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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

**SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):**

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Good afternoon. Before we get started, I would like to ask Members to welcome the Pages who will be working with us this week. The pages are from Mr Antoine's, Mr. Kakwi's and my riding. From the community of Fort Providence there is Samantha Bonnetrouge who is to my right. Also, Troy Gargon and Brandon Matto. Members might be interested to know that Samantha and Brandon were part of a group of 10 students from the school in Fort Providence who travelled to the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida to watch the launch of the space shuttle Columbia live last month. Canadian space agency officials invited the group to a reception and a special tour of the facilities. The highlight was meeting Canadian astronaut Dave Williams. Mr. Williams agreed to take their school pin with him on the trip into space. It was truly exciting and valuable experience for the students. It is my hope that we, as Members, will make the trip that these Pages have taken to the Legislative Assembly a memorable learning experience. Again, I would like to welcome all the Pages to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

--Applause

Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 101-13(5): Western Transition Report

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, earlier this spring I released a supplemental report on the Creation of the Western Territory which identifies a number of the key transition costs related to the establishment of a new Western Territory. The report has been widely distributed and will soon be available on the GNWT website.

These costs include \$10 million for staff retraining, \$3.8 million for office space rationalization, \$3.6 million/year for a Western Human Resource Development Strategy to build a representative public service and \$500,000 to assist NWT bodies such as Sport North and the Status of Women Council in their preparations for division. As well, the report identifies the need for federal funding to cover both the transitional and incremental costs that will result from changes to western governance. The amount of these costs will be more clear as constitutional development proceeds.

As Members are aware, the Premier of the NWT has committed that no existing GNWT staff will be laid off as a result of division during the term of the current government. The \$10 million identified in the report is intended to allow retraining of employees affected by the staffing adjustments needed to move to a smaller western headquarters.

We will use this funding to encourage and provide opportunities for any affected employees to pursue retraining if needed so that they can acquire specific skills required to fill vacancies in the new western government. Affected staff will be retained while awaiting a vacancy for which they are, or have become through retraining, qualified. The GNWT considers it very important to retain its experienced and skilled staff, and we are committed to treating staff fairly through the transition.

I would like to say a few words specifically about the new Human Resources Strategy included as part of the supplemental report, which I personally believe represents a very positive step in the creation of the Western Territory.

The Western Human Resource Development Strategy is designed to focus our efforts on the goal of a competent qualified public service which is representative of the public it serves by the year

2004. Over the past two decades, we have made considerable progress in developing a northern public service but we also know that there is more work to be done to reach our goals.

We know that partnerships and strategic alliances will be critical to our success. The strategy is designed to be flexible and leaves room for creativity in finding ways to meet unique local and regional as well as territorial-wide needs.

There will be opportunities for communities and regions to work with the GNWT to design specific initiatives tailored to their unique requirements. Groups such as aboriginal organizations, women's organizations, support for disabled persons associations, community governments, band councils, divisional school boards, Aurora College, and non-profit and private training organizations all have potential roles to play in support of the strategy. We will be consulting with these and other groups to develop partnerships and joint projects.

The effectiveness of the new western government will depend on the skill, knowledge and attitude of the public service. This plan would establish key building blocks on which an effective

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and representative workforce can be established and maintained.

I am very much looking forward to further discussions with western stakeholders and with DIAND, and to beginning the implementation of the strategy once funding has been secured. I strongly believe it will help us to build a better future for the residents of the Western Territory.

For the strategy to be successful, it will, of course, be important to ensure that it is adequately financed. As we did for Nunavut, we have proposed to the federal government that they provide incremental funding to support the strategy. A commitment of about \$3.6 million/year over a six-year period has been proposed in the supplemental report on western transition costs. The report was sent to Minister Stewart requesting a meeting to discuss funding the costs identified. It is important to note that Minister Stewart had previously provided a verbal commitment that reasonable transition costs with respect to staff retraining and office space rationalization will be funded.

Since that time, Minister Stewart has indicated that she will be in a position to discuss the other important issues raised in the report this June. For the reasons I gave earlier, we are particularly interested in pursuing discussions with her with respect to the funding for the Human Resource Development Strategy.

I am looking forward to the upcoming discussions with Minister Stewart and will continue to keep Members informed of progress in securing commitments from the federal government to fund the transition costs identified in the report. Mahsi.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 102-13(5): Prospects North '98

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the triennial conference and trade show, Prospects North, will be held in Yellowknife from September 21 to 23. This year's theme is Partners in Developing Canada's North. In support of this event, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has provided a contribution of \$150,000.

Prospects North is the most comprehensive business and investment trade show in the Northwest Territories (NWT). It showcases numerous economic opportunities available in the NWT, providing northern and southern businesses with an opportunity to advertise their services, expand their customer base and establish partnerships to maximize these opportunities.

About 450 delegates are expected at this year's conference. Organizers anticipate about 250 delegates from the North, 80 delegates from southern Canada, 20 international delegates and about 100 exhibitors.

We are pleased to be a sponsor of this worthwhile event. I am confident that it will generate future sustainable business development in the North, for the benefit of all northerners. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Minister's Statement 103-13(5): The Keewatin Pilot Project

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about the Keewatin Pilot Project. I think it is important to clear up some of the misunderstandings and concerns about this proposal. Mr. Speaker, here are the facts:

1. Kivalliq leaders are not asking for more money, they know they have to live with their fair share of the territorial budget. What they want is more local and regional say in how that money gets spent.
2. There has never been any intention to implement the Keewatin Pilot Project before April 1, 1999. It would be foolish to try to make such a major change in government at this time. What we have achieved is the development of a model that can be used in any region, in either new government -- if the government of the day wishes to proceed.
3. This pilot project is not benefiting the Keewatin communities financially in any way. There seems to be some misconceptions about this.
4. The Keewatin communities are used to working together on a regional basis. Since 1994, Keewatin communities have participated in the Kivalliq Partners in Development. This is a regional and community development organization. Kivalliq Partners in Development has done many good things in Keewatin communities and therefore the leadership already had good experience working together. That is why they were interested in this pilot project.
5. There have been concerns expressed that my department has been spending too much time and money on this project. Let me make it clear that MACA has not dedicated extra resources to the Keewatin Pilot Project. Keewatin leaders have used their regular regional leadership meetings to discuss the project.

Mr. Speaker, communities accept that money is tight. They know that there is no longer enough funding available for all the capital projects that communities need. They accept that difficult decisions have to be made about which capital projects can be funded and which cannot. What communities cannot

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accept, Mr. Speaker, is that these decisions are made by the government, with little input from the people.

Communities continue to ask us why some projects get funded while others do not. I am sure that all of us face these questions when we visit our constituencies.

The Keewatin Pilot Project began more than two years ago as a partnership between the territorial government and the Kivalliq leadership. We wanted to find ways to increase local and regional decision-making authority while still respecting and preserving the authority of the Legislative Assembly to set budgets at the territorial level. Today, we have the foundation for a model that proposes changes to provide more local and regional authority and control.

Mr. Speaker, the principles of the Keewatin Pilot Project are consistent with this government's Community Empowerment Initiative. I am sure we would all agree that we should support community government to be more effective, responsible, accountable and, most importantly, relevant to the people whom they serve.

The concept of more community control and authority is perfectly in line with the driving principles of Footprints 2 and the expressed desire of how the new Nunavut government should evolve. Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that neither MACA, the GNWT nor the Kivalliq leadership will support a model that contradicts Footprints 2 or that would create problems for the new Nunavut government.

Let me say it again. There is absolutely no intention to try to implement a new model of governance or new approach to capital planning before April 1, 1999. It will be up to the new Government of Nunavut and the new western government to decide whether they wish to use a new capital planning system or whether they wish to leave the system the way it is now. We are simply providing another option which can be accepted, modified or rejected.

The Kivalliq Leadership continues to support the concept. We are now at a stage in the project where the work that has been done can be consolidated and given to the two new governments for their further consideration. The Kivalliq leaders will be meeting in Yellowknife on May 26 to review the progress to date. I have personally invited the leadership of NTI, NIC and the Interim Commissioner to attend this meeting.

I know Keewatin mayors are hoping to meet with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and the Standing Committee on Infrastructure to address their specific concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say that there are some serious misunderstandings about the pilot project. I would like to correct these misunderstandings. Let me make it clear that the Kivalliq mayors and the senior administrative officers will not receive cash payments if they support this project. The Keewatin Pilot Project is not simply a scheme to pad the pockets of local Keewatin businesses. The delivery of Nunavut infrastructures will not be hindered by the Keewatin Pilot Project.

Mr. Speaker, the Keewatin Pilot Project is an idea. It is a new idea that makes sense for these changing times. It supports local decision making. It shows how communities can be given more flexibility to set their own priorities. It proposes a more mature and balanced relationship between the territorial and community levels of government. We have a wonderful opportunity to create new governments in Nunavut and in the west that can bring a meaningful, positive change for communities. I hope we will remain open-minded about new ideas that can help communities develop. I ask all MLAs and other northern leaders to support our work to try to find better ways to serve the people. After all, Mr. Speaker, that is what good government is all about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 104-13(5): Wolf Harvesting and Management

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks the public has paid an unusual amount of attention to one of our northern species of wildlife and the way it is harvested. A newspaper article in February prompted numerous letters and E-mails about wolves and the way they were being harvested near Rennie Lake, about 200 kilometres east of Great Slave Lake. The Beverly caribou herd spends part of the winter in the Rennie Lake area. This year, animals from the Bathurst herd moved further south than usual, meeting up with the

beverly herd. As wolves follow the caribou, this resulted in more wolves than normal in the area.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, plans are being made for a series of regional workshops involving harvesters, researchers and managers. Their expertise and advice will help focus and expand the awareness of wolf management issues and concerns. We will use the results of the workshop in our consultations with co-management boards and aboriginal groups.

Wolf harvesting typically occurs in very remote areas that are not regularly visited by renewable resource officers. This summer, fuel will be cached east of Great Slave Lake to allow our officers to conduct more patrols in the area next winter. Mr.

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Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is recognized as a leader in effective, responsible management of wildlife. We are committed to ensuring long-term, sustainable use of wildlife by northerners. We are also committed to ensuring that wolves, like all our wildlife resources, remain an essential part of our cultural and economic well-being. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 409-13(5): Young Constituents Service as House Pages

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce three young people from the small communities I represent as an MLA for Nahendeh. I would like to start off with saying that Carilyn Jumbo, from Trout Lake and John Paul Tonka, from Nahanni Butte, the young man over there. Up there we have Carla Norwegian from Jean Marie River. I would like to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly and I hope that by helping us this week that they will learn what I do here and learn what you do here. They will have some learning experience here to take back to the communities. Mahsi.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Member's Statement 410-13(5): Young Constituents Service as House Pages

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce three constituents from the Sahtu, Earl Zimmer, son of Elaine and Don Zimmer of Norman Wells; Natanda Oudzi, daughter of Helen Oudzi of Colville Lake; Megan Tobac, daughter of Edna and Henry Tobac of Fort Good Hope. They have come to Yellowknife to work as Pages in the Legislative Assembly and I know you will join with me to welcome them to our capital city. I would like to take some time to thank those who have contributed to this project in bringing these young people to Yellowknife. North-Wright Air provided free airline passes for Natanda and Megan to travel to Norman Wells. Canadian Airlines provided three free passes for Earl, Natanda and Megan's trip from Norman Wells to Yellowknife.

The Sahtu District Education Council donated \$1,885 to cover the cost of meals and entertainment and my Executive Assistant, Lynda Sorensen is providing accommodation and is sharing the role of guardian along with myself. Last night, we welcomed them with a barbecue at Lynda's residence which included the Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew and tonight they will be playing mini golf. These young people are going to Weladeh School each morning to complete school work provided by their teachers. I have asked each of them to complete a report on their experience as a page in this Assembly and their impressions as visitors to Yellowknife.

I will remember this week forever, and I am sure they will as they make new friends, experience new and interesting things and learn about their government which they will take back to their communities. I hope they will share their impressions, their views and experiences with their classmates, parents and friends in their communities. Mr. Speaker, this fall, with your permission, I will be hosting students from Tulita and Deline. To Natanda, Megan and Earl, on my left, welcome and enjoy the week with us. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

Member's Statement 411-13(5): Hunter and Trapper Compensation Coverage

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hunting and trapping are occupations many people enjoy in the NWT. It was, at one time, the main driving force of the economy in the NWT. Although, it is no lucrative business, it does provide food, clothing and some cash money for people who practice it. Mr. Speaker, it is also recognized by this government and by this country, TFN and the GNWT provides a Hunters Support Program in Nunavut. We have an Outpost Camp Programs, Community Hunt Programs, Fur Incentive Programs, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, like many other occupations, it has some risks. Many hunters and trappers lost their equipment and in some cases, their lives. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister about the compensation coverage to hunters and trappers. Either regular coverage or an alternative. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement 412-13(5): Hunting Licence Residency Requirements

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development knows, the Northwest Territories is one of the few jurisdictions in Canada that does not provide an exemption for RCMP officers and Armed Forces officers from the usual residency requirements for hunting licences. The Minister has informed me that there is little he can do to help these officers. He has said that because the term resident is defined in the Wildlife Act, nothing can be done unless there is an amendment to the Wildlife Act, and that it is not a priority of this government right now.

Mr. Speaker, I have to request that the Minister take another look at this issue. I do not dispute that the term resident is defined in the act, but I wonder if he knows that nowhere does it say that a person must be a resident in order to obtain a hunting licence. As the Minister knows, the act sets up a hunting licencing scheme and the details of the scheme are set out in the regulations. The act itself sets out the eligibility requirements for only two types of licences. The act

says that the qualifications for all other hunting licences are set out in the regulations. Certain hunting licences do require that the licence holder be a resident of the territories, but in almost all cases, the residency requirements are established in the regulations.

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For example, the trapping/hunting regulations provide that only a resident may obtain a special trapping licence.

Mr. Speaker, if the residency and other eligibility requirements are set out in the regulations for one type of licence, surely they can be set out in the regulations for another type of licence. Unless, perhaps, the Minister is suggesting that the trapping regulations are invalid. It should be clear to everyone exactly what the requirements are for every hunting licence and I have no problem with a general residency requirement, as long as there are appropriate exemptions. Right now, it appears that department officials are refusing hunting licences simply because of their assumptions and impressions, not because of any section that says that they should. Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that first, the Big Game Hunting Regulations and the Small Game Hunting Regulations should be amended to provide that a person must be a resident in order to obtain a Resident Hunting Licence. This amendment should then provide an exemption for RCMP and Armed Forces officers. The amendment should also exempt RCMP officers and DND officials from the requirement in section 44 of the act that non-residents must use outfitters and guides to hunt big game. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Yellowknife South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? Mr. Henry, you have unanimous consent.

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you colleagues. The amendment should also exempt RCMP officers and DND officials from the requirements in section 44 of the act that non-residents must use outfitters and guides to hunt big game. Section 44 is expressly made subject to the regulations. Mr. Speaker, I do not accept that this is too much for this government to

achieve. All we need is a little willingness to try. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 413-13(5): Lack of Youth Programs in Communities

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on the issue that most of the communities are affected by the lack of programming for youth. Mr. Speaker, we need to address the needs of the youth. It is of great concern for me, and probably other Members of this House, and we can agree here today, that the needs to address the needs of the youth. Recently, we have all seen the problems and effects that leave young people uninterested and bored youth have had on society in some of our communities. Many of the youth feel there is no support in regard to a positive, productive place for them within our societies and communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only happening in my riding, but in many other communities across the territories. These areas of concern are not just on the territorial scale, but nationally and internationally. We listen to the daily news reports on the brutal crimes committed by teenagers which are so hideous and heinous, on the television. We must stop and think, why are these young adults/children doing these things. There has to be a positive approach to targeting youth at this time.

I feel it requires immediate and serious attention to deal with this issue and to address it. The youth need to be involved in a more mainstream decision-making process at the community level so that they can be able to see the direct results of their input in a positive light. They need to feel important and respected just like an adult to lift their self-esteem and to improve the activities and programs that we deliver on their behalf by also having their input.

The future leaders who will take our place in this House and elsewhere in our communities are the youth. We must take the initiative now to allow the youth to take their role in society and hear them when they say they are bored, disinterested. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Member's Statement 414-13(5): Recognition of Polar Bear Hunting Guide

**MR. EVALOARJUK:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an individual. Members are aware that many sport hunters are taken out on polar bear hunts, yearly around this time on dog teams, especially big game hunters from outside of Canada. This is especially helpful financially to those who own dog teams in communities. In my community people with dog teams take big game hunters out on the land to hunt polar bears and it takes them three or more days one way and sometimes the weather does not always cooperate. I would like recognition given to Pakak Qamaniq who owns a dog team, and takes big game hunters to hunt polar bear.

On April 9, 1997, he guided a successful polar bear hunt and again on April 9, 1998, a year later, guided a successful polar hunt. I have never heard of incidents such as this where someone guiding big game hunters succeeds like this a year apart to the day. This is a very unusual occurrence and during question period today, I will be asking the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, what his department is willing to do to recognize this individual. I think this is the first time this kind of feat has been achieved during this lifetime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 415-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February and March, Members of this House spent seven weeks reviewing and approving the territorial budget. When we finished, we had given clear direction for the upcoming year's operations and maintenance and capital expenditures. I had a firm idea of what projects would be undertaken. Apparently, I was mistaken. Within days of finishing the budget, I got a press

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release that said, Finance Minister Todd and Transportation Minister Antoine have identified \$2 million to do a transportation study.

Now, I am all for such a study, Mr. Speaker. It is badly needed. We never discussed this in this House, nor did we approve a budget for this study. Nor, was the Standing Committee of Resources, of which I am a Member, ever made aware of this project. The question, of course, is where did this money come from?

Also, during the February/March session we discussed the P3 process. We passed a 13-point motion for Cabinet to live within certain guidelines. A week after the session, I got another press release, one that announced Finance Minister Todd had unveiled a list of P3 projects to be undertaken this year.

Again, I am all for projects and for the P3, but again, we never discussed these projects in this House, and we should have. What happens to the \$3.170 million that we approved in this year's budget for some of these projects? Is there a pool of money for projects that do not have to come before this House? If so, it makes a farce of consensus government and a mockery of democracy.

I believe the people of the NWT are tired of this apparent lack of transparency. I will be pursuing this through questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 416-13(5): Collapse of Local Tourism Operators

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to make a brief statement about tourism in the western Arctic. During the 12th Assembly, a decision was made to collapse or do away with all of the regional tourism boards and agencies and to centralize them into two operations, one in the east and one in the west. Since I have been elected, Mr. Speaker, I have heard repeatedly of the attention and the concern brought to me by tourism operators in Fort Smith and Hay River that what has been done has basically taken all of the



wind out of the sails, the initiative and the capability of local tourism operators to have any meaningful input into tourism and tourism decisions that are made.

With things being centralized in Yellowknife, there is a natural tendency for decisions to be made by the people here and there is a natural tendency due to centrifugal force, as we all know historically, for Yellowknife to accrue the first benefits of tourism funding. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, maybe it is time to evaluate the decision that was made in the 12th Assembly to see how well it is working, and if it is not working as well as expected and if there are enough legitimate concerns out there, that steps be taken to, in fact, adjust the process to ensure local tourism operators do have a meaningful avenue of input into tourism decisions since we have pointed out in all of our planning that tourism is one of the key priorities of the Northwest Territories. During question period, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of RWED about this particular issue and the need in the upcoming business planning process to take a look at the decisions that have been made in the past to see if they are still relevant today. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Member's Statement 417-13(5): Recognition of Kimmirut Community Group

**HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to pay tribute to an organization in my home community of Kimmirut. The group, Ikaarutit, was started one and a half years ago by volunteers and local leaders, Jeannie Padluq and Kowisa Arlooktoo. The name means, bridge or a way to crossover.

Ikaarutit raises money to pay for tickets for family members who cannot afford to visit very sick relatives or to attend funerals. To date, the group has raised and spent over \$10,000 and have assisted in helping many families to deal with their grief and healing.

Mr. Speaker, at one point, the government helped to pay for compassionate travel expenses of those on income support, but this program was eliminated during the deficit reduction exercise a few years ago. I would note that this was not solely a result of budget cutbacks as there were also real issues of fairness as to who received program benefits.

My point is, Mr. Speaker, these two community leaders recognized a problem and worked to solve it in the community by creating this organization. This is a real example of community self-reliance and I am proud.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency office receives, on average, one or two calls a week from family members who cannot afford to go see a terminally ill family member in one of the Montreal/Ottawa hospitals or to attend a funeral of a family member.

Mr. Speaker, not including the expense of hotels and meals, the cost of visiting someone in the hospital from Kimmirut is over \$2,100 return. Aggravating these already stressful situations is that usually the person in the hospital or the one who must make the visit is the main income earner for the family and must take leave without pay. Sick leave or special leave credits do not last long. Mr. Speaker, there are also the additional costs of ensuring that the family left at home is being looked after financially and otherwise.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I personally know families that have lost loved ones due to cancer, other diseases or by accident and have become financially bankrupt during the process. There are many families close to the same situation as I speak. When constituents talked to me about this issue, the area they stressed was the apparent unfairness. Mr. Speaker, I notice I am out of time, I would like to conclude my statement.

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**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Member for Baffin South is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? Mr. Arlooktoo, you have unanimous consent.

**HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my constituency meetings, they stressed the apparent unfairness. An example I will use is, because I live near a hospital here in Yellowknife, if I happen to land in the hospital for some reason, my family could visit me for a total cost of \$8.00 return cab fare or possibly \$2.00 worth of fuel if they took their own vehicle. This is compared to several thousand dollars and many days away from home for an individual in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I started out by paying tribute to Ikaarutit and I hope I have made everyone more aware of how important their work is. Unfortunately, they will have

no shortage of families to assist which is all funded from donations from a cash-strapped community of 450 residents. They have asked me to pass along their appreciation to individuals who have assisted in making donations. Local boards and agencies, businesses and First Air, have been cooperative. I understand that due to the stress and difficulty of raising money, let alone of deciding whom to assist and to whom to say no to, the group has considered disbanding. I hope this does not happen.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to say that we are thankful to this group, that their efforts are appreciated and I encourage them to keep helping these families in real need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement 418-13(5): Iqaluit Breakers Swim Team

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since January, a group of swimmers have gathered together to form the Iqaluit Breakers Swim Team. There are nine swimmers altogether, from the ages of 13 to 17, and all of the swimmers are involved in the lifesaving and lifeguard program. The Iqaluit Breakers participated in the Kimberlite Classic Swim Meet held here in Yellowknife during the month of May. While in Yellowknife, they had an opportunity to compete against the Yellowknife Polar Bear Swim Club. Overall they raced aggressively and broke their own personal race times and proved to be competitive opponents. Mr. Speaker, since then the swimmers have asked if they could swim at 6:00 a.m., twice a week in addition to the three other swimming practices that they have had. As you can see, the whole experience has had a positive impact on the swimmers having achieved their goals that they have worked hard for, they are keener than ever and look forward to competing next year, in January and May, here in Yellowknife in different swimming competitions. Mr. Speaker, their coach, Karen LeBlanc, hopes to come here to Yellowknife this summer to participate in a Coaching Level II Certificate Program. She is hoping to recruit younger swimmers to compete next year in Iqaluit. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Iqaluit swimming team, the Iqaluit

Breakers and their coach, Ms. Karen LeBlanc. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 419-13(5): Highway and Airport Service to Rae-Edzo

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past many years, my predecessors and myself have lobbied strong and hard to provide an adequate and safe highway between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife. This project has taken many years to get where it is today. This summer, according to the capital plan for 1998-99, we should see the start of the last 100 kilometres of reconstruction. We know this will take years before we have a completely paved highway between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife, but this is only the start.

Over the last couple of winters, this road has become very busy with the construction of BHP, all the explorations and many hundreds of trucks travel this section to deliver their freight. It has become such an important link that I understand, over this past hauling season, there was approximately one truck travelling every three to four minutes apart on this road. This of course, does not include any local traffic from the communities or regular freight hauled on a scheduled basis. This road is very important to everyone.

With this in mind, it is the reasoning behind the Dogrib Rae Band's development plan for the new airport and staging area outside of Edzo. To date, this project has been funded through the band council's operations with training programs and donations. Last year, the band council stated this project and with little funding were able to complete approximately 25 percent. This year they will continue to improve this site and hopefully with support from this government and the private sector we will see an airport to service my community of Rae-Edzo in the near future.

With this area being developed, the council's hope is to provide an alternate staging, as that will relieve the pressures this highway construction will have on all resupply to Yellowknife and the mines. I do hope we are starting this highway construction this summer. However, today I heard the Department of Indian Affairs will not let construction begin until an

environmental review is complete. This, I can say, came as rather a surprise considering this project is now in its fifth year in the capital plan. The Department of Transportation has not completed this review yet.

I would also like to say that later today, I will be asking the Minister of Transportation questions regarding this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 420-13(5): High Cost of Air Travel in the North

**MR. BARNABAS:**

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

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today in the House to talk about an issue that is very important to my constituents, the high cost of air travel in the north.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government's financial problems have resulted in the end of compassionate travel benefits for the people of the north. When a loved one is sick or dying, it is now virtually impossible for relatives from other communities to be able to afford to visit their loved ones in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, we pay the highest airfares in the world and, unfortunately, in Nunavut there are limited other options for travelling between communities. In the east First Air operates as a monopoly. The people I represent have no choice but to pay whatever airfare rate First Air decides the market will bear.

If you compare Yellowknife and Iqaluit as points of departure south, it is obvious to me that travellers going from Yellowknife to Edmonton have a distinct advantage over travellers going from Iqaluit to Montreal or Ottawa. What is this advantage, Mr. Speaker? The advantage is seat sales. Since the departure of Canadian Airlines from the Iqaluit-Montreal run, seat sales have been non-existent in the east.

I applaud the purchase of Canadian North by Nunasi Corporation. Some people might be concerned that

two Inuit birthright corporations competing for the same travelling dollar in the same market are counter to Inuit tradition. Mr. Speaker, I have no problems with this, both organizations are financially strong and have the necessary leadership to deal with the consequences of air travel competition in the north.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that competition will lead to lower airfares for my constituents. I strongly encourage the new owners of Canadian North to re-enter the Iqaluit-Montreal market. Fair and honest competition makes for better companies and better services to the customer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 421-13(5): Fishing Opportunities in Yellowknife North

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about tourism, and particularly to speak about tourism in the Yellowknife North constituency. Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known fact that there is very good fishing in the numerous parks and lakes along the Ingraham Trail. These are available by road, most of them within 30 minutes. I can attest that there is still trophy fish available in those lakes. To give you a good example, just this past weekend, Iqaluit MLA, Mr. Picco landed two huge pickerels in Prelude Lake. He informs me he waged a 20-minute battle with each of these fish. When I asked him how come he is such a good fisherman, he looked at me in a funny way, and he said, I am a Newfoundlander. So I guess that explains it.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite tourists and visitors alike to visit these lakes and the Yellowknife North constituency and experience world class trophy fishing and angling, as evidenced by Mr. Picco's success. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 422-13(5): Providing Quality Education for Our Children

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak to the importance of a quality education from a very personal perspective. Providing a quality education to the children of the north is not an optional undertaking. It is our mandate, our legal and moral obligation. We must ensure the resources necessary to provide for an education comparable to what our children would receive anywhere in Canada. This is not a lofty or laudable goal. It is the law.

If you went back to my home town of Saint Mary's, Ontario to interview my teachers, if you could still find any of them alive because they all seemed really, really old at the time, they would probably tell you that little Jane Osler would not have been considered the teacher's pet, a particularly model student or even elected most likely to succeed in life. They would probably tell you that the Osler kids spent more time working at their parents' family business than they did doing home work or even attending school. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that in spite of not being a model student or even a particularly attentive one, I am thankful every day for the core subjects grounding that I got when I was paying attention. In grade school, I attended classes called, English, grammar, phonics, vocabulary, math, sciences and social studies. Personally, the greatest asset that I acquired in school was the ability to read, write and speak. I would consider it nothing less than a serious life impacting handicap to lack the skills to communicate my thoughts in writing and verbally without that confidence. For that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the patience and dedication of educators to whom we all owe our respect and thanks no matter where we were educated.

Literacy affects our ability to learn and comprehend almost everything else. As we consider education in the north, let us consider quality, curriculum and adequate resources for our teachers to do their job. We owe our children nothing less. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 423-13(5): Lack of Funding for Inuvik Youth Centre

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard many times in this Assembly the issue of youth and the younger generation who are coming up. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Inuvik Youth Centre Board and its coordinator for one year of working with the youth in the community of Inuvik. Their work has helped provide a place for the youth to gather, play games or learn new experiences from

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one another. Without a youth centre or facility, we would have a lot more youth on the streets. As we know, in many northern communities, if they are not into going out travelling and hiking out on the land, then they are hanging around in the communities and with our extended sunlight hours in the summer, they have little else to do. Those people get involved with the youth at the community level who provide for time together and share experiences, as I said earlier.

But I have a concern with the youth centre in Inuvik. They worked this year and managed to keep the doors open with the help of many other organizations in the community. They are finding themselves in some difficulty right now because of lack of funding. As I said, we have spoken on many occasions, whether it is education or other things with the young, but if we do not go beyond saying things here, we have not done anything. Words are good inspiration, but we need to see action to get things done. I hope that while I am here, I can meet with different Ministers to find out if there is any funding available for programs for youth that the youth centre in Inuvik might be able to tie into and help keep the operation going to help the youth stay involved and believe in the things we are doing for them, not to get tired of just hearing us speak about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement 424-13(5): GNWT Workplace Accessibility to Disabled Citizens

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in regard to a very important issue here in the Northwest Territories and also in Nunavut. There are a lot of people who have physical disabilities. It could be in the form of physical, mental or otherwise. There are

also people who are confined to wheelchairs. There are all kinds of disabilities that we can think of which limits some people to go around. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want the work places, wherever they may be, particularly government departments, to be more accessible to people who are in wheelchairs so that people with limited mobility can access these buildings. We should be more than open to these people who would like to go into some departments because they have the same kinds of needs that we have. Therefore, I just wish some departments and workplaces to be more open to people with all kinds of disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Members' statements. All Members are doing well with their Members' statements, but I would like to request that some of the Members who do have written text to slow down when they are reading and allow the translators time to translate for the unilingual Members. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

**ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS**

Return To Oral Question 487-13(5): Canadian Departure Tax

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Picco on March 3, 1998. A reply made by myself in regard to the Canadian Departure Tax on March 3, 1998. The date this House adjourned, the Premier took a question on notice from the Member for Iqaluit concerning this Canadian Departure Tax. I believe the Member was referring to the Air Transportation Tax.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is changing the way it pays for its air navigation system. Transport Canada used to operate Canada's air navigation system as a federally subsidized public service. The federal government recovered about 85 percent of the cost of the air navigation system through the Air Transportation Tax. The tax was added to the price of air passenger tickets. The remaining cost of the system was paid for from Transport Canada's annual appropriation from Parliament.

NAV Canada was established as a private corporation to assume responsibility for the air navigation system

from Transport Canada and to operate the system independently of government on a cost recovery basis. The transition to cost recovery is taking place this year in two steps. Phase 1 took effect on March 1st and Phase 2 will take effect on November 1st. As NAV Canada introduces its new service fees on air carriers, the Air Transportation Tax on passenger fares is eliminated. Half the Air Transportation Tax was removed on April 1st and the rest will go on November 1st.

How the air carriers decide to recover NAV Canada's new service fees from their customers is a matter of the carrier's corporate pricing strategy. The Air Transportation Tax was collected strictly on passenger fares. Now, the air carriers have new flexibility to recover the NAV Canada service fees from either their passenger or their freight revenues or some combination of both.

I would like the Member to know that, with the northern air carriers, the Department of Transportation mounted a vigorous lobbying campaign that has been successful in modifying the impact of the new service fees on northern air routes.

The lobbying campaign made NAV Canada recognize that the fee structure, as it was originally proposed, had a greater impact on northern than southern air routes. As a result, NAV Canada agreed to raise the weight limit of the aircraft to which the Phase I fees would apply from 5.5 to 8 tonnes. The higher weight limit exempted twin otters and similar sized aircraft from the Phase I fees. The department also won the important concession that the new fees would not apply to flights departing from northern and remote airports where the air navigation services are delivered by our CARS Program.

The next and last phase of the service fees will come into effect on November 1st. So far, NAV Canada has circulated a discussion paper on the Phase 2 fees that considers several options. It has made no firm proposal at this time.

With other Departments of Transportation and northern carriers, the department has proposed, (1) exempting small aircraft under 8 tonnes altogether in Canada, or (2) exempting small aircraft under 8 tonnes in the northern and remote areas of

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Canada. NAV Canada has not rejected either proposal and appears to be giving them serious

consideration. We will have to wait and see. The department expects NAV Canada to release its Phase 2 fee proposal sometime in August.

Although, I cannot be specific at this time, I am reasonable confident that we will have similar success in influencing the Phase 2 fees as we have had with the Phase 1 fees. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Thompson.

**ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the mayors in my riding, Aivilik. We have in the gallery Mr. Louis Primeau, SAO for Coral Harbour, beside him is Mr. Johnny Ningeongan the Mayor of Coral Harbour and Percy Kabloona from Whale Cove. Mr. Steve Mapsalak Mayor of Repulse Bay and Donat Milortuk who is a member of the Keewatin Inuit Association. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent visiting from the community of Kimmirut, Mr. Jawlie Mingeriak.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. O'Brien.

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a good friend of mine and also the new Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth and Elders, for the new Government of Nunavut, Mr. Peter Ernerk. Mr. Picco informs me that Mr. Ernerk is one of his new constituents. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am here to recognize some of the people that have not been recognized. I see some elders in the gallery, and I would like to welcome you to this Legislature. Thank you.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to recognize Rhoda Perkison, a former deputy clerk of the House.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

**ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance, regarding my statement earlier today. With regard to the Highways Initiative Project and where the allocation for the money is coming from, I wonder if the Minister could address that issue for me and tell me where the money is coming from specifically on the highway's project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The dollars assigned to the major highways initiatives are coming from the supplementary appropriations.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the P3 projects, I tallied up a little over \$3 million, allocated in the 1998-99 budget. Could the Minister tell us where that funding will go since the projects will be allocated as P3 projects? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like some clarity. Is my honourable colleague talking about the road's strategy or is he talking about the P3 projects that we have all been discussing since early January? If he can give me some clarity, then I can give him an answer.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ootes. Your supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier in February/March, we approved the operations and maintenance budget as well as the capital budget. Within the capital budget, it had reference to a number of projects, some of which had \$200,000, for example I believe the Fort McPherson project is about \$200,000 in the budget. What I am curious about is where that money will be allocated to for those particular projects that were in this year's budget.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to step back a little bit and give some history here so everybody understands the issue. I had spoken to the committee at length, at which Mr. Ootes, of course, is a Member. I believe he was at one of the meetings, if my memory serves me correctly, and I will go back and check that. I indicated then that in our budget statement of January we will move forward on some P3 projects. We also indicated that we were going to try to bring forward some new monies for the desperate need in the housing program and that the reallocation of some of the capital projects into P3 projects will be put toward the development of the new housing initiative. That was clear at the time, I have spoken on a number of occasions about that issue and it was understood. I then sent a letter on March 9, 1998, to Mr. Erasmus, Chairman of the Standing Committee on the Government Operations, outlining the criteria for P3 and outlining a list of potential projects that the deputy ministers had allocated and where they thought they would get the best cost recovery based on the criteria that were set for P3.

I then received a letter from the standing committee and followed up with a further letter on March 23, 1998, to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, including Mr. Ootes. On April 16, 1998, based on the request from Mr. Ootes with respect to P3 meeting all the criteria and all the questions he asked in the House, the projects, I then sent him a ten-page correspondence outlining what was occurring and why it was occurring. Mr. Speaker, just give me a moment because it goes on and on and on. Maybe my honourable colleague forgot to read his mail. On April 28, 1998, he then wrote to me again. Mr. Speaker, if the honourable colleague has read his mail, he has obviously not read it properly because we have answered the questions and that is the point I am trying to make here. On May 6, 1998, we also wrote all the Members and I specifically wrote to all the Members with respect to the P3 projects prior to any official public release of the P3 projects. Then on May 25, 1998, I wrote to Mr. Ootes specifically with respect to the \$3.6 million approved in the main estimates and explained to him where the money was going.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I see \$3.17 million in the budget that is now going elsewhere. I still do not know exactly where it is going. More importantly why was it not allocated to the appropriate place in the first place, when we were discussing it. A week later we were into a bunch of new projects. I do not have an objection to the projects. It is just that it was not allocated in the proper departments perhaps.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

I will try to keep it simple and I will talk real slow. Mr. Speaker, I said from the very beginning, in which Mr. Ootes was aware of in committee and all the Members were, that we were going to reallocate some of the P3 project money into housing money that is desperately needed right across the Northwest Territories. That was explained from the very beginning. The P3 projects were identified by the deputy ministers to ensure the government is going to get value for money et cetera. I wrote to the Government Operations Committee, Mr. Erasmus, who I have worked cooperatively with the last two and half years and asked him for input to the P3 projects. I received the response from him. I believe you are a member of that committee or can be a member of that committee if you wish to attend. Give me some input into the projects. I then wrote to each and every Member about the projects prior to the public release. I do not know how else to explain it to my colleagues. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 525-13(5): Funding for Major Highways Initiative

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am still confused as to where the \$3.2 million is. The Minister is stating it went into the housing program. I just do not know

why we did not put it in there in the first place. I do not have any objection to the project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 526-13(5): Funding for Tourism Operators

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is in regard to the current structure of the tourism boards or the fact that we only have one set up in the Western Territory that was centralized. This seems like a contradiction to all of the other moves that the government has been doing to empower communities and move things away from the centre. My question to the Minister is, given the fact that this decision was made by a previous Assembly and that a number of years have transpired since that decision and there is concern about how effective that decision was and is, would the Minister consider having that evaluated to see if it is, in fact, meeting the needs of the stakeholders it was designed to do? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 526-13(5): Funding for Tourism Operators

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with division less than a year away, is it perhaps timely to look at the way that we conduct business and specifically in regard to the tourism portfolio and the strategy. We will be interested in looking at suggestions on how the Western Territory by itself could perhaps be in need of a review and an updated approach to tourism. The Finance Minister has taken the lead on behalf of this government to develop an economic strategy. We believe that we can advance a strategy particularly in the west in the next few months and work that in partnership with the federal government. This brings up the

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possibilities of new economic development monies, perhaps from the federal government. I think it is a



good suggestion, and we will take it into serious consideration and deal with it through the development of this economic strategy. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 526-13(5): Funding for Tourism Operators

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that response. Does the Minister anticipate that this work will have progressed sufficiently and that there will be some meaningful information and progress to bring to the Western Caucus and committees when we start doing business plans for the 1999-2000 budget. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 526-13(5): Funding for Tourism Operators

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the development of the strategy as a package will take a matter of months, three or four months at the very least. It is possible to look at earlier versions of some sections within that strategy. We will see what we can do to move things as quickly as we can. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd. It is regarding the collective agreement and pay equity issue. Last week I had asked Mr. Todd if he would, in fact, direct his officials to return to the table. Has the Minister made any advances to the UNW or has the UNW contacted the Minister's officials to come back to the table to talk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said publicly the other day in the House, I was prepared to come back to the table, but I did indicate there was not a lot of room to move by saying that publicly late last week. I believe it is now really in the hands of the UNW. We are ready, willing and able to move forward to try to reach an arrangement that will put this difficult issue behind us and get on with delivering more money to our employees.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think a little background is warranted here. I think it is fair to say that the GNWT has suggested they have a final offer that is on the table. The UNW is saying they will not have further discussions until the issue of pay equity is removed from the table. Hence the impasse. My question to the Minister is, and he has spoken a number of times and suggested that the UNW bring this question to the membership. My question to the Minister is, if the UNW does bring this question and package before the membership and the membership rejects it, will the Minister at that time consider taking the pay equity issue off the table and discussing them separately? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be difficult for me to determine the outcome vote. What I would really appreciate would be that the UNW let the membership move forward and vote in their democratic right whether the agreement or the

proposal we put before them, our final agreement, is one that they think is fair and reasonable. It would be difficult for me to specify at this time what would take place should there be a rejection if the employees do get the opportunity. I am reasonably confident that what we have presented to our membership, the constituency, is fair and I am optimistic if it gets a vote which I hope it will, that they will vote yes. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly agree with the Minister that it would be unfair to expect him to be able to determine the outcome what the membership would agree on. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recall some of the statements that the Minister made in the House last week on this collective agreement and the package in general. I quote the Minister stated...

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Henry, do you have a supplementary question?

**MR. HENRY:**

I do.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Would you continue with your supplementary question, please?

**MR. HENRY:**

My question to the Minister is, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister not give some consideration to removing the issue if the UNW rejected the offer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

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**HON. JOHN TODD:**

My interpretation, Mr. Speaker, and I was trying to be diplomatic in my responses, if the UNW rejected the offer, then the next move is to strike and I would hope that at some point, we would avoid that. That is certainly our intention. We need to try to get everybody back to the bargaining table, as my honourable colleague says, and I do appreciate the fact that he is working hard along with myself, to get that done. We simply have to get people back to the table to take another look at this proposal, and at the end of the day, I fundamentally believe and I will say it until I am blue in the face, our constituency and the membership of the UNW should have the democratic right to vote on this offer that is before them and we will live with the consequences of that vote. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 527-13(5): Returning to the Collective Bargaining Table

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister said that it is a good deal. Will the Minister remove the pay equity issue from the table if it is rejected by the UNW? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

It is hypothetical. It is the same question. Oral question, Mr. Erasmus.

Question 528-13(5): Miramar Mine Labour Dispute

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. It is on another labour dispute which is affecting Yellowknife and the north as well. The Con Mine is involved in a labour dispute, in fact, the workers have gone out on strike and having gone through a bad experience with Giant Mine several years back, and of course, not wanting to prolong this dispute, I was wondering if the Premier could update the House if they are doing anything to try to get these two parties back to the table? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Do you wish to respond Mr. Morin? This is more like a federal matter, Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 528-13(5): Miramar Mine Labour Dispute

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You are absolutely correct. It is a federal issue on labour, but we, as the Government of the Northwest Territories has an interest because those are NWT residents who are on strike. The mine is located in the Northwest Territories. As a government, we have already established a task force of senior GNWT officials. Deputy Minister, Don Cooper of Justice, is chairing that task force and Joe Handley, as well as Penny Ballantyne, Ron Williams and Judy Langford are also on that task force to keep us apprised of the issues of the strike. My understanding is that Mr. Cooper has already been in touch with the union as well as with the company to get information on the issues concerning the strike. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 528-13(5): Miramar Mine Labour Dispute

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear this task force has been formed and the government is being kept up to date. I was wondering if the Premier could indicate if he has taken any action to attempt to bring the two parties back to the table, so that this system is not prolonged to a greater degree? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 528-13(5): Miramar Mine Labour Dispute

**HON. DON MORIN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The strike and the issue out there are between Con Mine and the union. Our government has no involvement in that. What we have done is establish a task force to keep us informed about the strike, and hopefully, they will come back together, start talking and that the mine will be up and producing again and people can go back to work. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, the Minister for MACA made a statement on the Keewatin Pilot Project. There has been a lot of confusion and few answers surrounding the Keewatin Pilot Project. I am wondering if the Minister could tell me at this time and indicate if the Keewatin airport transfer in the Keewatin region is linked with the MACA's Keewatin Pilot Project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is linked to the Keewatin Pilot Project.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in response to a question on the Keewatin Pilot Project or the Keewatin airport transfer, on the last day, Friday, May 22nd, in reviewing the Hansard, the Transportation Minister indicated there was a concern with the deputy minister of Community Government Housing and Transportation for the Nunavut government with this transfer. I wonder if the Minister of MACA could confirm that she has been in contact with the Office of the Interim Commissioner and, indeed, they have told her that there is a problem with the Keewatin transfer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been talking with the Interim Commissioner. I talked with him yesterday morning concerning this and his position is that my direction is coming from the elected leaders, not appointed people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the unedited Hansard from Friday, the Transportation Minister indicated that the Department of Municipal, in the new Nunavut government out of the Office of the Interim Commissioner has not seen the Keewatin Pilot Project or the Keewatin transfer of airports as a priority at this time. I am wondering if the Minister for MACA has addressed that concern with the OIC during her discussions? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

The Keewatin Pilot Project is a proposal and the Keewatin airport transfer is closely linked with the proposal because of all the concern that has been raised and all the opinions that have been stated toward it. We have slowed down the process in some areas. I have not discussed in detail with the Interim Commissioner because his opinion has always been the direction is coming from the elected membership of the Keewatin. He feels that he is not in the position right now to give me direction as an appointed member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a contradiction then, because you have, on one hand, the new deputy minister for the Nunavut government saying that is not a priority of the Nunavut government which would seem they are directing policy for a government that is not in place. On the other hand, the Minister is saying that she is not concerned or having discussions with them because they do not see it coming forward. The problem with the Keewatin Pilot Project, Mr. Speaker, is that there are a lot of questions and not very many answers. I am wondering when the Minister would be able to table in this House those questions which have been asked like; does it impact on the Footprints 2 model on the deviation between the decentralized model? How many jobs have been created, the total cost? I am asking a question. Thank you, very much. Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, because it is an important topic. I am wondering when the Minister can table, in this House, those questions that have been asked, not only by myself, Mr. Erasmus, the OIC, Mr. Anawak, Mr. Kusugak and other people, when those questions could be answered and tabled in this House? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 529-13(5): Keewatin Pilot Project

**HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mayors would welcome the membership to go to their presentation this week, if they would want to see the mayors themselves and ask them questions because this proposal has been coming forward, spearheaded by the grassroots. It has not come down from the government. That is why it is so difficult for the Members to understand it because it is just an idea that is coming from the grassroots level going up. We have never done that in the government before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the WCB. I wonder if the Minister could give a brief update as to the status of discussions that are underway or have been underway regarding the WCB and how it relates to division?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be candid, the government's position right now, is that the WCB should stay as one. This is the current position. I do not think it will change at this time, although it is under review. There are a number of parties involved in this whole division issue and there are opposing points of view at this stage of the game with respect to WCB and where we are going with it.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell this House whether or not he has set up a timeframe as to when he expects we can finally get some answers and if the answers are that we do not stay as one, what he intends to do next? Thank you.

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**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated to you, there is a huge difference of opinion between the two parties. What we need to do is to try to work out some compromise. I have instructed our negotiators, Mr. Bargery, who is now in charge from a

bureaucracy perspective, to see if we can bring the parties together and reach an appropriate compromise. I have indicated that we have to get some direction within the next 7 to 14 days. If we cannot reach an appropriate compromise with the parties, then I will have to go back, as I have said to my Cabinet colleagues, to seek some direction there and advise the Members, the House and the public in general as to where we are heading with this difficult issue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the fact that there has been no decision made, as of this date, regarding whether the WCB stays as one or is split into two, could the Minister explain why office space is being requested for the WCB in Iqaluit and also in Rankin Inlet? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is in relation to division. That is just an expansion of the current Occupational Health and Safety component of WCB and is an expansion of existing offices in the eastern Arctic. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**MR. O'BRIEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell this House how many staff we are talking about here? Also, if there is any consideration given to, once again, moving this new staff to some of the

smaller communities in the eastern Arctic? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Two questions, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 530-13(5): Update on WCB Division Plan

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is important to point out that it is a decision made by the board. I just want to get my notes. The board approved a plan to move six staff in Rankin Inlet and five in Iqaluit, up from the existing three staff in Rankin Inlet and two in Iqaluit. There has been no direction given by the board of directors to reallocate them to any other place than where they are currently allocated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Finance Minister. Like Mr. Roland and Mr. Miltenberger shared in the House on Friday, I have heard from UNW employees in my riding. Some are saying put it to a democratic vote, but I am also receiving a mixed message because others want the issue of pay equity and collective bargaining separated. This is a difficult call due to the diversity of opinion in my riding but, for the record, I would like clarification from the Minister on a few items. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated in his statement in the House on Friday that the GNWT cannot sign an agreement that renews rates of pay knowing there is a pay equity problem. It would be irresponsible for the GNWT to sign a collective agreement that then gives the UNW the opportunity to sue the GNWT, et cetera. My question is, was the GNWT previously not willing to address pay equity within the collective bargaining process and that is why the union ultimately filed a grievance with the Human Rights Commission?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

I can only tell you what I did as a responsible Minister at the time and I have indicated earlier on that, I want to settle pay equity and that we wanted to get it to the table. That is where it is at. I believe at this time, and I will say again for the record, the proposal that we put forward is fair and I cannot speak for previous governments. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the pay equity issue has been on the table for approximately ten years. During that ten years, the GNWT has obviously signed collective agreements with the UNW what made it okay then, what has changed and now precludes them from signing a collective agreement without pay equity included? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the judge who brought down the ruling on Bell Canada made it very clear that not only did management, but also the union had the joint responsibility for the pay

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inequities because they negotiated agreements knowing there were pay equity problems. The responsibility is a joint responsibility. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Mr. Speaker, could the Minister further explain to me, perhaps it is inappropriate in oral questions or by oral response, but I am still unclear as to my understanding as to why both parties, at the collective bargaining table, created the pay equity problem considering the GNWT would not deal with the human rights issue of pay equity in previous bargaining negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 531-13(5): Pay equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Mr. Speaker, like I said, Mr. Speaker, that may have been under previous governments but under this one I was prepared to deal with it. We have made a fair and reasonable offer. We have brought it to the table and we hope that the Members will be allowed to vote on it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister said that he cannot deal with the decisions of previous governments and I understand that, but several Members, himself included, were Members of previous governments. When our government had money, why was this issue not dealt with before it got to be a problem of this magnitude and proportion?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

I will remind the Members that Members are not accountable for the previous government. It is only this Assembly today that they are accountable for. Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 531-13(5): Pay Equity Issue in the Collective Bargaining Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, at the risk of being repetitive, I want to say to my colleague that while I appreciate the question, I cannot speak for previous governments or previous Ministers. This Minister, this Cabinet and my colleagues have put pay equity on the table in a sincere and genuine effort to resolve and bring an end to a ten-year issue. It is fair, affordable and it is doable. Let the people vote on the contract. This is all we are saying, nothing else. I am not trying to avoid the question. I am not in a position to speak for previous governments. All I can do is speak for this one. We have put it on the table. We have made provision for it. We think it is fair. We think our constituents should vote for it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time would be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It has been some time since the agreement was signed with the federal government on the two hospitals in the agreement in 1998. I am happy to say that the department has finally agreed to a figure for the Inuvik hospital of \$28.5 million. My question to the Minister is in the area of the federal portion. There have been ongoing discussions and negotiations with the federal government, could the Minister up date us as to what is happening? The last time I asked him this question, he said he would have a report in the near future. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has negotiated a final arrangement with Health and Welfare Canada for the capital contribution to both facilities in Iqaluit and Inuvik. I

have signed off a paper to go to our Financial Management Board for final approval. It is expected to be, hopefully, on the agenda at this coming week's meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will those funds that you have negotiated, be put toward the specific facilities or will it go into general revenues? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as it stands now, it will be up to the government to decide on these payments. As it stands now, there are going to be significant payments from the federal government over an extended period of time, three or four years, I believe. It will be up to governments of the day, once they divide those proceeds, on where they would best use those funds, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

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**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform us if the funding, even though it is over a number of years, if it is the intention of this government to apply funding to those facilities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 532-13(5): Inuvik Hospital Funding Arrangement

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm or deny that right now. As you know, we are actively under discussions on trying to P3 both of those projects in Inuvik and Iqaluit. Of course, once those financial arrangements come to a conclusion and, at that time, the issue of lump sum payments toward the projects can be discussed and finalized, hopefully prior to the start of those projects, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 533-13(5): Recognition of Exceptional Hunting Guide

**MR. EVALOARJUK:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development. In my Member's statement earlier, I spoke about an unusual occurrence that we are very proud of regarding, Pakak Qamaniq. He guided two separate successful polar bear hunts on April 9th, 1997 and April 9th, 1998, a year apart on the same day. I believe this was the first time the hunt was accomplished within the timeframe I indicated. Mr. Speaker, this man is a humble man, well-organized and soft spoken. In view of the fact that the department is in the business of promoting tourism and economic development endeavours, can the Minister, in his capacity, indicate to me whether or not he can consider presenting an official form of recognition for his work? I wonder if the Minister can do this for me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 533-13(5): Recognition of Exceptional Hunting Guide

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be very happy to meet with the Member to discuss some appropriate form of recognition that we should give the hunter on



the achievement the Member has been outlining for us. I would be very happy to do that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you may recall during my Member's statement, originally I talked about Highway 3, the construction between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, the Honourable Jim Antoine. Could the Minister update the House and residents of this area regarding the status of the highway project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Highway 3 construction, reconstruction of paving the 90 kilometres of this highway, the predesign planning has been done. The existing conditions of the road have been documented. We have identified alternative alignments for reconstruction and this has been selected. The final alignment of the corridor has been selected. The new alignment will generally follow the existing right-of-way, the current corridor. It will be parallel either to the existing road or across the existing road at certain places. The engineering surveys are being carried out to collect the more detailed information and to prepare designs. As a result, part of the requirement was that the department was to submit a project plan on the Highway 3 reconstruction to the Intergovernmental Environmental Review Committee for review at the screening level under the Federal Environmental Act. The project plan includes technical proposals and methods that the department plans to use to address the environmental concerns that have been raised to date.

On the preparation that has been done, the budget for reconstruction of the Highway 3, has been approved

at \$8.86 million for this fiscal year. The plan is to do two sections, one from Rae toward Yellowknife and another section from Yellowknife toward Rae, starting from both ends. The plan is the construction of the highway grade at both ends will be publicly tendered as separate contracts later this summer with work to commence in the fall. Both of these contracts will be multi year contracts with construction of the highway grade that will entail a large amount of drilling and blasting. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Rabesca.

Supplementary To Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine, tell us if the project construction will be using only the large construction companies or will there be an opportunity for smaller business contracts to do a portion of the work to be done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the plan of the Department of Transportation is to publicly tender the two sections, like two different contracts. The reason for that is, it is a major undertaking, and there has to be a capacity for whichever construction company that is going to be successful in the bidding. It could be done through either a joint

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venture or whatever. It is up to the entities out there to organize themselves to get ready for this bid. The intention here is and, hopefully, the best scenario we find is that, if we do it in two large contracts, we might be able to get fairly good bids during the bidding process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Supplementary To Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**MR. RABESCA:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will there also be training components built into the construction to allow our people to be trained with marketable skills for future employment and possibly in future mines if the people ever happen to be trained on heavy equipment on the construction site? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 534-13(5): Status of Highway 3 Reconstruction

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two contracts because of the amount of concern in regard to employment and trying to increase local and northern involvement in employment and in business opportunities. These contracts will contain employment targets and will also contain training components. This will probably require some sort of an employment liaison capacity to make sure these targets are met. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent. In my Member's statement, I spoke about youth and the lack of employment programs in a lot of our communities for the youth, who seem to feel they are left out of the overall process. They feel like they are all alone. I would like to ask the Minister, what is being done to improve the self-esteem and pride of youth? How are they playing a more active role in regard to the community and programs that are delivered in the community? We hear a lot from the federal government that there is a lot of federal youth initiatives that the federal government, especially the liberals, are pushing. I would like to ask the Minister,

what is he doing, as the Minister responsible for Youth, in ensuring there are programs being delivered and what is being done to improve those programs in our communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

Return To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with several of the programs in the department being aimed at young people, most of our expenditures is, in fact, going toward helping young people get ahead in their lives. As for specific youth programs, we have our program which matches the Federal Employment Program providing incentives for employers to offer employment to youth. The department has worked in the course of the past year to prepare for youth to organize themselves into groups and handbooks to help them organize to find funding to operate their activities. The department always stands ready to help youth organizations when it comes to youth programs. We recognize the importance of youth, and many communities have gone a long way toward dealing with youth groups as well. I know that a number of communities have set up youth councils. I think that is important to note that local communities are going to have to get more and more involved in supporting the activities of this government when it comes to dealing with youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the programs that are available and the funds that are accessible to communities for youth programs, there is recreation, funds for youth centres, you mentioned youth councils, are all these available through program dollars? If so, exactly how are those programs delivered to the communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only direct program dollars that are available for youth right now are in terms of the Youth Employment Strategy. This is an on-the-job wage subsidy. The other assistance that we are prepared to provide through our regional offices is more in the level of support to groups by helping them to organize and work to find their own sources of funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You mentioned the regional centres that there is a program to assist youth organize and commit themselves. I believe there has to be more involvement of youth, especially in hamlet council meetings or meetings in general, in communities. Has there been any attempt by your department to make the communities aware of these programs and these initiatives that are in place? You mentioned some regional program. What is being done to make the communities aware of these programs and the resources that are there?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

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**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the extent to which departmental officials have made communities aware of these initiatives. We can certainly provide that information. I do know that communities ranging from the smallest to the largest have initiatives where a hamlet, a town or city councils are taking a look at youth councils and how they could interact with them. I will get back to

the Member on how much of this information has been passed on to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister make available to all the Members of this House whatever information he is able to catalogue and also, if there are other federal programs that are jointly funded between this government and the federal government?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 535-13(5): Community Programs for Youth

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to make available to all Members of this House information on youth programs offered by both this government and the federal government.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance in relation to the final offer that was made, I believe, to the union. In that offer, there are many people who are what is termed red circled, which means that if their wages had gone down due to their new classification, they would not actually go down in terms of dollars as long as they are still working in that position. Would the Minister please clarify for me what this means? I am still struggling with exactly what it means, and there are various people who are asking. Would he please clarify that for me?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me try to give you a hypothetical situation. Employee A being under the old system, pay level 25, step 3, and receives X amount of dollars. The reclassification takes him or her down to pay level 23, step 3, so it will be a significant drop in wages. We red circled that position, and as long as that employee remains in that position, his pay level, as he currently has, pay level 25, step 3, remains in place. On top of that, he gets the additional two percent increase, any northern allowance increase, any bonuses, et cetera. What we are saying is, with any existing employees in those jobs, there will be no cash reduction on their salary while they remain in those jobs. If that employee was to leave to go to another job, move along, and a new employee was to come in, it would be at the new pay level. As I said in my statement earlier, it is a win/win situation for everybody. I know it has caused some anguish, to not only my honourable colleague, Mr. Erasmus, but Mr. Roland spoke about it, so I hope this clarifies it. There will be no cash loss, whatever the existing pay level was. Should they be classified down as some of them are, it will not affect that individual at the job as long as they remain in the job. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears as though there are quite a few red circled employees who seem to feel that the government may lay them off so that they will be able to hire new people under the new classification, which would then mean lower wages have to be paid. Would the Minister make a commitment that this will not occur? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I think that we want to make it clear that the Premier was very clear, in his statement he made earlier in the last session where he said there would be no further layoffs. I think that is all I would do is reiterate that position as the Finance Minister and as all my other colleagues are here. There is no strategy in place to do any of that kind of thing, we want to contain or keep, if you want, the employees that we have. There is no movement, whatsoever, to let employees go so that we can bring new employees in at a lower pay level. That would be totally unacceptable. It is unacceptable, the Premier said that and the rest of the Cabinet supported it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presumably, if people are at a certain pay level and if they are not at the last step, they should receive pay increments every year. Would the Minister indicate how those pay increments are affected? Will they be the same as usual or are they less or are they more due to this red circling? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My

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understanding of the situation is that if a person is at pay level 25, step 3 and because a job evaluation has been evaluated at pay level 23, as long as that individual is in the job, he remains at pay level 25, step 3 and the following year he moves to pay level 25, step 4, step 5, step 6. That is my understanding of the situation. I will qualify it by saying that I will double check with Mr. Voytilla, but I am reasonably confident that is the situation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that information. On a final note with the final offer, the Minister indicated that he would be revisiting the cost of living index, could he indicate if he has any indication when this will occur? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 536-13(5): GNWT Final Settlement Offer

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to commend both Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Henry for bringing this issue before me and writing informative letters. It is appreciated when you get colleagues who take the time to speak with the Finance Minister and try to find solutions to difficult problems and I want to advise their constituency today in this House that I do appreciate that, of course, as other colleagues in this House do. Mr. Speaker, the final offer is on the table right now. I have committed to re-examining the Northern Allowance component for Yellowknife in particular and I intend to do that in the coming weeks in an effort to see if we can get a more fair approach to the normal side of things and I intend to do that as quickly as I can.

--Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation regarding the Rae Yellowknife highway contract and reconstruction. The Minister spoke earlier and answered a lot of questions that I had, but I do have a couple of followup

questions with regard to the letting of the contract. First of all, could the Minister tell us, does he expect the full \$8.6 million to be spent this year? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a multi-year contract. The intention is to try to get as much work done as possible this year, but doing this magnitude of work in this kind of terrain, it is difficult to say. The intent is to get as much work done as possible. I cannot say, at this point, whether the whole amount, which is budgeted for this year, will be spent this year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Question period is over. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I read, the Minister is saying not all of the money will be spent this year. I am sure that there may have been some pre-knowledge of what was possible to be done this year and I am wondering why we allocated \$8.6 million to this particular project when perhaps there were other requirements as well. In other words, we are getting into a division issue next year, separate budgets for each territory and so forth. My question is, was the department not ready to let tenders, as they usually are sort of around early April. Could the Minister tell us why they were not ready in early April?

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget is \$8 million plus for this year and the public tender has not gone out yet for the two sections, so we do not

really know what kind of numbers is going to come in. That is what the department estimated the two sections would cost for this year's operation. Why the tender is going to be made later in the summer, I think it all has to do with the accessibility into that part of the country where you have rocks, lakes and swamps. To start blasting, I think we need to do it more in the fall or winter when the terrain is frozen, so that there is accessibility into that area. That is what my understanding of why later in the year rather than in the summer. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that we need to do prep work and maybe some of the work is better done blasting in the winter, but I am wondering if the Minister has any idea of the exact amount that will be spent this year in regard to the \$8.6 million. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Hypothetical. Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 537-13(5): Highway 3 Reconstruction Pilot

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:**

Thank you. It is difficult for me right now to answer the honourable Member as to how much of this money we are going to spend this year. It is all based on the tendering process and if the tender comes in less than what we estimated, we will have a little bit of a surplus, but we do not know at this time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Question period is over. I will remind the Members that as far as oral questions go, I did allow Members to continue to conclude all their supplementaries, but it is still under the rules that oral questions cannot exceed 60 minutes. I will go by the rules starting today. Once 60 minutes is up, it is up. Item 7, written questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Written Question 10-13(5): Awarding Process for Transportation Contracts

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1. How many transportation contracts have been awarded in the last three fiscal years?
2. How many of these contracts were publicly tendered?
3. How many of these contracts were awarded following a request for proposal?
4. How many of those contracts were negotiated contracts?
5. Who were the negotiating authorities?
6. Can the government provide a detailed list of transportation infrastructure and maintenance contracts awarded as a result of public tenders, requests for proposals and negotiated contracts for the last three fiscal years, describing the contract, project, start and expiry contract dates and dollar values?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Written questions. Mr. Henry.

Written Question 11-13(5): Wildlife Act Hunting Licence Residency Requirements

**MR. HENRY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi. In my Member's statement earlier today, I outlined some of the licencing provisions of the Wildlife Act and the Regulations made under the act. The Wildlife Act provides that the qualifications for hunting licences should be set out in regulations.

My question is:

1. Will the Minister commit to having the Department of Justice review my May 25, 1998 Member's statement and advise as to whether it is possible to amend the regulations made under the

Wildlife Act to clearly state that eligibility requirements for a resident hunting licence and to exempt RCMP and armed forces officers from the two year waiting period?

2. Will the Minister commit to report back to me or to this House before June 5, 1998?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 87-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation System and GNWT Job Evaluation - Process

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled, Hay Job Evaluation System and GNWT Job Evaluation Process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Tabling of documents. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabled Document 88-13(5): HUB News Article Entitled, The Perils of Overusing Negotiated Contracts, May 20, 1998

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a column which I wrote for The Hub newspaper, published on May 20, 1998, The Perils of Overusing Negotiated Contracts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Tabling of Documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabled Document 89-13(5): Minutes From May 14 UNW Local 12 Meeting

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a copy of the minutes from the May 14, 1998 meeting of the Union

of Northern Workers, Local 12 of Thebacha Campus of Aurora College which includes a motion passed in favour of a membership vote on the GNWT final settlement offer for a collective agreement. Mr. Speaker, the minutes are signed by Mr. Paul McAdams, who is President of UNW, Local 12.

Tabled Document 90-13(5): Package of Letters From Fort Smith UNW Members Regarding Pay Equity/Collective Bargaining

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table a package of 13 form letters from UNW members in my constituency expressing their concerns with the pay equity issue and the current collective bargaining impasse within the GNWT from a different local. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Tabling of documents. Mr. Ootes.

Tabled Document 91-13(5): Letters From Metis Nation and NWTTA Regarding the State of Education in the NWT

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table two letters I have received in regard to education concerns in the Northwest Territories. One is from Gary Bohnet, President of the Metis Nation, and the other is from Pat Thomas, President

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of the NWTTA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 92-13(5): Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT, 1996-97

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Tabling of documents. I wish to table the Annual Report of the Language Commissioner of the Northwest Territories covering the fiscal year 1996/97, which was filed with me pursuant to section 23 of the Official Languages Act. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

BILL 19: A Bill To Amend The Dental Profession Act

**HON. KELVIN NG:**

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, May 27, 1998, I will move that Bill 19, A Bill to Amend the Dental Profession Act, be read for the first time.  
Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Notices of motion for first reading of bills.  
Mr. Todd.

BILL 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 1998-99

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, May 27, 1998, I will move that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1998-99, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. Notices of motion for first reading bills.  
Item 16, motions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 17-13(5): Topic State of Education in the Northwest Territories to Committee of the Whole

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Members of the Legislative Assembly have been receiving letters and other forms of communication from constituents raising concerns about the state of education in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS these concerns are being expressed by many segments of society, including teachers, education administrators, parents, students and other members of the general public;

AND WHEREAS the concerns being raised relate to issues of decreased funding, increases in the student/teacher ratio, reduction of support for special needs students, violence in schools, lack of educational resource materials, an extremely high turnover rate among teachers and curriculum development, including, but not limited to, the integration of cultural programming;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly and the government together have the responsibility to ensure

that the educational needs of all northerners are being met;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that the topic, State of Education in the Northwest Territories, be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. State of Education in the Northwest Territories is referred into Committee of the Whole for today. Motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

BILL 17: An Act To Amend The Territorial Court Act and the Justices of the Peace Act

**HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Keewatin Central, that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act and the Justices of the Peace Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 17, has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Todd.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2

**HON. JOHN TODD:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Income Tax Act to establish a Northwest Territories child benefit for which residents will be eligible in addition to the federal child tax benefit. The amount of the NWT Child Benefit will be determined in accordance with the scheme set out in this bill. Under this scheme, every resident family with a net income of \$20,921 or less will receive an additional



annual benefit of at least \$330 per child and every resident family whose net income consists of a working income of \$3,750 or more will also receive a working income supplement to be phased in, so that the maximum benefit will be received when working income reaches \$10,000. The Northwest Territories child benefit will begin to be phased out when a resident family's net income is more than \$20,921. For example, the benefit for a one child family will be reduced at a rate of 3 percent of net income in excess of \$20,921 and will reach zero when the family's net income is \$41,087. The NWT child benefit will be administered by Revenue Canada and delivered monthly, together with the Federal Child Tax Benefit to the child's primary caregiver. The bill also amends the Income Tax Act to allow the electronic filing of income tax returns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Bill 16, has had second reading

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and accordingly the bill stands referred to a committee. Second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 7, and the State of Education in the Northwest Territories document, with Mr. Steen in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

I would like to call the committee to order. For consideration in Committee of the Whole today we have Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act and the State of Education in the NWT. Could I have some direction from the Members? Mr. Ootes, how do you wish to proceed?

**MR. OOTES:**

Mr. Chairman, that we debate the issue of the State of Education in the Northwest Territories item.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Agreed. Thank you. Perhaps before we take a break, I would like to outline some procedures I propose that we follow for discussion on State of Education in the NWT. I would like to suggest that I would offer the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment the opportunity to move to the witness table and to bring in witnesses if he wishes. After that, if the Minister would like to make any general comments, he is free to do so. The Chair would then allow each Member, if he or she wishes, the opportunity to make general comments on the State of Education in the NWT for up to ten minutes. Once all those who wish to make general comments have spoken, it would be followed by a question and answer period whereby Members in turn, for up to 10 minutes at a time, can ask questions of the Minister. This procedure would be followed today and tomorrow, if needed. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Agreed. Thank you. I would then suggest we take a 15-minute break and return. At that time I will invite the Minister.

--Break.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

I call the committee to order. As agreed previously to the break, I would invite the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent, to take the witness stand. If he wishes, the opportunity to bring in witnesses as well. Mr. Dent, do you wish to take the witness table?

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to bring in the deputy minister as well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does the committee agree? Would the Sergeant-at-Arms seat the witnesses please. For the record, Mr. Dent, could you introduce your witness?

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me today I have Mr. Mark Cleveland, the Deputy Minister for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Welcome to the committee. As we agreed to earlier, Mr. Dent, you are free to make comments of a general nature, if you wish.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Members of this committee for initiating this discussion today. Education and training are essential elements of our social programs and services. Mr. Chairman, funding for education and training is an investment in the future of citizens in the Northwest Territories. As a government, we have recognized the value and importance of education and training and continue to provide a significant portion of our overall government's budget to this investment. If we think back over the past decade, we can see there has been considerable progress in expanding education and training to northern communities. Increased funding to support programs, the development and training of northern staff and new curricula and facilities have added to the range and quality of programs and services. While we have a long way to go, we should also celebrate the successes we have seen. Like doubling the percentage of students attending high school in the past five years. Like doubling the number of aboriginal students attending college in the past five years. There are many more successes that we could celebrate.

We also need to recognize that society and jobs are changing across the north. It is important that education and training activities reflect this change. We need to realize that it is very important to continue to review and improve the standards of our programs so that they match the skills and knowledge students will need in the future.

While changes are occurring, Mr. Chairman, we have also been active in ensuring that the public, parents and stakeholders are involved in setting the direction for education. Divisional education councils and the public colleges now ensure there is regular and effective involvement in setting direction for our educational institutions which reflects territorial standards but in the context of local and regional

needs. Do we face challenges? Yes, we do. Is the system under pressure as a result of lower federal transfer payments? Yes, it is. Continuing discussion and debate of educational priorities is important. This House has raised the matter, and it is timely to pursue this discussion today. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be open and straightforward in its participation during these discussions. Our 1998-99 plan to review and update the existing departmental strategic plan is an example of our commitment.

Mr. Chairman, I am a strong and passionate advocate for education. I would dearly love to see more funding for education, but it is important that we frame our discussion today by recognizing that we are in very challenging times. There is simply not enough money to do everything that our constituents want us to do. If we were to raise our investment in education and training, then we must all understand that the monies need to come from some other program and/or service area. With overall reductions we have had to face in the past few years,

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choices will not be easy. In my view, we need to define our priorities, but we must also strive for a balanced approach.

Mr. Chairman, I hope the discussion in the next few hours in committee of the whole will be positive. I hope we can consider our successes and focus on how we can do better in the future. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Dent. I now open the floor to general comments from the Members. I just would like to remind Members that we did agree to hold questions until later and just comments of a general nature at this time on the state of education in the NWT. Mr. Picco.

**MR. PICCO:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the Minister for his opening comments. I think it is opportune that we do have a chance to discuss the State of Education in the Northwest Territories today, and that is why I seconded the motion that was introduced by Mrs. Groenewegen. We also had an earlier motion in this Assembly where we asked for the rebasing of any surplus funds within the departments to Education. That was two months ago. I think the process for this

debate was that the Finance Minister continue to say if it was the priority of this Legislative Assembly that, indeed, he would like to see it and hear it from the Members. I think the debate today in the committee of the whole will demonstrate that.

I want to touch on a couple of areas. Looking at so many problems that we seem to be having right now in education, and not all of them are a result of the three percent cuts to the base programming funds given to Education over the last two years. I think we have to look at and analyze where our money is being spent and are we getting the best results for the money we spend. A good example of this is the grade ten math curriculum. In the Baffin region alone, the implementation of the new math curriculum, which is a grade 10 math curriculum, there are 361 grade 10 students in the Baffin and approximately 24 grade 10 math teachers. The total actual costs of the materials for those students is \$80,526. Education, Culture and Employment contributed \$19,000 toward that cost. These are actual figures from the divisional board of education, so there was a shortfall of over \$61,000 that the divisional board had to make up just for that one grade 10 math curriculum. In questioning in the House, Minister Dent confirmed, I believe it was in the March sitting, that there are problems with the math curriculum. Maybe later we will be able to get into that.

Another concern I have is with classroom size. Our Department of Education seems to think that classroom size really is not an issue or a factor contributing to student performance. It is interesting to note that on June 4, 1997, the Alberta Minister of Education looked in sizing up the situation, said that among red herrings, the issue of classroom size is the king of the tunas. Of course, referring to the fact that he did not believe that classroom size contributed to problems in the classroom. I should note that a study done in Tennessee, quite a comprehensive study which has been quoted several times in different papers, has actually established a clear linkage between student numbers and achievement. The study concluded that the smaller classes resulted in substantial improvement in student performance, particularly in the areas of reading and arithmetic. By studying the students for an additional four years, the researchers were able to show that the positive effects of smaller class sizes persisted throughout to the seventh year of schooling. Mr. Chairman, I think that type of research shows that, indeed, classroom size, which is one of the biggest complaints we are hearing right now from our educators and parents, is

a concern. I think that study demonstrates that it is a concern.

Again, what I am trying to demonstrate, Mr. Chairman, is that I am not an educator in the classroom today. I can only go on what educators send me in writing, when I have meetings with the parents and what information I get through the divisional board of education. Then, when I bring these arguments forward to the Department of Education, in most cases, I can honestly say that the board has been forthcoming and willing to discuss the concerns and realize it is a concern, but then nothing is done.

Now, I do not know if more money put into the system is what is needed right now. I think we have to evaluate, as Mr. Dent has tried to articulate here in the House, and size up where we are spending our money and make sure that, indeed, we are getting the best results for the money that we are spending. The statistics are easy to read out, Mr. Chairman, but the fact of the matter is, there are problems in our schools, and those problems are from extra classroom size, more work, and less money to do more with. I have said before in this House, if you are asking to do more with less, you are going to get less done. Those are the main areas.

I would also like to speak a little bit about the government's perspective if we do not have any money and we cannot do anything. We just throw our hands up. Mr. Ootes illustrated this morning how extra money was found for different programs and projects. We needed it to study, \$750,000 for the Med-Emerg Report as an example. We found \$50 million, supposedly, in a news release from the government saying we were going to

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buy diamonds. We found \$40 million, although there is no line item in the budget, for pay equity. That is \$90 million there that is not budgeted for, but someone came up with it. Someone has to pay for it. All I am saying is that, if the concern is that the department needed more money, I think we must be able to find it. The Minister of Finance this morning spoke about bringing forward a supplementary appropriation. I do not know if the Department of Education has gone to FMBS or to the government and said this is what we need more. I do not know. I have never seen any letters to that effect. That will be a question we can ask later today. Has the department gone to the government and said we

need x-number of dollars and quantified why they needed it?

I do not understand, Mr. Chairman, when I get letters from the divisional board of education showing \$61,000 shortfall for just a grade 10 math curriculum to the Baffin region. Somewhere between what the department is saying and what the divisional boards are saying, there must be truth. I do not think they are saying it just for the sake of rhetoric. I have a package with me today, Mr. Chairman, from all across the Northwest Territories, from hamlets in the Baffin, from the Keewatin, from the Kitikmeot and from all over the Northwest Territories. Today, we also received a letter from the Metis Nation, from Mr. Gary Bonnet, spelling out the problem with the student/teacher ratios and English as a second language programs. It seems that this problem we are having in education is not unique to one area of the territories. It is all across the spectrum and all across the territories and we have to deal with it. I think just by throwing our hands up and saying we do not have any money or whatever, is not acceptable. Maybe today, in questioning in committee of the whole, the Minister and the Deputy Minister, Mr. Cleveland, will be able to answer some of those concerns, and hopefully pro-actively as the Minister said, the debate here today will be a pro-active in a positive manner, so that, indeed, positive results for our students, who are our first and foremost priority, and the teachers and parents can be put at ease.

Mr. Chairman, some of the Members have said that there is really nothing to debate about education. It is a motherhood and apple pie statement and what are you going to get out of having a debate here today. The debate should hopefully, at a public forum, clear the air and we can move on constructively, as asked for in the motion by Mrs. Groenewegen yesterday. With that, Mr. Chairman, those are my opening comments and I look forward to asking some questions to the Minister and Mr. Cleveland later today. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Picco. I would now recognize the Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus.

**MR. ERASMUS:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the outset I would like to indicate that I may have a few problems with the way education is being implemented. However, my main problem that I see today is not the fact that things are

being implemented but the fact that we simply do not have enough dollars within the education system for the Minister and his staff to work with. Similar to Mr. Picco earlier, I do not buy the argument that we just finished the budget process and that nothing can be done. Every year, Mr. Chairman, there are supplementary appropriations, supplementary appropriations, as I understand, to deal with problems that arise, unexpected things or perhaps a shift in priorities. We all know that during the budget process you cannot add money to areas. All you can do is cut. In this instance we knew that we did not want to cut from education, so there is nothing that we could have done. We had to wait until after the budget process in order to try to put more money into education.

Another thing I wanted to touch on, Mr. Chairman, is the adult education that we are currently providing in the Northwest Territories. We do have the worst education rates in Canada. Many of our adults cannot read or write and many are semi-literate. These people are of working age and many will be of working age for many years, and they will not be of retirement age for many years. I simply cannot accept that we have to let these people continue living like that when we can invest some dollars to ensure that their problem is alleviated.

Some statistics indicate that, from the GNWT's own reports, 45 percent of the new jobs that will be created in the next decade will require 16 years of education, Mr. Chairman. Sixteen years! What are we doing to our people when a good many of them have dropped out at grade 9 or less, because another fact here, the population of Northwest Territories in 1994, with less than grade 9, 27 percent of our population? Grade 9 to grade 12 without a secondary certificate was a further 19 percent. This, in total, with less than grade 12 is 46 percent, which is almost half of our population. We know that in the next decade half of the jobs that are created will require 16 years of education. The NWT graduation rate is 25 percent, and the national average is 68 percent. This is almost one-third of the national average. The graduation rate of aboriginal people is abominable. The Inuit graduate at a 12 percent rate, the Dene graduate at 16 percent rate, and the Metis graduate at 20 percent rate. Mr. Chairman, just to go a little bit further, we also know that 93 percent of university graduates and 76 percent of grade 12 graduates in the NWT are employed, while those people with grade 8 or less, only 32 percent of them are employed. I do not really want to go into a great big bunch of statistics, Mr. Chairman, but I do have to indicate that we have quite a few

communities that have some form of adult education. However,

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only approximately 35 communities have permanent educators. I would safely say that every community has a problem with adult basic education, so that this certainly has to be improved upon. I would urge the government to look at this and to put into place some type of a plan that looks at all the different areas and to set some goals. This is what we are going to do here. This is what we are doing in this community, this community. Not everybody wants to go and get grade 12 or go to college that is granted. A lot of people will be satisfied just to learn how to write their name and to improve the way that they live simply because they know how to read and write at a basic level. Those types of people, of course, many of them are happy to do other types of work, labour or whatever. Many of them, of course, would want to work on the land, trapping or fishing but for those people who wish to go on to a greater education, they should not be denied. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Next on my list is Mr. Enuaraq from Baffin Central.

**MR. ENUARAQ:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank the Minister of Education and his staff, as well to thank the Social Programs Committee for producing some money to be used for education. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that funding, which is allocated for education, was the most in all the funding that was allocated to departments in the government. I know that there are a lot of people are saying that the money that was allocated for education is insufficient. We all realize, as Members, that the funding is not adequate because we have heard from regional education boards and from principals and teachers, as well have told us that there is not enough money for education in the communities. As well, the student/teacher ratio is a problem area as well. The problem is students are feeling the crunch in classroom space and I will also be supporting my colleagues to get more funding to be used for education purposes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (Translation Ends)

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Ootes for Yellowknife Central.

**MR. OOTES:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members are making references to many areas that are of concern and I would like to do so as well, then I would like to make some comments about what needs to happen after education because education is also related in a sense to where people get jobs afterwards and where is the motivation to get your education, in other words. We have to be able to identify jobs, but first let me speak about a couple of areas that I have been able to garner as areas of concern to what I believe are concerns of the teachers and the education profession.

First of all, dealing with the dollar aspect of education, I think it is important to point out the budget for education has not been decreased. What is happening is there is a forced growth factor developing. We are getting more students into the education system. That is, of course, placing pressure on the system.

One of the areas, I have been told is a big concern in the education area, is the student support services. While statements have been made that class sizes are too big and classes have too many students in them, the reality of the situation, I think more appropriately is, students are not getting the support service in classes. The classes are more diverse and multi-grade classes. There are more special needs in each classroom. Yet there is not anymore support for those special needs, those special needs students. As a result, there are fewer resources to go around. Some resources but fewer of them. For example, there is a lack of teacher-counsellors, teacher's aide in language acquisition when in comes to English as a second language and there is lack of learning assistants for teachers.

I think another important aspect of our education system is the whole area of vocational training. We place a great deal of emphasis on academic subjects, but, to my understanding, there is not that much vocational training happening in any of the schools in the territories, up to grade 12. That, to me, is perhaps a critical area to be examined simply because not all students are going to end up moving onto a university. After all, a grade 12 education is just a general education, it does not prepare you for a job. That seems to me to be an area we do need to concentrate on, to say where are we going with our

curriculum and is it adequate to prepare people for jobs later on.

I am just going to make reference to some areas that have been brought to my attention on several subjects. Teacher turnover. I am probably repeating things that other Members have already said and the department is well aware of, but I think it is worthy to make reference to them. Teacher turnover, there is a concern there apparently, because there has been an erosion of pay and benefits. More important, what I understand, it is the high housing costs and the difficulty facing teachers to get housing. That is an area of concern. Class sizes and structures. I have already mentioned in some cases the student/teacher ratio is of less concern than the lack of adequate support staff to assist students with special needs.

Funding is of concern. It can be identified very specifically. I was told, for example, there is an allocation of \$24 for text books, yet one particular text book cost \$25, so the teacher could not even buy that. Teachers are photocopying material rather than being able to buy text books. I give that as an example because I think it is important to get it on the record of what I have heard.

Dealing with curriculums and outcomes and assessments, parent groups have lobbied for renewed emphasis on basic skills, teacher centred instruction and stricter evaluation methods. Some jurisdictions are moving away from the recent practice of moving children from grade to grade with their peers regardless of achievement level. Now, I did address this through questions last year. I think there is some concern out there about students staying with their peers, regardless of their achievement. Hence they can graduate from high school, yet they may not be able to achieve the level of a grade 9 or 10, but for all intentions and purposes they can state they graduated from high school. I think that needs to be addressed, perhaps re-evaluated.

The provincial assessment programs are available in nine provinces now where high school exit exams are required. The

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NWT have scored below average in the areas such as math, science, reading and writing in the school achievement indicator's program. That is of concern, Mr. Chairman.

Now, school to work transition. We do not seem to have many programs in place that allow students to learn what the work world is like out there. I think there are some programs, for instance the principal of St. Pat's, here in Yellowknife has been working on a program. It is to give students work experience. He is working with businesses around the community. I think those kinds of programs are to be lauded. These schools also need support for this particular kind of service.

I am told the most basic adult education programs in the NWT do not have stable funding. Only 35 communities have permanent adult educators.

Just on the special needs students. I have a statistic here that says the department estimates that about 30 to 45 percent of NWT students need specific supports to help them learn above what is provided as part of regular teaching practice. The incidents are probably higher in some communities. That is sort of a lot of information, Mr. Chairman.

I want to come back now to our need to be able to say, yes, Members are speaking in support of more funding for education. I do not disagree with that. We also need to address and identify job opportunities. We have to look at this on a statistical basis and say, okay, where are the jobs going to be in the future and address that in our curriculum and in our schools so that students get some incentive to be able to go and finish school. Right now, I think a lot of students are probably in there, they do not know where they are going to end up with a job, if they are going to stay in the Northwest Territories. It becomes a question of giving them some motivation to carry on in school and that is an important element. I will leave my remarks at that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I have Mr. Miltenberger, the Member from Fort Smith next, followed by Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Roland, Mr. Ningark and Mr. Barnabas, in that order. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been a Member of the Social Programs Committee since I first came to the Assembly. We have been dealing with the issue of education as one of the areas of grave concern since we got here. It is a department where we spend roughly \$300 million or about 25 percent of our total budget is already spent on education. The question

to me is, it is not just a problem that there is not enough money, but how well is the money that we are now currently investing being spent. I think that is a more critical issue than adding more money because we are not going to be adding \$250 million or \$300 million. We are going to be adding some millions. There is a significant amount already spent there. So I think we have to take a very significant look at not just where are we going to put new money, but before we put the money in, let us make sure we are putting it into the right places, that the structures and programs we set up are, in fact, meeting the needs. For example, the statistics we have been given, and you have heard them elaborated here very eloquently by my colleagues, some that have not been mentioned are how we rated on the national standards tests, how low we rated across the board. Which gives concern to the basic standard of education. Are we competitive with our other jurisdictions in Canada? Can our children graduate, if they graduate, and expect to be able to compete on an equal footing, with children from other jurisdictions?

There are problems that have been touched on that I share as well. Concerns with the area of special needs. We have heard and seen information that would indicate this whole language program is not as effective as was anticipated when they brought it into play, into the curriculum. In fact we were told California has moved away from it wholesale when their state ranked last in America in language and they had the whole language programs. There is the issue of literacy, libraries and adult education. They have all been touched on. I am very concerned that while we look at this issue, we cannot forget there are far more needs than there is money, not just in education. There is incredible competition for scarce dollars. We know that because we have had to make very hard decisions since we got elected and brought into office and dealt with the deficit. To me it is a fundamental priority that we cannot turn away from the deficit battle that we just fought or we could very easily pour millions into education, millions into social services, millions into any other program you want to name and it still would not be enough. We would find ourselves back in the same situation that we just managed to struggle out of.

I would also like to say I think we can respond affirmatively and positively to the challenge put down by the Metis Nation where they want more funding given to the upcoming education budget. I interpret that they want money, when we look at our next

budget cycle, of trying to put more money into education.

I think as a western MLA, when we sit at the table to plan the budget for the upcoming year, that education very clearly already is a priority that has been identified and we will be taking the steps to do that.

The issue is not, I think, for us to just sit here and elaborate eloquently where all the problems are or say to the government, we want you to put more money in and bring in supplementary appropriation, not if we do not want to go further into debt.

The question is, what kind of hard decisions are we going to be prepared to make as an Assembly if we want to, in fact, put more money into education? Do we want to put more money

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into education wholesale or willy-nilly before we, in fact, do the kind of review that I think is necessary to ensure that the current structures are adequate? Is the current curriculum meeting the needs that it was intended to? It can be argued that it is not.

We have heard that graduation rights mentioned and how we rate with our colleagues in other jurisdictions in terms of educational standards. Are we prepared to look at raising education taxes? Are we prepared to go to communities in the general taxation area that now pay a small fraction of what tax-based municipalities pay and say, and it is time for everybody to ante up more money? This is a priority and we want people to pay more. We think it is essential for our children, your children, our grandchildren. Are we prepared to do that? Those are the kinds of hard decisions I think we have to make.

There is reference made to the \$40 million offered up in the collective agreement. The \$50 million that could have been offered up for diamonds if, in fact, that was a reality and not just a very astute bargaining ploy. Where that money would have come from, I do not know. We have the Deficit Elimination Act that would limit how far we could go into debt. It is critical that we look at education, but I think we have to look at it in context of all the other needs as well, the employment situation, the economy. The reality is I have heard elaborated on and spoken to by a number of Members is, you are not going to be able to educate everybody and have them stay in their own communities. We have to be prepared to have a

transient population that is going to go where the work is.

This is another issue that has to be addressed. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a valuable kind of exercise, but if we want to make it more than just an exercise we have to be very specific in what we are prepared to do as an Assembly and not just speak our peace and walk away from here feeling good and then expect the Minister of Education and his colleagues to make it so. As it is spoken, so let it be done. I do not think it is quite that easy. It worked for Moses and the Pharaoh on TV in The Ten Commandments, but I think, in this day and age we have to be a little more specific and helpful. I am listening to the comments that are being made by my colleagues with interest and I know that, at the end of the day, they will keep in mind that the path we have already travelled to get to this state of financial stability as we look at trying to possibly reallocate money or provide concrete suggestions to the Minister of how we can better meet the educational needs of the constituents that we represent, their children and their grandchildren. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen, Member for Hay River. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased today that this very important subject has been moved into Committee of the Whole, so that we can take our time to address it and put our heads together, so to speak, to see what kinds of creative and progressive ideas that we can come up with.

It was suggested by someone in the House this week that perhaps all this attention on education was, in fact, due to some well-organized lobby effort and to that I want to respond that this is not the case. The concerns about education are coming from many sectors and it is certainly something that has been raised at the last two constituency meetings that I have had. This is not some artificially created crisis or concern that, in fact, the people out there are very much wanting the education of their children to be addressed.

When we talk about education, it is easy, when you look at the statistics, to become overwhelmed by it, maybe even a little bit depressed by it because of

those pressures on the system that Mr. Ootes referred to that we seemingly do not have any control over. We do not have control over the number of students coming into the system. We do not have control seemingly over the things that are causing such a high proportion of our students to be in the special need's category.

I can tell you that as an MLA there is little that I have experienced to date that is more perplexing than having a parent come to me and say, my son or my daughter just needs to have some extra help or just needs and assessment for special needs, or just needs to go to a summer program to get some extra help in a certain area. We have no response to those kinds of things because it is always the same answer: There are no resources to address that. I must say that I have been very upset by not having answers readily available for people when they come to you and they are concerned about their children's education.

It is important, on the subject of special needs again, that we do have proper diagnosing of where the problems are. I believe that we need more ability to identify what the needs are so that we can address them effectively with programs and, well, just the most effective assistance that we can possibly offer. I think that kids sometimes go through school and they may not be functioning well, but we do not really know what the source or the cause of it is.

In Hay River, I do not know, seriously, what we would do in Hay River if it were not for volunteers in the school working with kids on a one-on-one basis. It is very extensive and I would say it is maybe even unique in the north that we have so many people in the community that are dedicated to this, but that is not the answer in the long-term, although we so greatly appreciate what they do. It is not something that is going to solve the problem in the long run.

The needs are very diverse across the territory, with respect to teachers and teacher housing. In some ways I think we have shot ourselves in the foot, so to speak, getting rid of all the housing as we did and then realizing that we do not have any place for people coming to the non-market communities where there is no affordable housing for them. I think that was a small price to pay to attract and keep teachers. I am disappointed that some teachers, in fact, at the end of this school term are leaving the north due to something as simple as something that we could have addressed and solved, I believe, something as basic as their need for adequate accommodation.



I do not know exactly what our mandated, legal obligation is to our students in the north. That is something I am going to be asking the Minister about later, because if we received the funding from Ottawa and it is unconditional, I do not know

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exactly where we can take the resources from.

We must have some responsibility to ensure a certain level of education for all students, not just the students that thrive and that do well and get through the system, but also to address the needs of those who do have special challenges. I think that if we, as a government, bury our heads so to speak, on this and do not deal with it, I think, that the burden and the fiscal costs are going to be really burdensome in the future. This is one of those things that if we do not address it effectively, as we are going along, that we are going to pay a much greater price in the end. I do not think that is good management or good for the people involved. I think we have to face up to the fact that we do have a challenge before us that the system is under a tremendous amount of strain and that we have to face it head on.

Mr. Chairman, that is all I want to say for right now and I will have a number of questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Next, I will recognize Mr. Roland, Member for Inuvik.

**MR. ROLAND:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have heard a number of different areas of concern when it comes to education. We need to say, or at least, I think, we need to start with, that we have come a long way in the area of education. For example, when my parents were going to school before Inuvik was built, the higher education at that time was grade 3 and 4. That was average throughout the Delta communities. We have come a long way and there is still much to go.

I know there are opportunities to reach a higher education, as well, when you go through life and it is a matter of being committed to your cause. I think a challenge brings out the best in people, so hopefully that will bring out the best in us and we can come up with a solution that would try to deal with these problems.

As we heard earlier from Mr. Miltenberger about the education tax, I think that is an area we need to look at. The tax-based communities pay their portion of their tax for education. I am not sure of the comparisons. I know that because I live in a tax-based community, much of my tax money goes into education. This is something we need to look at throughout the whole of the territories. If we want to put more money into it, we should go back to the people and ask if they are willing to pay a little more so we can have more special need's assistance in the classroom. I think that is something we need to address.

In the area of education, it was mentioned earlier, but I will go a little further, is the quality of education. One of the concerns I have raised in the past is in the area of automatic passes. I have a concern with that. At some time we end up paying for that because that student who has gone along with his peers for a number of years, when it comes time to write the test that he has to write because it is mandatory, realizes he does not have the knowledge to succeed. How far do we expect that student to go from that point on? I think that needs to be looked at.

From my experience, when I went to school, it was divided into groups of people. Maybe there was some concern, maybe it was not the best way, but I found it to be productive. Maybe it is something we need to look at. Governments have been known to go back to the ways they delivered programs in the past. Maybe we can look at classroom settings. For example, when I went to school it was divided into five different groups: A, B, C, D and E; A being the one who achieved high.

If we are going to do something about this, as we heard earlier, then we should be prepared to make the necessary decisions to try and come up with solutions. I put out to the rest of the Members here, one of the solutions possible is to put a survey out to the residents of the territories and ask if they would be willing to put more into it. We might get an answer back which is not what we would like to hear.

For example, in Inuvik, the Inuvik District Education Authority has gone a long way to try and achieve the best balance with the money it receives in trying to provide proper programming and support for teachers. It is difficult with the population growing as fast as it is and with the problems related to the younger generation, there are concerns. Before we say, where to do we transfer money from one department to another, we need to try to find new

money. As I have heard said in the past, you can educate people, but if you do not have jobs to put them into then what does that education count for at the end of the journey? It is something that we need to look at.

As well, I think that, as a government, we need to ask ourselves, what is the end result? Is it a number? Is it quality? What is the key point? We have shown the increase in students by going with the extended classes in the smaller communities, but we have also heard that by doing they need more teachers or more assistants because they are having to deal with a larger range of students in a class.

These are a number of areas that we need to look at, but I hope that, at the end of the day, we will be able to offer up somewhat of a solution. It is fine to say it is important. Education is a priority, which in the social programs we have stated many times that it is. We have asked for funding to be put into education, but if there are no new dollars there, where do we take it from? I am not in favour of moving funding around. We need to find new dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Roland. I now recognize the Member for Natilikmiot, Mr. Ningark.

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, like my colleague, Mr. Roland, I believe we have come a long way since 20, 30 years ago, perhaps 40 years ago. I think we have recognized some of the things we have started with and how far

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we came. Sometimes a positive attitude in this kind of situation helps a bit. Mr. Chairman, like my colleagues, I have attended many meetings at the community, regional and territorial level. We are talking about education, talking about the kind of product that we are producing in the system. Many things are contributing factors for our failure. Many meetings I have attended, like I said, community, regional, territorial, even international level, talks about many of the problems that we have talked about. In most cases, Mr. Chairman, a very important element or body is not in the attendant, that is the representative of the student. Mr. Chairman, did we ever stop to think and ask a student how he or she

feels to be up here from a community in a strange environment? Did we ever stop to think and ask, how does it feel to go to school without having a breakfast, or having lunch, for that matter? Did we ever stop to think and ask when a student for some reason is being picked on time and time again and there is no counsellor? Perhaps there is no money in the program to have a school counsellor. Perhaps a student is too shy to get some help. Did we ever stop to think and ask a student what his parents think about education?

We have in different cultures, different values. In many cases, children are brought up in small native communities to become hunters and so on. Did we ever stop to think and ask students what do your parents think about education? Do you get support from education? What is the environment like at home? Is it overcrowded? Do you have enough space in your home to do your homework? Do you get support from your parents, brothers to do your homework? We have to realize that it is not always up to politicians, parents, educators to make a right choice or decision for the student. In many cases, I think, having the students involved in the process is very important. Very critical.

Mr. Chairman, like my colleague, Mr. Floyd, I think we also have to recognize that there is hope in our system. We have graduating, producing and quality students. In many cases we have talked about special needs. I have not heard anyone at the meeting, or this forum, talking about bright, gifted students. Are we supporting gifted, bright students to go forward? I think we are lacking in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ootes talks about motivation. Did we ever stop to think and ask, again, a student what he or she wishes to be? Where does that person go beyond the education that we are expecting her to be? There are no opportunities in the small communities. The few opportunities that we have in the small communities are taken and the turn over is very low, thereby making graduation lower than we expect it to be. I think we have to recognize that.

How many times does a student want to go home because they are having their education in another centre, another larger community, where that person is exposed to many of the things that he has never seen before or been part of before? I think that we have to be, although we are looking at what our failures are in terms of financing, facilities, et cetera. We have to be sensitive to the person that is very much part of education, which is the student. I think

we have to realize that. We have to. If we are not able to do a survey, Mr. Chairman, in order to compile information from the students, if we are not able to go to the community, let us have a survey by way of, we have computers. We have a communication we can use; we can use mail, et cetera. Then we would realize that there is a very important part that is missing. What does the student think? Why are the students not graduating like we anticipate they will graduate? What is the problem? We identify problems many times, but never from the students' point of view. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):**

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I have two more on my list here, presently, Mr. Barnabas from High Arctic and Mr. Krutko from Mackenzie Delta, in that order. Mr. Barnabas.

**MR. BARNABAS:**

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few comments to make on the education issue. Having been a previous Member of the divisional board of education, I am familiar with the trends concerning teachers and students. First of all, I remember that teachers need support staff in order for them to teach properly. In particular, when it concerns capable professionals we hire from the south to live up here and teach. They are in our communities during the school year in order to teach and help our students to educate themselves and so it is important that we support our staff. The other thing is during their tenure as teachers in our communities, they experience problems with housing rates, especially in the higher Arctic communities. These include per diem and other money or indemnities that they receive which comes to a minimum of \$100. We did a survey and came to this conclusion and this is really not fair. In many instances, teachers feel that their salaries are comparable to social assistance, or income support that they can receive and this is not right either. There is a 67.5 ratio of students that need adult supervision or special assistance. We have problems in dealing with this issue. We have problems in finding part-time special needs educators for our special need's children. For these reasons I feel that we need full-time employees to deal with this problem in order for our students to accomplish their potential. This also looks at the high rate of rent in the communities. This affects the special need's students as well as the special need's teachers, in particular, because they need professional development days. This affects the professional teachers and we cannot just overlook

this issue. It is important that we afford professional days.

The other issue is, there are up to 25 students in a classroom with one teacher with many special needs students integrated into those classrooms. When you go beyond a certain comfortable teacher/student ratio, you have to look at the problem and you need further assistance. We need more funding targeted toward this problem because a lot of these teachers have to produce their own school curriculum. When they have this extra workload, it does not fully recognize the extra workload they have considering their salary. (Translation ends)

We are trying alternative studies as well. We are at the point where we cannot really handle all the needs we have.

(Translation) This has been recognized as a problem by the management of the divisional boards. It is becoming increasingly difficult to be a teacher as your student numbers

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continue to increase. This will result in teachers resigning, and then we have a problem there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (Translation ends)

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, have a lot of concerns in regard to education and especially in the area where we see a very large increase in special needs students and cuts that have taken place, especially in regard to the teacher/student ratio. There has to be more emphasis put on the special needs concerns in communities, for example, in McPherson they calculate the special need's team that is there which supports and assists some 36 students from kindergarten to grade 10. I believe that is a high enough figure that there has to be additional resources put into those schools where they do see a real increase, especially in the number of special needs students. It is more than that. It comes down to the cuts that have taken place within this government in the last couple years in which, again, in the case of McPherson, they are looking at being cut one and a half positions 1998-99. It works out to some 9 and a half teacher positions for students from kindergarten to grade 12, which adds up to approximately 210

students. I believe that is inadequate in regard to the number of teachers and the number of student ratio in the classes that they have to commit to. There have been motions put forth from the Beaufort Delta Leaders' meetings which ask for an in-depth study and review of the old education system and the quality of education that is being delivered in the Inuvik region. Those motions have been passed time and time again. Yet, nothing has been done to look at the quality of education that we are delivering and also what are we setting our students up for in regard to grade 9 students whom we are finding through different tests that they have a grade 5 education. There has to be something done to not allow this to continue to set up students for failure when they move on to post secondary education or into the trades. We have to also find the resources within ourselves which are the biggest question that the government states, which is there is no more money. We have to find the resources now to deal with this problem and not allow it to continue to carry on to the position where we find ourselves. In the case of McPherson and Aklavik, the communities I represent there are a high turnover of teachers because of the stress that they find themselves under dealing with this additional problems in regard to special needs students and the cuts that have taken place in regard to a number of teacher/student ratios. There has to be more of an adequate way of assisting students, and especially the ones with special needs, to cope with the learning curve that they find themselves in because of their health or medical problems. We have to also address this in light of not only the education, but health as a health issue. There has to be more resources put into the health care field and assist the individual student who has a special need's problem and to work alongside with the special needs teachers, and the community to address this issue.

We cannot basically continue to say, well, we are going to give the teachers a little more training or allow them a few more courses on how to deal with special need's students. The problem with special needs in the classroom is effecting all students, not just the students that have a problem. It is effecting behavioural problems in the classrooms. It is effecting the day-to-day operation of students who get frustrated and basically drop out of school. We have to look at education as an overall concern and not just piecemeal it together. I still do support the Beaufort Delta leaders' motion to call for an in-depth review in regard to the quality of education that is presently being delivered to the Inuvik region. There also has to be more time spent to assist teachers coping with

problems they have come across. In the case of a meeting that I held in McPherson with the education council along with the assistant Deputy Minister, Pauline Gordon, we heard of the number of problems that they see and that all comes back to the whole area of more resources and more dollars to assist in a community. The community has tried their utmost to try to find special needs teachers, tutors, and what not within the community through funds like pathways dollars that the government gives to the bands from Indian Affairs. Those funds are being used to hire tutors in the classroom, and income support money to find individuals who are willing to assist the teachers by filling in wherever possible. It has come to such a state now that it is a crisis and that we do have to deal with it. I do not believe we can use the excuse, we do not have any more money. We seem to find money whenever it comes to large projects, P3 Initiatives, we are able to find money in regard to diamond evaluation, sorting facilities, the purchase of some \$50 million for diamonds. I do not know where the \$50 million was going to come from, but I believe the Minister of Finance seemed to have ways of finding large pots of money whenever it is appropriate to do things. At this time I would like to ask the Minister of Finance what is being done to ensure that the major concern with a large teacher turnover in the Northwest Territories and also the problems that we find with the whole area of special needs in our communities are addressed and it is addressed effectively and efficiently and also as soon as possible. I do not believe we can allow ourselves to wait until next fall to deal with this problem because I believe with a number of turnovers and the number of teachers that are leaving, that we are going to have a bigger crisis next year when it comes to dealing with this problem all over again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you. We have an agreement, once all Members who wish to speak have spoken, the Minister and his officials will respond to some questions. I have Mr. Steen on the list. Mr. Steen.

**MR. STEEN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak toward a few points here as well. My other colleagues have identified class sizes as a concern and I have that concern as well in my ridings. I also have the concern of school sizes. I understand that in the early 90s the number of students for the size of schools, the formula was increased to allow for more students for floor space in the school. This has

created overcrowding in the schools and as a result there is problems that have been generated from this overcrowding which includes discipline. I am also concerned about the quality of education in the small community versus larger centres. By this I am referring mostly to the quality of high schools that is being offered in the smaller community versus the larger centres, mainly, in the area of home economics and shop work for the students. I believe that the same facilities are not available in

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the small communities as they are in the larger ones. In the last two Assemblies there was a move to have high schools in the smaller communities rather than have them all centred in the larger centres. This apparently was in response to a call from the public to have high schools in the smaller centres. This, it seems, has resulted in a lesser quality of high school education and programs available to the students in the smaller communities. I am concerned about that and I wish that the Minister and his department would address this.

I am also concerned about the curriculums in the schools being offered at this point in time. By this I am referring mostly to whole language versus phonics. I understand this is a problem Canada-wide, as well as even in the States where whole language is being taught rather than the use of phonics. I have noticed even in my own children where they could not recognize words because of the use of whole language in the recent years. I was concerned about that for a number of years now where the ability to read is not there any more. But this problem is further put to a larger extent because apparently we now have teachers who are not trained to deliver phonics. They are only trained to deliver a whole language program. Apparently it is going to take a number of years, even if we adopted going back to the system of using phonics versus whole language, and it would take a number of years before we could again have students who have the ability to read and I am told that there is a very high percentage of overall Canadians who cannot read. Somewhere in the nature of 40 percent cannot read properly due to the use of whole languages in schools. I would like to ask the department if they plan to continue using whole languages or do they intend to use a combination of dual or just what the plan is?

I am concerned about adult education in the smaller communities and the availability of vocational training programs. I know that Mr. Erasmus and other

Members in the Assembly spoke about there are not the opportunities available that should be available for vocational training. I am 100 percent a supporter of more vocational training for students who want to take other than high-level type jobs, like doctors and lawyers, that demand university training.

One of the concerns that became obvious to me just recently is that, for instance students going to school in my communities, all the material is supplied to them by the schools, but if they moved to larger centres like Yellowknife or Inuvik, these same students, their parents have to buy materials for them. This is a surprise both to the parents and to the students. We do not understand why that is. We assumed that as aboriginals we were guaranteed an education by the government through the land claims and through the treaties and we thought that as we received it free in the communities, it would be free wherever we went. I am surprised that if you move to a larger centre you have to buy your own materials for the students. The interesting part about it, it is not available in the schools. I know of children that go to the school, take mathematics, and they have no materials to take home to study. Whatever the material they were given they have to return that evening back to the school, they cannot take anything home because there are no books to take home. There is just the page given to them on a daily basis. I do not know if this is standard procedure in the larger centres but this is what is being experienced by some students whom I know. I do not know what it really means. It means the standards are different in the larger centres than it is in the smaller communities. Do we have a set standard? That is the question that has to be answered. Is there a set standard of education for everybody?

I think one of the major things we have to consider as the Legislative Assembly is, can we afford a high school in every small community? At what level of population do we stop and say, hey, it is not affordable to put a high school in this community. You are going to have to go to a larger centre. Is the policy of this government, for instance, is it the same policy for education, as it is for Municipal Affairs? With Municipal Affairs, the small communities get the same type of infrastructure as larger centres, but can we afford it? That is the whole question. Can we afford a high school in every community, or should we go back to the system of sending our children to a central high school? Many people in my communities say the old system, even though it had flaws, even though children were away from their parents, there were a

number of good points to it in that discipline was better. Quality of education was better because children had more ability to rest and be ready for school the next day. Those types of points were being expressed in the smaller communities now. Mind you, you could say it is 50/50. Fifty people would like high school in the small communities, and fifty people would not. As a government we have to question this. We cannot find any more money for education. We have to look at whether we can cut down on the cost of the existing education system and still keep the standards or improve the standards. That is the question we have to answer, I believe. Mr. Miltenberger pointed out, putting the same money into doing a better job may be the way to go. That is what we have to look at as an Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, I pointed out a few points here and some of them are not popular. For instance, the idea of having central high schools rather than community high schools, but we have to raise one more question here why are aboriginal groups, at this point in time, requesting to take on education responsibilities themselves rather than this government? It must be related to the fact that they are not satisfied with the standard of education we are giving and they suggested they can do a better job. All those things have to be taken into consideration, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the time to say these things. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):**

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Looking at the clock, I will recognize the clock and I thank the Minister and his officials for appearing before the committee. I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

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

**ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**MR. NINGARK:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering the state of education in the Northwest Territories and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**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 full Caucus at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow. The Ordinary Member Caucus at 11:00 a.m. and a briefing on the DEW Line at 12:00 noon.

**Orders of the day for Tuesday, May 26, 1998:**

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. 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
18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act and the Justices of the Peace Act

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

- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act

- State of Education in the Northwest Territories

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:**

Thank you. This House stands adjourned to May 26th, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT