assembly.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 7, written questions. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Questions 06-13(5): Personnel Inquiries Re:
Baffin Correctional Centre

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is for the Minister of Justice.

1. What procedures are used to screen potential job applicants? Who checks to ensure compliance with hiring procedures?
2. Does the department have a personnel person or staffing function at the Baffin Correctional Centre?
3. Does the Department of Justice have a process now that, indeed, will have an evaluation component since the hiring of the last psychologist, who was released on Friday, January 30, 1998, which will ensure that the inmates get real professional care?
4. Will the Minister re-evaluate hiring practices in the Department of Justice and table a report in this House?
5. What procedures, counselling and help will be given to the Baffin Correctional Centre in Iqaluit because of the January 30, 1998 incident?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 30-13(5): Workers' Compensation Board Corporate Plan 1998-2000

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled, Workers' Compensation Board Corporate Plan 1998-2000. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and

other matters. 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); Tabled Document 15-13(5), 1998-99 Budget Address and Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships. With Mr. Steen in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee to order. For consideration by the committee today, we have Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Committee Report 02-13(5); Committee Report 03-13(5); Committee Report 04-13(5); Committee Report 05-13(5) and Tabled Document 15-13(5); 1998-99 Budget Address and Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships. I

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would like to get some direction from Mr. Ootes on how we wish to proceed.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That we consider Bill 8, Appropriation Act along with Committee Report 02-13(5) and Committee Report 03-13(5) and that we carry on with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, followed by the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. We will proceed as indicated after we take a 15-minute break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee to order. Before we resume our review of the main estimates for the Aboriginal Affairs Ministry, I wish to clarify the process

we will follow as the committee of the whole conducts its review of the 1998-99 Main Estimates.

I would like to begin by reminding all Members that our rules limit the amount of time that a Member may speak to a matter under discussion in committee of the whole. Rule 79 reads as follows:

79(1) No Member shall speak for more than ten minutes at any one time in committee of the whole; and

79(2) Subject to the discretion of the Chair, a Member may speak more than once to a matter under discussion, but not until every other Member wishing to speak has spoken.

As your Chair, I wish to permit meaningful input into this review process by all honourable Members. However, as Chair, I also have the responsibility to ensure that business of committee of the whole is dealt with in an efficient and timely manner.

In an attempt to better manage the time available to us and to ensure all Members have an opportunity to provide their comments, I wish to improve the review process by adhering more stringently to our rules regarding speaking time limits in committee of the whole.

The Chairs will permit each Member to speak up to ten minutes at a time and to frame any questions they may have for a Minister within the context of their comments. After all Members wishing to speak have spoken, the Chair will ask the Minister to respond to all comments that may have been made by Members. At the Chair's discretion, Members may be recognized to make secondary comments. This approach should help to ensure more efficient use of our time.

Once again, for the record, I would ask all Members to assist us in the departmental reviews by posing their specific questions or concerns under the appropriate activity. General comments should be exactly that, general comments. It is not a question and answer period.

In summary, your committee Chairs wish to permit meaningful debate here in committee of the whole. The cooperation of all Members in this regard will be greatly appreciated. Thank you. With that, I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Antoine, if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree that the Minister may bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms bring in the witnesses and seat them. For the record, Mr. Antoine, could you introduce your witnesses.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right is Mr. Fred Koe, he is the minister, and to my left is Mr. Peter Bannon.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Welcome to the committee. We were on Appropriation Act, 1998-99 Main Estimates and we were on Aboriginal Affairs, general comments. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding my comments yesterday, I think that the comments that I am making are not only for myself, but, I believe, all aboriginal groups, regardless if you are Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, Inuk or basically one of the aboriginal groups from the southern part of the territory, having the concern in relation to your family ties. Regardless if you have relatives in Alaska or basically if you have relatives in Greenland, Labrador or Quebec, it affects every one of the aboriginal groups in some way or another.

The point I am trying to make with my questions Mr. Chairman, is that I do not think we should take the position, standby and leave this matter to someone else because we hope that they will take care of it. The reason I am raising it is because I feel strongly enough that we have to find a way to help improve the family ties between the different aboriginal peoples and their relatives who live in Alaska or basically Quebec or Greenland. I am not asking these questions because I want to get my face in the newspaper. I am asking it because it is an issue that has to be looked at.

I use an example in regard to the Inuvialuit who have a lot of relations in northern Alaska. A lot of people that presently live in Aklavik originated from Alaska at the turn of the century, I think, in regard to the Gwich'in who basically originated as a tribe from Alaska through the northern part of Yukon and into the northwestern part of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chairman, I believe that those ties of those aboriginal people

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have to be kept in mind when we are talking about relatives here.

We are not talking about the colour of your skin or basically a line that separates, from basically Israel or Syria or wherever. There is a line there that separates based on culture. Basically, you are talking about a group of people who are related across different jurisdictions. The point I am trying to make is that there are issues that affect those aboriginal groups regardless if it is harvesting rights. In the case of the Gwich'in they have a strong argument in regard to the Alaskan government because of the Porcupine Caribou issue and the calving grounds of that caribou herd. So regardless of what happens in Alaska, it could have a bearing on what happens to the aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories.

I think the point I am trying to make is, regardless if it is a question about the environment, economics or protecting our wildlife, we have to keep in mind that at the end of any one of those issues, it is the people's concerns that we have to take care of at the end of the day. The question I ask the Minister is that there are no real answers to any of my questions because it seems like no one really knows what one department is doing or one Minister is doing to deal with this matter. I hope my other colleagues could be patient and realize where I am coming from on this matter and allow me the opportunity to continue on and ask questions to the appropriate Ministers on these particular matters because it does affect the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in of my riding. I would like to ask the Minister, is there any possible way that his department can look at the possibility of finding resources or someone within his department to seriously take a look at the whole question of what the effects of families between the different jurisdictions are and try to find a way to bring these groups closer together rather than keeping them apart by boundaries? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think our colleague, Mr. Krutko, eloquently talked about the relationship of the aboriginal people in this country and also with another country, in this case, the United States, in Alaska. I believe that to be true. We have met with our relatives many times during many meetings in this country at a circumpolar conference, for that matter, Mr. Chairman. Quebec talks about separation many times in the past. The uncertainty of Quebec being part of Canada allows myself and the people of the Nunavut area, the eastern Arctic in this case, to think about our relatives in northern Quebec. I do not believe that northern Quebec Inuit want to be part of a separate Quebec. They have let us know about that concern, Mr. Chairman. I believe we had the opportunity at this time and in the past, a responsibility of ensuring that our brothers, our relatives in northern Quebec are accommodated in their wish to be part of Nunavut should Quebec separate or should they not have their own land recognized to be distinctly Inuit land.

