



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

5th Session

Day 23

13th Assembly

HANSARD

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1998

Pages 773 - 799

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Good morning. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 234-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good Morning. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Valentine's Day. I would like to wish my wife a happy Valentine's Day in Clyde River and also my friends Tim Evic and his family in Pangnirtung. Also Joanasie Maniapik, Levi Kulualik, Joanasie Qarpik, Sailoa Metuk, Philip Sangooya and family, Lootie Toomasie and family and Jassie Kuniliusie, happy Valentine's. Have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 235-13(5): Funding Sources for Educational Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment threw in a challenge to the Ordinary Members to identify where money could be located in the budget in order to direct more of our resources to the area of education. It was interesting to me that the only suggestion or example that the Minister could come up with on the spur of the moment was cutting the meagre money paid to assist seniors with the cost of living in their own homes. The format of our budget is such that the main estimates do not provide a very useful tool in identifying areas where this government wastes money. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the government has had to make cuts and this has impacted almost everyone. Does this government waste money? I question the value of things like a \$750,000 Med-Emerg report. I continue to question the value of a \$223,000 report on POL privatization. I question the indeterminate and 20-year inflated leases on unoccupied housing units in our communities. I question trips abroad for groups which no report, cost benefit achievement or findings ever get tabled in this House after the fact. I question the prolific use of RFPs for procuring goods and services for which we will never know how much we may have overpaid. I know one group who knows how much money this government wastes and that is our constituents. The phone number here is 1-800-661-0784. Phone and have your MLA raise these issues in this House. We will bring them to the attention of Mr. Dent so that he can use a better example the next time he asks Ordinary Members where he can get more money for the education of our children. Mr. Speaker, on this the anniversary of the death of my father, I wish to wish all seniors of the Northwest Territories happy Valentine's Day.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 236-13(5): The High Cost of Food in Isolated Communities

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I raise concern about the price of food in the High Arctic communities. This has been a continuing problem for northern residents living in isolated areas where

supplies must be flown into the communities. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use enfalac as an example. Enfalac is a very important part of the diet for many; they need it in order to grow strong and healthy. In Igloolik, the price of a 400 grams can of powdered enfalac is \$17.22. The lowest cost of Enfalac in a remote northern community is in Arviat and that cost is \$12.95. However, in Yellowknife, the same 400 grams can is a mere \$6.12. The cost in remote communities is more than double the price.

High prices in the Arctic are not a new problem. I raised this issue on February 10, 1997 but still have not received a response from the Premier. The government must realize this is a problem. It was recently announced that it would adjust the food allowance rates within the Income Support Program, but this does nothing to ease the hardship faced by people who are not on this program and are struggling. As I stated in my Member's statement last year, for residents trying to live a traditional Inuit lifestyle, this is quite difficult because prices of food in the NWT increase frequently. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member from Amittuq is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have

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any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Evaloarjuk, you have unanimous consent to conclude your statement. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I looked into some of the prices the Baffin and in the Keewatin and some prices from the Natilikmiot area. I will be noting how much the prices are in those regions. This is to show what the prices are in the communities.

Prices of Powdered Enfalac (400g) Prices do not include GST

Community	Northern Store	Co-op
Arctic Bay	\$12.99	\$13.99
Arviat	\$12.95	\$12.95
Cambridge Bay	\$15.39	\$15.39
Clyde River	\$16.29	
Grise Fiord		\$14.99

Hall Beach		\$15.95
Igloolik	\$17.22	\$17.22
Kimmirt		\$16.89
Pangnirtung	\$16.64	\$15.59
Pelly Bay		\$14.99
Pond Inlet	\$11.69	\$11.99
Rankin Inlet	\$13.92	\$13.00
Repulse Bay	\$16.59	\$18.04
Resolute Bay		\$12.95
Sanikiluaq		
Yellowknife	Extra Foods \$6.12	

Those are the rates I looked into. I am talking about this because I think it is important that we know this issue. Mr. Speaker, I will be directing my question on this matter to the Premier later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 237-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is a special day for all of us and for the ones we love. I would like to just take a moment from the business of the House to extend my best wishes and Valentine greetings to my wife, my daughter and my granddaughter and, of course, my mother. As well as, to my constituents and the loved ones of my colleagues here in the House today and the staff, as well. I would also like to send a reminder to all the men, who may be listening, do not forget that tomorrow is Valentine's Day. It is a very important day and it is much to your benefit to remember that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Member's Statement 238-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to remember, tomorrow is Valentine's Day, my husband, Tom who takes care of my boys and works very hard when I am in Yellowknife. I would also like to remember my boys who are staying at home, Trevor and Buddy and, also, my parents in Coral Harbour, Mikitok Bruce and Kanayuk Bruce. I would like to thank them for their prayers and I would like to thank them for praying for the Members of the Legislative Assembly. I wish the community of Coral Harbour a good day tomorrow and people in Chesterfield Inlet and Repulse Bay, I would like to remember them tomorrow being Valentine's Day, I will remember them in my prayers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 239-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize all the elders of Arviat and Baker Lake and wish them a happy Valentine's Day. As well as, my daughter Kelsey and the two ladies in the House, Ms. Thompson and Mrs. Groenewegen, happy Valentine's Day. I would like to let my constituents know that I will be in my home constituency on Monday to meet with the Manitoba Trade Delegation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 240-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to heed Mr. Miltenberger's advice and send a special Valentine wish to the two women in my life. First of all I would like to send a happy Valentine to the woman who has put up with my shenanigans for many years, my mother. Of course, it started around 47 years ago when I would not wait to see the world and she was forced to give birth in a tent frame in Ndilo in a cold month of February. Mr. Speaker, our mother has had to put up with a lot and did a lot things for me, from getting me out of bed to go to school, putting up with all mine and my brothers and sisters' endeavours, getting us ready for hockey, boxing, baseball, putting

up with my teasing of my younger brothers and sisters. I would like to thank her and, of course, my dad for putting special emphasis on certain things like respect for elders, being honest, hard work, getting an education and many other things. I would also like to thank my

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mother for making many fine traditional clothing for myself and my other brothers and sisters, such as slippers and this fine vest that I am wearing today.

Mr. Speaker, the other special woman in my life is my wife. I would also like to send Valentine wishes to her. She has also put up with me for many years, since shortly after high school. Through those years we have gone through lots, too many to get into here, of course, but most recently it was the building of our house. Many people told us if we could go through that without getting a divorce, we would probably be together for life. I am happy to say we are still together and we have moved in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I read in the Globe and Mail an article about the fact that men's brains shrink faster than women's and that this causes memory loss starting in their early 30s. Mr. Speaker, my wife said that in my case it probably started in my early 20s because I have forgotten many birthdays and anniversaries and Valentine's Days. This is one time I have not forgotten and I wish both my wife and my mother a very happy Valentine's Day and I wish to send the same to all the Members of this House and our staff here. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I do not know whether or not I was shouting loud enough to remind you that your time was up, but maybe it was because of Valentine's Day, I do not know. I would like to remind the Members that Mr. Erasmus had his birthday yesterday too. Is it 47 or 48 now? Members' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Member's Statement 241-13(5): Saktu Health Services Concerns

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Members of this Legislature may have heard recent CBC reports. I have received a copy of a story that ran in the MacKenzie Valley Reviewer out of Norman Wells recently. This was regarding difficulties that my Sahtu constituencies are expressing about changes that have been made in the way health services are provided in the Sahtu. I rise today to dispel any thought that I, as an MLA for the Sahtu, was not paying sufficient attention to their concerns and the outrage that they are expressing. I apologize to my constituents for the length of time that it has taken to resolve this problem. I have asked the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services to assist in finding a solution to the high-handed way in which the Inuvik Health Board is treating my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, without consultation with Sahtu leaders and myself as MLA, the Inuvik Health Board recently overturned a Cabinet directive which was effective April 1, 1995. This directive was communicated in writing by the Premier of the day, to each community leader. The leaders since then, were confident the government would stand by its word, particularly since they had in it writing. This is the reason, Mr. Speaker, why they are so upset and disturbed.

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet directive says the following:

1. All residents of Fort Norman, now Tulita, Norman Wells and Deline will be required to obtain medevac, hospital and medical specialists, referral services from the Stanton Hospital in Yellowknife.
2. Residents of Colville Lake and Fort Good Hope will have the choice of obtaining these services from either Inuvik or Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, a spokesman for the Inuvik Regional Health Board said today on CBC, they had made changes for medical services in the Sahtu which I say are contrary to the Cabinet directive because he says they had heard people were complaining about having to go to Yellowknife for specialist services more than once.

Since when, Mr. Speaker, do governments make arbitrary decisions in isolation of any consultation with MLAs or the communities and their leaders? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Sahtu is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Kakfwi, you have unanimous consent.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, since when do governments start to make arbitrary decisions in isolation of any consultation with the MLA or the communities and the leaders involved, particularly about something so sensitive as to where and how health services are delivered? Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu has two members on the Inuvik Health Board. One member from the Sahtu resigned over this issue last fall. I have just received word this morning that the remaining representative has also resigned.

Last night, in Deline, a five-hour meeting of the community took place, and another meeting has been called for Monday, February 16, 1998. I believe that the health board has acted inappropriately and I look forward to Cabinet resolving this issue in the very near future. This will be what the Sahtu residents will be expecting, and I believe they will be receiving that. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 242-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. Tomorrow is Valentine's Day and I would like to recognize my wife, my children, my daughters, Lynn, Marie and my sons, Paingut and Robert. I also wish to acknowledge... (Translation ends)

Point of Order

MR. ROLAND:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe the Member from Sahtu has referred to a Cabinet

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document and used it in reference to the Inuvik Regional Health Board which I, as an Ordinary

Member, do not have a copy of. I believe he is using his position to further his point as an Ordinary Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

On the point of order of Mr. Roland, Member for Inuvik, you do not have a point of order. However, by way of procedures or protocol, the Minister should table a document that he would be making reference to in order to quote from it. Mr. Morin, on the point of order.

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister Kakfwi, the MLA for Sahtu, in his Member's statement and I quote: " This directive was communicated in writing by the Premier of the day to each community." Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to get that letter and table that in this House, so all Members are able to see the same information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

We would appreciate that. Mr. Barnabas, you will continue your Member's statement. We will start from the beginning again. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 242-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying earlier, tomorrow is Valentine's Day. I want to say, I love you to my wife and my children. My daughters, Lynn and Marie, my sons, Robert and Paingut and to the people in Igloodik, including my mother and father, sister and my older and younger brothers, as well. I also want to say, I love you to my sister in Baker Lake, your husband and your children. I also want to remember my constituent members in Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. I wish them a very good day tomorrow. To my fellow Members here in this House, I love you because tomorrow is Valentine's Day, so I wish you well tomorrow. (Translation ends)

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Morin.

Member's Statement 243-13(5): Deninoo Health and Social Services Board

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me an honour and pleasure today to recognize some very hard working individuals from Fort Resolution, the Dene community Health and Social Services Board. They are in Yellowknife to take board training. They run the health care system in Fort Resolution. They are all local people. They are all very committed and have the full faith and confidence of our community and me as their MLA. I would like to introduce Don Balsillie, the chief of Fort Resolution who is the chairperson. Raymond King is the director who represents the Metis Local. Philip (Peppy) Beaulieu as we know him in Resolute, also represents the Metis Local. Diane Girouk represents the Deninu Ku'e First Nation, Patrick Simon represents the Deninu community council and Elizabeth-Ann Lafferty-Mackey (Bess-Ann) represents Deninu Ku'e First Nation. We also have an ex-Member of this Legislative Assembly, who is living in Fort Resolution now, Pete Fraser, is also a board member. Paul Bucher is a trainee and Jackie Coulter is chief executive officer. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 244-13(5): The Need for a Yellowknife Mining Museum

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the dream of a long time Yellowknifer. Eric Watt is an author of Walk on Terre, who appreciates the rich history of Yellowknife. For a long time he and his friends in the Spirit of Yellowknife have dreamed of opening a mining museum, something for tourists and newcomers alike who want to discover the roots of our capital. It is no secret that many tourists come to Yellowknife to capture that northern spirit many of them heard about when they were kids listening to tales of the frontier. What do we have to offer them here in Yellowknife? Yes, there are a couple of producing mines here in town, but you just cannot walk up and ask for a tour.

If you come to town any time other than mining week, there are precious few exhibits which capture the

golden years. Some of the mining flavour can be had at the Wildcat Café and the Prospector Café across the street, which is a fine collection of memorabilia and maps. There is no museum dedicated to frontier development that is where Eric Watt comes in. There are a number of abandoned mine sites close to town that could be cleaned up and outfitted like a vintage camp. There has been talk of setting up shop at the old Thompson Lumbard Mine which is on a hiking trail and fully accessible in the winter.

The idea of a mining museum is a good one. We need to preserve what made us special and we are losing pieces of our history every day. Setting up a museum on an old mine site would give tourists the thing they want to see while preserving our heritage for new generations. It would even generate some jobs and economic spin-offs in the process. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, this idea cannot lose. I would urge the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to initiate some discussions with the Spirit of Yellowknife on this idea, seeing how Monday is Heritage Day. I want to wish all of our listeners and all the people who are watching on television happy Valentine's Day, as well as my partner in life, Margaret. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 245-13(5): Recruitment of Nursing Staff Difficulties

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my wife and everyone else a happy Valentine's Day for tomorrow. I would like to raise a concern we may experience in Rae-Edzo. This concern not only affects Rae-Edzo, but rather, all health boards across the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the increasing need for qualified

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nursing staff. In Rae-Edzo, we have a health centre with seven nursing staff. However, by mid-March this could be down to four. It is very difficult to hire staff. Advertisements placed in southern and northern papers have no effect. I understand the reasons for leaving are high rent costs, poor accommodations, very expensive travel, heavy workloads, under staffing, high community expectations, no continuing

education opportunities, salary scales and benefit packages are no longer competitive to the rest of Canada.

It seems that the people we train in the north are more valuable to the rest of Canada than they are to their own homeland. These graduates in the north can now go south and get the same jobs as they would have up here with lighter workloads, no on-call time, much cheaper cost of living and the same or more salary. In Rae-Edzo, we are trying to provide a desirable place to live and work. We can however only do so much. We need assistance from the Department of Health and Social Services to attract these very important individuals to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 246-13(5): Reflections on Valentine's Day

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to do a little bit of refocusing here, we have heard a number of Members' statements today on what tomorrow, Valentine's Day holds. The symbol of Valentine's Day, Mr. Speaker, is the heart. I look at that for a number of reasons, not just for the idea it is Valentine and it is good to give a gift of chocolate and so on. As I grew up, and now that I have children, my heart is filled with many happy memories of being with my family and children when I comfort them when they scrape their knees or have a fight with one of their brothers or sisters. The heart is a place where you store up these treasures and you allow yourself to grow with those and move forward. All of us here have had times in our lives when we can look back, whether it is our children or parents and some events of that has happened which made a significant difference in our lives. Mr. Speaker, in this forum, at times, we do not get to show that. Days like this, we get to experience and share a little bit. I would like to share something with my little friend, Mr. Todd. Mr. Speaker, where the heart is, is just above his hope chest and I hope he finds it, so that the rest of the people can see he does have a heart.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement 247-13(5): Valentine's Greetings

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to pass on Valentine's Day greetings to my wife and family. I wish you and the rest of my colleagues a happy Friday the 13th. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 248-13(5): Thoughts and Shots

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with the tradition of holding an occasional roast of the Members of this body, the working title of this statement will be thoughts and shots. Before I get going, Mr. Speaker, I would like to send greetings to my wife and family back in Yellowknife South. Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague, Mr. Todd, is a prime example of what happens to a socialist when they discover money, a man of short stature, fast on his feet and doing a difficult job in difficult times. I would like to provide some clarity and remind Mr. Todd of one thing, it is getting toward the end of the day.

Moving on to Mr. Kakfwi, one of our busier Ministers, sometimes I think Mr. Kakfwi spends more time on a plane getting to those meetings than he actually spends at the meetings. We should, in fact, Mr. Speaker, add a new Minister of Southern portfolio to his agenda. I am always amazed when I look through Hansard at his ability to sound good and say nothing. By the way, I will be taking bets in the Members' lounge later on today whether this House finishes before Mr. Erasmus finishes building his house.

Our Premier, the Honourable Don Morin, confessed to me recently that he missed Sesame Street on the day they did they the letter "G". I cannot imagine that he calls the Deputy Premier, "Oo."

I will try not to be flippant when I talk about my honourable colleague from hard luck bay, sorry Iqaluit. Mr. Picco, had informed me he is considering quitting because he has his 12 weeks of stamps in now.

If my colleague from Hay River thought she might be spared because of her gender, I am sorry to disappoint her. What can you say about Jane, the "Dragonslayer," Groenewegen? There is some talk that in a previous life, Mr. Speaker, she was on Senator McCarthy's staff and is still looking for reds under the bed.

I might suggest to Mr. O'Brien that he not wear that seal skin jacket anymore. If I were to advise him that he should not wear it in case Mr. Todd clubs him again.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your wisdom and for your ability to keep a finely ... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays. There are no nays. Mr. Henry, you have unanimous consent.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say again, finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your wisdom and your ability to keep a firmly tooled cowboy boot on the throat, sorry, I mean on this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I would like to finish off by wishing my wife and daughter a happy Valentine's Day and I would like to extend that to all Members

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of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 249-13(5): Rationale for Posing Questions

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is about being known as the person who asks a 1000 questions. Mr. Speaker, there are times when I ask questions to try to get answers and information and try to find a way to lead up to the next question. A lot of times, Mr. Speaker, the reason for our questions is

to get information to clarify issues with our concern for our constituents and ourselves in this House. Mr. Speaker, there are times when we raise questions which may cause grief to some people in the public, especially regarding the Lahm Ridge Tower, questions that are being asked in this House or in committee of the whole regarding the budget, questions on the block funding arrangements and transfer agreements that this government has in place. Mr. Speaker, I do not ask questions for the sake of asking questions. I ask questions to try and receive answers. Mr. Speaker, there are questions we ask in regard to the way this government operates and to keep this government in line regarding the activities and work that it does day in and day out. It is my responsibility as an elected representative of the Mackenzie Delta to I try to make things better for the people I represent and deal with issues such as water problems, funds to the municipalities, infrastructure for the communities and health care and social problems we see eroding in our communities based on the cuts we made that deal with our deficit. Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with our deficit. We do have to have a heart for the people in the communities to ensure that we allow them the ability to do things and have the resources to do those things with. With that, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the question about the heart, I would like to wish everyone out there a very happy Valentine's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms. Thompson.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Oral Question 231-13(5): Broughton Island Airport Garage

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Enuaraq, on February 6, 1998. It is regarding the Broughton Island airport garage. The garage at the airport in Broughton Island belongs to the hamlet. Through an agreement with the hamlet, the Department of Transportation, Arctic Airports has used part of the garage for parking their vehicles. The hamlet now requires the full use of the garage and has requested that the Department of Transportation remove their equipment by the spring. When the Department of Transportation removes their

equipment, the hamlet will have sufficient space to park their equipment. I understand the regional superintendent for the Department of Transportation is aware of this issue and is looking at alternatives for their equipment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. 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 have a few people I would like to recognize today. I would like to recognize Alek Morin, a respected elder and fisherman from Hay River. I would also like to recognize Georgina Rolt-Kaiser, my friend and UNW vice-president. Mr. Speaker, I am especially pleased today to recognize a life long friend of my late father it seems that after four years of dating, my father was having difficulty convincing my mother to marry him and at the home of his pastor, he was engaged to her. I owe a debt of gratitude to Reverend Ken Sweigard. Welcome.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife North, Mr. Fred Turner, who has been a life long resident of the Northwest Territories, born here. Mr. Turner is a local businessman with many interests. He is a carpenter, he has owned construction companies, he has owned an airline company, he has been a real estate salesman. He also promotes Treaty and aboriginal rights and Mr. Turner is currently developing a mineral deposit very close to Yellowknife here. I would like to welcome Fred to the Assembly. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier. As we are well aware, prices in the High Arctic communities of the NWT are much higher than those of southern Canada. The Premier stated last year he would review this problem of the high cost of food in the communities. Can the Premier tell me what he has found out regarding his review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many factors that affect the cost of foods in the High Arctic communities relative to the cost in Yellowknife. Even Yellowknife itself experiences high food costs when compared to southern Canada, like Edmonton. Transportation costs are

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the primary factor that directly impacts retail prices. Some food stuffs such as frozen food, fresh vegetables must be frequently flown into the communities. While the government is working on reducing the cost of air travel in the north through improvement to airports, it is still extremely costly as compared to the frequent road transportation that is available for Yellowknife and other communities on the highway system. Other foods are delivered on the annual sealift at a much lower cost. However, the transportation costs of sealift are very significant as well. In addition, the overall cost of doing business is a lot higher in our remote communities. Businesses must reflect these high costs in their prices. Competition and the relative size of a local marketplace also affect retail prices. Small communities are served by few business outlets which result in less competition than larger centres such as Yellowknife. It is difficult for small businesses to obtain low prices available to large national food chains such as Extra Foods. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Supplementary To Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier commit to investigating the possibilities of subsidization for the essentials which are needed? (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is as concerned as the Member is about the high cost of food in remote communities. As a government, we provide indirect subsidies to the communities that are not served by regular transportation methods through the Transportation Assistance Program. This applies only to the communities that are not serviced by road or sealift. Presently, the only community on this subsidy, Mr. Speaker, is Colville Lake. I think we are doing all that we can with the limited financial resources that are available at this time. We provided support for overall business development through programs provided by RWED in order to provide better service to residents and to lower the costs. We are continually exploring ways to reduce transportation costs in the NWT. Fuel resupply contracts have been restructured which has reduced the cost of fuel. The Department of Transportation is continually looking for new ways to bring down the cost of our northern transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier aware of any other subsidy in other jurisdictions? (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 309-13(5): Food Prices in the NWT

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The one that comes to mind is the Canada Post Food Mail Program. This provides communities with lower postal rates for food shipments to remote areas of Canada. The NWT is included in that federal government program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 310-13(5): Broughton Island Airport Terminal Replacement

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Transportation, the honourable Mr. Antoine. As I indicated in my Member's statement yesterday, the community of Broughton Island needs a proper airport. The airport terminal failure will continue to put an additional unnecessary burden on maintenance and repairs as well as power consumption. Can the Minister assure me, replacement funding for the airport will be moved forward to the upcoming fiscal year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 310-13(5): Broughton Island Airport Terminal Replacement

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Broughton Island airport rehabilitation the department has been working with the municipality for some time now and the plan is to improve the airport. We had to make some changes to the municipal roadway and from the runway that is in conflict with zoning of the airport. There is a lot of major work to be done. The hamlet had asked the department to make some changes to our original plans and look at realignment. It will take some time to do. The department had asked the hamlet to do the work and there was some

arrangement with the department and the municipality. We entered into a full-authority agreement and the hamlet did some work on the airport on behalf of the community. There are some working arrangements along with the hamlet. We are fully aware there is concern about speeding up the process, but we are working with the hamlet to try to do the work that is there right now. Once some arrangements are worked out, then we would proceed with the project. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Enuaraq.

Supplementary To Question 310-13(5): Broughton Island Airport Terminal Replacement

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for that response. My second question, Mr. Speaker, is to the same honourable Minister. How can the Department of Transportation proceed with the work if the funding for the new terminal building is not even in capital plans? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

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Further Return To Question 310-13(5): Broughton Island Airport Terminal Replacement

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the airport terminal building in Broughton Island is in the five-year capital plan. At the present time, we have had to do some air-side repairs. We had to build up an apron at the airport and realign the work. We had to find the material and these things take time. Once the air-side improvements are done and the road is realigned, then that is when we bring in the capital project, the airport terminal building. The way the plans are right now, we had to get the foundation, the base, for the airport terminal building in there. That is the reason why it is in the five-year capital plan. It is not for this year. We have to do the groundwork first, before we start planning for putting a building up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 311-13(5): Maintenance of Arctic Bay - Nanisivik Road

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have a question for the same Minister, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Speaker, I have learned that the road from Arctic Bay to Nanisivik, the maintenance funding, was deleted. I also learned that Nanisivik is going to be open for another 10 years and there is no maintenance funding for this road. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, how will the road be maintained?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 311-13(5): Maintenance of Arctic Bay - Nanisivik Road

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the only highway system that we have in Nunavut is between Nanisivik and Arctic Bay. It is a 36-kilometre road. This department has been maintaining it. We also have some capital improvements for the airport and the highway at Nanisivik and Arctic Bay. This department has been negotiating with the owners of the mine there. The honourable Member is aware there are discussions between Nanisivik Mines and this department to see if the mine would be interested in taking over the responsibility of that roadway from the dock to the airport and taking over the airport. This department will continue to maintain that road. At the present time, we are still in negotiation with Breakwater Resources, the owner of Nanisivik Mine. We should come to some conclusion in this discussion sometime in the next few months, but at the present time, we are still maintaining the road and the airport. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 311-13(5): Maintenance of Arctic Bay - Nanisivik Road

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mine is trying to make money like any other business. I have talked to the mine manager have the concurrence

that they are not planning to maintain the road. There are some people from Arctic Bay that are working, going back and forth, and the people of Arctic Bay are using the road to the airport. What will happen if the mine does not want to maintain the road? Will this government still maintain the road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 311-13(5): Maintenance of Arctic Bay - Nanisivik Road

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. In our discussions with the mine owners and with the municipality in Arctic Bay last year, we covered this area. This department will continue to maintain that section of road. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Todd. Last week, the Minister announced in regard to the pay equity issue, talks had broken off with the UNW. The Minister at that time had also committed to providing information to the House regarding how the make-up or break-up of the pay equity would be regarding employees living in the Northwest Territories or living in southern Canada. My question to the Minister is, does he have that information available at this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I do have some preliminary numbers which I am prepared to share with the House, I would add the caveat that we do not have it finalized right now, but those people who are

on the retroactivity side, approximately 50 percent of the employees who were there then, are no longer there. In other words, they have gone somewhere else in terms of employment opportunities. I am advised and I caution everybody, I am advised because I want to get it very accurate, approximately 70 percent of them have moved south. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated previously that there was a percentage of these people who were no longer residents of the Northwest Territories. I did not anticipate it was going to be to that degree. I did not quite hear the Minister. I think he said it rather low at the end, but could the Minister confirm the actual percentage of people living in Southern Canada? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

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HON. JOHN TODD:

As my colleague knows, this is a highly sensitive and political issue right now, so I am a little reticent in giving defined numbers. We are working very hard to try to get that for our own benefit. When we make an agreement, which I am still optimistic, we can, we can get the cheques in the hands of the people, whether they live in Toronto or Whale Cove. But, my understanding is, in the preliminary review my staff had done with respect to the retroactivity side, in other words, what we owe people who were originally there, half of these people have now terminated their employment. I am advised, again, I qualify it by saying, I need to see the numbers clearly, I am advised it seems that about 70 percent of these people now reside somewhere besides the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Still on the issue of pay equity. It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, at one point, there were representatives of the GNWT and the UNW who came together in a joint equity pay study, known as JEPS. Subsequently, the Government of the Northwest Territories employed the services of Hay and Associates in determining a settlement. Can the Minister please advise the House why there was a change in the GNWT's position in employing the organization called Hay and Associates? Why was there a difference in amounts at that time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 312-13(5): Distribution of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to answer that question. The JEPS system was a research committee which relied solely on employee questionnaires to evaluate sample positions in the government. We believe the quality and the rate of responses to the questionnaires varied considerably. There was not an in-depth evaluation of job by job. The Hay Plan Associates is a system we have been using for the past 20 years. We asked them, because of their Canada-wide experience, if they could do a position by position evaluation. We now have that and that is how we determined the retroactivity in terms of pay equity. The ongoing costs, I think we identified them as \$9 million, I believe. It was a question of accuracy and taking the time to do, not just a sample view of jobs in the government, but to do each and every one of the individual jobs, with an organization that has the credible, professional standing in the job evaluation business and who have done numerous job evaluations for other provincial jurisdictions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, this House has spent in committee of the whole six days reviewing the budget and going over the finances of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. This review took six days and it would have proceeded much more efficiently if Members had received answers to their questions in a more expeditious way. There are still several outstanding matters that have been raised which have not been answered by the Minister. I wonder if the Minister will agree to conduct a review of Hansard, prepare comprehensive responses to all the outstanding questions asked during the review of her budget in committee of the whole and table these responses in the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will answer all of the questions. I thought we had answered them. We will go through the Hansards and answer the questions which were asked. If they felt they did not receive enough information from the department, we always provide that. We will do that for the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister would commit to table that in this House by Tuesday, February 17th? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member was more specific, I would be able to give him the answers right away. We have to go through quite a bit of detailed information if that is what they are looking for. Is it going to take longer than Tuesday? I will give the answers as soon as they are available from the department. I cannot promise for Tuesday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister will commit to at least tabling this in the House next week? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

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Further Return To Question 313-13(5): Outstanding Information Requests

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will table it when the staff have it ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. I would like to at this time on behalf of the Member for North Slave recognize two people in the gallery, Jack Webb and Alice Mercredi. Welcome to the Assembly. Mr. Roland.

Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time would be directed to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in this House on numerous occasions we

have heard of the concern of community empowerment and the level of effort which goes into it or the concern there is too much going out and the control is not there. I would like to know from the Premier, does he still stand behind the community empowerment initiative?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand fully behind the community empowerment initiative of this government. I had the pleasure today to introduce to this House, for example, a health board from one of my communities, Fort Resolution. The people in the community with the proper assistance of this government and proper training can govern themselves at the community level. I have said that since the first day I came here, ten years ago and I will continue to say it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a relief to hear the Premier state that in the way that he does, especially when he brings up health boards. I would like to know with all the direction we have done downturn, we have said that communities and the health boards can make the decisions efficiently and effectively. Is that the process we are following that the general area of direction is, if they can make the decision, the community will let them?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our community organizations are those people who are elected at the community level, or who are appointed to boards. They are quite capable of making decisions and knowing what their communities want. We, as a government, are committed to working with them to achieve what they would like at the community level. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In continuing in the area of empowerment and guidelines, some concern has been brought up with the matter of who has the final control to changes in the system. Is there right now in place guidelines that would let boards make their decisions without having decisions made by, for example, Cabinet? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a tough one to answer because we do have so many different types of boards and organizations in the communities. There would be guidelines to assist those community boards to develop, and how their working relationship is, with this government. That would be the right way to govern and the right way to help the communities to achieve what they want. Whether or not there are specific guidelines for every board, I do not know that. I could find that out for the Member and get back to him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I have raised these questions in specific concern for the community I represent, which the Inuvik Regional Health Board operates out of, although it is a regional centre. I would like to know if the Inuvik Regional Health Board will have the same ability as you have said. As community members elected to the positions, it will have an opportunity to fix things and operate things as efficiently and effectively as they see it being done? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 314-13(5): Support for Community Empowerment

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All boards will have to live and work within certain parameters. I do know that. What we, as a government, are committed to doing is working with boards to ensure they can achieve the best results for the people they represent and do it in a cost-effective manner. In the specific case of the Inuvik Regional Health Board, there are some very specific guidelines of where the medical health services come from and things as such, that are still on record of this government. They have to work within those parameters and achieve their efficiency within those parameters. Thank

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you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 315-13(5): Interest Relief for Business Credit Corporation Loans

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of RWED and is in relation to his statement yesterday and his reference to the one-time interest relief for BCC loan holders. I wonder if the Minister could elaborate somewhat on what that means? How many people would be influenced and are there such details as he may have available? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 315-13(5): Interest Relief for Business Credit Corporation Loans

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of Members of this Legislature who have requested, including the Standing Committee on Government Operations, Cabinet and the Minister, to look at the idea of doing a general roll back interest rates on all loans in good standing with the Business Credit Corporation. This is to provide some relief to our businesses in the north, who have been recipients of loans in the past. Loans that may have been locked in at a higher interest rate than the interest rate at this time. It was felt that there was merit in looking at that. We have done that and we have approved a general roll back to be effective April 1st. This means a prime lending rate that is prevailing on April 1, 1998, plus two percent, would be the rate we charge to all outstanding loans that are in the portfolio of the Business Credit Corporation. It would apply to all loans that have interest rates higher than the rate at that time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 315-13(5): Interest Relief for Business Credit Corporation Loans

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate or does the Minister have the information available as to how many businesses or outstanding loans that it would possibly affect? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 315-13(5): Interest Relief for Business Credit Corporation Loans

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can request the information from the department and give the

statistics to the Member at a later date, I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Premier. I will take it from where my colleague from Amittuq, Mr. Evaloarjuk left off, in regard to the cost of enfalac, which seems to vary from community to community, not only from region to region. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that this government provides a different form of subsidy on different programs. I also understand we provide a subsidy to ship alcohol across the country. We talk about fetal alcohol syndrome, we talk about healthy babies, we talk about fetal alcohol effects in our jurisdiction. Can this government look into adding a fringe subsidy to enfalac. We seem to be providing all kinds of subsidies across the board. Will the Minister, the Premier of this government, look into the possibility, seriously, of providing a subsidy across the board to ship enfalac? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier.

Return To Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is well aware, we do in one way or the other, supply subsidy for transportation on all the goods in the Northwest Territories. We do have resupply contracts. We have been working through our Transportation Departments and other departments in this government, to try to reduce the cost of doing business in the Northwest Territories, as well as reducing the cost of our goods for sale in the stores in the Northwest Territories. I know we have worked with Arctic Co-ops to assist them in businesses and they pretty well own the vast majority of stores in our remote communities. We are working with the people to reduce the cost. We can only do so much as a government and then from there, it is up to the private sector. I stand to be corrected, but I understand, as well, that we do not subsidize the transportation of

alcohol. I believe they have to pay what they have to pay and it is the cost of getting it there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the Premier, I find the Premier does not reply. Mr. Speaker, yes, I do understand we provide some type of subsidy to many things across the board, but what bothers me and my colleague from Amittuq is, in our community, there are times when a child, a baby, is forced to drink juice or water, just to save that extra few spoonfuls for the evening. Will the honourable Minister seriously look at paying a little more attention to enfalac? Can we at least take a look at it and see what we can do in this case? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will talk to the

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Ministers responsible for income support. We have put more money into that program. The Minister made a statement in this House and we have to make sure that the parents understand that the dollars are given to them on behalf of the children, as well, to make sure that they can budget properly, so that no child in the Northwest Territories goes hungry. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

MR. NINGARK:

My supplementary to the honourable Premier is, our stand here, Mr. Evaloarjuk and I, is enfalac. We are not talking about the Income Support Program. We are talking about the item, which we know as enfalac, in the store, on the shelf. Mr. Evaloarjuk talks about the price varying from community to community, in some cases by \$5 even. Can the Minister try and find equalization for this unfair pricing across the board? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 316-13(5): Freight Subsidy for Enfalac

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, there are many different ways to subsidize all articles or all food in the Northwest Territories, whether it is reinvesting in an airport so a bigger plane can land, or it is assisting people to marshall dry goods out of the south. We are committed as a government, to try to keep the cost of living down, try to work with people to reduce that cost of living, but enfalac is one item children need. As I have said earlier, we have put more money into the Income Support Program. I will talk to the Minister. I do not know if it is proper or right to itemize one item that should get a subsidy. I think food in general, we have to look at and that is why we have done that. I will take the Members' request seriously and I will look into it. I do not know if we will do one item or one brand name. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. In reference to the selection of the new chairperson for the Keewatin Health Board, I realize the Minister recently requested names of individuals who may be interested in this position from various parties. Can the Minister tell me, which stakeholders were invited to submit names, aside from the MLAs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the letters went to the mayors of all the municipalities, the president of the KIA, MLAs and the trustees.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the fact that there will be various names submitted by various parties, what process is the Minister planning to use to make the final selection? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have tasked my deputy minister right now to do an initial screening of the applicants who are put forward. The process would involve some input from the regional representation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further clarification on this matter, given the importance and sensitivity of the selection of this individual, will the Minister be involving some of the stakeholders to make sure the majority of the groups or organizations who submit

names are comfortable and satisfied with the selection? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once the screening committee has narrowed it down to one or two potential candidates, and I am comfortable with whomever they may be, I would plan on doing some consultations myself, recognizing we may not be able to keep everybody happy in this situation, where you are dealing with a broad range of individuals who want maybe their representative as the chairperson. It is certainly something that I am cognisant of, particularly because of the sensitivity of this position. They have to be really strong with respect to communications with the stakeholders in that region, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

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MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, further point of clarification as to the individuals the Minister will involve with the final selection. Will some of these individuals be from the hamlets, for example, hamlet mayors or somebody from the KIA, not just regional staff? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 317-13(5): Selection of Keewatin Health Board Chair

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ultimately, the final decision will be mine and I will have to be cognisant of that. As I indicated, I am trying to get it

narrowed down so we can have some suitable candidates hopefully who I will be able to convey as potential candidates, to get a sense of how much credibility or support they would have in the Keewatin through the leadership of the municipalities and through the KIA. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 318-13(5): Tuktoyaktuk Wildlife Officer

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to Mr. Kakfwi, the Minister of Wildlife. Mr. Speaker, since September of this past year, Tuktoyaktuk has been without a wildlife officer. Can the Minister inform the House when this position will be filled?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 318-13(5): Tuktoyaktuk Wildlife Officer

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The regional office in Inuvik is conducting interviews this week, interviewing candidates interested in filling this position. If everything works out, we should fill this position very shortly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 318-13(5): Tuktoyaktuk Wildlife Officer

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate how the duties of this office are being addressed at this point? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 318-13(5): Tuktoyaktuk Wildlife Officer

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion with the community transfer committee in Tuktoyaktuk regarding the position. There are discussions underway now, with the suggestion the position should be transferred to the community, possibly the hamlet. In turn that would necessitate some discussion of the duties and responsibilities this position would undertake regarding the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Also, reporting responsibilities and duties regarding the community body that will be accepting transfer of this position. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 319-13(5): NorthwTel Rate Increase

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for NorthwTel. Recently, there has been an announcement there will be rate hikes, which will mean an extra \$10 a month for local services. As we have indicated in the past, many people on fixed incomes, particularly seniors, will be affected by such rate hikes. I would like the Minister to explain why are we getting these rate hikes when we have recently had some. Thank you?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 319-13(5): NorthwTel Rate Increase

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the details to explain that. I would like to take it as notice and get back to the Member as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, there has been some confusion over the past few months as to whether or not the Aurora Fund is a public fund or a private fund. Could the Minister please tell us which it is? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate my colleague asking questions. My interpretation is, it is a private fund with public involvement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Finance Minister please tell us who sits as chairman and who sits on the board of directors of the Aurora Fund, not the sub-committees, not the screening committee, not the finance committee, who are the board of directors and the chairman of the Aurora fund? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

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Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I am the Chairman of the Aurora fund. My colleague, Mr. Kakfwi, is the deputy chairperson. There are three deputy ministers on it, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Voytilla and Mr. Handley. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then this is a private fund, but the board of directors is all associated with this government. That is good for clarity. Thank you. Is the Finance Minister aware of any other provinces or jurisdictions where there are currently immigrant investment funds in operation and how these are playing out in other jurisdictions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

I should have clarified for my honourable colleague. It is not the individuals who run the board. It is the position. It is important, so that if the fund is still there, future Finance Ministers, Ministers of RWED, et cetera, would sit on that fund. The position of our fund is no different from it is in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Quebec, BC, et cetera. They all work on the principle of some government involvement. You have to remember a little of the history. The federal government put this in place because under the previous funds where there were private sector funds, there was a great deal of problems associated with that. In fact, new Canadians were losing their money because of the term would be, scams that were in place. Under the new regulations for immigrant investment funds, the federal government made it clear that they want some presence of either provincial or territorial governments. Our system is not any different from it is in some of the other provincial jurisdictions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a document which the Finance Minister tabled on the Aurora Fund, there was an item identified at \$1.5 million for start-up costs, marketing, et cetera, it named a few things. When I questioned the Minister about it before, he had committed to table a detail of that \$1.5 million for me, in the House. I was wondering when might we expect to see that document? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Aurora Fund Status

HON. JOHN TODD:

I did get a signed note yesterday from my colleague with respect to requesting that breakdown. I will be able to provide her with that early next week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 321-13(5): Communicating Reductions to Health Boards

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time would be directed to the chairman of the FMB. Mr. Speaker, in some of the responses I received from the Premier on previous questions, some of these health boards have mitigating factors of how they operate. I would like to know, when the Minister sent out his call letters when we were going through reductions, if this was taken into consideration for the Inuvik Health Board, if it had mitigating factors of how it could operate? Was that taken into consideration and how much reduction would it be handed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 321-13(5): Communicating Reductions to Health Boards

HON. JOHN TODD:

I would like to be able to answer my honourable colleague's question because I know how the question has come about, based on some previous discussions that took place in the House earlier today. I will have to look into that matter with my deputy minister, Mr. Voytilla and report back to him early next week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 321-13(5):
Communicating Reductions to Health Boards

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister, when he is seeking this information, come up with some clear answers as to the amount of reduction that was directed to the Inuvik Regional Health Board in consideration of some of these mitigating factors, so there will be a clear answer and we can see if fairness and equity were truly followed in this case? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 321-13(5):
Communicating Reductions to Health Boards

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, I would only be too happy to give my honourable colleague the clarity he requires to ensure that his health board, the board representing the Inuvik region, was fairly treated in the whole process. I will provide it to him next week.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 322-13(5): Impact of Freight Cost Increases

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I

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would like to follow up on my colleague's questions to the Premier, Mr. John Ningark and Mr. Evaloarjuk. Mr. Speaker, I have learned that NAV Canada is

proposing to raise freight costs in April, then it will go up again in August. How will that reflect in the cost of living in the higher regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier.

Return To Question 322-13(5): Impact of Freight
Cost Increases

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a very detailed question that the Minister responsible, Mr. Antoine, would bring an answer back for the Member. I will take the question as notice and we will get an answer fairly quickly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 323-13(5): Evaluation of Education
Authorities

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Education, the Honourable Charles Dent. Mr. Speaker, the questions keep coming up in this House and these are very serious questions about education, concerning teachers, students, education councils and divisional boards. To solve these problems, we all have to work together. My question to the Minister is, can the Minister evaluate education council or divisional boards, or even on this level, try to find out where poor planning is done? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 323-13(5): Evaluation of
Education Authorities

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year, at least one of the divisional education councils in the Northwest Territories is reviewed. We use this information to evaluate their capability and how well they are doing at the job they are tasked with, through the Education Act. This is an ongoing function. As far

as I am aware, the councils in the north are doing, in general, a very good job of administering education in the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services a question regarding the Lahm Ridge Tower. I was left with word that the Lahm Ridge Tower was a good deal for this government. My question is, was this the most financially advantageous deal for government, vis a vis, other space alternatives? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has a variety of office spaces leased in Yellowknife. There are a number of different places where we have offices. After the lease extension was negotiated for Lahm Ridge Tower, we come in about fourth lowest in the total per square footage. In that case, there are a number of other leases we currently hold that are substantially higher per square foot cost than the Lahm Ridge Tower. In that way, it is quite a good deal for the government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. The Minister stated that it was the fourth lowest. Fourth out of what, ten, 20?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have quite a number of leases. I am not quite familiar with how many leases we have out there including our own space. The information I have is, if you compare the cost per square foot for the Lahm Ridge renegotiated deal, it comes in about third lowest. I could render a guess right now, but I would like to be more specific. I will have to ask my department to come back with the actual number of leases, or spaces we have out there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Minister is familiar with the fact that it is either third or fourth lowest, could he tell us what it cost per square foot in that building? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the average cost of square footage, I could guess right now, but again, I have to be more specific on that and get back to the honourable Member with the exact cost per square foot. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department developed a variety of discussion papers and no doubt some alternatives were considered during this period of time, which was about a six-month period. Could he tell us, is there some paperwork available that provides us with an idea of what the alternatives were?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 324-13(5): Alternatives to Lahm Ridge Lease

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Lahm Ridge Tower issue is something that I have been dealing with for quite some time now. As you can see, my file is pretty thick and every time questions come up, I have to go through it and try to find the correct answer. If we go back on earlier questions first to clarify, the Lahm Ridge Tower lease, is one of the 12 major leases in Yellowknife. I have to correct myself here. I said it is about fourth lowest, but there are two other leases that are less expensive than Lahm Ridge Tower, so it is the third lowest.

--Applause

There are eight other leases which are more expensive than Lahm Ridge Tower. This lease is eight percent below the average lease rate in our Yellowknife inventory. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since it is Friday 13th, I might as well keep on the roll. I have a question for the Minister of Public Works in regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower. Mr. Speaker, I had some discussions with the Dene Development Corporation in which they were shocked to find out the Lahm Ridge Tower was going to be sold to a private company. They were also

looking at it with Urbco here in Yellowknife and were always being told there were not going to be any long-term leases.

In an attempt to find alternative space, they were looking at the Laing Building, in which they made an offer to this government to purchase the building and renovate, which put \$3 million in the building, and rent back to this government with a 20-year lease, at \$8 a square foot. Mr. Speaker, Could the Minister tell us why that offer was not taken, which was a lot cheaper than the Lahm Ridge Tower deal?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is talking about the Lahm Ridge Tower. I have to explain again. The government has never owned the Lahm Ridge Tower. It was owned by the Lahm Ridge Investment Company. A private owner and they sold it to another company. A northern company. In regard to the Laing Building, I am aware that the Denedeh Development Corporation did meet with some officials of Public Works and Services for preliminary discussions to see what the possibilities are there to purchase the Laing Building. That was some time last year. In the mean time this government was looking at the office space requirement for this government after the downsizing and consolidation of the different departments took place starting last January, 1997. It was clear by last July which office space and how much office space was required in Yellowknife to run this government. These meetings with the Denedeh Development Corporation were around that same time. There was no definite commitment by anybody to sell at that time, it was part of a plan, one of the options, and that option did not get approved until this January. I just wanted to explain some background here that the Laing Building is up for sale and if the Denedeh Development Corporation is interested, the decision was made as of last month to go ahead and sell it. If they are still interested, now is the time to get involved in the whole process of trying to acquire it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about leases, about ownership of buildings. Presently my understanding of the lease in regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower is somewhere in the \$20 range, yet the offer to renovate and upgrade the Laing Building was \$8 a square foot. There is a difference between \$8 and \$20 which is almost double what the offer was. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister what the understanding that the Denedeh Development Corporation had with this department is, that they were not going to make any decisions on any long-term leases until the plan was concluded, where they were looking at developing proposals for a year. Why was the other organization not given the information that this building was going to be opened up for a long-term lease?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Lahm Ridge Tower was a renegotiated lease. There was an outstanding lease there with the previous owners. The exercise initiated the discussion to renew that lease. The landowners wanted to know whether we could renegotiate an extension of the Lahm Ridge Tower lease. This is where the Department of Public Works exercises the lease agreement. That is why this was done. As for the Denedeh Development Corporation they do not have any office space in Yellowknife. They have to acquire it first before they lease it to the government. Their offer to lease it back to the government at \$8 a square foot, I am not aware about it. I am not aware that

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they were told that there would no longer be long-term leases. I am not familiar with these discussions that happened in the past. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole question about the lease and exactly what happened between the Department of Public Works and the Denedeh Development Corporation, is pretty shocking to realize that they have been led down the garden path at the end of the day and ended up with nothing. In August there was an understanding that they had with this government that the Stuart Hodgson Building was going to be up for sale. I would like to ask the Minister exactly is the offer still on the table to sell the Stuart Hodgson Building and if not, why? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine, there were two questions. Mr. Krutko, you have used up all your supplementaries. Mr. Antoine

Further Return To Question 325-13(5): Offer to Purchase the Laing Building

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a little bit of background here just for clarification. In April, 1997 the Denedeh Development Corporation submitted an unsolicited proposal to the Government of the Northwest Territories to purchase the Laing Building and to renovate it and lease it back to the government. In August of last year the Cabinet reviewed the options' paper for the Yellowknife office space. The option that was selected called for the sale of the Laing Building and sale and lease back of the Stuart Hodgson Building at that time. That was the option that was favoured. The Laing Building would be sold on a condition that it would not be used for government office space. The Cabinet also directed that a detailed office plan be prepared. In August again, Public Works Services met with the DDC representative to discuss their proposal. At that time Public Works and Services advised the DDC representative that the Laing Building would be disposed of and that the sale and lease back of the Hodgson Building was favoured at that time.

In August, Public Works and Services advised RWED officials there were other development corporations interested in proposing building purchases and lease

back arrangements with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Besides the DDC, there were other groups that were interested. In September, Public Works and Services also advised that, because of other competitive interest, advised the DDC representatives that there will be no further discussions about the government office space and that, likely, request for proposals would be considered. In September, 1997, again RWED had asked Public Works and Services to look at the DDC proposal and at the criteria for aboriginal participation. In January, 1998, Cabinet had reviewed the office plan again and decided to make a final decision that the Stuart Hodgson Building would not be sold at this time. The Cabinet also directed this department, Public Works and Services.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Antoine, you have answered the question. Question period is over. Item 7, 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. Ningark.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 47-13(5): Letter From Taloyoak Adult Training Program Students Regarding the Students Trip to the Legislative Assembly

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document. It is a letter from the students of Taloyoak Adult Training Program and it has to do with request for funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Morin.

Tabled Document 48-13(5): Correspondence to Sahtu Chiefs Regarding Sahtu Residents' Access to Health Services

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two letters from the then Minister of Health and Social Services, January 13, 1995 to Chief Isadore Manuel and Chief Richard Kochon and it is from the Minister of the day. It is on residents of Sahtu access to health services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 11: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1997-98

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice on Monday, February 16, 1998 that I will move Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1997-98 be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motion. 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 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Committee Report 2-13(5); Committee Report 3-13(5); Committee Report 4-13(5); Committee Report 5-13(5); Tabled Document 15-13(5) and Tabled Document 19-13(5). With Mr Steen in the Chair.

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

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call committee of the whole to order. For consideration by the committee we have Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Committee Report 2-13(5); Committee Report 3-13(5); Committee Report 4-13(5); Committee Report 5-13(5); Tabled Document 15-13(5) and Tabled Document 19-13(5). Mr Ootes, can you give the committee some direction here as how you would like to proceed.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman that we proceed with Bill 8, Committee Report 2-13(5), Committee Report 3-13(5) and continue with Public Works and Services review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We will proceed in that manner than after the break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee back to order. We are dealing with Public Works and Services. General comments. Before we go to that, I will ask the Minister if he would like to bring in his witnesses?

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Committee agreed, the Minister may bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. The Minister may bring in his witnesses. Please seat them, Sergeant-at-Arms. I will ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses please.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right I have Gay Kennedy, the director of corporate services. To my left, I have the deputy minister, Ken Lovely.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Welcome to the committee. Before we go into further general comments, yesterday Mr. Roland, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Krutko and Mr. Ootes were recognized under general comments. At this point in time, I will recognize other than those four mentioned. General comments. I see you have your hand up, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move a motion to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. There is a motion to report progress and I do not recognize a quorum. I am going to have to ring the bell. I recognize a quorum. We have a motion on the floor to report progress. All of those in favour? To the motion. Opposed? Motion is defeated. For those Members who did not hear me earlier, I stated the chair will recognize that Mr. Roland, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Krutko and Mr. Ootes did speak on general comments yesterday. Therefore, I will recognize other than those Members. Are there any general comments? No further general comments? The Members agree that we will move into the estimates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Agreed. Thank you. We will skip program summary and move onto page 5-6, activity summary, directorate, total operations and maintenance, \$8.839 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the directorate, I would like to know what the policy is in this government with regard to allocating leases. Is there such a policy and who makes the decision on how these leases are going to be purchased?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your question is better directed under assets management. If you wish, you can ask the question at that time. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the directorate, it coordinates activities in support of the Government of the Northwest Territories properties and departmental goals. I thought it would be under directorate where the questions could be asked. It is listed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, I would like to direct you to page 5-8 where assets management refers to standards, policies and procedures of the department. Perhaps, you might want to ask your question at that time? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe yesterday this question was put forth to the Minister on exactly where questions should be asked with regard to leases. His comments were the directorate, as stated by the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, do I understand that assets management includes the activities related to lease management policies, procedures, and standards of the department, which relates to leases? That would be the proper place to address your question. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the deputy minister, exactly what is the deputy minister's responsibility in terms of expenditures? How much can the deputy minister spend without the approval of the Minister?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, except for things which require Cabinet approval, the deputy minister's area of authority is for the total department, client capital and agency functions. He has full signing authority to initiate contract performance, the budget for the operations and maintenance, as well as, the capital. He has been given the full authority for the maximum delegated levels. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

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MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister tell me exactly what those amounts are?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the authority is for the full budgeted amount we see here in the estimates. It is within the activity. There are some areas where it might be subject to approval. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister clarify those areas that are subject to approval and who does the approval? Is it Cabinet? Is it the Minister?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister has the full authority for the total budget for this department. However, the approvals are exceptions to the rule. For example, it might be the deputy minister's own expense. There might be a time when it is required for international travel, things of this nature which are extraordinary and above and beyond the activity which is outlined for the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was, with regard to the deputy minister, at what time does he have to get an okay, from either the Minister or Cabinet for any expenditures in this government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are some areas during the year where we are negotiating

contracts and request for proposals situations, where that has to get approval from Cabinet before we go ahead and negotiate any contracts. This is one of the areas where we need approval. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister tell me if the deputy minister received approval with regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower from Cabinet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister has the full authority of the total amount of the budget. In the activity summary, as we go through the process, there are budgeted amounts for each activity. If he is within that amount, and if it is subject to conditions of a lease or a lease extension, then he has that authority. In the Lahm Ridge Tower situation, it was negotiation of an existing lease. He was within his full authority to go ahead with the renegotiation of the Lahm Ridge Tower lease. In all competitive contracts, he has the full authority to go ahead and make those arrangements. Again, in areas where there is a need for negotiated contracts or other arrangements such as request for proposals, there is a need for approval in that area. In this particular case of the Lahm Ridge Tower, he was within his full authority to go ahead and renegotiate that arrangement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. We are on directorate. Operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, on page 5-6, \$8.839 million. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the case of long-term leases, I will be hypothetical about it, would it not seem appropriate that the deputy minister would seek the input of the Minister on this? Does he normally seek the Minister's input?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the long-term leases are normally done through a competitive process. This is why we have deputy ministers and managers to run different departments. The responsibility of the deputy minister that it is not really normal practice to seek approval for long-term leases if it is done on a competitive basis. It is within his full authority to negotiate the lease. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will repeat my question again, Mr. Chairman. I think I was fairly clear on the question. Would it not seem to be a natural process for the deputy minister to consult and to seek the advice and approval of the Minister in the event there is a long-term lease of a substantial amount of money?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thought I was very clear in my answer to the honourable Member from Yellowknife. As Ministers, we are politicians, in the political realm, in the Department of Public Works we try to make it as non-political as possible. The reason for giving the full authority to the deputy minister is to deal with it in a very businesslike fashion. Therefore, the deputy minister has the full authority to negotiate long-term arrangements with some substantial amounts of dollars attached to it. This has been the practice of this government for some time. It has worked in the past and it continues to work today. This is the way it is done, especially if it is done on a competitive basis. It is very clear when they go to a competitive basis, all the different safeguards which are in there. I am very sincere in the fact that I want to make sure it is done above board and as transparently as possible. The way to do it, is to continue with the way we are doing it in allowing the deputy ministers to do their work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the government departments were involved in a half year plan to develop a YK office plan. Half a year, Mr. Chairman. The other day the Minister stated this was probably circulated throughout all of the departments and it probably went to other individuals for

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approval. I understand that Cabinet did have a look at this in August. My question will be more direct about this. Did the deputy minister consult his Minister, advise his Minister, contact the Minister or talk to the Minister about the Lahm Ridge Tower lease renewal before he signed this document?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ootes, you are getting specific on a particular lease. Although I agree that it does refer to the duties of the deputy minister, you are now becoming specific. I would suggest you ask your question under asset management if you are going to refer to any particular lease that is involved. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will preface my comments with the fact we have all been informed there is an office space plan developed and it went through various scenarios. The office space plan, because the government was so concerned about its budgetary needs, and in order to meet our fiscal requirements, has to be considered on a political level. Therefore, did the deputy minister consult with the Minister on the office space plan, where potential leases would be signed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ootes, again, I have to suggest you redirect your question under asset management because there would be reference to an office space plan. Your question would definitely fit under that activity. I am having problems as to what part of your question actually relates to the directorate. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am raising this because, yesterday I asked and Mr. Krutko has already referred to this, where the Minister, himself,

stated we should direct any questions with regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower under the directorate. That is why I am raising it here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ootes, I am not preventing you from asking your question. I am suggesting you re-ask it on the next page, unless you can tell me how this relates to the directorate activity. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Let me go on to another question, then, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the office space plan that was developed for Yellowknife, could the Minister tell us, it went through various scenarios, was there a specific group within the Department of Public Works that worked on this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ootes, I did get an indication from the Minister he is willing to answer your question at this time. Your first question. I am going to leave it up to him as to whether he wants to respond to both of your questions at this time. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for clarification where a couple of Ordinary Members made mention of what I stated yesterday. From an unedited Hansard, I did say, I think there was some concern about the authority of the deputy minister in some decisions. Perhaps, it might be a good idea to address it at that time. I was making references to the directorate in regard to the authority of the deputy minister.

In reference to what the honourable Member is saying, I would like to ask the deputy minister to elaborate further in response to the honourable Member, Mr. Ootes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Mr. Chairman. I did not consult with the Minister of Public Works and Services before signing the lease on the Lahm Ridge Tower. The group that worked on the office space plan for Yellowknife, under my

direction, was the North Slave Regional office, the superintendent of the North Slave Regional office. It was a collaborative effort between me and the superintendent. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions not specifically related to any particular lease but with regard to the authority of a deputy minister. Would it be possible for everyone's edification, to get a copy of the signing authorities of the deputy minister? The levels they are at so it is clear what the authorities are, the delegated responsibilities, and what areas the right to manage is laid out in?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Chairman, if I may. We can provide through the FMB and Cabinet the policies and the spending authorities of everybody, right down to a clerk. Perhaps that way we will have some clarity and get on with the budget as we were supposed to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to cause extra work to already overburdened FMBS staff. I am interested senior management, deputy level. The clerical positions are not something I need.

I have another question for the Minister, possibly the deputy minister. As a senior manager, the most senior non-elected official in the department, when there are items which are perceived to have political sensitivity, there is a role of protocol where you alert your superiors or your political masters, I suppose for lack of a better word, of possible politically sensitive issues. Could the Minister tell us when, in fact, he was contacted by the deputy minister that this issue had political ramifications? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the deputy minister to provide some information on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Lovely.

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MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a copy of my own financial signing authority spread sheet which Mr. Antoine has indicated he would be prepared to copy and pass it out to Members to show how it works for one deputy minister. We could do that immediately.

With regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower lease, I was particularly concerned with the political implications or the perceived political sensitivity of that particular lease. I made a point of not discussing it specifically with my Minister, who, at that time, was Mr. Arlooktoo. I felt that, and still do feel very strongly that, the reason deputy ministers are given full signing authority for these kinds of matters is to take them out of the political arena and ensure contracts are awarded under my authority through the competitive process. The Lahm Ridge Tower lease was awarded in 1985, through the competitive process, and it had provisions in it for two five-year extensions. It was published at the time that the competitive process was finalized in 1985, so all bidders who submitted a proposal were aware if they were successful in getting the lease, that there was the ability to extend it upon mutual agreement of the parties. When I reviewed the request and realized we were in a position to negotiate better arrangements than were currently in place, I examined the lease in minute detail to be sure I had the authority to do it. I forged ahead to try to finalize the deal as quickly as we could. It happened at the time the Yellowknife office space plan was going through its tenth or twelfth iteration.

I had been to deputy ministers on at least six occasions discussing a variety of approaches the government could take to deal with its need for office space on a long-term basis. I had reached a consensus with the deputy ministers about which recommendations would be made to Cabinet, and

three options were proposed to them. This occurred, in fact, the Minister of Public Works and Services signed the options' paper on July 31, 1997, just at the time we were negotiating with the former owner of the Lahm Ridge Tower. It was clear to me that it was not in the best interest of the government to get out of the lease. Two major government departments were residents in the building preparing for division and dealing with some fairly sensitive client needs in terms of both education and transportation.

I took a look at the implications of going out to the competitive process and negotiating new lease arrangements, recognized the disruption that was involved. The \$1.5 million in tenant improvement costs the government was likely to incur, were not worth the benefits, of perhaps, getting a marginally lower base rent on the facility. Therefore, in conjunction with the deputy ministers of both departments who occupied the building, I made the decision to finalize the extension negotiations, and we proceeded to make the formal arrangements with the owner.

We knew at the time the owner was negotiating with a northern firm to purchase the facility and that the owner would have been in a better position to sell the building if he were able to show that he had longer term government leases which would provide some financial stability and would probably make it a bankable proposition.

It was not really relevant to us at that point who the northern business was. We were only concerned about dealing with some long standing problems. We felt we were paying far too much for utilities in the building, and the owner agreed to make changes which would cut our utility costs by \$500,000 over the life of the extension.

We moved into that building in 1985, when it was opened, and I know how difficult times were, when the air handling equipment did not work, for example. We negotiated with the owner to replace the HVAC system, the air handling equipment, and he made that investment. On balance, when we reviewed the financial arrangements involved, we felt that it was a good deal and finalized the negotiations with a view toward signing the lease extension as quickly as possible. At no time did I talk to my Minister about the negotiations that were underway. My recollection is, I may have discussed it with him about a week after the event. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Minister, a large portion of that response was directed to activity assessment management. I urge the committee to stick to the activity at hand. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the deputy for that thorough response. It was almost ministerial in length. I have one question, if I may. If you think it is more appropriate I ask it under a different activity, let me know. I have a question about RFPs which I see is a policy of the department. I know there is work being done on RFPs, but there is obviously a clear concern that it is not a perfect system which is now in place. On one page you can put out a request for proposals that could be worth millions of dollars that have no detail and then once it is awarded, you have no idea what went on behind closed doors. I was wondering if the Minister could indicate, is there going to be significant and meaningful improvements made to the RFP process, in fact, it is truly transparent and more in line with the current public tendering process? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is a request for proposal concern here, and it is a policy of this government which this department also exercises which is in the form of a competitive bid process. There are a lot of details and there needs to be some explanation done in this area to clarify this one. There is enough detail in the request for proposal to make it transparent, and to make it workable, and make some changes to it. The suggestion here is, if we could provide some detail on some of the material, it might help to explain this request for proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I have to recognize next on my list, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Ootes and Mr. Erasmus, in that order. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some general questions in the area of negotiated leases. Mr. Chairman, when there are negotiated leases which are undertaken in a Minister's riding, would that

Minister necessarily be aware of those leases through his role as a Cabinet

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Minister? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if it is a negotiated lease, then the negotiated lease has to be approved by Cabinet before it is initiated. The Minister would be aware of any negotiated lease including in his own riding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

In the case of a negotiated lease, in any Minister's riding, that Minister would not in any way be precluded from knowing about that negotiated lease?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

I would say that, yes, if it is a negotiated lease. It goes to Cabinet for approval prior to it being initiated to start the negotiations. The Cabinet Ministers are all aware of any negotiated arrangements. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister think of any circumstances under which a Minister would not be made aware of leases being negotiated in his riding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Any new negotiated lease with the Minister, he would be aware of. If there is a situation where there is an extension of an existing lease that has been there for some time, it might be an area where the Minister might not be aware of exercising terms of an existing lease which has been initiated. Let us say, ten years ago, it expired and you are negotiating an extension. Perhaps, in those circumstances, the Minister might not be aware. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the Minister's department goes to RFP for something, is it considered acceptable for negotiations or alterations to take place with the proponent on the details of the contract after it has been awarded? For example, could the price or the scope of the contract be altered in any way?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the request for proposal is a way for the department to look for new and innovative ways to do a certain project, like a request for creative ideas on how to do a certain project. We have X number of dollars to get a project done. Perhaps, we have not done it before. Perhaps, we are doing it in a small community. Request for proposal is asking for ideas from different companies to come forward with how they propose to do a certain project. Price is not the only factor. There needs to be some flexibility. There might be an occasion where a request for proposal comes forward and there needs to be some adjustments to make it work. There are some minimum changes to it after it is awarded. I would like to ask the deputy minister to add to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister indicated, the request for proposal process is usually used when we know what we want to do, but not necessarily how

we want to do it. We take into account a number of factors when we evaluate the proposals that are received, including the scheduling the proponents are coming forward with; the team skills of the people who make up the team that will do the work; the experience that they have had in doing similar work in the past; cost that is not necessarily a bottom-line cost, but can represent the going rate for the industry and a general outline of how they propose to do it.

Once that work is done, we then proceed to the tendering process, because we know exactly what the building is supposed to look like, what is supposed to be in it and what kind of material is needed. That is when it is more appropriate for us to say, give us a bottom-line dollar figure for how much it will cost to put up this building. In the front-end of the process, we are looking more for how to do it, who is involved and what is the schedule that is associated with the work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The purpose of my question is, there are quite a number of people who already feel that RFPs are too subjective in the evaluation to start with. What we are hearing from the Minister and deputy minister, there is another whole level of subjective evaluation that can be applied to this, to the extent that the person or company's proposal can then be taken and further altered in terms of price. In the case of the scope of the work, it could be for more than what was in the original proposal, if what I am understanding is correct. This is a second layer or level of subjectivity, which lends to the whole argument that RFPs are not a very transparent and seemingly fair way of contracting for goods and services.

I notice the deputy minister shaking his head when I said you could change the size. Let me give you an example, or ask you,

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for a contract awarded on RFP, for example, on a building. If the building was going to be 1,000 square feet and ultimately, the client department decided they needed 1,200 square feet, would that be classified as fine-tuning to actually negotiate with the proponent to increase the size of the building and thus, increase

the size of the contract, altering the price? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, normally, if we are going to build a building, it is a certain size. Let us say, for example, the honourable Member's example was 1,000 square feet. We would not increase the size. Most of the fine-tuning as this Legislative Assembly knows, we just have X number of dollars for a certain project. What this department tries to do by fine-tuning it, we usually try to go lower rather than higher. In many cases, the RFP, in examining a certain building, may estimate to be higher than budgeted for. What we try to do, is to try and accommodate the budget that we have. The fine-tuning is more to accommodate what we have and try to make it less rather than more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that answers my question with respect to a capital project, like a building. What about in the case of something like a lease? After the contract has been awarded to a proponent, would you go back to that proponent and say, actually, we needed 100 square metres more than what we told you, we will take it at that same price. How about that kind of fine-tuning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a difficult question to answer. It is a hypothetical question and I am told the department never encountered that kind of situation before. Usually, in the lease business, the majority of leases this government has, are done through a public tender process. Usually when that happens, leases are pretty well locked in after they are negotiated. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your time is up, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was an indication that current policy is meant to keep the politicians out of contract awarding. I would like to know how long this particular policy that outlines this area, been in place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once you go through a competitive process, it is always done through that process. There is no interference in it. There is a process which is laid out very clear. It is very transparent and once it is in process, there is no tampering with the whole process. It has to run its course. At the end of the day, through evaluation, the department does its work fairly well. We have very good people administering the public tendering process for leases. Once the process has run its course, again, they come out with the best price for the best dollar. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no doubt we have competent people looking after the contract awarding selection process. I also understand that the process is intended to have no political interference. I would like to know, when did we start this process, so that there is no political interference? Has it been in place for 20, 30, 10 years? How long has it been like that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. To the best of your knowledge, Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what I have been told is, this whole process has been in place for a very long time, ever since there has been a functioning executive for this Government of the Northwest Territories. Also, there is a financial

administration manual which lays out this whole process of competitive bids. It is all laid out in there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other question I would like to know is, if other jurisdictions do their contracts in a similar manner, such as other provinces and the federal government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

The competitive bid process is done here in the Northwest Territories like all the other governments in this country, and the other provinces. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specifically, in other jurisdictions, do they also exclude politicians in the decision-making and awarding of those contracts? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mr. Chairman, in the competitive bid process, to the best of my knowledge, and what I have been told by the experts in my department, is that the process is used in other jurisdictions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I am on Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1998-99, Department of Public Works and

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Services, activity summary, directorate, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance,

\$8.839 million. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Ootes in that order.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In reference to two leases, in general, I will use the example of the Lahm Ridge, since that seems to be the hot topic these days. You indicated the Minister was not consulted on this transaction until after the fact. Can you tell us whether any other Minister of the Cabinet was consulted for input prior to the signing of this agreement?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you. No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Chairman, from that, I gather, the signing authority for a deputy minister is unlimited. Is that the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

My question is, whether or not the signing authority for deputy ministers is unlimited, as it applies to long-term leases? Given the fact that they do not have to consult or get approval from their Ministers. Is that the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien the question was asked and responded to earlier, but I will allow the Minister to give a short response. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister does have signing authority, and the question was, is it unlimited. No, it is not. It is not unlimited. It is bound to the provisions of the Financial Administration Act which more or less paraphrasing some of it is that it has to comply within the activity of

the department. It has to protect public interest, and it has to be done through the competitive process. As long as the deputy minister is adhering to the Financial Administration Act and the conditions laid out in there, he has the signing authority up to the budget amount and the activities in the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You indicated that the deputy has the authority within the budget. Is that saying that this item here, this long-term lease was budgeted? Otherwise, how would you know what the cost would be? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this long-term lease was budgeted. It is done through the existing lease that we have, the requirements that this government needs to have office spaces available in Yellowknife. Yes, it was budgeted for in that manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I would just like to remind the Members that if you get specific to a particular lease, you should wait when the chair requests you to wait until we reach assets management. The overall policies of contracts, how they are awarded and the involvement of the department at the top level is what was being addressed in this particular activity rather than the specific leases. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Chairman, I made a comment earlier that I was referring to the Lahm Ridge as an example, but I am speaking in general terms. My next question then would be in reference to leases in general. Is it safe to say that all long-term leases over the last number of years have been signed without consenting or without consulting with the Minister of the day? In other words, are all long-term leases signed without consultation with the Minister?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to request Mr. Lovely, the deputy minister, to reply to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Mr. Chairman, I can only be categorical about the experience I have had with the Department of Public Works and Services. As I stated earlier, in matters such as lease extensions or signing leases after a competitive process has been completed, there is not consultation with any Minister. That is generally an accepted practice for any kind of contract for which the deputy minister has, to speak in generic terms, a responsibility. I cannot guarantee that my predecessors followed the same practice. In summary, I do not know prior to my own taking on the responsibility in this portfolio.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the deputy minister takes on the responsibility and gets involved with putting this kind of a lease together, I know you indicated in most cases you do not bring the Minister into play. Is there anybody else that you consult with prior to signing such a major lease, whether it is five or ten years?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister consults with the client departments and determines from them if the desire is there, first of all, to continue in the existing lease and, if, there is support, then it goes ahead and he tries to negotiate a good deal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General comment very short on directorate. Everybody seems to be talking about the lease in question. My gathering, Mr. Chairman, is that it was partially a nonpolitical decision, the deal that was made. It is also my understanding that since the two owners of the said building are not able to be here and take part in the decision to defend your position, I think we should move along. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I hate to say it, my co-chair, but your question is on the wrong page. It is out of order. You should refer to specific leases under assessment management. I am going to have to ask if you have a specific question under directorate. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was not a question. It was just a comment. People were talking about this particular issue, and I just pulled into that discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I have to recognize Mr. Krutko as next on my list.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to notification to the different departments, who do you notify? Do you notify the Minister? Do you notify the deputy minister when these notifications are given that you are going to require some purchase of an item or a lease? Whom do you notify? Is it the Minister or the deputy minister?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

The practice is that the deputy minister of Public Works contacts the deputy minister of the client department. If it is in the case of leases, extensions, office rent and so forth, it is a deputy minister to a deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At what time does the Minister get involved in saying exactly where he wants his offices? You talk about this plan or whatever you have for developing offices. You mentioned using the Lahm Ridge Tower where you have two departments, Transportation and, I believe you said, Education. I believe Education is in the Northern United from the breakdown you had. The decision is to put everybody in one location, at what time does the Minister make the final decision that he wants his departments over in block A versus being in block B? When does the Minister make that decision through Public Works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the deputy minister to provide some details.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Lovely, do you wish to respond?

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The provision of office space and management of the office space inventory is handled by the Department of Public Works and Services as an administrative process. We allocated space, and we pay for the leases out of the budget that we have in our asset management activity. The departments are consulted and the deputy ministers are consulted with regard to whether they are satisfied with their existing office space, whether changes are required, and they are asked with regard to their preferences. It is not always possible to satisfy the deputy ministers because of the availability of space, the cost associated with it and those kinds of things. To the best of our ability, we try to satisfy

them that the space we are providing does satisfy their needs. At no time do we involve the Minister of the client department because the deputy minister, to use the example in Education, is mandated to determine how he deals with his counterparts in the service departments such as Public Works to satisfy his administrative needs. We do not involve the Ministers in administrative matters. We go to them when we need direction on policy issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to Mr. Lovely's comments earlier, that he felt a real unease in having to make the decision in regard to the Lahm Ridge Tower. In making that decision, did you advise any other people within your department, your superintendents or, through some sort of a committee, other deputy ministers to see knowingly that this was going to be a controversial issue that you try to get some legal advice or you got advice from other deputy ministers on this matter?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this particular case, both deputy ministers of the client departments were consulted. We did get legal advice on our ability to extend the existing lease without going out to competition. As you are aware, we tabled some information in the House about other leases that have been extended. We needed an overall legal opinion on our ability to do that within the existing leases. I also talked with all deputy ministers about how we should deal with all their office space requirements in Yellowknife. I asked for their advice. They finally agreed in July, 1997, in terms of what we would recommend to Cabinet. It is a very consultative process before we enter into these kinds of arrangements and when we decide to extend a lease for a significant period of time. It is not done without a lot of consideration. It was not a snap decision. I had the benefit of advice from a variety of colleagues before the decision was made.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to expenditures of deputy ministers and the department, the Financial Administration Act which is still in place, my understanding is there was a limit on expenditures of \$500,000, and you had to get approval to spend anything beyond that. Can the Minister clarify in this case, why the Financial Administration Act was not used on this particular matter?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Are you suggesting approval of \$500,000 at one time or \$500,000? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the Financial Administration Act that we implemented because of the deficit, there are limits to how the government can spend money, in which there has to be an approval process, over and above that amount, which is usually Cabinet making a decision. I would like to know, why was that not practiced when the act is still in place in regard to this government? Did they follow the

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Financial Administration Act in making these decisions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the decision by Cabinet and FMB is to give full signing authority to the deputy ministers so they could do their work of managing their department and they make good business deals for this government. This is a way of streamlining government and providing good service. This was done about two years ago, this change, to give full authority to the deputy ministers within their departments subject to the Financial Administration Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason for the Financial Administration Act is because of the deficit situation we found ourselves in and not to end up back in that position. I would like to ask the Minister, or deputy minister, how much is your signing authority for expenditures? Could you give us a cash amount?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy ministers have been given full signing authority to run their departments. They are managers and we have to let the managers manage their departments. Last year, the total expenditure for this department was \$62.029 million and this year, in the main estimates we are proposing, \$61.352 million. This is the limit of this whole department. According to the Financial Administration Act, and subject to the provisions in there, this is the authority a deputy minister has in the case of each one of the departments of this government. We are looking at salaries, wages, grants and contributions, other operations and maintenance, buildings and works, equipment acquisition and contributions. These are the activities in each department and there is a certain amount in each department delegated to those authorities. These are the conditions placed on the deputy ministers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Antoine, the question was, is there a \$500,000 limit under the Financial Administration Act that applies to the deputy minister. That was the question.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mr. Chairman, there is no \$500,000 limit the honourable Member is talking about. There may have been in the past, but as of about two years ago, the deputy ministers were given full authority for the total budget of their department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Two minutes to go. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we addressed the Financial Administration Act last fall. I have a section here. This is the appropriate section. Guarantee or indemnity on behalf of the government, the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the board and on behalf of the government may in a fiscal year, make an indemnity where the maximum liability under the indemnity does not exceed \$500,000. Where do they get the authority to do this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I am advised your question is not appropriate to this directorate. Do you want to have another try at it?

MR. OOTES:

Let me ask the question, what is the limit that a deputy minister can sign for in this fiscal year, without checking with Cabinet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Antoine, I will allow you to respond and then I will have to recognize the clock.

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, again, the deputy minister has the full authority to expend the budget in this department according to the Financial Administration Act. However, there are some sections within the department where the Cabinet has to seek approval if we are negotiating leases or in contract areas. Overall, the deputy minister has the full authority to expend the budget that is in his department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I recognize the clock and I thank the witnesses for appearing before the committee. I will now rise and report progress.

--Break

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Good afternoon. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We did not have a quorum to vote on the report of committee of the whole. The Chair recognizes a quorum. 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 on Monday, 9:00 a.m. of the Ordinary Members' Caucus.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 16, 1998:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements

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4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion

15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, No. 2
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 9, Loan Authorization Act, 1998-99
 - Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, Number 3, 1997-98
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
 - Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99
 - Committee Report 02-13(5) Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 03-13(5) Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 04-13(5) Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 05-13(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

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. By the authority given the Speaker by motion 3-13(5), I order that the sitting hours be set on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. until February 27, 1998. All other sitting hours stand as established by the rules. This House stands adjourned to Monday, February 16 at 10:00 a.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

MR. SPEAKER: