



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

5th Session

Day 27

13th Assembly

HANSARD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1998

Pages 927 - 958

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Sam Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, 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. Roland. Good afternoon. Today is Literacy Day. The purpose of Literacy Action Day is to raise awareness of local and territorial issues and to reaffirm our support for literacy regardless of form in the Northwest Territories. Literacy is not only about reading and writing, but also about effective communication. Reading and writing is not only about reading what is on paper, but also on rock or a piece of wood. This would have been said if I was doing it in my own language, but we are communicating now. To get my message across sometimes we have to use the services of the interpreter translation staff. Their job is very important when it comes to communication. Sadly enough, the Northwest Territories has the lowest rate of literacy in Canada. The good news is that indigenous languages are alive and well in the Northwest Territories. We have the highest rate of indigenous language practice in Canada, perhaps even in the world.

Literacy is communication. Communication is needed for survival, whether you are saying a prayer or piloting a plane in a life-threatening situation. Sometimes saying one thing in one language may mean another thing in another. For example, in this House, I would address a Member according to the name of his constituency or by his last name. In the aboriginal culture, it is most respectful when we define the person by his first name.

Literacy skills are important. I would like to encourage all aboriginal organizations, business and labour groups and Members to include literacy as their activity, not only for today, but for the rest of their lives. Mahsi cho.

--Applause

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 66-13(5): GNWT Position on Northern Diamonds

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The north is blessed with an abundance of resources including oil and gas, gold, base metals and diamonds. However, as fortunate as we are to have such riches, northerners have mixed feelings about our nonrenewable resources. For example, we worry that these resources will be taken from us, without real benefits to the north. We worry that mining companies will come and prosper and then leave us with a mess to clean up.

Mr. Speaker, we have reason to worry about these things because this has happened before, but as a result of our past experiences, we cannot and we will not allow these situations to be repeated. The fact is these resources represent our greatest potential for economic development, the jobs and revenues that we need to become more self-reliant, both for today and our future generations. We must welcome the investment and the expertise of oil, mining and exploration companies who want to work in partnership with us to share in the benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we will soon join an exclusive club of producers of one of the most valuable commodities on earth, diamonds. The diamond industry is unique and it is highly profitable. BHP Diamonds should recover the capital costs associated with Ekati Mine within the first five to seven years of operation. The company will go on to generate over \$14 billion in income during the 25-year life of the mine. We estimate its profit over the same time period will be over \$4 billion. Mr. Speaker, this is revenue that will be generated from our resources.

What do we think is fair to the north? First, we must ensure our land and environment are protected. Second, we expect some of the jobs and business opportunities for northerners from construction and

operation of this mine. Third, we want a fair share of taxes and royalties. Finally, we want opportunities to participate in the value-added industries that are fed by this resource. Is this asking too much?

--Applause

I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. Let us look where we stand with our first diamond mine. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT, Canada and BHP have negotiated an environmental agreement which we believe provides unprecedented commitments to protect our environment. The socio-economic agreement between the GNWT and BHP complements the impact benefit agreements between BHP and affected aboriginal groups. It is designed to ensure residents of the Northwest Territories will receive training, employment and business opportunities from the construction and operation of Ekati Mine. These arrangements will help us to meet our first two objectives of protecting our environment and providing northern job opportunities. What about the revenues?

Mr. Speaker, under current arrangements, the federal government will have a net fiscal benefit of over \$4 billion over

Page 928

the life of the mine. The NWT will receive only \$400 million from this mine in net tax revenue, less than ten percent of the federal revenues. Due to current inequities in the federal royalty and fiscal arrangements, our average annual revenues of \$17 million will be less than we will spend on infrastructure and social programs in support of this mine. One option is to add new taxes to these mines. We have thought long and hard about doing that. However, Mr. Speaker, this government has decided it would prefer to work with the federal government to achieve a fair share of the current taxes and royalties. We are doing just that.

This government would also prefer to work with the industry to achieve benefits through value-added opportunities. Our government is participating in a federal-territorial task force, which we hope will shape future Canadian policies on the diamond industry. We have consistently taken positions that the diamond valuation should take place in a northern community, off the mine site. In doing this, we recognize that BHP Diamonds may incur a small incremental cost. However, government valuation occurs offsite in every major diamond mining jurisdiction. The NWT

and Canada should accept no less, Mr. Speaker. We have been told, we northerners do not have the skills to get involved in this industry, that we should be content with our role as a mining colony for multinational corporations. Mr. Speaker, this is completely unacceptable.

--Applause

The key to developing a diamond cutting and polishing industry is access to a constant reliable supply of diamonds at a fair market price. Let me be very clear on this. We are not asking the mining industry to subsidize development of a new northern industry. BHP Diamonds has stated publicly that it would prefer to sell diamonds in the north, provided they get a fair price under normal commercial terms.

Our wish is to work directly with them to achieve that objective and make a small fraction of the raw resources available for northern use. The supply of rough diamonds will be used to assist the development of a value-added diamond industry in the Northwest Territories. A small but direct involvement of this government in the diamond industry will also provide us with valuable inside information on diamond markets, information we need to protect the interests of the north.

We look forward to working with BHP Diamonds and future diamond producers to ensure northerners share in many benefits from the discovery and mining of NWT diamonds. Mr. Speaker, these are our resources and our future. There are some people who would say, we are asking too much, but I say, we can accept nothing less, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Todd.

Minister's Statement 67-13(5): Pay Equity Negotiations

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the government decided to speak out openly and factually about pay equity. It is now recognized that a negotiated solution will only be possible if the government provides factual information that puts an end to speculation and

corrects perceptions that were based on misleading information.

The government believes it is possible to find common ground that will bring about a negotiated solution to the pay equity complaint. Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to consider that the government, the union, employees and the people of the NWT have the following common interests. Everyone would like to see men and women paid the same for doing work of equal value.

--Applause

Everyone would like to see a negotiated solution. No one likes this issue to drag on for another ten years, Mr. Speaker. No one wants to solve one inequity by creating greater inequities for other residents. Mr. Speaker, there are ways to find solutions that meet all these interests. I have stated many times that I believe the only way to resolve disagreement is through negotiations. Our best hope for a negotiated solution is to put aside the emotions, rhetoric and concentrate on the facts and on finding reasonable solutions.

Until recently, the government believed that the Canadian Human Rights Act did not apply to the pay equity complaint. Until recently, the government did not have the results of a reliable job evaluation system to determine the extent of any pay equity problem.

Before the new Hay Job Evaluation System was implemented, all we had were evaluations on a sample of jobs from a study done in the early 1990s. These evaluations were inadequate to identify any specific pay equity problem. These evaluations did indicate, however, there was a potential pay equity problem. Efforts to address these potential problems were made at previous rounds of collective bargaining by the restructuring of rates of pay.

Recently, the federal court ruled that the Canadian Human Rights Act applies where there is a complaint against the government. The government has just completed the evaluation of all positions using a bias-free job evaluation system. These evaluation results show that even with the restructuring that has taken place, the rates of pay in the collective agreement do not provide for equal pay for work of equal value. This means that the government cannot knowingly ignore the legal obligations

Page 929

set out in the Canadian Human Rights Act by signing a new collective agreement with rates of pay that may be discriminatory against its female employees.

Mr. Speaker, the UNW is faced with the same dilemma since the Canadian Human Rights Act applies equally to the union as the representative of unionized employees. The UNW cannot knowingly sign a collective agreement that contains rates of pay which may be discriminatory against its female members.

This means that the government and the UNW must find a solution to the pay equity problem before they can sign off a collective agreement. Rates of pay must be based on a bias-free job evaluation system as set out under the Canadian Human Rights guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful and optimistic that a negotiated solution to pay equity will be achieved within the April 1, 1998 deadline the parties have set for themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Minister's Statement 68-13(5): Rent Scale Moratorium

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak about the social housing rent scale. As Members may recall, this government put a halt on raising rents last year for tenants in social housing.

The moratorium on rent increases was to allow work to begin on integrating the social housing and income support programs. A number of important opportunities on the two programs to work more closely together have now been identified.

Some of these opportunities include:

- Developing an appeal process to look at cases where rent increases may be causing true hardship for families.
- Establishing a consistent cost of living indicator, which can be used in both social housing rent calculations and the income support program.

- Developing consistent definitions of income between the two programs

- Developing a process where social housing construction and maintenance can be used as one of the income support program's productive choices

In order to allow government attention to focus on developing these opportunities for the benefit of both future governments, it has been decided there will be no further rent increases to social housing tenants prior to division. I am also pleased to announce an extension to the Rent Rebate Program.

--Applause

My colleague, the Honourable Charles Dent, and I look forward to the opportunity to further integrate two of the government's most important social programs. This is absolutely essential. The work, to be jointly done by the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, will set a vital framework for future social program implementation for the two new governments in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, when the social housing rent scale was put into effect in 1995, it was intended to bring rents in line across the NWT in all communities. The rent scale has had the desired effect in urging more families to consider the home ownership options offered by the NWT Housing Corporation. The Corporation now gets well over 1,000 home ownership applications annually.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the government's decision to defer further rent increases until this vital work is completed, demonstrates that we have heard the messages being given by the communities, tenants and many of my fellow MLAs that housing and income support programs need to work more closely together to benefit our citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Before we go on to Members' statements, I wish to recognize some people in the gallery.

The Honourable Leonard Derkach, Minister of Rural Development; the Honourable David Newman, Minister of Northern Affairs, Energy and Mines; Mayor Spence of the town of Churchill and Mayor Comaskey, from the city of Thompson, Manitoba, with

their delegation of public servants. Welcome to the Assembly.

--Applause

Before we proceed with Members' statements, some Members have been commenting that I am hiding something. Just in case I turn redder than I am now, I want to remind the Members that today is half the day of the rest of my life.

--Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 279-13(5): Birthday Greetings to Speaker Gargan

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today one of our own is one step closer to officially becoming an elder. It is 50 years ago today on February 19, 1948, that this Member was born. He was first raised in Red Knife River and has since spent his life in the community of Fort Providence. This Member's years in this House and the growing amount of silver hair have earned him the title of Dean of the Assembly. As you might have guessed, Mr. Speaker, the

Page 930

birthday I am talking about is yours. You are now a half a century old. On behalf of all your colleagues, I wish you a happy 50th birthday. Mr. Speaker, I hope your next 50 years are filled with as much joy as your first half a century on earth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Evaloarjuk. It is very much appreciated. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 280-13(5): World Championship Dog Mushing Results

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to provide an update on the world championship dog races in The Pas, Manitoba. We have several NWT dog mushers who are participating there. This is just hot off the

press. It occurred earlier today. Richard Beck came in third. Richard is the defending world champion, six times I might add, and the only person to have won this championship six times. He is a constituent of Yellowknife North. In fourth place was Frank Kelly of Yellowknife; in fifth place was Raymond Beck of Hay River; in sixth place Grant Beck from Yellowknife; in seventh place Sam Perrino of Yellowknife; ninth was Danny Beck from Hay River; 11th was Ernie Campbell from Yellowknife; 12th, Joe Hickers from Baker Lake; 13th, Heather Beck of Yellowknife; 14th, Arthur Beck of Hay River and 19th, Henry Landry from Kakisa. Mr. Speaker, this race goes on for a couple of more days. I would like to wish all the best to the NWT mushers. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 281-13(5): Literacy Action Day

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise today to speak briefly about literacy and the fact that today is Literacy Action Day. As you noted, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Northwest Territories has the lowest rate of literacy in Canada. I think we have done a good job with our children in the high schools and elementary schools in terms of providing an adequate education. I am concerned about literacy as it relates to adults, adult basic education and literacy. Mr. Speaker, very clearly in the last two years with our deficit reduction, we have not been able to put the kind of resource that are necessary toward this very important initiative. In fact, in the last three years, there have been reductions in both at the territorial and federal level while the demand for the service has gone up.

If the people are not literate, they are handcuffed, Mr. Speaker. They are handcuffed and have a disability which is easily cured with a little education and motivation on their part. It is very critical that we now look to try to reinforce these programs such as basic adult education. When I say basic adult education, I am not speaking about from grades 10 to 12. I am speaking about the people who are in need, from grades level zero to grade 10. There are a significant number of people in that area.

We have a job market opening up, but in order to be able to be competitive, people have to be literate. We have to look, as we move ahead into the 21st century, at how we can bring these people into the workforce, provide them with the skills they need through literacy programs and give support to Education, Culture and Employment to, in fact, provide that very critical service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 282-13(5): The Rising Cost of Power

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with regard to concerns from my constituents in regard to the increases to their power bills. Mr. Speaker, in one sector it basically makes a statement that these temporary rates of increases because of the shortfall this government had to incur over the last two years and because of low levels of water and not more usage of diesel fuel for running the power generator in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the increases people see, especially in my riding in Fort McPherson. There was an initiative taken to find ways of conserving energy and new ways to save power. Eventually, these savings would go to the people in those communities by seeing decreases in their power rates. Mr. Speaker, I am talking in regard to the Lottery Corporation effort between the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and the Gwich'in Development Corporation, who developed a program to use heat from the Power Corporation and distribute it to different buildings in the community to bring down the cost of heating fuel and usage of power.

Mr. Speaker, later on I would like to ask the Minister a few questions, especially in regard to the process of the NWT Utilities Board, and the hearings which took place and these new rate increases. Is there is a possibility, if not a public outcry, to consider looking at calling for another review, in light of not taking into account the savings that are going to take place from this new initiative in Fort McPherson? My constituents want to know when will they see these savings? Exactly when will it show up on their power bills? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 283-13(5): Inuvik High Temperature System

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have raised the issue of Inuvik's high temperature system many times. This system was built back in the days of the federal government and has been handed down to the Government of the Northwest Territories and is managed by the NWT Power Corporation.

The system was built to provide water and sewer services as well as provide heat to many government buildings such as the

Page 931

hospital, schools and government staff houses. Mr. Speaker, since the sale of staff houses, many people have pulled off the system as a cost-saving measure. As people pulled off the system, the revenues dropped. As the revenues dropped, the cost of operating the system was passed on to the remaining customers.

The majority of these customers are government departments. There are, however, a number of private customers who are being severely impacted by the decision to pass the full cost of operating the high temperature system onto the remaining customers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Todd and the Members of Cabinet for agreeing to put forward the dollars to convert the system and bringing it up to the 20th century standards. This will, indeed, help the government departments provide a cost efficient service, but we must also address the issue of private customers affected by these added costs. For example, Mr. Speaker, a private customer on the high temperature system, during the colder months of the year could be paying as much as \$1,300 per month for the heat alone. Mr. Speaker, I will be addressing questions to the appropriate Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 284-13(5): Alternate Energy Sources

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mention a very interesting and beneficial idea that a community in my riding is investigating. The community of Wha Ti is currently investigating the cost effectiveness and the practicality of alternate energy sources for electricity.

It is my understanding the community has met with a company out of Vancouver, which manufactures low cost turbines that a person anchors into a river bed and ties to the shore. This turbine, apparently, will produce the electricity and is environmentally safe. There are also no apparent ill effects caused to the fish or river, as this turbine only spins at the speed of the current, which allows fish to swim through the turbine.

Mr. Speaker, in this day conservation in all forms is the common practice and I applaud Wha Ti in pursuing alternatives to reduce the high cost of diesel generation for their residents and to also save the environment in doing so. Mr. Speaker, I wish the community the best of luck in this venture and am certain our Power Corporation will provide any assistance they can to ensure this will help the residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 285-13(5): Birth Registration and Certification

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will speak in Inuktitut. (Translation) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about birth registration. I have just assisted two of my communities in registering a child's name.

One of the constituents I represent is in their early thirties and the other is in their late twenties. There was a problem that arose with regard to Revenue Canada. When they were filing their income tax returns, if they wanted to travel outside of Canada, they would not be able to get a passport.

I would like to send a message to the new parents today to strongly encourage them to register their children's name with their proper certification so that situations like this will not happen again.

Mr. Speaker, we have to have proper registration ahead of time, so that we will be issued passports when they are needed. When requesting passports you also have to make sure there were no criminal activities involved in the beginning. These types of issues have to be included. (Translation ends)

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Department of Health and Social Services, Vital Statistics Bureau for all of their help in addressing the problems of my constituents. Their professional approach in dealing with the concerns of my constituents is appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement 286-13(5): Lack of Police Services

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to the lack of police services in the outlying communities of Sachs Harbour, Holman Island and Paulatuk.

Mr. Speaker, I will be quoting from a letter I received from Sachs Harbour, which I will table later. Mr. Speaker, Sachs Harbour is 300 miles north of Inuvik. At this time Inuvik is supplying police services to Sachs Harbour. At the best of times, it would take two to six hours for the RCMP to arrive in Sachs Harbour, weather permitting of course. According to the letter, we have been forced to live with the situation of no police presence in the community for more than two years now. Residents have brought to the council's attention their concern of lack of police services and presence in the community. Council has acted on this concern and recently had a local individual trained in Regina, who is currently employed with the community as a community constable by-law enforcement officer.

Residents still question the safety of our communities. The hamlet council feels with the community constables limited authority as the law enforcement officer, his services alone are not a justifiable solution

to the ever increasing criminal activity, much of which is of a violent nature involving firearms. Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Members of this House will agree the residents of Sachs Harbour are entitled to the same level and standards of safety and police protection as any other citizen in

Page 932

Canada. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the honourable Minister of Justice questions, at the appropriate time on this subject. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 287-13(5): Literacy Action Day

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Literacy Action Day is designed to raise awareness of literacy issues and encourage ongoing support for literacy efforts.

Literacy is an important long-term development issue that affects each and every one of us. It is a sad fact that more than one-third of our adults have a grade 9 education or less. That figure nearly doubles to 60 percent when our focus is narrowed to aboriginal adults. Although more and more young people are finishing high school, the NWT's completion rate remains far lower than that of the rest of Canada. When we look at these numbers, it is no surprise that adult literacy programs are full to bursting, mostly with young adults who have come to realize literacy skills are necessary for holding a decent job. Yet, the funding for these programs has consistently been cut by both the territorial and federal governments for each of the last three years. Between 70 and 80 percent of adult education students are enrolled in programs without base funding, which means they are in tentative year-to-year projects. As the workforce grows and demands for literacy increase, we must be able to meet that demand quickly and effectively. Adult education programs have to receive solid base funding so students can depend on them being there from year to year. It is an investment in all our futures. People with literary skills can get and hold jobs. This gives them a sense of self-reliance and cuts our social program needs. This is a win-win situation for all northerners and we need to do all we can to ensure its viability and survival. On Literacy Action Day, it is a good time to take stock of what we

as a government are doing to promote literacy and continue to come up with ways to improve our services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 288-13(5): Government Integrity and Credibility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have been very clear as to my mission between now and division. I am firmly of the belief that the people of the Northwest Territories are entitled to a government and leaders that they can put their confidence in. I am on a quest or crusade to ensure that this government functions in as open and transparent a fashion as possible. In the days ahead, I will be speaking to the issues which could enhance the credibility of our government. Maybe it is time that we take another critical look at the merits of consensus government versus party politics. Maybe we need an ombudsman. Maybe we should look at the possibility of a comprehensive audit by the Auditor General prior to division to determine if long-term leases and contracts extending past April 1, 1999 are of good value or a VFM audit, as they are called, and numerous other ideas that I have and have had suggested to me. In response to calls by some Members about getting on with substantive issues, I want to ensure you that I consider the integrity of this government to be a very substantive issue which affects every other issue of this government. I have shown respect for the decorum and purpose of this House by raising many serious issues reflecting the concerns of many honest northerners. If our government is perceived to lack integrity, this does affect us all and it behooves us all to face it and deal with it. I am doing my part, Mr. Speaker, to get answers and I thank my colleagues who have also been on the credibility trail. To the highly principled other Members who have been very quiet, maybe it is time to get involved. To all of my colleagues, let us take our two new territories into existence on a ticket of integrity, credibility and equal opportunity for all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 289-13(5): Literacy Action Day

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Happy birthday, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak a little about literacy, having been one of the founding members of the NWT Literacy Council several years ago and as a former adult educator, I believe that literacy, whether in one of our official native languages, national languages or our aboriginal languages, is very important. At school in Iqaluit, my children are enrolled in the Inuktitut stream and at home, Inuktitut and English are spoken. To be able to read and write, Mr. Speaker, is sometimes overlooked or understated. This being Literacy Day, gives us a chance to reflect on programs and services offered by this government in supporting literacy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our teachers, educators, parents and most of all, Mr. Speaker, our elders for the work in supporting literacy in all its forms every day, at home, in the school, in our various workplaces and here in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on January 30, 1998 with respect to the details of the Aurora Fund expenditure. In my Minister's statement of January 27, 1998, I stated that approximately \$1.5 million was spent on sales fees, marketing expenses and initial start-up costs. The actual amount was \$1,351,323. Later today, I will table a document which shows the breakdown of these expenses. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Oral Question 355-13(5): Number of Businesses Registered Under Business Initiative Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is in response to the question asked by Mr. Barnabas on February 17, 1998. It in regard to a number of businesses registered under the Business Incentive Policy. As of February 17, 1998, there was a total of 2,133 northern businesses registered with the business incentive policy monitoring office. The total amount was broken down as follows: in the North Slave, 847; South Slave, 429; Inuvik region, 306; Baffin, 187; Keewatin, 118; Kitikmeot, 69; De Cho. 91; and the Sahtu, 71. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud today to stand up and recognize members and the instructor from Mine Tap Training Program from Thebacha Campus of Aurora College. This is a course that was put together with the government and BHP to gear northerners to take apprenticeships in BHP Mine when it is up and running in the next few months. I have in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, the instructor, Mr. Paul Taylor; Craig Johnson, my son-in-law and father of my beautiful granddaughter; Glen Villebrun; George Cummings; Aleide Gagnon; Jason Landry; Ken Mercredi; Rene Mercredi, fine northerners, one and all. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly and good afternoon. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is not every day I recognize people from the gallery. I would like to recognize Rhoda Arreak, chairperson from Baffin, Member of Chamber of Commerce and also Russel Arreak, different family, representative of Grise Fiord. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize some members of the Mine Trades Access Program who are from the Yellowknife Campus who are here in the gallery. As the Member for Thebacha was noting, this is a partnership program but he forgot to mention that one of the partners is the Mine Training Committee. Members who are attending at the Yellowknife Campus are: Clayton Smith, Chris Dawe, Tony Dryneck, June Eronchi, Alice Sanderson, Peter Huskey and Patrick Goulet.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Pat Thomas of NWTTA being it is Literacy Day today and also the MLA from Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize David Connelly. He is a member of the diamond industry development task force. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 373-13(5): Policing Services in Sachs Harbour

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today in my Member's statement, I referred to the lack of police presence in the community of Sachs Harbour. I was quoting from a letter I intend to table in the House later. Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Minister of Justice has a copy of it. It says, we must know why the money once committed to police services in Sachs Harbour has now been diverted. Was this justifiable and can the new function of this money take precedence over the safety and the lives of the people in our community. The people of Sachs Harbour, furthermore, request the staffing of an RCMP police officer on a year-round basis in the community. Can the Minister respond as to the last portion of the question whether or not an RCMP officer would be stationed on a year-round basis in the community of Sachs Harbour? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 373-13(5): Policing Services in Sachs Harbour

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that is the same letter that the Member provided to myself and the Department of Justice, one which I have passed on to the chief superintendent of the RCMP. As I understand it, the RCMP is drafting together a response, but as we have been discussing the last few days, the RCMP is not immune to the shortage of funds that all government agencies have been experiencing over the past few years. I understand that although there have been no visible or net cuts to the budget, there have been no increases either. Therefore, the amount of forced-growth in the RCMP expenses, such things as benefits, travel and other expenses, have continued to increase while the budget has stayed the same. Therefore, you have the effect of the RCMP having to cut back services in some areas. Having said that, we have been discussing other options such as a

Page 934

Community Constable Program. I am looking forward to the response from the RCMP, which I will pass on to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 373-13(5): Policing Services in Sachs Harbour

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community referred to the Community Constable Program which they undertook and obviously residents were not feeling that this was adequate police protection in light of the amount of increased crime that has been taking place in the community. One of the things mentioned, Mr. Speaker, by the community was the increase in bootlegging, drug trafficking and drug use, which contributes toward serious crime. My next question to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, would be, I understand the RCMP is going to be responding to the community, but I wonder if there is still opportunity for the RCMP or the Department of Justice to actually go and discuss the problem face to face with the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 373-13(5): Policing Services in Sachs Harbour

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is yes. I can certainly arrange for the Department of Justice and the RCMP to go to the community and speak with them. We have our community policing coordinator, at this moment, in another community in the Beaufort Delta area doing that exact thing. I wanted to indicate too that we are as concerned as the community and the MLA is about the level of crime and law enforcement. We take the concerns very seriously that have been brought forward to myself by the Member to the Department of Justice recently. I will make arrangements for the Department of Justice officials and possibly with the RCMP to go to the community to talk about possible solutions.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 373-13(5): Policing Services in Sachs Harbour

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank the honourable Minister for that response. I will be looking forward to a copy of his correspondence to the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister Responsible for Public Works and Services. Earlier this week the Minister had indicated that the Government of the NWT had made a presentation to the CRTC in relation to the long distance rates in the Northwest Territories regarding opening up competition for long distance in the north. I would like to know whether the Minister can elaborate on whether or not the presentation supported or went against opening competition in the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories' presentation with the CRTC regarding long distance competition was in favour of long distance competition starting immediately. However, we also support a subsidy for provision of local services in the high cost areas, and we need the protection of the service we are currently provided by NorthwesTel to the smallest community, at the same time. The Northwest Territories local rates are among the lowest in Canada. Local rates

are rising to be more in line with the cost to provide the service and rates charged in southern Canada. Shifting the balance of local and long distance rates will reduce overall telephone costs. The majority of the customers in the north will lower long distance rates which could increase economic development. Taking all these factors into account, the Government of the Northwest Territories has supported increases to local rates with a strong recommendation to the CRTC to explore subsidies for the north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, long distance competition will not occur for a couple of years yet, but NorthwesTel is being allowed to increase its rates in August, and again next year. Will NorthwesTel not be getting a windfall for a couple of years prior to the long distance competition actually coming into force? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. NorthwesTel will not be allowed to make any extra revenue from the changes. This is part of the CRTC's control on NorthwesTel. There is a restriction on the amount of profit they can make. In this case, the rules are the new revenues from the higher local rates must equal the lower revenues from decreasing long distance rates. In this way, the CRTC puts restrictions on NorthwesTel. Even if we have to wait for long distance competition to come into effect, NorthwesTel will not be making windfall profits from its higher local rates for the next two years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand in the smaller centres there is not enough revenue coming from those local rates to actually fully support the phone system there. At the same time, people on limited incomes have to have phones, particularly, for emergency services. Is there any potential relief on rates for those people in the smaller communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are going to be hearings that CRTC will have, starting in May through June. At these hearings, presentations will be made and will explore the need to have a high cost serving area fund in Canada. There will be a move for all telephone companies in Canada to contribute to a fund. This fund would help telephone companies support areas in the country where cost of providing local service is very high. This would help lower local rates over the long term. There is a move toward all these telephone companies in Canada contributing toward a fund that would be there to help these people who are unfortunate, if the costs of telephones are too high. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated there will be further hearings. Could the Minister elaborate on these hearings in the north, particularly where and when they are going to be held and who is allowed to speak at them?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 374-13(5): Long Distance Telephone Competition

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand there will be a hearing in only one place in the Northwest Territories which would be in Iqaluit on June 25th. NorthwesTel has asked the CRTC to establish video conferencing to link people from Yellowknife for this hearing and to also establish audio links from some of the other centres, like Hay River, Inuvik, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.

There are other regional hearings. Each of them will last for just one day. They have been scheduled for other parts of the country. The other one in the north would be Whitehorse and throughout the rest of the country. Who would be able to speak? Anybody who could make a presentation in Iqaluit or if the video link up is done from Yellowknife, there would be opportunity for people from Yellowknife to participate in that video link up. There will also be audio link ups from these other communities I mentioned, so anybody that is interested could take that opportunity. This government will be making an oral statement at the Iqaluit hearing, as well as making a variety of written submissions.

At the last CRTC hearing, for your information, that was held in Yellowknife, there were very little political presentations made at that time. MLAs, if you are interested, I would like to encourage you, as well as community groups, businesses and mainly the general public, to take part in the CRTC process. You could do it either through the regional hearings or through written submissions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. In regard to my Member's statement, there were concerns from my constituents who have been calling me about a temporary rate which is in place because of a shortfall over the last two years, especially, the people with homes. They are the ones seeing the rate

increase in their power bills. Could the Minister clarify what is the purpose of that and what is happening in regard to that item?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the low water surcharge was a charge that has been in effect for the past couple of years as the Member has noted. Three million dollars for that surcharge was collected from residents of the Snare system and \$1 million was collected from residents of communities all across the Northwest Territories. The impact on residential rates for any individual across the territories has been relatively small. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell me when do they expect this rate to be done away with in regard to the present condition we find ourselves, where there are no real increases in usage of fuel this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that next month's bills will be the last ones on which the surcharge appears. Starting in April, the surcharge will not

Page 936

appear in communities.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister or his department make a public statement on this in regard to some press release or something that can go out in the newspaper so people are aware this will be concluded and they will no longer see it on their power bill? Maybe you could give them some comfort.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A press release may have already gone out. However, I will check with the Power Corporation and ensure that one is sent out at the end of the surcharge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 375-13(5): Purpose of the Low Water Surcharge

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the public hearing process, I mentioned. There are initiatives such as the AADRIL Corporation in Fort McPherson where they have found a new way of possibly saving customers money in the long run, bringing down the rates in the communities that make such an effort to try such an initiative. Is there a possibility of these initiatives coming into effect sooner than the present timeframe because of the latest Public Utility Board hearings?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will rule the question out of order. It is a new question. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 376-13(5): Spread of Canine Distemper

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi. The Minister provided information to Members today regarding canine distemper. My honourable colleague, Mr. Erasmus, spoke earlier today about the credit that comes to the north and particularly Yellowknife, with some professional dog mushers who have animals that mush on a professional basis. There are also numerous pet owners. My question to the Minister is, I understand where the disease comes from, but how is it transmitted from community to community? I understand it is a problem at the present time in some communities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 376-13(5): Spread of Canine Distemper

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not certain I know how the disease is transported from community-to-community. I have always gone on the assumption that it is dog-to-dog, but I shall have a scientific response for the Member and I will share it with him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 376-13(5): Spread of Canine Distemper

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have part of it right, from dog-to-dog, but I just noticed the Minister in his note to Ordinary Members has identified there have been reported cases in Repulse Bay, Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Arctic Bay and Resolute Bay. I do not think the dogs are travelling that far. In cases such as this, I suspect it is going to be transmitted by foot. Does the department have any policy or would they consider producing some type of an advertising campaign making pet owners aware of the potential for this disease and

providing the means they can take to prevent this within their own animals? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 376-13(5): Spread of Canine Distemper

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department has been working with Municipal and Community Affairs and municipal councils in an effort to address the difficulties and the problems that have arisen as a result of what you might call an outbreak. I am not even sure that is an accurate word to use, but part of our problem is we are not clear who is responsible for addressing this problem. In most cases, it is the responsibility taken on by municipalities, but we are down to even quibbling about who is responsible for paying for the shots that have to be administered, where the money should come from and who should be carrying out the vaccinations. I have asked my department to simply take the lead in making sure the job is done and sort out the details of who should be carrying this on as a normal practice and responsibility, later on. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 377-13(5): Appointment of District Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It is in relation to local district education authorities. In Fort Smith a request has been made to the Minister by the band and Metis to look at moving from an elected to a permanent board. This issue also came up in my constituency meeting a while back. I indicated, in my opinion, it was an issue that had to be addressed through the DEA and at the community level, through an extensive consultation process before any further steps could take place. However, I would like the Minister to clarify the process that would be required, if in fact any changes were going to be made to the

board structure? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 377-13(5): Appointment of
District Education Authority

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the first instance, the requirement is that a petition be submitted to myself for consideration. The department and I would review the request and determine whether any further consultation was required. That consultation could be in the form of a plebiscite, a public meeting or resolutions from the DEA. There is no set formula for what the consultation could be. It would depend entirely on the situation of the individual community and our assessment of what would demonstrate there being clear public support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 377-13(5): Appointment
of District Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate to this House on the issue of the petition as to how many signatures are required? Is it a percentage of the population? Is it three names? Is it 25 percent of the ratepayers on the electoral list? Could the Minister please elaborate, since it is a critical first step? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 377-13(5): Appointment
of District Education Authority

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the number is 50 names on the petition but I will provide the Member with the correct number if that is not, in fact, the requirement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 377-13(5): Appointment
of District Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate what he sees or what is the role of the DEA in this process? Do they have a role to play in terms of garnering the community feedback? Do they handle the consultation process? Is there a function for the current elected board in this process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 377-13(5): Appointment
of District Education Authority

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no process outlined specifically in the Education Act. It is left to the discretion of the Minister. Would the DEA have a role in this? I would say, yes, because the DEA is made up of elected officials. Therefore, having been elected by the population of the community, I would take them to be representatives of the population. They would have to be involved in some way. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 377-13(5): Appointment
of District Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate in terms of process, since it is not clearly laid out, how would the Minister respond to a petition of 50 names? Would he be prepared to act on that alone or would he, in the case of Fort Smith, ensure thorough public consultation did take place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I will rule the question out of order. It is hypothetical. Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 378-13(5): Policy on Alternative Energy Sources

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you may recall in my Member's statement today regarding Wha Ti and their quest for alternative energy sources. My question to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is what is the policy the Power Corporation is using in regard to alternative energy sources? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 378-13(5): Policy on Alternative Energy Sources

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Power Corporation is always interested in alternate energy. The driving force for most decisions by the Power Corporation is, of course, cost. Because of the high cost of power in the north, we work to find the lowest cost means of power. The Power Corporation is always willing to look at alternate energy sources.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 378-13(5): Policy on Alternative Energy Sources

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to get more information as to whether the Power Corporation would assist the community of Wha Ti to see if this initiative is viable? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 378-13(5): Policy on Alternative Energy Sources

Page 938

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation would welcome the opportunity to investigate any opportunity or any chance of alternate energy that could be used. The Corporation, for instance, has met with the community of Lutselk'e to discuss a run of river project close to their community. I see no reason why the Power Corporation would not be interested in discussing this with the community of Wha Ti.

Given our relationship with the Dogrib Power Corporation, we would probably want to tie them into the project as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the GNWT made a submission on the ongoing national unity question debate at the Supreme Court, I believe. I think this government was represented by Mr. Funston. Could the Premier update us on that situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Funston is forcefully, and with integrity, defending the borders of the Northwest Territories and all members of this House should applaud his efforts. As they say, our borders are frozen. Quebec cannot move them north. Mr. Funston does represent us. We have an intervener on the whole issue that has gone to the Supreme Court of Canada on Quebec being able to unilaterally declare sovereignty through Quebec. Mr. Funston does represent us on contract to represent our government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understood that Mr. Funston was, indeed, representing the Government of the Northwest Territories. I was wondering if that was a slight contradiction in what had happened in this House before Christmas, when this House supported in motion form and debated the Calgary Declaration which then appeared before the Supreme Court on this issue. Does the Premier see both of those things in conjunction? Is that a contradiction, Mr. Speaker, the one main point being in favour of the Calgary Declaration, the other one appearing saying that Quebec does not have the opportunity, legally or whatever to take itself out of the federation?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Can I ask the Member to rephrase the question? You cannot ask for particulars about a proceeding which is in the courts right now. Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how was this decision made to have Mr. Funston represent us at the Supreme Court? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made by us, as Cabinet, to hire Mr. Funston on contract. We looked around and we knew what Mr. Funston's credentials are. He is one of the most sought over constitutional experts in this country. Many other provincial jurisdictions as well as the federal jurisdiction would like to hire Mr. Funston. Mr. Funston is still committed to working with the Northwest Territories through contracted services. Mr. Funston was raised in the Northwest Territories, Fort Smith, Thebacha, which has produced many fine people. We are very lucky to have him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 379-13(5): Update on National Unity Issue

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was not questioning the credibility or the legal skills of Mr. Funston. Mr. Speaker, the reason behind my question, of course, was the jurisdictional concern of the Northwest Territories in this regard. That was the adjacent islands that are in Hudson Bay and James Bay and the effect of those. That is my question. I would ask the Premier, is that the representation this government is presenting that if, indeed, Quebec had separated, would they not have a claim on those islands? Was that what the Premier tried to explain in his opening comment? That was my question. Is that the reason why we were there? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I have to rule the question out of order. You are asking for an opinion that has not been determined yet in the courts and cannot be determined until the proceedings are over. I am sorry. The question is out of order. Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 380-13(5): High Temperature Heating System Costs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I raised the concerns of the high temperature system and its impact on the private citizens of Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, as I said we are thankful. The community of Inuvik is thankful to Cabinet and Mr. Todd for coming forward with the money to change over the system, but there is an impact being felt by residents of Inuvik who are still on the system.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I have a couple of copies of bills

Page 939

from residents who are on the system. When you include their electrical bill along with their heating bill and water, they are paying out in a month \$1,700 to \$1,800 which is absolutely ridiculous. Compared to other constituencies, and I spoke to Mr. Miltenberger

from Thebacha, he pays on average \$36 a month for his water and sewer and \$120 for his electrical. Although some would suggest we move further south, Inuvik is a good place to live. We just have to bring our technology up to current levels and efficiencies. My concern, again, is for the private residents. There are not too many left on the system. It costs them approximately between \$15,000 to \$20,000 to convert. Right now, there are a number of them still paying out these monthly bills in the winter season. My question is directed to the Minister of FMBS. I brought this issue up before, but I would like to know if there is anything this government can do to lessen the impact of the system that was handed down from past governments, to lessen the impact on these peoples' pocket books? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 380-13(5): High Temperature Heating System Costs

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate my honourable colleague's kind words. It is not often you get them in this House. Thank you. Secondly, my understanding is we are not looking at a large number of people, somewhere around eight or nine domestic tenants or clients, if you want to call them. I will address the problem tomorrow morning with my deputy minister and see if we can reach, as quickly as possible, an appropriate course of action that will ensure these costs that have been outlined to me and shown by my honourable colleague, Mr. Roland, are adjusted to reflect the affordability aspect as it relates to those eight or nine people. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 380-13(5): High Temperature Heating System Costs

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of individuals who have been pulled off the system this summer when they heard the rate increase was 125 percent. Hopefully, the Minister will look at all individuals who were impacted by the rate increase. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 380-13(5): High Temperature Heating System Costs

HON. JOHN TODD:

We put a considerable amount of money, as my honourable colleague has said in his statement, into that system to try to convert some of the commercial users. It is in the millions, I understand. Millions. We will take a hard look at the domestic users who are still on the system. I will try to work with my colleague as quickly as we can to solve the problem and have the conversion done, so that everybody has an affordable heating system in their house. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and relate to the function of delivering income support at the community level.

In Hay River this function has been taken over from the department by the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre. It is a fairly large task. I am wanting to know on what basis do these organizations receive payment for providing these services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have told other Members of this House several times in the last week, the formula is the equivalent of one full-time employee for every 2,000 cases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, what determines a case? If someone comes and they are approved for income support, is that a case? If someone comes in, the income support counsellor has to spend a lot of time with them and then they are ultimately declined; does the formula reflect that time spent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I have answered this question within the last week. The answer is that a case is a visit to an income support worker. That means, whether the person is accepted or rejected, the visit counts as a case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How does the cost of the program delivery compare now that it has been given over to various organizations versus the cost when the department had control of this program? My question is, in

Page 940

devolving this, was it a case of down loading whereby the resources that the department was spending were not in turn given to these organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The formula was worked out over the course of time with people who were delivering the program at the community level. It is important to remember that the department ran 11 pilot projects in communities across the Northwest Territories ranging from Yellowknife to Gjoa Haven to get a sense of what it would take to have communities deliver the program. Over time, they found the formula that appeared to cover the cost was one full-time equivalent for every 2,000 visits. In answer to the question, is this down loading? We do not believe it is. We are not attempting to save any money on the administration of the program. This program was being delivered by government employees who were also social workers. The intent was to free up the social worker to do more counselling and take what is, by and large, a clerical function away from them and find somebody else to do that job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that the Minister may not be able to provide this at this time, but could he provide for me a comparison of what it was costing the department versus what it is costing now at the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre delivering this program because it is my understanding that they are paid for a three quarters of one position and, in fact, it is taking two full-time positions to deliver the program?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 381-13(5): Local Income Support Service Delivery

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right that I am unable to provide that information right now. I will

endeavour to see what information we can get for the Member from our files, but I must express some caution. In the transfer of this program from Health and Social Services to the Department of Education, for some time, the program continued to be delivered by people who worked for Health and Social Services just as a part of their job. The administration function may not be completely clean in terms of being able to say, here is what it cost in the past and here is what it is costing us now. That is why some effort was put into the process over a couple of years to determine what is a good average figure to reimburse communities to deliver this function. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 382-13(5): Election of Local Education Authorities

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am directing this question to the Minister for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. My question is that they do have local education authorities in each community or hamlet. On July 1, 1997, it was enacted and the advisory board would be removed; also they would be elected at the same time and also they would have another election for the education authority boards every two years. A lot of the communities feel this is not appropriate. For example, it would be more appropriate to have half of them there for the first term and then for the next term. Is this a policy? Can you tell me if it is up to the community to decide how they would like to have a board? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 382-13(5): Election of Local Education Authorities

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right, the Education Act, which came into force July 1, 1996, does stipulate that elections for DEAs must take place every two years. It is not just a local choice. They cannot arbitrarily make the change, but the Education Act does allow the communities to

petition the Minister to request a change. The community could petition to request that the elections be held on a staggered basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 382-13(5): Election of Local Education Authorities

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do understand what you are saying. Would it be the Minister of Education himself who can approve this or can I do it myself? For example, do I have the power to change this or would it be up to the House to change this? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 382-13(5): Election of Local Education Authorities

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the act gives the Minister of Education the power to approve or reject a petition for a change that comes from the community. If the community were to submit a petition to me, I could decide whether or not to approve it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 383-13(5): Literature Available on Breast Cancer Screening

Page 941

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There were some questions that remain unanswered, as far as I understand, from our mid-term review. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng. It is in regard to his commitment to find out what literature may be available from the health centres and the boards throughout the Northwest Territories regarding the availability of information and literature on breast

cancer screening. Has the Minister been able to undertake that and if he has an answer on that for us?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 383-13(5): Literature Available on Breast Cancer Screening

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I do not have that information, but I will commit to having it available for committee of the whole review of the budget next week, hopefully. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 383-13(5): Literature Available on Breast Cancer Screening

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder also if the Minister could commit to, at that time if he does not have it now, find out what health boards are spending on mammography programs in the territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 383-13(5): Literature Available on Breast Cancer Screening

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recognizing the Member's strong interest in this area, I will have as much information as possible on breast cancer screening. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Power Corporation in regard to the

efforts that communities are taking to find new ways of conserving energy and finding ways to bring down the cost of electricity in their communities. I would like to ask the Minister, is there a possibility that these efforts could be implemented so that the people within the communities can see these savings within the next couple of years in their power bills with these efforts that are taking place within the communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation is working in concert with the Housing Corporation on energy conservation programs and housing conversion programs to convert, for instance, hot water heaters from electricity to oil. The Power Corporation is always interested in working with other agencies and communities on conservation and savings initiatives. The cost of a general rate application is so big that the Power Corporation tries to submit an application for rate changes to the Public Utilities Board no more than every three or so years.

The chances of seeing any changes in the next two years are very slim. The cost of an application to the Public Utilities Board would probably be more than what the community could save in total energy costs. Since all of the costs have to be recovered by the Power Corporation, there would be no savings. We have to be careful that we do all the general rate applications for all communities at the same time in order that the costs are shared across the Northwest Territories and no one community has to pay too much for the cost of the Power Corporation appearing before the Public Utilities Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communities that do take this initiative, it should be an enhancement to them and the people in communities should see the benefits because they are the ones who are making the efforts to find ways to save energy to this government. When will the consumer see these savings in their power bills with these efforts that the communities are taking to find new savings for conserving energy and decreasing the price of power in their communities? How long will it take before they see it in their power bills?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some energy conservation programs allow the consumer to see the reduction immediately because they use less power. If you use less power, your power bill is lower. If you convert your electric hot water heater to oil, you will see your savings begin immediately. The sort of savings that we are seeing in a community such as Fort McPherson on the AADR II project are long-term. The capital cost of the program was millions of dollars. That capital cost has to come out before those savings are going to be passed on to the consumer. The consumer sees right now an immediate savings of about 15 percent on their oil bill because they pay less for heat through the heat recovery project than they would if they were to purchase fuel oil to heat their buildings. The savings are immediate, but the long-term savings will be even bigger. It will take some time for those to pass through the system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 942

Supplementary To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In seeing these decreases in the power rates, my understanding is it is the Public Utilities Board that will be the ones who set the power

rates. If you see it in your power bills, that is where it will come from. How soon can a community demand or petition this government to call for the Public Utilities Board to call public meetings to see if those increases can be seen sooner than having to wait until everyone else is ready.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot speak as to whether or not a community could petition the Public Utilities Board for review. I do not know whether or not that is possible. I would like to remind the Member, the cost of a Public Utilities Board review is paid for by the people of the community. The cost, I can guarantee you, would be higher than any savings the community could possibly see in the next two years. To have a public review done by the Utilities Board would cost the community more on their power rates in the long run than what could possibly be saved in utilities reductions right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a note that calls that the Public Utilities Boards, the three years will end March 31, 1998. Is that when the public review will be held, March 31, 1998, which is next month, when they call a review of these power rates for the Western Territory?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 384-13(5): Community Energy Conservation Efforts

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation will not be filing a new rate application for consideration by the Public Utilities Board any time in the next year and probably not for another two years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 385-13(5): Attendance of Ministers

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a question for a Minister but he is not available right now, but I would ask the Premier a question. Mr. Speaker, I use this time here to ask the government questions, items that are current. So the government gets an opportunity to talk to Members of this House and more importantly, the people of the Northwest Territories, explaining why they are doing things. For the past three days, Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to ask questions of Ministers who have been in town, have been in the legislative building but have not been available to answer questions. There are some Ministers, Mr. Speaker, who spend a lot of time and very seldom leave this House during Question Period. There are some who are consistently absent from the House, so the public of the Northwest Territories does not get an opportunity to hear these responses from the government. I would ask the Premier, would he please ensure that for that one hour, if the Ministers are not on duty travel, that they remain in the House so they can answer questions so the public of the Northwest Territories, who we are responsible to, can hear government positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 385-13(5): Attendance of Ministers

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Member 100 percent. I will direct the Ministers to be in the House for question period other than calls of nature or in some cases, like yesterday or the day before, we had a Russian delegation. Today, I stepped out, we had a Manitoba delegation, government to government, we had to leave for a few minutes. Other than that, they should be in the House, they should be answering your questions like I do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 385-13(5): Attendance of Ministers

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Premier's comments. I understand there are some Ministers who do arrange their schedules around question period and certainly, I understand that nature calls every so often, but I appreciate the Minister's comments and I appreciate him following up on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 386-13(5): Public Consultation Re: Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

My question is directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like assurance from the Minister that before any changes are considered in Fort Smith that there will be a full community consultation. Can he give me that assurance please?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 386-13(5): Public Consultation Re: Education Authority

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very close to being a hypothetical question. I would have to be assured that the community was in support of any request that I receive. A petition of 50 names from a larger community would probably not demonstrate to me the same level of support that a request

Page 943

that had 50 names from a community of 120. In fact, they would be treated differently, there is no question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 386-13(5): Public Consultation Re: Education Authority

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that time has elapsed, I will just hold my further questions for the Minister until tomorrow. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that the standing committee on government operations has reviewed Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998 and wishes to report that Bill 10 is now ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 52-13(5): Details of Aurora Fund Expenditures

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled, Details of the Aurora Fund Expenditures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabled Document 53-13(5): Letter Dated February 11, 1998 from Mrs. Groenewegen to Mr. Morin

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two documents. The first is a letter dated February 11, 1998 from myself to the Premier requesting the notes from a meeting held with him and the assistant deputy minister of justice held on November 24, 1997.

Tabled Document 54-13(5): February 6, 1998 Unedited Hansard - Page 1000

The second document, Mr. Speaker, is a copy of page 1,000 of unedited Hansard from February 6, 1998 when Premier Morin committed to provide me with a copy of the notes from the meeting held on November 24, 1997. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Steen.

Tabled Document 55-13(5): Letter to Mr. Steen from Mayor of Sachs Harbour Re: Policing

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, copy of a letter from the hamlet of Sachs Harbour, signed by the Mayor Bradley Carpenter. It refers to a lack of police service within the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Krutko.

Tabled Document 56-13(5): NWTPC Notice of Power Rate Changes to Fort McPherson Customers

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a note sent to the residents of Fort McPherson, that on July 1, 1997, the power rates took effect in your community. The changes have been approved by the NWT Public Utilities Board for a three-year period ending March 31, 1998. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

BILL 14 An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 23, 1998 I will move that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1997-98; Committee Report 02-13(5); Committee Report 03-13(5); Committee Report 04-13(5); Committee Report 05-13(5); Tabled Document 15-13(5) and Tabled Document 19-13(5). With Mrs. Groenewegen in the Chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call the committee of the whole to order. We have a number of matters before us today in committee of the whole. We left off yesterday under the Department of Justice, law enforcement. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Barnabas?

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The committee wishes to consider Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99

Page 944

and Committee Reports 02-13(5); 03-13(5) and 05-13(5) and to continue with the Department of Justice and Housing Corporation. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. We will proceed with those items after a 15-minute break. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I will call the committee of the whole back to order. We have the Department of Justice. Has the committee agreed that we should ask the Minister to take the witness table and bring in his officials?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms could you please escort in the witnesses? Mr. Arlooktoo, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you. We have Nora Sanders, the assistant deputy minister and Kim Schofield, the acting director of finance and management services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. The line item we are on is law enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$28.015 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under law enforcement, I have some questions under the RCMP. I have been made aware there are some reductions heading to the Inuvik region when it comes to police officers. I have also been informed by the good people of the Inuvik Drum. Was the Minister aware of the possible reductions and could you make me aware of the implications or what has brought this about? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Minister Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We have not been formally advised of any reductions. We will approach the RCMP in quick order to get a report on what exactly is going on in the Inuvik Region.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. What is the normal process when it comes to the RCMP looking to reduce services in our communities in the NWT? Is there a formal way of letting us know or is there a protocol? Is there a form of getting the message to us? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you. The normal process or protocol is the RCMP would advise us either in writing or through meetings with the deputy minister. I am aware in the Inuvik region, which includes Paulatuk, that community has always been an issue, whether or not it requires the extra services. I am unsure if that is the community in question or not. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could the Minister say as to when he will be able to get the information, because the reduction that is being suggested of possibly five members in Inuvik, has a very serious impact to what is happening. Could the Minister let me know when he can get back to me with that information?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would be, frankly, quite surprised if that is the level of reductions. I would expect the RCMP to inform us immediately if there were reductions that significant. We will immediately contact the RCMP for an update and, therefore, inform the Member within the next few days.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Next, I have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, in the briefing we received, at noon from the RCMP representatives, we were told the RCMP in consultation with the Minister of Justice allocate police officers to communities. Therefore, my question to the Minister is how could the RCMP reduce police officers in Inuvik by five members without consulting with the Department of Justice first?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is an unconfirmed report at this time. As I said earlier, I would, frankly, be surprised if there were reductions this significance. This is something that I would expect the RCMP to involve us in before the decision was made.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, this particular piece of information is disturbing to me in regard to my communities that do not have permanent police officers and have been relying on Inuvik to supply police services when and if they are required. Now, with that thought in mind and with that taken into consideration, as well as the points brought up by Mr. Roland, the Member for Inuvik, would the Minister confirm that he is not going to support this move to reduce RCMP in Inuvik by five officers?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Page 945

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is very difficult for me to give what my position would be on something that is hypothetical at this stage and which is something that is unconfirmed. What we will do is confirm with the RCMP what exactly is going on and try to find ways of assisting the RCMP to deal with a shortage. I would say, again, what I indicated yesterday is we are not reducing our contributions to

the police contract. The net amount of money stays the same, but the RCMP, as with all government agencies is faced with increasing costs of doing business and I gave some examples earlier, the cost of travel. The cost of business in general has gone up, but the overall budget has not. The effect of that is you would have to deal with the budget as if it was reduced.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, the budget shows that in the last two years, the budget went up from 1996-97 to 1997-98, revised forecast of some \$27.960 million to \$28.015 million. There was an increase in the budget in the last two years. However, there is no increase for this year. Does that \$28 million reflect this territorial government's share of the police services? Yesterday, we heard the Minister state that the territories pays 30 percent of RCMP costs. Does that mean the federal share is roughly 70 percent?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The figure you see in the books for 1996-97 of \$27.960 million, they are actual expenditures, but the budget for that year and this year has stayed the same. The correct percentage for our share and the federal share is 70 percent of the RCMP expenditures are paid by the GNWT and 30 percent by the federal government.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, my question was, is the 70 percent of the feds included in the \$28 million or is that over and above the \$28 million?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you. The \$28.015 million in the main estimates is the 70 percent portion that we pay, the 30 percent that the federal government pays is over and above this figure.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thank the Minister for that correction. I had it reversed. We pay 70 percent. The feds pay 30 percent. So my next question, Madam Chairperson, in the past, the RCMP has supplied services to the government, in particular, I use the example of the Giant Mine issue that took place a few years ago, whereby the extreme costs to this government for RCMP services for mining. There is a suggestion, Madam Chairperson, that there is going to be an increased requirement for RCMP services in regard to diamond mining. My question to the department is, is that forecasted cost in this figure of \$28 million?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, and I am sure the Member is correct that the Giant Mine incident and the required extra security and police that were required for that time were significant. I understand it was the GNWT's position then that was a federal responsibility. After discussions and negotiations, I believe the federal government did pay a portion of that extra cost. With the diamond industry, we do see a need for more security and police services. Here again our position is that it is a federal responsibility.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, my last question is in regard to the overall number of police officers who are in the small communities. We were given figures this morning of 225 officers, territorial-wide. Does the department have a break down of where most of those police

officers are? Obviously they are not in the small communities. Where would the majority of the police officers be stationed?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Do you have that information, Mr. Arlooktoo?

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yesterday, I committed to providing Members a list of the communities that do not have RCMP officers. I understand that is in the process. I will ask the staff also to include the locations of these 425 RCMP officers in the NWT and provide those to the Member as soon as possible.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. That is the end of time for Mr. Steen. We can always come back to him. I have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question to the Minister is a follow up to yesterday's question regarding Tsiigehtchic in consideration of establishing a training program within the community for a constable or peace officer. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what the status is to date with regard to that process and will the community be able to implement this program in this fiscal year since they have been recognized on the short list?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The community has completed a memorandum of understanding with the RCMP under the Community Constable

Page 946

Program. I understand there has been training with some community members or at least a community member and there is more planned. The Community Policing Program coordinator, Mr. Gunther Lobby, is travelling to this community in the next few days and will be discussing the matter.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could the Minister tell me when the MOU was signed? The information I received in September, there was no MOU in place. It was pending approval by MACA. Could you tell me what the status of that MOU is now?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not have the exact date, but the information we have is that the MOU was completed since September of last year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regard to the peace officer and Community Constable Program, is the community presently receiving funding and training for this individual right now?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That is my understanding. If the Members will recall, our explanation of the Community Constable Program is where there is cooperation between the Department of Justice, the Department of MACA, the RCMP and the community where we arrange for and fund the training of by-law officers to take training in the RCMP Academy in Regina, therefore, assisting the RCMP in adding to security and safety in the community.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Law Enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$28.015 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I have some more questions on how the department approaches the communities in offering community constable by-law officer training, and what they expect of these community constable by-law officers after they are trained. From the response of the Minister yesterday, it was suggested that this would enhance the police presence in the community that does not have police presence. It is my experience, Madam Chairperson, that by-law officers in the communities in the past were not expected to enforce the Criminal Code. They were never asked to do that. As a matter of fact, if you take the simple description of the by-law officer's title, he is a by-law officer. He is there to enforce municipal by-laws and nothing else. He was paid a salary based on that. Obviously, the department is now expecting to replace the RCMP presence with an enhanced by-law officer, but the fact of the matter is, the communities are not accepting that this person would, in fact, be fully trained or capable of handling a crisis situation.

Therefore, I am sure the communities are starting to question whether or not they should have taken this service on at all for the amount they are receiving in return. That is my understanding, Madam Chairperson, from meetings with the community as well as the statement in a letter from the hamlet of Sachs Harbour to the Minister, which I gave him a copy of. How is the department selling this program to the community? I believe that is what is happening. The department is selling the program to the communities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We have a situation here of the GNWT and the federal government that has limited resources that can no longer afford to put a couple of police officers in every single community. You also have a situation of communities, residents who wish to have law enforcement and justice in general closer to the communities and be more run by them. If you marry those two, first of all I think it

would be much more desirable to have more police officers or to be able to give all these communities that require or want police officers those officers, but the fact of the matter is we cannot. We cannot afford to do that. Over the years, through MACA, the hamlets and the communities have gained the ability to hire and train by-law officers and to have these peace officer types in the communities who have some training. If you go a step further from that, what you could have and what we have in some communities is an arrangement where these by-law officers receive further training, upgrade their skills and their knowledge. They work closer with the RCMP and help the community in general in the security and safety area. I know this is not as desirable as having at least a couple of full-time police officers all the time in the community, but in some communities it is working very well. In many communities, it has made the RCMP more accessible, more accepted, et cetera. It is a relatively new program that we see as a viable option or addition to law enforcement or the restorative justice that we want. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I understand that the Police Constable Training Program that went on in Fort Good Hope and in Coral Harbour was one level up from community constable. It is quite effective and very satisfactory to the communities. Could the Minister tell me what it would cost to have this type of constable in other communities? What would the cost be to this government?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Page 947

It is important to say to the Member that I do appreciate his comments and the Department of Justice, at no point, pretends to have all the answers. I do appreciate his feedback on this, very much. The pilot projects which occurred in Coral Harbour and Fort Good Hope were successful, as far as I can

understand. The draw back with those projects was and is the extra amount of money it takes to run them because you are talking about hiring some extra part-time staff. At this point in time, the government or the RCMP cannot afford that much extra resources.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Law Enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$28.015 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In the issue of law enforcement, we know that it is cost shared with the federal government. This morning, in the briefing we had with the RCMP, the chief superintendent mentioned the GNWT portion was \$26 million. It is different according to what is before us, \$28.015 million. Is there some misinformation there or is there funding that goes to other areas? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe the superintendent this morning was giving a ball park figure. The police services agreement is \$27.6 million. There is also, in addition, a First Nations policing component for \$342,000 which totals what you have in the main estimates of \$28.015 million.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could the Minister inform us with all the talk on the federal funding situation and with the forced-growth factor, are there any negotiations between our government and the federal government that increase the limits we receive from the federal government? Will there be any

soon? This is something we need to start putting some focus on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is certainly something that has crossed our mind. The 70 to 30 ratio is the same all across the country, I understand. I do not believe there are any plans or possibilities of going into negotiations to change the ratio. There are no formal talks going on right now to increase the federal share. What could happen is if the GNWT found some extra money and decided to put it in the policing agreement, we would then have to go to the federal government to increase their share to match ours proportionally. That is not going on right now.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Is this the same ratio used in the Aboriginal Policing Program?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Minister Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No, the First Nations Policing Program has a different ratio, 48 percent is the portion we pay compared to the 52 percent for the federal government.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$28.015 million. I have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, am I to understand the money to train community constables is in the \$28 million?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It does not show up in here because we signed an agreement with the Government of Canada for funding for that, subsequent to when these were prepared. We are receiving funding from the federal government. It is a complicated one because they are actually matching funding that MACA is providing when they give communities money for their law enforcement component. Over a 24-month period, that started April 1, 1997, there will be a total amount, total cost of \$750,000. Part of that is MACA funding. The amount coming from the federal government to the GNWT during that time will be \$390,000, roughly half each year, just under \$200,000 each year, but that is not showing up in the \$28 million you are seeing.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. How does that break down per community? The community of Sachs Harbour, for instance, they said they signed an MOU. How much would they receive under that MOU?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We could provide a detailed breakdown but just generally I can say a portion of it goes for the RCMP training that takes place in Regina. Not the actual training because the RCMP contribute that, but the cost of getting the people down there and others from the RCMP that go down to be with them, their cost of travel and accommodation and so on. There is some money set aside, for example, later in March there is going to be a workshop of people who have had that training coming in for further training in Yellowknife and meetings together on it. Once that training money comes out of it, the money is divided up by community and depending upon the size of the community and so on quite a few of the communities are at the

level of \$3,000. There might be ones getting more. It depends on their level of commitment as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Under the MOU, if the community accepts the training program and the funding, and the person they send down is successful in his police training, when he comes back, is he required to enforce the criminal code?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

They do work with the RCMP when they come back. Assuming the RCMP is satisfied with their success in the training program, and so on, then they would be sworn in as a peace officer once the MOU is signed in that community. What each one is required to do is work out individually between that person, the community and that RCMP detachment, based on the community expectations, what the person feels able and willing to do and what the detachment members feel are appropriate to have them do in the circumstances. They do work under the supervision of the RCMP detachment and they take responsibility for the assignments they are given.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is obviously beneficial. I have seen this actually in place in the community of Tuktoyaktuk where they are RCMP officers. How does the trainee receive this training in a community like Sachs where there is no police officer?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

It is a good question. It is a new program and initially the idea was, they would only allow those people in communities where there were detachments. There

was a demand from other communities that did not have an RCMP member. They wanted to be involved. The idea is that they would at times, of course, if there is not a detachment, members go over. For example, in Sachs, from Inuvik, they would work with them then. They have telephone contact. They work as closely as they can. Obviously, it has to be handled carefully. We are hopeful it will be better than having no presence at all. Certainly, it is something new and we need to see how it works out.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Law enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$20.015 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I am sorry. \$28 million. Next we have legal services board, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$4.852 million. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I have the Members' permission to go back to item, law enforcement for one more question?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Steen would like the consent of the committee to return to law enforcement. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

The committee has agreed. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chairperson, I apologize to the Members and to the Minister. I thank you for your cooperation. I had a question in regard to police services to Holman Island after division. Is the department at this point in time supplying police services to Holman Island out of Inuvik or out of the Kitikmeot?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe, at this point in time, they report to the office in the Kitikmeot. Although we do not have the details here, I would not be able to say whether or not there would need to be changes. As far as I can tell, the Western Territory and Nunavut will both use the RCMP. In most cases the same Criminal Code and very similar laws will apply, et cetera. We can find out what the RCMP division plans are for that border community.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Law enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$28.015 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Legal services board, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$4.852 million. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Legal services board is one of the...is this similar to the lawyers' support? I am a bit confused here. Is the legal services board the one that supplies services to clients?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. For clarification, Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The legal services board is a board that oversees services to the public and to clients, it is, in essence, legal aid.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr.

Page 949

Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am on the right page, then. One concern has been expressed to me from the community of Holman that they were not having opportunity to have legal services in the community. Is this something that is addressed through the boards or through the department?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is something that would be discussed through the regional board. For example, for Holman Island, it would be the Kitikmeot law centre and the board that run that law centre.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I will have to check my information but I thought Holman Island was represented by the Inuvik board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Madam Chairperson, I just looked on the wrong list. The Member is correct. It would be the Mackenzie Delta legal services committee. Sorry about that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department is saying that if the community has concerns they should be addressing them through the boards as far as legal aid services in the community goes? Is that correct? The department is supplying the Inuvik Beaufort Delta board with funds to service Holman Island?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That is essentially correct. The community would have to deal with the Mackenzie Delta legal services committee. I understand that has happened recently. There have been discussions with their executive director. How far along it is, I do not know, but there has been some effort made in that area.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate the information the Minister gave me on that. I would appreciate being kept informed as to the progress on that particular concern expressed by Holman Island.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is important to get the information out on whom people should contact because that is very basic information people should know about. A comment on additional services, I know that the community should be given some basic services and does. The legal services board is a board that has also received significant reductions with its budget and is struggling with its budget. Even though I say for extra services you should contact this organization, I do not want to give the impression that once you do that, there will be that extra service. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I presume, in the division, there is going to be some thought that the particular services to Holman Island come out of one specific region. I asked the question earlier if police services should come out of Inuvik rather than the Kitikmeot. It seems the departments have inconsistent services to this particular community. Sometimes they are serviced out of the Kitikmeot and in this particular case, the Mackenzie Delta legal services committee. I

do not understand why it is coming out of all over the place, different regions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I agree with the Member that these are questions that need to be addressed and it is not just with the legal services board, there are other government services. The community of Holman Island, because of its location, its proximity to the Nunavut/western Arctic border and the fact that traditionally in some areas of government, they have received services from both the Kitikmeot region and the Inuvik region; these are issues that are not yet finalized. In my other responsibility with division transition planning, I can commit to working with the Member to make sure these questions are answered and the community does know what direction it is going. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Legal services board, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$4.852 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Lawyer support services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.272 million. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I have some questions within this activity and I will be introducing a motion that was discussed yesterday. Within the lawyer support services, can the department advise as to how many outstanding lawsuits there are against the GNWT?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We do not have the answer to that and that is not to suggest there is a whole bunch and we need to count them. We cannot

Page 950

even say for sure right now if there are any that are presently before the courts.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Do I assume then, if the Minister does not know if there are any outstanding cases, he probably could not tell me how much money, if any, that cost last year? I will ask the Minister, then, when would he be able to make that information available to the committee? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The first question of how many, if any, lawsuits there are against the GNWT, that information would be readily available and we could give that number as soon as possible. The other information, the historical data on how much we have spent defending the GNWT on lawsuits against it, that would take some time, probably a few weeks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I understand that the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife, in particular, went through a very sad time in its history a few years ago with the situation we had at Giant Mine. My question to the Minister is, is he aware of any ongoing RCMP investigation into any of the happenings of Giant Mine through that particular troubled time. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No, we are not aware of any RCMP investigations into that situation. That is not to say that there is no investigation. We are not aware of one.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Do I assume from that then, to the Minister's knowledge, as he did mention in a briefing this morning with the RCMP that they usually make the Minister aware of any activities that are happening as far as investigations go? Would I assume then, from that, there are no investigations arising out of that particular time in our history? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That is a difficult question to answer. One, I do not know whether or not there is an investigation. Two, if I did know, I would likely say that I know something but it would be very difficult for me to say it out here in the public forum and make any particular remarks about any police investigation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I have some questions under this activity with regard to the statutes revision process that is now underway. Could the Minister indicate how that statutes revision process is going and the type of work being done? If it is like Bill 10, which we did this morning, it is more of a housekeeping situation. I am also concerned about the issue of just mirroring legislation that may be quite old and possibly out of date, that has irrelevant or no longer appropriate sections because of its age. Could the Minister comment on that?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The statutes revision project is ongoing. I understand that progress is being made. Basically what you have with the statutes revision project is ensuring both territories, the Nunavut Territory and the Western Territory, have statutes or laws governing it so that the two new governments, when they start up, will have a basis for its legislation. The statutes revision project also deals with translation of the statutes to French, and in the case of the Nunavut side, also into Inuktitut. In addition, the statutes revision commissioner through the project deals with things like renumbering legislation where required, removing provisions that no longer have any effect, replacing obsolete or archaic terms and reorganizing statutes in general. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Would it be safe to say - I do not want to put words into the Minister's mouth by making an assumption that the Minister can confirm or not - that good, bad or indifferent, both new territories are going to inherit the current legislation? It will be up to the two new Legislatures, once they are elected, to, in fact, sort through, update and modernize legislation? That the changes being made now are more transitional in nature? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I understand that all jurisdictions from time to time need to have a statutes revision project because statutes or laws require updating, correcting, renumbering, et cetera, all the time. The NWT statutes or laws have been updated relatively recently. If you compare to what has been done or not done in other jurisdictions, other parts of Canada, this statute revision project will do that much more in updating our laws. In that sense, it is a good thing. It will enable the two territories to start off with relatively modern or good legislation bases. What it will not do is fix all the ills or all the inconsistencies or

changes needed in the Legislation. It is not a cure all.
Relative to other

Page 951

jurisdictions in other parts of Canada, the Western
NWT and the Nunavut government will start off in
relatively good shape.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Would the Minister
have any idea, across the governments with all the
legislation we have, how much legislation do we have
that is 20-years old or older?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We do not have
that information in front of us. We could find out but
as I said, the statute revision or updating laws to
make them current is something that has been
ongoing. If you will recall, we are creating a new
Education Act and there was, and is, work being done
to the Wildlife Act. We will soon have the Family Law
Act that will modernize it and make it current. There
is old legislation that has been there for a very long
time. There are some extreme examples that I know
of. For example, we have a Motion Picture Act, that I
have not seen, but I have been told about, which
requires a bucket of sand to always be close to the
projector because it was written before the invention
of the fire extinguisher. Those are the types of things
that need to be fixed. They are relatively off to the
side. The main body of the statutes will be in good
standing soon.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not need the list
of legislation 20 years old or greater. I am just
concerned about the law. I want to make it clear, I
suppose, this is a process to get us to division, and
the substantive work that will have to be done by the

various governments and departments. I also have a
concern with this process in terms of workload.

Initially, my recollection when it came through our
committee was, it was a situation that could easily be
done in-house part-time. My understanding now, and
further re-enforced by discussions of how time
consuming it is even to do a miscellaneous statutes
revision, is that this process has grown in nature and
demands, to the extent that I am concerned about the
workload and what is not getting done because we
have decided to do it in-house and all the people are
tied up doing this when they should be doing other
stuff related to the 1,001 other things that Justice has
to do in regard to division. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am told the work
that is required to be done by the cut-off date will be
done. How that compares to what was expected to
be done in the past or sometime ago, I do not know. I
could not make that comparison. I am assured that
the required revisions will be done. The required
translations will be done. Also on the other point of
making sure you start off with a good statute base, it
is important to ensure future Legislative Assemblies of
both territories be the ones that change or improve
the legislation and not bureaucrats and lawyers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Twenty seconds to go, Mr.
Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thank the Minister
for not running the clock on me. My final question is,
is all this work being done in-house or has there been
some contract work brought in to, in fact, try to
cope with the workload for those and other chores?
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. What has
happened so far is the work to date has been done in-
house. The Department of Justice staff plus the

Statutes Revision Commissioner, plus the legislation editor and the project coordinators are able to and will contract out further future work, if required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Lawyer support services. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I am mixed up. I am told it is according to the list. I just sat down. It is actually Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following up in the same area as Mr. Miltenberger. It seems rather strange that we would not be using a contract lawyer to be doing these revisions considering the fact there has been several MLAs who have identified areas where our acts are outdated. If we cannot bring forward to amend these acts because we are told people are too busy getting ready for division and other things; if this is the case; why did we not contract out this work right from the beginning so we could free up our staff to work on outdated legislation and preparing for division?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important to point out this work is, yes, indeed, complex. I do not believe it takes away legal staff that otherwise could be working on other urgent areas. There has not been a net reduction of what the department should be doing in those other areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus. We will take a few minutes after Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand from the Minister's previous answer that there will be some work contracted out. Is this some work that is too complex to be done by current staff lawyers? Why is

this particular work going to be contracted out if our lawyers have enough time to work on the revision?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Ms. Sanders.

Page 952

MS. SANDERS:

It is not so much the complexity. The idea was there may be peaks and valleys in the work that is needed. Legislative drafters are needed most intensely at certain times because of the legislative schedule. The statute revision itself will probably be kept in-house. If there is extra work at times, those who are doing the legislative drafting work will assess which things could best be contracted out to somebody. It is not necessarily the complexity, but simply what fits with the expertise they have in-house and what expertise is available on a contract basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Lawyer support services. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the expertise available in the north to do the remaining work or would this have to be contracted out to southern legal experts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those decisions are not made at this point. Legislative drafting is quite a specialized area. Depending on the particular drafting task that is being done, it may be a greater specialty. It is a matter of finding someone with a particular expertise who is available at the time. It may be they will choose to contract out the less technical matters or it may be there is a particular project of a more complex nature. The choice is made on a project by project basis. There are times when we do use drafters from the south, normally, people who have had some background and experience drafting for the north because they are familiar with the circumstances, both the drafting style and circumstances in which we work. Those decisions are made on a project by project basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of defending staff and elected officials for criminal and civil matters, do we use staff lawyers for that particular exercise or do we contract that out?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Normally we would not be using staff lawyers. It depends on the circumstances whether we would be involved or not. There are times where counsel is retained by the government's insurers and those are the people who represent the individuals involved, which is probably the most usual circumstance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one final question. I was busy with a constituent earlier and I just heard the tail end of a question that Mr. Henry had asked in relation to the criminal and civil cases that the department has been responsible for. I think he asked about the numbers, as well as the costs and the Minister did not have that information on hand. Would the Minister be willing to defer this particular area in case we still have some questions after we receive the information?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I was not here, but I was advised that it was communicated. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is no. I indicated that the information that the Member at the time was asking, would require some time, a few weeks perhaps, to put together. That would be after the budget session has completed, hopefully.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. For the benefit of the Minister and the witnesses who have been sitting here for the last couple of hours, we will take a break for fifteen minutes. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the committee back to order. I would like at this time to recognize, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of quick questions. Regarding regulatory reform that Minister Kakfwi's department is conducting, are there any acts that will be looked at through that process that the Minister is aware of? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The regulatory reform initiative that was announced earlier is one of several initiatives and the principles which is to reduce red tape and to make legislation more user friendly, especially for businesses that use it. I understand RWED, with our assistance, is putting together a report. There will likely be some further work coming out of that, but we do not have that information here in front of us, of what it may be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that information. I also note that within RWED, there is a suggestion to rebase an additional \$109,000, which may assist both departments in pursuing some of this outdated legislation. A final question, if I may, Mr. Chairman, regarding the Statutes Revision Amendment Act. I am unsure whether the Minister mentioned it here, but am I correct in believing the federal government contributes toward this process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The federal government did agree to provide funding for this as part of the implementation funding towards division. They put aside for this project \$1.043 million, for work that is needed to be done leading up to division.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, in 1997-98, there is \$200,000 identified. Could the Minister confirm this is accurate? The Minister also stated, or one of his staff stated

Page 953

that, a lot of this work was being done in-house. Is there a potential for some of those financial resources to be attributed to updating some of the acts that Members of this House have been suggesting require updating? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The additional funding from the federal government for the statutes revision project is only for revising statutes leading up to division and for the purpose of division and cannot be used for any other purpose. There are specific parameters for how that money should be used and they have to be division related. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly understand the principle if you receive funds for a project, you should be using it for that project. I had understood the Minister to say that the work that was required for the Statutes Revision Amendment Act is being done in-house by staff of the GNWT. I am assuming that if they are working in-house on the Statutes Revision Amendment Act, then there is other work they are not doing, such as amending some of the outdated

legislation. Could the Minister confirm if my assumptions would be accurate? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Merci Monsieur. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The salaries for the Statutes Revision Commissioner, the legislative editor, the interpreting work, although they are quote "in-house", the funds for salaries and expenses are for the statutes revision project for division-related purposes. This is paid for through the extra funding the federal government has provided.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would be prepared to move a motion at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Proceed with your motion please.

Committee Motion 17-13(5): Recommendation to Review and Amend the Labour Standards Act

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that this government commit to immediately reviewing and preparing amendments to the Labour Standards Act to provide for calculation of remuneration for commissioned employees; and

Further, to bring these amendments before the Legislative Assembly for consideration at the fall sitting of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe the motion is circulated and translated to an appropriate language of this committee. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. I do not see a quorum. I will ring the bell. Thank you. The chair recognizes a quorum. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Lawyer support services, operations and

maintenance, total operations and maintenance \$2.272 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Registries and court services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$9.479 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Steen and Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the department, could they give me an indication of how successful they have been in recruiting justices of the peace for those communities that do not have them?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you. I am going to ask Ms. Sanders to make a comment on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Assistant deputy minister, Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have JPs in many communities and there are other places where we do not have JPs or where we could use an additional JP. At the moment we are not in a position to do active recruiting. In most places, we do not have the regional staff who would be there to do that, but where a community wants to have a JP, especially if they have someone who they could recommend, we are quite receptive to having those kinds of recommendations. The appointments are never made without that kind of community support. Certainly, if the community wishes to be proactive and come forward with recommendations, that is normally welcome. It is very

important to have JPs from within the community. With the respective community members, it links the community with justice because it is again, someone from the community who can work with the justice committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am aware in some communities people are reluctant to come forward and be appointed JPs. I am also aware of the cost involved in having no JP. In some cases, there is required transportation of those people charged to another community in order for a show of cause hearing. That type of thing can get quite expensive. I am not sure that communities are actually aware of all this cost associated with not having a JP.

I have not seen any outward effort on the part of the department, whereby they advertise in the community for somebody to come forward as a JPs. I know you go through the process of appointment through recommendations from hamlet councils and MLAs as well, but what I am wondering is, whether or not the public is actually made aware there is a

Page 954

requirement for JPs? Perhaps, the department could do a little recruitment to actually go into the communities and explain the role of the JP and what could be expected of him in the early stages. A lot of people think right off the bat they are going to be required to hold court. Of course, it is not the case, but I do not think the public is fully aware of this. It might be beneficial to the department to reduce costs if they can recruit JPs for those communities that do not have them and no one has come forward because of their uncertainty of what will be required of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple points. One is that I agree with the Member that it is important to have JPs. It is also true that there are a few communities that do not have JPs. The number I have for the department is a total of 183 JPs in the

NWT that are supervised by the Chief Judge of the Territorial Court. The Department of Justice, in conjunction with the Chief Judge, is trying to improve the administration of JPs, which would include recruiting. I understand that a position for a JP administrator was advertised in the last few months and we hope one will be hired soon to start working on improving this. Keeping in mind the fact that, because they are supervised by the Chief Judge, there is a line between the Judge and the Department of Justice and we have to respect that. It is fundamental that we have that separation and we continue to work together to make this program a success.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Registries and court services. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the areas that I wanted some more information on was the Justice of the Peace Program. I understand that we are supposed to be getting a justice of the peace coordinator. Obviously, it is a very important position. One of the recommendations was that we get someone who is very familiar with the north and with the people in the north. Has this position been advertised and filled yet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated earlier, the position for JP administrator was advertised in the fall of 1997, at the request of the Chief Judge who is the JP supervisor. Although there have been some delays in hiring someone to fill this position, we are very hopeful that in the not too distant future the position will be filled. I agree that the position is important.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Will this position be re-advertised, then?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would have to confirm whether or not it would be re-advertised or at what stage the hiring process is at. The Department of Justice is involved as far as administration of the hiring process goes, but in the end it is the Chief Judge who makes the final decision. We do not have the information in front of us but we can find that out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could we get clarification as to why the competition was not brought to fruition? Why was someone not hired? Usually when you run a competition, you go through and you hire someone or else the competition is over, you withdraw it for some particular reason. Why was someone not hired? Was there no one qualified enough that had applied? What reason is it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I cannot say at this point in time what part of the hiring process has caused this delay, whether it had to do with personnel issues or qualifications, et cetera. As I understand, it takes a special person to be a JP administrator. The person requires a rounded knowledge, experience and also requires the confidence of the Chief Judge and the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of the Coroners Program, one of the concerns that I had brought up some time ago was the fact that there is a lack of space in the communities to hold and prepare bodies for burial or for travel. Has there been any headway made in this area? Obviously, this can be a health hazard if the proper facilities are not present for

people working with bodies. Has there been any headway made in this area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the Member that this is an issue. The storage of bodies in some communities is a problem. I have seen cases, especially in the summer time, with some particular communities having problems finding suitable storage places in the community while waiting for the RCMP, the plane to get the body out for an autopsy or waiting for burial. It does make it a difficult problem when you have the coroner and the coroner's assistants or the people who work with the community coroner trying to figure out what to do with a body, whether to use the nursing station, the community freezer, et cetera.

When the Member brought it up, I asked the Department of Justice to look into it. They are looking at the issue. Apparently it has financial implications because you are talking about specialized facilities, mortuary facilities that are not there right now. It is going to take some time to figure out a solution to the problem. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Registries and court services. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has there been a study or a report done to determine how many communities are actually in need of assistance to acquire suitable facilities?

Page 955

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that information but from common knowledge it is likely the majority of the smaller communities in the NWT do not have mortuary or deceased body facilities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In another area, since my time is almost up, I know the department has been working with a committee trying to establish a legal program, particularly in the western NWT. Could we get an update on where this particular venture is at, at this time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a committee functioning under the leadership of Arctic College in Fort Smith with expertise from different areas related to the Justice system. What the committee is still trying to establish is what are the actual training needs. There are some different possibilities. Is the program aimed at training people who would later go on to become lawyers? Is it aimed at training people for fairly specialized positions as court clerks or something which is limited in number? Is it aimed at training people to be court workers? If so, they will also need specialized on-the-job training. Is it a general kind of training that could prepare people for a variety of roles in the Justice system? As far as I know, that working group for the western Arctic is still continuing on, looking at those different possibilities.

There has also been discussion of where community development fits into that, whether that is a separate course or where that all fits together. They are also looking at the work that has been done in Nunavut for similar kinds of training there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are dealing with the Department of Justice, 1998-99 main estimates. The activity summary is registries and court services. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed with your motion, please, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we extend sitting hours to conclude the matter under discussion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We shall continue until we conclude this particular department. Registries and court services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$9.479 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 7-11, community justice and corrections, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$25.162 million. Agreed? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few days back the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs had undertaken to take a lead role in the development of a community development program so that the colleges could have a certificate and/or diploma program for community development. This, obviously, would include community justice. The Minister for MACA was hoping to get the different Ministers in those areas...there would be a requirement for a course. The view at the present time is since all the communities are now getting into community justice, there should be a course in community justice. Would the department undertake to cooperate with the Minister of MACA's staff and contribute financially toward development of a Community Justice Program that could be taught at the college level?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, would you endeavour to answer this one department of MACA, which is involved but not here? Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Justice is prepared to work with anyone, including MACA, to sit down and talk about

what a program would look like, how it would be taught and to whom, et cetera. The department is also very committed to the concept of community justice and moving that forward. It is pretty much impossible right now to be committing dollars or contributions to that, but we are interested in working with others on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and correction. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Developing a community justice course would not cost that much. We are not talking hundreds of thousands of dollars. It probably would be a small amount, maybe \$25,000 or something like that. I am not sure of the exact price, but at least if the Minister would not totally close the door. We do expect the communities to operate community justice committees and to start taking on sentencing circles and the rest of these types of things so that we can have an alternative to stacking up inmates like cord wood at the YCC, Iqaluit and other correctional centres. If we are going to do that, we have to give the tools to the community people. A community justice course is a big step along the way. This would be part of an overall course, and we would not expect the department to go beyond the community justice course. It would be part of the whole community development course. Could I ask the Minister if he would at least consider it and depending on what happens, possibly in the future contribute financially as well if the opportunity arises?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, the community justice area is an important area for myself personally. It is an important area for the department now and it was before I got to the department. It is one that is moving forward very well in some communities in Nunavut and

Page 956

it is moving along over here in the western Arctic too. It is not well defined in some areas. In some communities you have community justice committees that are operating well. It is important that we always

look at improving the way we do any particular program, and I think community justice is somewhat in its infancy in today's stage, although people argue that you had community justice in the past. The way we do it today, it is new and we are always learning new things. The department does spend, according to the numbers I have, \$2.355 million in community justice and some in contributions to community justice committees, in some research in coordinating work. As I said earlier, yes, we can consider, we can talk to other departments, other individuals and in general, say this is an important area, but saying an amount or saying they will contribute dollars in the current year or in the coming year is just something I could not. Right now, it is premature.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and corrections. I have on the list, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for indicating he is willing to discuss the matter with MACA or at least his people would. I would like to move onto the area of federal inmate repatriation. Could we get an update on what is being done in the area of bringing federal inmates back to the north? Most federal inmates, as we all know, are down south and some of them never come back until their time is finished. The social programs committee had begun to look in this area. We were discouraged from the response of the department. What has the department done since last summer? Has there been any movement in this area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak to the first point if Ms. Sanders will speak to the second. On the whole idea of moving federal inmates who are in southern penitentiaries or in institutions to the north, I think in principle, most people would agree that is probably the way to go. However, in reality, we do have overcrowding in the facilities we do have. Most facilities are over capacity and as a general statement, you could say we barely keep up with the inmates we generate here, and we could not afford to bring in other federal inmates at this time. Even though they are former northerners, there is just no

room at the inn, so to speak. In terms of how things are going with the concept, I will ask Ms. Sanders to speak to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Ms. Sanders.

MS. SANDERS:

When we last had intensive discussions with the Correctional Service of Canada about the possibility of bringing more inmates north, they backed off because of the capital costs that would have been involved for them for the same reasons the Minister just said, we did not have extra space. It would have required adding space to what we already have and adding program space. When you have people incarcerated for lengthy periods of time like that, it is especially important to have program space. We are just at the most preliminary stage of trying to reopen some kind of discussion on that level in the hope that in the context of division the Correctional Service of Canada would be more interested in some further development work. We have recently visited several facilities in Saskatchewan, including the federal facility for women at Maple Creek, the federal penitentiary at Prince Albert and a smaller facility run by the Prince Albert Band Council, an aboriginally run program jointly funded by the federal government and the provincial government. That gave us a lot of ideas of a very diverse range of possibilities, some of which would not work for us at all and some which might have some application. We are at that stage of doing some early investigations in order to have more information before we formally approach the Correctional Service of Canada.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On the list I have Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the community justice committees, there has not been too much concern raised of lately but I know in the past there was a lot of concern with justice committee members not having or reaching burnout stage and not having a lot of people stepping into the committees again. Then committees were depending a lot on these individuals to try and lessen the load as we have heard earlier on the systems we have.

This relates much to the training Mr. Erasmus spoke on. If we had the proper training - I know we do some

committee training with individuals who are on there - and if we could focus on those areas, we would go a long way in making these community justice committees much more viable and the people on them would be able to last a lot longer.

That is an area we need to continue to focus on, as well as in the area of division. With division coming, the state of affairs as we know them within justice and corrections, much work needs to be done to prepare us for the new governments for what lies ahead in their futures. As we have heard over and over again, the facilities are continually at their maximum. Then we have a lot of reoccurring offences and the same inmates following the cycle. Can the Minister update us as to the activities in these areas?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Burnout for justice committee members is always a concern because you are dealing with sometimes delicate and stressful situations. You are dealing with many good people who are committed and care for the community and others who have decided to be part of these justice committees. That is exactly why they are there and we would like nothing more than to keep them, to support them, train them in that field and to help them.

Page 957

visit communities and to give support and training to individual justice committees and their members. This work is ongoing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed with your motion, Mr. Roland.

Committee Motion 18-13(5): Recommendation Respecting the Review of Corrections

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under activity summary, community justice and corrections. I move that this committee recommends that the corrections review by the department include at a minimum a) the preparation of working papers on the state of corrections in each of the two new territories addressing the issue of compliance with federal corrections' regulations to provide the new governments with direction on resolving the serious issues facing corrections. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The motion is in order. It is circulated and translated. To the motion. Question has been called. I have to ring the bell because we do not have a quorum. Thank you. There is a motion on the floor and it is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Mr. Roland, do you have any other comments? No. Thank you. We are on page 7-11 of the review of the Justice Department. Community justice and corrections, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$25.162 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Agreed. Thank you. Page 7-12, community justice and corrections. Building and works, headquarters, total region, \$470,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Building and works, Baffin region, total region, \$435,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total building and works, \$905,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Acquisition of equipment, headquarters, total regional, \$249,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total acquisition of equipment, \$249,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total activity, \$1.154 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 7-13, detail of grants and contributions, total grants, \$46,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Contributions, move to page 7-14, total contributions, \$2,977 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total grants and contributions, \$3.023 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 7-15, an information item, active positions, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 7-16, detail of work performed on behalf of third parties. We will move onto 7-17, total department, \$235,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Please return to program summary, page 7-5. Justice, program summary, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$73.581 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Capital, total capital, \$1.154 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total expenditures, \$74.735 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, very much. Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Justice estimate is concluded? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the honourable Minister and his witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you, very much. Have a good night. Thank you. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

Page 958

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Good evening. We are on item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Friday, February 20th, 1998:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions

9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, No. 2
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 9, Loan Authorization Act, 1998-99
 - Bill 12, Write-off Bad Debts Act, 1997-98
 - Bill 13, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 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
 - Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1997-98
 - 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

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Friday,
February 20, 1998 at 10:00 a.m.

--ADJOURNMENT