Has the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs had any indication from the Inuit of northern Quebec? They wish to be heard about their concern that they do not want to be part of Quebec when it separates. Has the Minister had any discussions, any correspondence with the Inuit people of northern Quebec or from the government, for that matter, about what I have just stated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Any further general comments on Aboriginal Affairs? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of the responsibility of Aboriginal Affairs is to deal with land claims and self-government negotiations. The First Nations living within my constituency are the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. They, of course, were included in the Dene/Metis discussions for many, many years which finally fell apart somewhere around 1991, or something. Following that, a year or so later, they began discussions with the federal government. Later on it began to include the territorial government representatives as well. Mr. Speaker, the

Yellowknives First Nations have been trying to resolve their land disputes with the federal government for many, many years. I suppose you could say decades. They are now involved in the First Nations in Akaitcho territory, as they call it.

Mr. Chairman, there are other aboriginal governments that have finalized their claims and these First Nations are now able to move ahead with economic development. They have a lot more to say on the lands within their traditional areas. They have a lot more influence on what occurs in their traditional area as well as on their selected lands. They are able to concentrate on other things rather than trying to settle their outstanding claims. That is not so with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. They are still struggling to settle their outstanding claims which, for the last while, they have been trying to do through the treaty entitlement process. I understand that they are trying to do some sort of an amalgamated claim which includes comprehensive claim and treaty entitlement.

It has been a long, drawn-out process, Mr. Chairman, and it does take a lot of time and energy of the leadership so that they are not totally able to concentrate on other economic and social ventures that they would otherwise be able to for the betterment of their membership. Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to lead up to is that this government, part of its responsibilities is to participate in these discussions with the Akaitcho First Nations. I am trying to urge the department to assist the Akaitcho First Nations, not only the Akaitcho First Nations but the Deh Cho and the Dogrib First Nations, so that they can complete their respective land negotiations so that all three of these groups can get past this hurdle and on to the next stage which is to start getting into economic ventures and concentrate on other problems that their memberships have such as social problems. We all know that we have horrendous social problems as well as a burgeoning birth rate. Those types of things we have to tackle. When the leadership is taking a lot of their time in trying to finalize land claim negotiations which seem to have the rules of the game changed periodically by whichever government happens to be in power in Ottawa, it takes a lot out of the leadership. I would like to urge the Minister and his staff to do everything within their power and abilities to help the groups that have not finalized their land claims negotiations and treaty entitlement

negotiations to finalize or at least come very, very close within the lifetime of this government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Are there any further general comments on the department's budget? I would then like to ask the Minister if he would like to respond to the general comments and questions that have been posed by the Members.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the honourable Member, Mr. Krutko's comments on the concerns of finding resources and finding someone in the department to bring groups together, we have not really received anything formal from the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in to do this work. These groups are strong-minded First Nations on their own, wanting to handle their internal affairs and their relationship with their relatives in Alaska with the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in. I have attended the Fort MacPherson Gwich'in gathering two years ago where the Gwich'in of Yukon and Alaska got together. There is a strong sense of community where they wanted to handle this internally. If there is a formal request from these First Nations then certainly, we will take a look at it. Thank you.

With regard to the honourable Member, Mr. Ningark, if there were any requests from the Inuit in Quebec, we have not heard anything officially from them requesting closer ties between the Inuit of northern Quebec and of Nunavut. We have not discussed this. There is a circumpolar initiative which is this government's initiative as well. There is a certain polar initiative that deals with all the northern parts of this continent as well as Europe, Greenland, Alaska and Russia that have met occasionally. We encourage that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

If there are no more general comments, does the committee agree that we proceed to the detail of the estimates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do we have a quorum?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I do not recognize a quorum. I will ring the bell. Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq.

I recognize a quorum. We will proceed on. I believe I had consensus to proceed to the activity summary, the detail of the estimates. If we would then move to page 2-40, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.765 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday during general statements, the Minister spoke on an issue of funding that came to this government from the federal government. Maybe the Minister could correct me if I am wrong, but my understanding is that he stated the funding comes to general revenue and through that process is not specifically identified to any aboriginal group, but it is to all the people of the territories. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

In the Formula Financing Agreement, that is true. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us then, with all the negotiations that are happening throughout the Northwest Territories, a lot of that will entail some funding. Where will this funding come from? For example in the Beaufort Delta region, where I come from, there are some negotiations going on that will entail quite a bit of delivery of the programs now existing through the GNWT. Is the funding for that included in those discussions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the negotiations it is true the negotiations that we arrive with costs for the programs and services. The GNWT will be paying our share for the programs and services. Part of the negotiation is the incremental cost which this ministry has been working with the federal government to try to determine what this is going to be. We are pretty close to an arrangement with them to determine what this incremental cost is going to be. Yes, the funding for the programs and services has been negotiated. Some of it will be coming from the Formula Financing Agreement.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us how that funding is broken down when they discuss the different delivery of programs? Is it per capita? Is it based on historic amounts funded through past government expenditures?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

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HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Beaufort Delta self-government are negotiations the first of its kind. It has not been done in any other place before. It is a historic process. We are breaking new ground in this area here. That is what the negotiations are all about is trying to determine how to come out with a figure to provide the programs and services that the Beaufort Delta First Nations have put on the table for negotiations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister inform us then, as these discussions are going, he mentioned yesterday some of the process involved in the negotiations, some of the different steps taken into achieving signing some of these agreements or

sub-agreements. When would this Assembly as we know it look at some of these agreements or how would that process be done?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the sub-agreements are being reached by the Northwest Territories negotiators at the table, these sub-agreements will be coming to me, as the ministry, and I will have to have it go by Cabinet for approval. Once it is approved by Cabinet, then we will inform the Members about their arrangements in the sub-agreement. As the sub-agreements come forward, they become part of the agreement-in-principle so there are about 32 different items that are on the table for the Beaufort Delta. If I am correct, there are about six areas of sub-agreements that have been worked on and been developed at the present time. So we have a long ways to go before we reach an agreement-in-principle. Once that is done, that is the total package, and it will be moved forward so that the public will be aware of the contents. It is some ways down the line. Yesterday we talked about the timing. It is hard to estimate that. There are Members in this House who have been involved in negotiations so it is hard to tell exactly, pinpoint, when this is going to be done. We mentioned somewhere between six months to about a year or 12 months timeframe before this is concluded. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question, using the formula financing negotiations that happened in the past, when formula financing between this government and federal government took place, that happened within, for example, FMBS or Finance possibly, but those discussion went on and an agreement was signed. For example, we saw just recently the old Formula Financing Agreement put on the table quite a bit later, but we were already operating under it. I am just wondering if that is the process that is going to be followed or because this is a new process, there will be a new process developed as well in recognizing the changes that have to occur. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you. The honourable Member is asking for a process on how this is going to get done. Again, it is something that is new that we are attempting to do. There is going to be a new financial arrangement that will be negotiated as part of the self-government agreement. I do not know what else to say except that it is going to be something we are working with. We do not know for sure exactly how that is going to eventually happen. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. For the record, I am on page 2-40, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.765 million. I recognize Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following up on discussion of Mr. Roland, the Minister said that all the funds are put into one pot, and basically it is there for everyone. Is it not true there are funds that flow from Ottawa which are earmarked aboriginal funds in regard to insured health benefits where those funds can only be used for aboriginal people for certain events? I will use an example where when Tl'ooondih Healing Program was running, the only monies they were able to allocate or receive was those classified as insured health benefits which were basically earmarked for aboriginal people. On one hand you are telling us that the money is all put into one pot for everybody, but on the other hand, there are certain funds that are only earmarked for aboriginal peoples. Which is it? It is not clear. In regard to certain housing programs that were in place in the past which were designated for aboriginal houses such as the HAP Program, such as that, which flowed from a national program to this government to be delivered on behalf of the aboriginal people by this government. I think it is not clear in regard to the version that everything is put into one pot. We cannot account for it. There is no way of knowing exactly where these monies come from. I think there is a way of monitoring. There are transfer agreements which take place between ourselves and the federal government which clearly states exactly how those funds are supposed to be spent. I would like to ask the Minister, has there been an attempt to break down

these funds and to identify those dollars which are classified as national aboriginal programs which this government administers at the present time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is true that there are two different approaches here. There is the Formula Financing Agreement which is a complicated formula that determines on an annual basis how much the Government of the Northwest Territories receives as a grant from the federal government. This is a general amount that does not really specify whether it is for treaty people or Inuit people. There are other arrangements separate from that, which are transfer agreements or charge back agreements which I am not totally familiar with. I think the host departments, for example Health and Social Services, would have more hands on than we do here in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Yes, there have been attempts in the past to try to determine if these funds are for aboriginal people or

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My other question to the Minister is, the aboriginal organizations who are presently in negotiations in regard to self-government, have they been given the opportunity to have access to these agreements that presently exist? Has your department made an attempt to ensure that all this information is available to the aboriginal self-government groups? Are they aware the information is there so when they do establish regimes to look at health, housing or whatever, they are aware these program dollars are there, and they can take that into account when they negotiate their agreements?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the budget is a public document and it lays out what has been

determined department by department to be spent in a given year. Part of it is general information available to the public. There have been requests by the aboriginal organizations which are negotiating to come out with a costing of different programs and services. We have requested this costing from the government system. We are still waiting for information in regard to this request for the costing that has been requested by ourselves for the aboriginal organizations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I was referring to the different national programs that presently exist and the Formula Financing Agreement that is in place and the chargeback arrangements that are presently in place between Indian Affairs in regard to health care and other programs such as that. In regard to the different transfer agreements that are in place, have those agreements been given to the aboriginal groups who are presently negotiating self-government at the present time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am not aware that organizations have requested these specific transfer agreements, like the health transfer for example, for aboriginal people. I am not familiar whether there was a request or not. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. The reason I ask the question is because I have spoken to the chief negotiator dealing with the Beaufort/Delta self-government negotiations who has stated to me that they have not had access to all the documents that the government presently has in relation to the different arrangements between themselves and the federal government. That is why I raised the question. That is where my question is coming from.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I take that as a general comment. Are there any further questions or comments? Total operations and maintenance, \$2.765 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Grants and contributions. Page 2-41, details of grants and contributions. Total grants, \$225,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Contributions. Total contributions, \$297,000. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Minister is in regard to the grants and contributions. Are there any other funds that may be available to aboriginal groups in regard to the different contributions that may be out there? Could other aboriginal groups be made aware of them so they can also have access to them or is this it? Is there another section where people can look to see exactly where the different grants are for different aboriginal organizations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, these are all the grants and contributions we have in this department which are available to aboriginal organizations. The question was that if we are aware of any other grants and contributions that are out there that may be available to aboriginal peoples? I take it, am I aware that there are other funds within the total government? I think there are funds in the other departments that are perhaps accessible to aboriginal organizations, but I am not too familiar with each one of the departments. This is all we have in this department that is available. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

In regard to the different contributions, is there a contribution policy in place that different groups can go to because it seems there is always a need for money, especially in the aboriginal community? It seems there is always a real effort to try to get funds. A lot of times there are certain petty cash set aside somewhere where it is used to contribute to different things, such as assisting aboriginal groups with meetings or helping pay rent or those types of programs. Is there any sort of a contribution policy or some way of helping to subsidize the rent of different aboriginal organizations presently in place?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am only familiar with this department and with this department for grants and contributions. We do have a policy within this ministry specifically for what we have here. There is no overall policy covering the total GNWT for grants and contributions. There are departments which have their own programs and their own policies. Specifically, there is no overall policy for grants and contributions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Total contributions, \$297,000. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe a good portion of this page, the money is slated for the western aboriginal organizations. However, the budget for \$75,000 is for aboriginal organizations for special events. What special events are we talking about here, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the \$75,000 is available for annual assemblies of the aboriginal organizations and for the celebration of National Aboriginal Day. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you. This particular budget for \$75,000 is for both eastern and western groups? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Yes. There is a request from both the east and the west for these funds. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Total contributions, \$297,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total grants and contributions, \$522,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Page 2-42, information item, acting positions. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see we have 21 active positions. Could the Minister elaborate on the number of people that have affirmative action status?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are 21 positions that have been approved. We have 18 of the 21 positions filled. We also have an implementation staff of seven, which is at vote 4/5, which is a federal contribution. Of that 18, five are aboriginal.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Antoine, I believe the question was not how many were aboriginal, but how many were eligible under affirmative action? Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mr. Chairman, there were five aboriginal people and six are indigenous, non-aboriginal, long-term which are under affirmative action, so a total of 11.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Erasmus. You have further questions?

MR. ERASMUS:

No. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Active positions, page 2-42. Agreed? Mr. Krutko and Mr. Ningark. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the issue I raised regarding affirmative action, the Minister stated that he has some plan in place that he is presently looking at implementing. Is there a possibility of the Minister elaborating on that plan that he presently is looking at to ensure we increase the affirmative action numbers especially at this time, where this department deals with the aboriginal area which seems to be lacking in regard to the numbers of aboriginal people within this department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the affirmative action policy has been with this government for a long time and with this ministry. However, we are very active in very key areas. We have 40 percent of senior management who are aboriginal, which is quite high compared to the other

larger departments. We have looked at the ministry and there has been a review done and a report on the review. We are looking at ways on how to improve this ministry in regard to applying the affirmative action policy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the efforts that the department is doing, is there any sort of training efforts made to entice the aboriginal employees who are in the lower ranks of the structure to allow them to develop their skills by taking different courses or programs to move up the ladder sooner? I speak more in line of what is going on in the east where there is a lot of effort made to train aboriginal people with division around the corner to ensure there are a lot of aboriginal people in the senior management area. What attempts are being made to develop these types of training programs within your department to entice the aboriginal people to continue on with your department but also allow them to move up the ladder a lot faster by taking different training programs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

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HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we just received the review and the report about two weeks ago and as we go through the report to determine what needs to get done in this ministry, part of the overall strategy is to look at ways we could have aboriginal people come into this ministry here and if it requires training then that is what we have to do so that they become part of the ministry staff with the kind of knowledge that is required. Again, I must emphasize that even though we are a small department we are involved in a lot of real key land claims and self-government negotiations. It would be very useful if we had aboriginal people in some of these positions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko, do you have further questions.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe yesterday I asked for a copy of the breakdown on the stats that the Minister mentioned with regard to the employees, different status of the different employees. He said he was going to get that to me and I was wondering how soon can that be made available? Also, he mentioned that the report has been concluded with regard to looking at the overall department and trying to find ways to improve that. Is there a possibility of getting that report also?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the request by the honourable Member for the status of the number of positions that we have, we will get that information to him tomorrow. As for the report, it is a confidential report for use addressed to myself and it is an internal document at this point in time because there are a lot of, perhaps you could say, very sensitive, confidential things in that report. It is not for the general public. It is an internal management tool. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The report the Minister mentioned, will the management tool become a public document at some time so we can take a look at it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this internal review is for the ministry to see how we have been operating and see where there are areas to be improved. We still have to go through the report, analyze it and implement some of the directions that are in the report. There is no plan at this time to make it a public document in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I am on active positions, page 2-42. I recognize Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recognizing the 21 positions here in this particular area are indeterminate full-time, that may carry us through division. Mr. Chairman, the transfer of PY from headquarters to the Nunavut area is imminent. If Mr. Minister has any information, how many of those 21 positions are looking after the operation of Nunavut? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the question, most of the present people in this ministry are working in the western area on the different claims that are there. With regard to Nunavut, the Division Secretariat has been taking the lead in that area in dealing with Nunavut and none of the employees except one in the vote 5 area in dealing with Nunavut implementation will be transferred to Nunavut upon division. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Active positions, page 2-42. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, page 2-43 and 2-44. Total department on page 2-44 is \$747,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Could I have the Members revert back to page 2-39 where it says program summary at the top, Aboriginal Affairs, program summary, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.765 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before concluding this department I would be putting a motion forth later on with regard to the item which I raised about formulating some coordination between Intergovernmental Affairs and this department to look at the issues, especially in conjunction of the different bilateral arrangements between aboriginal peoples from the different jurisdictions if there is a way that they can consider looking at that topic and try to find a way of developing some sort of a mechanism or policy within house to deal with that matter. I would for the record, state that I will be putting something forth on this matter at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We are on Aboriginal Affairs, program summary, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.765 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Total expenditures, \$2.765 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Does the committee agree that consideration of the department's estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. I would like to thank the witnesses and the Minister. What is the wish of the committee at this point? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

To report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We have a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion 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 review of Bill 8 and proceed with the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. We will then take a short five-minute break to allow the department to prepare themselves. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

We will call committee of the whole back to order. We have on the agenda next the Department of the Legislative Assembly. Would the Speaker like to present his opening remarks?

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I have with me the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Hamilton. Madam Chairperson, colleagues, I am pleased to present the last budget for the Legislative Assembly as we know it today. However, like the Minister of Finance, I am feeling a little nostalgic. I would like to take this opportunity through you, Madam Chairperson, to thank the Members of the 13th Assembly, individually and collectively for their support to me as Speaker. I am particularly pleased that when we were sworn in to the 13th Assembly, we

had among us 15 new Members. What I have found, as the longest serving Member of the Assembly, and therefore, the Dean, is that each Assembly establishes its own mark on the history of the Northwest Territories.

The 13th and last Assembly of the Northwest Territories as we know it today is no different. We have a tremendous responsibility and obligation to the people of the future territory of Nunavut and the Western Territory that will be created from division on April 1, 1999. To paraphrase an old saying, so it is said, so shall it be written. History will judge the actions we have taken and the actions we will take in the next few months. Madam Chairperson, I think it is worth reminding ourselves of the vision we have adopted for ourselves, which is;

the Legislative Assembly provides, within a framework of accepted democratic principles, an environment in which the elected representatives of the people of the Northwest Territories can, effectively and to the best of their abilities, pursue a common agenda for the collective good while taking into consideration the demographic diversity of the north.

Madam Chairperson, as your Speaker I would not only like to thank the Cabinet and Members for their hard work and understanding, but I would be remiss if I did not express my appreciation to the staff of the Legislative Assembly. We sometimes take the people behind the scenes for granted and I would like to thank them for their efforts on our behalf.

--Applause

Madam Chairperson, the main estimates before this committee today provides the financial and human resources that will take us to April 1, 1999. The Legislative Assembly is requesting an expenditure of \$12,797,000 which includes a capital allocation of \$282,000. The estimates of the Legislative Assembly are expenditures that are driven again, by legislation, political direction and historical trends. As we know, Madam Chairperson, these elements carry a price tag. The estimates reflect, as accurately as we can determine, what I feel are the financial and human resources needed to meet the demands as we know them today. Changes in the political environment are not unusual, especially in our jurisdiction, where we are undergoing profound political and constitutional changes. In preparing the estimates, we did not feel we could predict with any certainty how this might change over the next 12 months of this budget.

As you know, there will be 24 MLAs throughout the year this budget covers, but we will lose ten of our colleagues on April 1, 1999 when the Nunavut Legislative Assembly will take office. As a result we cannot foresee how the Legislative Assembly, Cabinet, standing committees and particularly our Nunavut and Western Caucuses will be shaped. Changes in this regard may require us to realign our expenditure allocations throughout the 1998-99 fiscal year. However, I am confident that we will be able to ensure flexibility in reallocating the dollars from within the appropriations before you today. The Management and Services Board has deliberately taken action to ensure services are continued to be provided, without disruption, up to March 31, 1999. The board has structured our major contracts and statutory appointments to terminate on March 31, 1999. This puts no restrictions on the next Assembly and permits them to decide on the level of services they would like to provide.

There has been no significant changes in the estimates presented to the Standing Committee on Government Operations earlier this fall. I am pleased to report, however, that the estimates for the Legislative Assembly will increase in the current fiscal year by \$689,000 and in 1998-99 by \$1,101,000. This is the result of an agreement signed on November 10th by the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories for the financing of elections in Nunavut and the Western Territory.

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With respect to Legislative Assembly operations, the staff here will be involved in providing assistance to the emerging Government of Nunavut, with respect to staff training and the establishment of a functioning office, in time for the elections and swearing in of the First Assembly of Nunavut. Our staff will also be of assistance as the structure of the Legislative Assembly as the Western Territory unfolds. The future structure will impact on the level of services and budget allocations that will be required after 1999 and into the new millennium.

Some of us will not be around this table for the next review of the main estimates as the election for the First Nunavut Legislative Assembly will probably be held in early February of 1999. It will be a very busy year for all of us, both Ordinary Members and the Ministers. It will be difficult, as always, to balance our day-to-day duties to our constituencies, the work of the House, committees and Caucuses, and most importantly, our families. Madam Chairperson, along

with my officials, I would be pleased to address any questions as to the significance of the main estimates. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Speaker Gargan. I would like to now call on the Government Operations Committee for their report on the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The committee held a wide-ranging discussion of the operations of the Legislative Assembly in conjunction with its review of the Assembly's 1998-99 Main Estimates. Issues touched on included elections before and after division, building maintenance issues, fire safety issues, the Chief Electoral Officer position, pension plan administration and services provided in the Speaker's Office. The committee is generally satisfied with the 1998-99 Main Estimates as presented by the Speaker. However, the Standing Committee on Government Operations wishes to comment on the following issues:

The committee appreciates the briefing on the current situation regarding the delivery of interpreter/translator services to the Legislative Assembly. Committee Members were concerned about the impact on interpreter/translator service delivery and the associated costs resulting from the privatization of portions of the Language Bureau. The Legislative Assembly must be able to provide language services in all of the official languages of the Northwest Territories. Former employees of the Language Bureau have moved on to other opportunities within and outside government and shortages of qualified private-sector Dene language interpreters now exist. This shortage has impacted negatively on language services to Members of the Legislative Assembly and to the public.

When the privatization of the Language Bureau was first proposed, Members of the committee expressed concern that although costs would initially be reduced, interpreter/translator services would not be more effectively delivered by the private sector.

In addition, there are serious concerns that the funding transferred to the Legislative Assembly to provide for this service will not be sufficient to cover the cost of language services for this or subsequent fiscal years. Members of the committee have also heard concerns expressed that other departments

and regional staff face the same dilemma. The committee intends to closely monitor issues related to the privatization of portions of the Language Bureau. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. At this time are there any general comments on the Legislative Assembly? Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I will direct my general comments to a couple of items that I will expand on when we reach the program summary of the particular activities. Specifically, I would like to address the question of interpreters provided by the Legislative Assembly in this building and the service they provide us as Members. Madam Chairperson, I am not sure whether the government has really addressed the situation on the question of if, in fact, we are benefiting from contracting out our requirement for interpreters. To some degree the question is going to have to be answered as to what happens to some of these interpreters, in particular those Inuktitut interpreters when division comes. Are they going to have an opportunity to move on to Nunavut? I do not see the west being in a situation where we would require them although, there is going to be a need for interpreters for the different languages that are left in the west. In particular, I am talking about the interpreters that translate for the Nunavut MLAs at this time.

The other question I will be addressing is constituency assistants' salaries. Madam Chairperson, as we attempted to point out in the past to the Management and Services Board, as a Member who has four separate communities to administer and represent, it is very hard. I do not think it is realistic to expect the Member to divide this particular one into four separate pieces so that every community has a representative that I could contact. I do not think there would be enough money left after dividing it into four. In fact, five is what is required because of the time spent in Yellowknife, that there is enough funding there to actually allow a Member to act and to operate efficiently. By comparison, Madam Chairperson, communities that have or Members that have only one specific community to represent, it is very easy to, from my perspective anyway, be able to attend meetings and functions within that particular community which is, in fact, your overall responsibility

right there in one particular community of the riding. Therefore, there is an advantage to some degree where Members represent only one community. Mind you, the communities are larger but in a sense you can be available to attend meetings or have your assistant attend the meetings in your absence. By comparison, it would seem that you could use the whole salary for one constituency assistant. I do not think we have been very successful in the past in addressing this particular issue and it does not just apply to my ridings. There are many ridings that represent more than one community. I feel this particular shortage should have been addressed at some point. Even if you take constituency assistants' salaries as a whole and apply it to one individual, they are not paid very much in comparison to the amount of services that are required of them. I will be bringing

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up those particular concerns, Madam Chairperson, when we reach the activity summary of the Office of the Clerk. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. In keeping with the process, move on to the next person who wants to speak and we will ask the Speaker to respond to these all at once. Next on the list I have Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The first thing I wanted to do was to congratulate the Speaker and the Clerk on being able to pave the driveway for the Legislative Assembly in one year when it was supposed to be done over the course of two years. They were able to save a considerable amount of money in doing this. Madam Chairperson, I think with all the visiting dignitaries that we have to the Legislative Assembly here, it was incumbent upon us to do this. I am glad we were able to do it in one year, as well save a considerable amount of money in doing so.

The other thing I wanted to touch on is something that Mr. Steen has already mentioned, the constituency assistants' salaries. I had an opportunity to look into it earlier and I know secretaries make more than the constituency assistants. I believe that at the time when people set the salaries for assistants, it may have been a part-time job and perhaps it still is a part-time job in some constituencies. However, Madam Chairperson, at the last election there were over

2,500 voters in my constituency and it is very, very difficult to serve that many people with a part-time assistant as well as having the person do research and helping to initiate new projects that a Member might want to do. In addition to that, when you have low pay for a good worker, good workers often will not stick around very long because there is an awful pile of better paying jobs out there. If you have a good person working then they will likely move onto another job unless they have another good paying part-time job. As I have indicated, I too, would certainly like to see something done to assist the constituency assistants get a better salary to live on so that we can do a better job and to ensure MLAs can retain good workers to maintain consistent service for their constituents. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, communication is very important in this particular forum. One area that I would like to speak to in general, if I may, is interpreting and translating. We provide interpreting and translating because we have seven or eight official languages. I think I can say on behalf of my Nunavut colleagues, Madame Thompson, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Mr. Barnabas, Mr. Enuaraq and myself, I think we are very lucky in this Assembly to have travelled throughout the Nunavut area to the three different regions during the educational process, other training and job-related travel. In essence, we were able to pick up the different dialects from different regions. A person who is confined to a community or to a region from the Kitikmeot, it would be really hard for an elder, even for the middle-aged to go to another region and be able to debate without any problem. What I am trying to say is, we have three different regions and the three different regions have different dialects. Perhaps it was partly our fault from the Nunavut area that we have not, Madam Chairperson, requested we get three different translators from Nunavut. I can almost see when Nunavut becomes a reality, there may be a need to have three interpreters even within Nunavut, one from Baffin, one from Keewatin and one from the Kitikmeot region in order to respect the different dialects.

Speaking about translating, interpreting, communication; I do not believe the people of Nunavut would want to have one unified dialect. We

do understand each other because we are fortunate to have travelled throughout the Nunavut area. When the Speaker talks about division and the operation of two governments, in that respect, I hope that we will keep that in mind. You know communication is very important. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Would the Speaker like to respond to some of these general comments that have been made and then we will continue on with some of the other Members I have on the list? Mr. Speaker.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Recently, we have written a letter to Cabinet regarding the translation services and we may have a shortfall on the amount of money necessary to continue with this service. The other question asked, the response is that the translation services are now privatized. All services that were received under that are contracted. We may require an increase in order to continue providing those services. Madam Chairperson, the problem is we have not operated a year with this arrangement and we were unsure about how much money we required. That is the reason why we may be short and will probably need to request an increase.

The other concern that was expressed regarding constituency assistants is, in our budget there is \$660,000 for constituency assistants for 24 Members. The Management and Services Board discussed the salary issue already and the best we can offer is in the area of holiday pay for \$1,600 which we have included as part of that salary. The other observation, Madam Chairperson, is that some Members use their constituency assistant to hire a full-time position, others use part-time. Still further, others are using contracts. Other Members can use it to do projects, and also other Members can still hire constituency assistants on a seasonal basis, too. There are different ways Members are using it. Madam Chairperson, the constituency assistant dollars can also be complemented by using their constituency budget. There are a variety of ways of doing it, but if there is a directive from this Assembly to increase or to review, we can do that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. I have on the list, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the whole question about the constituency assistants, I think the points which have been made are good in order to attract good employees and to keep these employees for a number of years so that you have consistency. We have to look at the

Page 530 overall area of exactly what is the fair price on the market for attracting assistants in different areas, especially in trying to find someone for \$28,000 or \$29,000 and to keep them for four years. I believe it is going to be awfully attractive in regard to the ability to serve not only the communities you represent, but to assist the Member while the House is sitting. Something has to be done to look at the whole issue to try to find a compromise so that when we do find good people, we are able to keep them.

Madam Chairperson, on another matter, in regard to the whole question of official languages in this House. We have cutbacks in regard to the different aboriginal languages that are presently being offered, especially TVNC when we are broadcasting in different official languages. We have to keep in mind that a lot of the people we represent are illiterate and they feel more comfortable hearing an item being discussed in their aboriginal language and being able to grasp what is being said than to hear it in English where it is a foreign language in which a lot of items are discussed. They do not really understand the topics, but I believe that it is one of the fundamental items we have in regard to the Official Languages Act, which has been passed by this government to ensure that the public is offered the opportunity to not only speak their language in different public places, but also to be able to hear procedures that do go on within the government in their official languages. In light of that, we should consider to take another look at that matter, along with implementing some of the initiatives or ideas that have been put forth to this Assembly in regard to the Language Commissioner's Annual Reports to this Assembly identifying certain items to be carried out so that we are aware of the concerns.

We have to take the time to get a feel for what the public is thinking in regard to the way that procedures in the House are being presently conducted in regard to the television time where a lot of items are being said up front, but there are a lot of other issues which we deal with at other times, such as in committee of the whole or through motions and petitions, in which a

lot of these items are missed. We should also take a look at that item.

The other concern I have is in relation to the turnover of the staff of the Legislature, especially in regard to the research people we have and attracting people that we have had in the past. We have seen a lot of people leave in that particular area where they have put a lot of effort and hard work into their jobs to keep us informed on the different issues or researching different matters on behalf of the Members. I would like to thank those individuals who have assisted us in the past and who are no longer here. Also, keep in mind, in that area too, we have to be able to attract good people and keep them. The Legislature should look at that matter. Overall, in conclusion, I would like to thank the Speaker, along with Mr. Hamilton and his staff for assisting myself in this House. Thank you, very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I have Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just some opening general comments on the Legislative Assembly on the vision, goals and mission. Over the last couple of years, having been the rookie MLA and now having had an opportunity to reflect on the last two years of how this Legislative Assembly functions, I have found some very good things logistically as to how the Legislative Assembly works, the management structure and style.

I also note in the overview on page 1-3, that one of the mandates of this business plan we are about to look at, is to allow for the establishment of a fully functioning Legislative Assembly for Nunavut by April 1, 1999. That would be my major concern here.

About a month ago, when I was home in Iqaluit, I had an opportunity to look at the plans that were made initially for the temporary Legislative Assembly building. I understand that our Legislative staff have actually been working in concert with the architects designing that building. There were some flaws, for example, the library in the new building is 150 square feet, where this one is 1,500 square feet. Our Legislative Assembly staff actually picked up on that so I was very pleased to see that. I have some general questions later on, of the operations of the Legislative Assembly itself, the financial implications of the Legislative Assembly, the person-years at the

Legislative Assembly and the hiring practices of the Legislative Assembly here in Yellowknife.

I would also like to compliment the Clerk, Mr. David Hamilton, on his recent appointment as the Chief Electoral Officer for all of the Northwest Territories, which was an Order-in-Council of the federal government, I believe. I would also like to say that the Assembly itself, the way it acts and reacts within its budget, has been very progressive. I would also note in my opening comments that the Legislative Assembly has tried to initiate some new ways of getting information out to the public. In this respect, the Legislative Assembly has put up a web page, which I understand is getting a lot of hits on the Internet. It is well done and very professional. I believe Mr. Sorensen is the Web Master. I have had some comments from my constituents on the web page. On that web page, they have actually put up new pictures of all the gallery, where you have people like Mr. Ningark, and yourself, Madam Chairperson, the Speaker and so on. Some of the pictures are very flattering, some have to be adjusted as I noted this morning when reviewing my own. Thank you, your honourable Member, Mr. Miltenberger. Those are just my general comments. I will have some good questions later for the staff, for the Speaker, Mr. Gargan, and his associate, Mr. Hamilton. I would also like to say, that sometimes in the Legislative Assembly, we get wrapped up in our own self-importance.

--Laughter

Madam Chairperson, that was demonstrated during the unity debate when we had this huge flag over the backdrop of the Speaker's chair when we were going to go live on TVNC, that C-PAC was going to pick us up, and everything was going to stop on Bay Street, and President Clinton was going to be tuning in, of course, none of that happened. Sometimes we get overly dramatic at the Legislative Assembly, and maybe that is something we could all take a lesson from. With that, those are my opening comments on the Legislative Assembly

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and I will have further questions on the fully functional Nunavut Legislative Assembly, staffing for Nunavut and other general questions on the operations and maintenance budgets of this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco.

--Applause

General comments on the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Ningark is calling line by line. I am sorry. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the concerns expressed by Mr. Krutko regarding the reporting of our session, we have the reporting done twice a day. One at 10:00 a.m. and one during the evening at 10:30 p.m., of either Members' statements or question period or both just to remind the Member it is being done and in all the languages. The other problem you mentioned with regard to the Languages Commissioner is that this department is under the overall operations of the government. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Are we ready to proceed with line by line? If I could refer you to page 1-6 of your main estimates book. Legislative Assembly, activity summary, office of the Clerk, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$7,472,000. Agreed. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I would like to know at this time, under the main estimates on page 1-6, how many positions are dedicated to Nunavut at the present time, how many we are training for the new Nunavut Legislature? How many positions are identified right now in that business plan for 1998-99? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There are no positions being funded from the current amount of money which are directly related to Nunavut. We do have positions, but they are being funded by other mechanisms outside the Legislative Assembly budget for positions that will eventually move to Nunavut.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, if those positions are not funded by the Legislative Assembly budget itself, it also means that, indeed, the Mentoring Program with our own staff here must be taking place with those students. I would assume those people are under NUHRDS funding. If that is the case, could that be clarified right now?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Yes, Madam Chairperson. It is under the Mentoring Program and we have two people currently. One is the clerk assistant of committees for Nunavut and the other one is a policy officer that was under the Department of Public Works who is working on a three-month attachment from Public Works in our research division.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I understand that the new clerk for the Legislative Assembly for Nunavut has either been hired or will be hired very shortly. Will that position be coming here to Yellowknife to work with Mr. Hamilton under a mentoring program and would that be funded out of this budget or would that again be out of the nearest funding or out of the office of the OIC?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

I will ask David to respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The final details have not been worked out yet, but we understand it will be a combination of both working with the other deputy ministers in Iqaluit and also there will be times that the individual and other deputies in that area will be coming to Yellowknife and working with deputies and the Clerk, in my case, in Yellowknife.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, there was some concern last year when I was going through the main estimates and the numbers granted Therefore on 1-6, on O and M, concerning the pavement of the parking lot of this Legislative Assembly, I wonder if there is any contingency money that has been carried over to complete that work this year. Was that job done on time or, indeed, is there more work that had to be done with the landscaping or the area surrounding the Legislative Assembly itself? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Yes, Madam Chairperson, I do not know what it is by way of process but it is under capital. We are under O and M so I am wondering if the Member might want to wait until we get to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Obviously you are a more experienced Chair than I am. Further, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will defer that question on capital until later on that line item. I would like now to ask about the Office of the Clerk, on 1-6, which I think we are dealing with, which also

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provides for the Members' amenities, allowances, salaries, their constituency office rent, the standing and special committees and, yes, the support

services of research and library. I wonder if, at this time, the Speaker or the Clerk could update us on what type of logistic preparations have been put in place for the new library for Nunavut. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As the Member had indicated, we have had some discussions with the programming for the facility, the actual facility that will house the legislative library for Nunavut. He is correct that we did find that they had not properly programmed the space that would house the library. We have managed to convince them that they need to increase that space. We have provided to the Office of the Interim Commissioner and it will be up to the Office of the Interim Commissioner and the Clerk-designate for Nunavut to hire one of the key people that we have indicated as the legislative librarian who would have the responsibility of pulling together all the collection and starting to establish and catalogue the legislative library and reference material for the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. It is now in the hands of the Office of the Interim Commissioner and of the Clerk, once he or she is officially appointed, to hire the legislative librarian who will begin to catalogue all the collection for the legislative library.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under the library, that is good information. I am glad to see that, indeed, the Clerk's office is following up. I wonder, are we still continuing to make duplicate copies of all items, records, Hansards and so on, information material that could be transferred over to Nunavut and are those materials being transferred or are they held in storage here? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Yes, Madam Chairperson, all the material that will be in the library is being duplicated and it is in storage here in Yellowknife.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under the communication services, which also falls under the Office of the Clerk, I am wondering if there are any new processes put in place by the Legislative Assembly for communication services, specifically the Internet services and/or an update on Mr. Erasmus' earlier concerns on switchboards and that. Am I correct in assuming there has actually been additional staff put in communication services, the PR or Internet web masters or something like that? Have you hired additional staff? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Madam Chairperson, I am a bit unclear on the question. We have not hired any additional staff nor have the financial resources to hire any staff directly related to Nunavut and the whole issue of switchboard operators and communications does not fall within the Legislative Assembly. The word communication is for public relations type functions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Anything further, Mr. Picco?

MR. PICCO:

No, thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will defer to the honourable Mr. Erasmus.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, for that Mr. Picco but, in fact Mr. Steen is next on the list. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Mr. Picco. Madam Chairperson, my question, as I indicated earlier, is what is the plan that we have in place here for the existing Nunavut interpreters? I realize they

are on contract but does the government have a plan in place where they will have an opportunity to be employed in Nunavut?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Madam Chairperson, in my opening statement I mentioned that we deliberately did all our contracts and our statutory appointments to end on March 31, 1999. The translation services provided to this Assembly is done by private contracts. Again, we will not put ourselves in the position of influencing what Nunavut will be provided. If there is a market there, then the people who are providing who service will have the opportunity to provide that service.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I think we all realize that interpreter service to an Assembly of this nature requires quite well-trained and educated interpreters. Therefore it might be said that, in fact, it is going to be hard for Nunavut to find interpreters of this quality. I was wondering, do we have any program in place where we would be training interpreters for the Legislative Assembly in Nunavut?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Madam Chairperson, there are a lot of very well-qualified interpreters throughout the north, not just based in Yellowknife and, in fact, we do bring in Inuktitut interpreter/translators from communities outside Yellowknife. They have to go where the

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market demand is. When the services of interpreter/translators were privatized one of the responsibilities of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was to establish a register of interpreter/translators so that clients, no matter who they were, could be assured they were getting

qualified and experienced interpreter/translators by being placed on this register of interpreter/translators. I am not quite sure whether there still is a program in Nunatta Campus Arctic College for interpreter/translators, I am not sure if that is still going on. There are programs in the colleges that would train interpreter/translators where they can get experience. We have no program in place that would train interpreter/translators. The market is there and we are able to attract and have to pay to bring people in for that function.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, my other question is with regard to the obvious fair amount of empty office space upstairs, in particular, once the Nunavut MLAs leave there will be ten empty Nunavut offices. What is the government's plan to do with those offices? Do I have opportunity to use them for the constituency assistants that I cannot afford?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Gargan.

HON. SAMUEL GARGAN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The constitutional process is still ongoing right now. We cannot make any determinations on how many Members we will have. We might have two chambers. Also, under the NWT Act we still can have up to 25 Members but that still has to be determined. We do not know what the numbers are going to be yet and we are not going to know until maybe 1999. That is the best answer we can provide right now.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

No, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Madam Chairperson, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

MR. SPEAKER:

Good evening. The House will come back to order. We are on Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: 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 02-13(5), and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that report of committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Programs at 6:00 p.m. this evening. For tomorrow morning, at 9:00 a.m., of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, also at 9:00 a.m., of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 11:00 a.m., of the Nunavut and Western Caucuses at 12:00 noon tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 4, 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

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- Bill 9, Loan Authorization Act, 1998-99

18. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Committee Report 5-13(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs, 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 until Wednesday, February 4, 1998, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT