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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 Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable Manikot Thompson, Honourable John Todd.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Good afternoon. Before we proceed with the session for today, I would like to thank the Languages Commissioner, Ms. Judy Tutcho, for the presentation she made today. As you know, the Languages Commissioner's Report was tabled in the House yesterday. Today, she presented to me, as the Speaker, as the representative of the Legislative Assembly, a framed logo that represents her office. I feel it also represents our efforts as a government to preserve the languages of the north. The framed logo will be placed in the Great Hall later this week. I would also like to use this time to remind Members of a few events this week. During the afternoon break, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be launching Tools for Success in the Great Hall. During tomorrow afternoon's break the Department of Transportation will be showing their video production on a special large screen format. This presentation will take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete. I hope that Members will join me in these events.

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

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 105-13(5): Tools for Success Campaign

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you have just mentioned, today is the official launch of the Tools for Success campaign by Education, Culture and Employment.

Tools for Success is designed to encourage junior and senior high school students to consider careers in skilled trades. The campaign is also aimed at people who are considering a change of career. The message of Tools for Success is simple. The best tool for success in an apprenticeship or trades career is a high school education that includes math and science.

There is a high demand for skilled tradespeople and workers in the Northwest Territories. We can help meet this demand by promoting careers in the trades to junior and high school students. However, we must make sure that the students who wish to enter careers in apprenticeship and trades have the right tools - that is, a good math and science education.

The Tools for Success materials have been sent to every school and every regional career centre in the Northwest Territories. Career centres have been provided with information kits as well as other promotional items which can be used as prizes for science fairs, math competitions and scholastic achievements.

To celebrate the launch of this campaign, I would like to invite the Members of the Legislative Assembly to join Richard Edjericon, Chairperson of the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board, and our invited guests for a reception in the Great Hall at the break. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.
Minister's Statement 106-13(5): Speech and Hearing Month

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize May as Speech and Hearing Month. This is a time for us to recognize the challenges that people, with communication disorders, face every day. It is also a time to acknowledge the professionals and caregivers who help people living with these challenges reach their full potential.

An estimated ten percent of Canadians suffer from some type of communication disorder. In the NWT this percentage is higher due to a greater incidence of ear infections and noise-induced hearing loss. It is well established that hearing loss can cause significant delays in speech and language development.

Early detection and treatment can alleviate the effects of speech, hearing and language disorders. Through early intervention, children can be provided with the support they need at a critical time in their development. In many cases, this can help lessen the supports required when the child starts school.

There are many professionals who provide valuable work in this field. For example, audiologists specialize in the prevention identification, assessment and treatment of hearing and balance disorders. Speech-language pathologists provide assessment, consultation, therapy and education to clients, their families and other caregivers. They work in the areas of language, articulation, voice, stuttering and alternate forms of communication.

Page 1402

Mr. Speaker, communication is a vital part of our lives. At this time I would like to recognize our citizens who are living with communication disorders. I would also like to commend the work of the many caregivers across the north who help to make sure that people challenged with these difficulties can lead full and healthy lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 425-13(5): Nunavut Languages Policy Conference

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a brief statement. There was a meeting of Nunavut Implementation Commission on March 24th to 26th. At that meeting, participants included were people from Nunavut region, Quebec and Labrador. Tommy Enuaraq and I attended as well and the discussion was on languages. The progress on the

topic covered was tremendous. We learned a great deal and had a productive meeting. I would like to congratulate the co-chairs John Amagoalik and Peter Ernerk for giving us the opportunity to participate and to say that the Inuit should work to preserve their languages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 426-13(5): Recognition of Frankie Noah

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young man who had rescued his brother in Grise Fiord. On the evening of January 18, 1998, ten year old, Frankie Alorut Noah went out with his 17 year-old brother, Manasie to Brume Point, approximately 6 kilometres from the town to gather ice for drinking water from an iceberg. This Sunday evening the temperature was around minus 45 degrees with poor to zero visibility. While at the iceberg chipping ice, Manasie fell into the water. Frankie attempted to pull his brother from the water, but could not. At this time Frankie under great pressure left his brother in the water, and in the extreme cold and reduced visibility drove home to get his father to help. With his father and a rescue team, Frankie took them back to the site of his brother. Frankie's actions saved his brother's life. His parents, Parnee Noah and Imooshie Nutaraqjuk are very proud of their son, who has done a great job in order to save his brother. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement 427-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Division Plans

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak briefly about the issue of NTPC and how it is a continued concern in the community of Fort Smith. When public hearings were held, presentations were made by myself, the mayor, council and Stand Alone Energies by Mr. Dennis Bevington. Initially, there was resignation to the fact that there would be combined

NTPC and that arrangements would be made to try to minimize what the people of Fort Smith saw as a downside to that.

Now that the issue is still at the table and being discussed, the concern is still there and I am getting it from all corners of my constituency. There is concern about the issue of cross-subsidising. My understanding is that 60 percent of the revenue of NTPC is generated out of Yellowknife and south of the lake with a population of about 24,000 and two mines. Yet, none of those 24,000 people have access to this subsidy. The government will say that it is not NTPC that distributes a dividend. It is the government. However, the government owns NTPC and to me, it is a subtle distinction that the people of the west, I know in my constituency, do not appreciate or understand.

There is a concern that in Fort Smith for example, we pay about \$600,000 per year as a headquarters' subsidy to run the operations in Hay River. While in Yellowknife, under a different utility they pay about \$300,000, even though they have about 12 times the population. It is a disparity that, people once again, do not understand. I believe, I understand the people in Inuvik pay even more than Fort Smith in terms of headquarters' subsidy. There is a concern that the rate increase projected by NTPC, in fact, if you look at it closely, could be challenged. The five percent they talk about is very debatable, given the fact that NTPC did not really suffer any of the cuts during the last two years of deficit reduction and that they have a very healthy administrative structure at the headquarters' level. In fact, like any good corporation they could absorb any sort of downsizing and not have to transfer a rate increase onto the people of the Western Territory. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this issue is of concern. Fort Smith, the riding of Thebacha, is a home of a hydro electric development. We are part of the Western Territory and I am getting very clear messages that this is of concern to them and I thought it incumbent of me to bring these to the

House. I will be asking the Minister questions about this during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 428-13(5): Youth Violence

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday of this week, I received a call from Ter Hamer, a local business man and a sports supporter, regarding some vandalism that

Page 1403

happened at the Wade Hamer Mini-Golf facility over the weekend. The Wade Hamer Mini-Golf facility is run primarily by volunteers and it is to raise money for the Wade Hamer Hockey School. It is a school which is one of the major ones in the Northwest Territories and it is open to the youth at very minimal costs to families. The damage to the mini-golf facility means that there may not be sufficient funds in the future to run the hockey school. It is disheartening to see that volunteers, dedicated to community work, seem to receive so little gratitude from some youth in our community.

The vandalism is not an isolated event, Mr. Speaker, just over the last week in Yellowknife, there have been a number of incidents; vehicles parked along the Ingraham Trail had their tires slashed. In another case cars were damaged. Throughout the city windows were smashed on vehicles. Last summer, the city of Yellowknife held a number of meetings regarding violence in the downtown core area and several citizens mentioned the need for a greater responsibility to be placed on the parents and family of youth who commit crimes. I would like to see this government work with communities to assist in providing legal and administrative tools that allow communities to assume a greater role in administering justice matters. Recently, the Federal Minister of Justice, Anne McLellan proposed a new strategy for dealing with young offenders. The strategy focuses on presentation alternatives, sentencing and harsher sentences for repeat young offenders. A community-based sentencing that emphasizes the offender's responsibility for harm done appears to be a useful approach for crimes to property such as those experienced at the Wade Hamer Mini-Golf facility.

I trust that the Minister responsible for Justice will take note of my constituent's concerns and that he will inform us about the possibility of making changes to existing young offender sentencing and means for increased community participation in the administration of justice for non-violent crimes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 429-13(5): Inuvik Transition House Society

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about the Inuvik Transition House Society. The Inuvik House officially reopened in 1994, their clients come from the communities of Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Fort Good Hope, Deline, Tulita and Colville Lake. On occasion, the Inuvik Transition House has clients from Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Hay River when their shelters are full.

The shelter has been underfunded since it was reopened. It is an eight-bed shelter that is a regional facility. In order to remain in operation, it requires a minimum of \$201,000 per year. The funding that it currently receives is \$180,000 per year. The shelter currently employs four full-time employees, these positions are: the executive director, program coordinator, evening caregiver and night security. They also have a half-time child care advocate and four casuals who work eight-hour shifts on the weekends. The shelter workers are front line and most are in high stress positions, for which they receive low wages and no benefits.

The shelter assists the clients with immediate needs and also gives referrals to many agencies such as the Family Counselling Centre, the health and social services mental health worker and social workers, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Inuvik Hospital, income support workers. The majority of the clients who access the shelter are women from abusive relationships and family violence situations. A majority of these women come to the shelter with their children. The clients can stay up to a maximum of six weeks. At times there are clients who stay up to eight weeks in order to find housing in Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, the women and children who come to the shelter are in crisis situations and need the Inuvik Transition House to remain open. The shelter needs an additional \$21,000 in core funding per year to stay in operation. It would be in the best interest of the people to keep this shelter with its important programs and services open, this year and every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 430-13(5): Tribute to Freddie and Bella Greenland

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, I would like to pay tribute to a well known and respected elderly couple from my constituency, Mr. Freddie Greenland and his wife, Bella. This couple has been blessed with ten girls who were raised and educated for their high school years in the north. This coming Saturday, May 30, 1998, the family will be celebrating the graduation of their youngest daughter, Sharla and their first granddaughter, Kimberly, both in Whitehorse, Yukon. Mr. Speaker, the Greenland girls were educated in various provinces and territories and a few cities such as Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Fort Smith and Whitehorse, also in the TEP program that was delivered in Aklavik. They were educated in fields such as social work, teaching in special needs, adult education, nursing and native business management.

Mr. Greenland was educated at George Brown College in Toronto. This is quite an achievement on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Greenland, and they both deserve a round of applause and recognition from our government for a job well done as parents and good role models to their children and grandchildren. I would also like to offer my congratulations to Mrs. Annie Kay on obtaining her Bachelor's degree of Education on Monday at the University of Saskatchewan. I also would like to congratulate her parents, William and Mary Teya of Fort McPherson, who I am sure, are proud of Annie's accomplishments which took a lot of hard work and dedication. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr.

Rabesca.

Member's Statement 431-13(5): Highway No. 3
Maintenance Problems

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, regarding the highway, I guess I should have mentioned that the Department of Transportation should also continue to maintain the Highway 3 section between Rae junction and Yellowknife. I realize the department is doing its utmost to ensure this road is kept to a safe and driveable standard. However, over the course of the last week or so, probably since the frost is now out of the road bed, many soft spots have appeared and in some cases have developed into very large holes. These holes are unavoidable as they go from one side of the road to the other. This is very dangerous and if there is no warning which is the case for some of these spots, one can easily damage their vehicle or can cause an accident.

While driving in this morning, the crew was working from the Rae side back toward Yellowknife, grading and levelling the road. There was also one dump truck working in the area where there are numerous potholes. He was dumping gravel and levelling these potholes. Hopefully, within the next few days the road will be up to its normal standard. I do believe that this is just a temporary measure to fix these holes. I would hope that Transportation would find a permanent solution. We all want a road that is in good repair and the ability to concentrate on driving, not fighting the highway for the 100 kilometres of gravel we still have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 432-13(5): Concerns Raised at
Yellowknife Constituency Meeting

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the Yellowknife MLAs held a constituency meeting and I just wanted to relay some of the concerns which were brought up. The first thing I wanted to mention was that we had been presented with some letters that I will table later today. I am sure other MLAs will be doing the same with the letters they were presented with. There was a

concern about the BIP Policy, whereby, a company was put out of business because the bed and breakfast they were running lost business to a local hotel because the people were given instructions not to utilize the bed and breakfast. There was a lot of concern about pay equity, the fact that it should be taken off the table from the contract talks and be separate. There was a concern expressed that only the people affected should be voting on the pay equity issue. One person felt that it was against the Canadian Labour Relations Law to have all the membership vote on it. There was also concern that we seem to be paying for a lot of different plans, the Willis plan, the JEPS process, now the Hay Plan. What is next? There was concern expressed about education, the fact that things have to be done. The Power Corporation people are concerned that they will no longer belong to the public service once things occur, whether it will remain as one entity or whether it will split into two after division.

There also was quite a bit of concern expressed about the fact that there was a lot of legislation which is outdated or there simply is no legislation in place. For instance, enduring power of attorney, there is no legislation in place for this to occur and we explained that it was because of the lack of manpower, the rest of that, but there still is a lot of concern. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was indicating, there were concerns about the fact that there is a lot of legislation that should be happening and perhaps is being put on the back burner because we are preparing for Nunavut. There is also concern brought forward by people who were involved in the transfer of the Arctic airports, who are supposed to be getting an update on the special equalization packages. It seems as though there is a problem and they are hoping that the ministry can make some movement on this soon because it appears as though there is a July 1st deadline.

There also was a concern brought forward that federal inmates should be repatriated and the Social Programs Committee had been looking at this last

year and perhaps, it is time this issue was brought back to light since it does not seem as though the department has done much since they basically told us that it should be left to the communities and the federal government. Nothing seems to be happening. There was also a concern brought forward about the amendments to outfitters regulations. It appears as though most of the outfitters are against the changes of the regulations. This issue will not go away. There are the Workers' Compensation Board amendments that were considered, which was brought up here last session, the last time we were sitting by the Member for Yellowknife South, myself and others. People are wondering if the amendment is actually going to occur so that it is no longer possible for the Workers' Compensation Board to sue employees to recover costs for various things. There also was a concern from a retired teacher, well he is no longer teaching, he brought up concerns about education, but he was also very concerned about youths. He would like to see more things being done for youths. We certainly agree with that. One other area, there was another person who come up with the need for legislation in the diving area. There were several different areas that were brought up where the legislation is lacking or there is no legislation. It does seem to be a great concern of our constituents that more legislation be put into place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, I would like to remind the Members that when Members ask for unanimous consent to conclude their statement that you are allowed a reasonable time to do it. If you go beyond that, I will remind the Members. Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 433-13(5): Recognition of Efforts and Positive Impacts of Teachers

Page 1405

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have all heard in recent days the concern that has been expressed by different Members of this House on the state of education in the north. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the efforts put forward by the teachers of the Northwest Territories. In these times of diminishing fiscal resources, it is gratifying to me to know that there are caring professionals whose

greatest concern is the quality of education that our children receive. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that there is anyone in this room whose life has not been positively impacted by a teacher at some point in their schooling. A teacher can be a friend, confidante, nurse, counsellor and even, sometimes a surrogate parent. Teachers are worthy of our respect and support. Too often, Mr. Speaker, I believe that teachers do not receive the respect and admiration they so richly deserve from society. We must work to instill respect for teaching as an institution. Teaching is an honourable profession, and we must encourage this regard. Moral support is not enough, however, Mr. Speaker. We must also deal with the very real outside issues that affect the ability of teachers to perform their jobs in a competent and professional manner. There must be adequate and affordable housing in the smaller communities to meet the needs of teachers. We must ensure that teachers have sufficient supplies and support to deliver the curriculum. Teachers spending their own money to buy necessary supplies is unacceptable. The issue of discipline and safety in schools must be dealt with. I believe that we must be pro-active in dealing with the teachers in the north. We must listen to their concerns and, where possible, act upon those concerns.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of this Assembly, we have the same concerns as the teachers do. We all want an education system that responds to the needs of our students. We all want the best education system possible for our students. I ask the Members to join me in applauding the teachers of the Northwest Territories. I would also like to throw out a challenge to the Members of the Legislature. When you return to your ridings after this session is over, I would challenge you to contact one of your local schools and volunteer to attend for one day as a classroom assistant, have coffee and chat with the teachers and hear what they have to say on the issues of education. I will be doing that when I get home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement 434-13(5): Rental Subsidy Program

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, several times over the past sessions, I have raised a concern with the GNWT employees in Iqaluit with regard to their housing and rent increases. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Todd, as Minister for FMBS, implemented a program with renters at the FDL and other properties to ease the transition from subsidized rental rates to market values. The government agreed they would increase the rents charged to employees by increments of ten percent, while at the same time the lessors would lower the rents charged by 10 percent. Mr. Speaker, this pro-active move by the government was well received by Iqaluit residents. However, Mr. Speaker, as of December 31, 1998, the Subsidy Program is set to end, sending hundreds of employees to the situation where their rents could increase by 40 or 50 percent. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Todd and I worked cooperatively on this issue two years ago. Mr. Todd came to Iqaluit and met with the parties involved, and the solution I just spoke about was worked out. Mr. Speaker, I have, on occasion, tried to constructively criticize the government, but for the Subsidy Program, I congratulate the Minister and the government for that pro-active move.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be asking the Minister for FMBS, Mr. Todd, about the continuance of the subsidy and the direction the government will be taking on this important matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement 435-13(5): Pursuing Economic Opportunities in Clyde River

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to tell you today about how my home community of Clyde River is preparing to meet the challenges of Nunavut, particularly in the area of economic development. In view of the necessity for economic growth, a group of my constituents have, over the past two years, banded together to form the Apitak Development Corporation. Named for one of the forefathers of our community, this corporation is comprised of 30 Inuit shareholders who have committed themselves to establishing training and business ventures that at once reflect the desires and the needs of the community and stimulate the economy.

Over the past 18 months, Apitak has established a visitor's centre, taxi services and staff housing for some teachers. It has trained six cooks and four community tourist guides. It has purchased carving stone to sell back to the carvers of the community. It has supported the Prenatal Nutrition Project in the community and has recently taken over the administration of the Igutaq Arts and Crafts Group. It has taken over the POI fuel contract in the community.

In conjunction with Apitak Development Corporation, a tourism industry is developing slowly but surely in Clyde River as well. Qullikkut Guides Ltd, which is owned by a group of hunters from our community, has attracted over \$40,000 tourism dollars in the last month alone.

Employing ten men from the community, Qullikkut runs tours dealing with dog team and snowmobile trips in the spring and boat tours in the summer. Visitors are drawn to our community by the spectacular scenery and wildlife such as polar bears and the bowhead whales I mentioned last week. Sam Ford Fiord, in particular, is becoming a world renowned site for the big wall climbers, and a National Geographic team is presently on site making a television production and a magazine article of the area.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this kind of grassroots community development that is from the people and for the people is the basis upon which Nunavut will come to be a reality. Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my statement, please.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Baffin Centre is seeking

Page 1406

unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? Mr. Enuaraq, you have unanimous consent.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope this Assembly and the new Assembly of Nunavut will see fit to support the initiative of Apitak Development Corporation, and Quillikkut Guides and other community-based development organizations in the future.

The good news in Clyde River continues. I am pleased to tell this House that I was privileged to open

Iliasaqsvik on March 2nd during one of my visits to my home community. Iliasaqsvik is a family resource centre housing the Health Children Programs, the community library, two counselling units, the Elders' office, and the office for Suqqaqkut, the Clyde River Women's Group. This centre has already had many positive repercussions in the community and has become a focus for groups and individuals from the community itself who are dedicated to supporting functional family life and social well-being in general. There is great potential in this project and others like it to build Nunavut on a solid foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to do my best to support these initiatives by lobbying for funds and other kinds of support to maintain community development such as this in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement 436-13(5): Infant Changing Facilities in Public Buildings

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have many laws and regulations governing public and their safety. Public facilities have many requirements to fulfil before they can open their doors for new businesses. However, Mr. Speaker, concerns have been brought to my attention over the lack of public facilities for parents with infants who require change room facilities. Many public areas do not have any facilities for parents who, in many cases, are forced to change their infants on dirty washroom floors or atop public tables. Some newer facilities are now providing a wall mounted change table in their washrooms as a courtesy to their customers, and they are to be commended for this because it is not a requirement. I understand this piece of equipment retails for less than \$300 and are sometimes installed in disabled washrooms, which are more spacious but can also be found in both men and women's washrooms in newer facilities.

Across the north, where we have such a young population, parents and caregivers are sometimes forced to use open areas or washroom floors to change infants which, as I am aware and I am sure all Members are aware, they are not always the most sanitary or safe. I would ask the Minister to consider

incorporating a requirement for public washrooms to include changing facilities for infants such as a wall mounted change table in future amendments that he may be proposing for the act.

A new amendment to legislation to put the requirement of this small piece of equipment in public facilities would certainly be accommodating for the vast number of infants we have across the territories who require this facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Oral Question 499-13(5): Education Boards' Hardship Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to a question asked by Mr. Barnabas on May 20, 1998, regarding the Education Board's Hardship Program.

Mr. Speaker, all teachers employed by divisional education councils are Government of the NWT public servants and fall into the same rental programs as other employees. Divisional education councils are not funded to provide specific rental subsidy programs for their employees and none have a program in place at this time.

For some time, however, the Government of the Northwest Territories has had the Shelter Assistance Program in place. This program is administered by the Financial Management Board Secretariat and is available to all Government of the Northwest Territories indeterminate employees who are tenants in housing where the government is the landlord. The program is designed to assist employees in situations where the shelter costs, which include rent and utilities, exceed 30 percent of the gross household income. Employees who meet these criteria may be eligible to have their rent adjusted downward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce members of my family in the public gallery, my son George, my granddaughter Georgina, my grandson Jonathan, and my staff member, Patsy. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize John Quirke, who will be the future Clerk of the Nunavut Assembly. Mr. Quirke is a constituent of Yellowknife South, and we will hate to lose him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 1407

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I wonder if the Minister could give this House an update as to the status of the proposed new Arviat Health Centre? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance answered last week, it is one of the projects that is identified under the P3 pilots. With that as a consideration, there is going to be a request for qualified bids and request for proposals' outlines over the course of the next two to three weeks. In respect to the actual facility and a functional program in that facility itself, I know there is still work continuing on into the size and which programs are going to be required for that facility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did pose this question last week, and unfortunately, was not able to get all of the information I requested. Therefore, the second part of my question to the Minister is, does he have a timeframe in mind that the people of Arviat can look forward to as to when the process will be started? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process has been underway for quite a well in respect to some of the initial planning for the facility. Could the Member clarify his question, is he referring to substantive construction, the hope is to get as far as possible so that we could possibly start some foundation work this year, certainly, with some of the more substantive building construction early in the next year? Right now, it is a matter of timing in respect to how quickly we can get out these proposal calls, how quickly the response is to come in and they are evaluated and signed off, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker that is exactly what I was referring to. I was looking for an approximate date as to when the tenders or the RFPs, whatever, will go out if they already have not gone out, and what the timeframe on a response on that would be? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, all the projects are falling under the auspices of the Financial Management Board Secretariat in respect to the P3 projects. It is my understanding it is within two weeks minimum and four weeks maximum that it is expected to get through this request for qualified bidders and the request for proposals for all of the P3 projects with the exception of regional facilities that are on a different track, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister confirm whether or not consideration is being given to include a birthing centre within the new complex? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 538-13(5): Arviat Health Centre Update

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the specific details of what programs are being considered at this stage. As I indicated, there is some

work ongoing in respect to which programs and services will be provided for the Arviat Health Centre. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 539-13(5): Recruitment and Retention of Nurses

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng. We have heard of the difficulties of a nursing shortage in the north and the problems that the GNWT is having in retaining medical staff, especially in the remote communities. Concerns have been raised regarding excess costs this government is now incurring given this problem. There are some questions I would like to direct to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng, on this matter. First question, Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Health advise the House of the number of nursing positions currently vacant in the north where contract employees are presently providing the nursing services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 539-13(5): Recruitment and Retention of Nurses

Page 1408

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a fairly detailed question. I will take it as notice and provide the information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for NTPC. I would like him to speak to the questions I referenced in my Member's

statement in regard to the constituency concerns regarding NTPC and its current structure and the possibility of keeping it as a joint corporation. The first issue I would like him to address in that regard would be the issue of subsidies, could he speak to both issues of cross-subsidies given the fact that the majority revenues are generated in the west and the headquarters' subsidies as well? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting that the subject of cross-subsidization comes up almost all the time when we discuss the Power Corporation, particularly, when we talk about continuing the corporation as one. It is a legitimate concern. People need to be assured there is no cross-subsidy. I would like to remind all Members this issue was put to bed once and for all last summer when the Public Utilities Board, after five years of painstaking work, came out with a decision, approved rates that ensured there was no subsidy going across the east/west boundaries. Western communities are in no way subsidizing any Nunavut communities. The target over the next few years is to make sure all communities are paying their own cost of power.

In terms of there being a perception of unequal support for the headquarters operation, again, all of the costs and the expenditures of the NWT Power Corporation are examined in excruciating detail by the Public Utilities Board and by a number of lawyers representing all of the intervenors. We have, I am afraid to say, over the last five years killed a large number of trees to make enough paper, when stacked, darn nearly reach the ceiling in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, to prove that there is a rationale behind the rates and that there is no inequality in the subsidy or the cost of headquarters apportioned to each community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regarding the reference to the headquarters' subsidy is being apportioned out fairly, in relation to the communities that are serviced by another utility. There seems to be, like Northlands in Yellowknife, a distinct difference of disparities, especially given the difference in population of the communities. Could the Minister explain that balance and how it figures into the equation and how is that justified when some place like Fort Smith pays something like \$600,000, and a community like Yellowknife I understand pays about \$300,000 for the same kind of headquarters subsidy to Northlands? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would not want to confirm the figures that the Member has just used. What I will commit to doing is providing the Members of this House with clarification of what the numbers are in terms of the support for headquarters operations for those two communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the other issues in relation to the NTPC is the concern that the figure put forward of a five percent increase is a \$5 million cost to the west if there is a split. This question, in light of the fact, the perception we will have headquarters for NTPC is, I do not know if fat is the word, but is perceived to be very ample that the corporation did not, in fact, experience the same magnitude of cuts that other programs and departments did, and that any corporation with good planning could absorb that kind of restructuring without passing on a rate increase. I am wondering if the Minister could to speak to that particular concern, as well? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the corporation is, in fact, a very lean operation. It has over the years since this government has taken over made itself even more efficient. Again, the Public Utilities Board acts as a proxy for competition and represents the interests of the public to guarantee that all of the operations of the corporation are examined in detail to ensure there are no extra employees, that the costs of headquarters are not being driven up by added payrolls. That, in fact, is what guarantee the members of the public that the corporation is run efficiently. I would say that this issue is a red herring and I would say to the public that I am confident this is an extremely efficiently run corporation and is not one that has room to cut its operations and absorb a smaller size, if you will, without any increase. In fact, I have commissioned three different accounting firms to examine those figures and not one of them came back at less than a five percent increase across the west to support our own

Page 1409

headquarters if the corporation is forced divided. Just so that Members know from the Nunavut side, the numbers, depending upon which of the accounting firms we used, ranged between seven and just over nine percent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his responses, and I would like to get from him a time line as to when he would be able to provide the information he referenced in terms of subsidies in relation to headquarters and the communities of Yellowknife and Hay River. In fact, I would appreciate it for all of the larger communities, if possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 540-13(5): NWT Power Corporation Concerns

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that information is all available right now. It has been filed with the Public Utilities Board and is public information. As I have stated, there is a lot of paper to go through and copied, which will take some time, but I will endeavour to make the information available to the Members before the end of this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time would be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. As in my Member's statement, the Transition House in Inuvik has for sometime now been trying to get extra funding to fulfil and continue on a yearly basis. Every year they run into problems and had to consider closing its doors for a number of months to continue the following year. I brought this up with the Minister in the past, actually before the funding was transferred to the health board. I would like to know from the Minister if there is any funding available for the shelters, especially since I have brought it up before that shelter in Inuvik was not funded at the same ratio as other shelters across the territories.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. The funding has been transferred for shelters to all of the regional health and social services boards. I will commit to try and facilitate with them as

to whether or not they can come up with some additional funding to meet the needs of this specific Inuvik Transition House. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of communities in some regions that do not have these types of facilities available, unfortunately. The main goal is to provide shelters in all communities. It may not be at a specific shelter, but, certainly, to have some safe houses or a place where individuals needing assistance can be placed for their protection, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for endeavouring to facilitate this, but what I would like to know is, before it was transferred, was there discussion on increasing the funding to allow them to continue yearly operation without running into difficulties on the year end? When the transfer happened, was there any discussion at that time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot recall any specific discussions on that matter, but as I indicated I am aware of the specific deficiencies throughout the Northwest Territories in not being able to meet or provide a shelter in every community, one that is totally funded by this government. As I indicated, our main priority is to be able to provide some protection for individuals in those circumstances where they require it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the shelters, would the Minister endeavour to provide me with information on the existing facilities that are funded through this government and the amount of funding they received and continue to receive, whether it is through GNWT headquarters or the health boards? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 541-13(5): Funding for Inuvik Transition House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I would be glad to provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 542-13(5): Termination Benefits for Laid Off Employees

Page 1410

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last February, I had asked some questions of the Minister of the Executive, the Premier, to whom I wish to address my question regarding the termination benefits of laidoff employees. There was some concern that each employee be offered the same sort of benefit package as other employees. I have in hand a written return from the Premier which states there are cases where employees who have been laid off take court action against the government. Some cases have included allegations that the package provided is not adequate or appropriate in particular circumstances. My question for the Premier is, has the government identified one central specialist charged with implementing the guidelines to ensure all employees are treated the same and fairly?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 542-13(5): Termination Benefits for Laid Off Employees

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to Minister Arlooktoo, Minister responsible for Housing. Mr. Speaker, there is a situation in one of my communities that the Minister is aware of. Mr. Speaker, I will not go into detail so as not to disclose the identity of the person in question. Sometimes we get into a situation, not by choice but by circumstances. The point is, can the Minister help this individual? Of course, he can. The question is, will the Minister help the individual to find time in order to find a solution to his problem? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Do you wish to respond, Mr. Arlooktoo?

Return To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been dealing with several housing issues in the community of Gjoa Haven, as we have in practically all communities across the NWT. At this point, I would not want to guess in the House which one that is, but what I would commit to, is talking to the Member and the housing client to ensure the client knows all of the options available.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same honourable Minister, as the Minister will not be guessing, it is the situation that I was talking to earlier today. Will the Minister look at this situation seriously and get back to me? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do recall now the situation. It has to do with an individual who is in some financial difficulty with a number of sources, including housing, Revenue Canada, et cetera. What we can do is provide some advice as to which sources to go to, to get some help. The Housing Corporation programs are somewhat limited these days to people who can get bank financing unless someone is trying to get into social housing. Even in that case, we do require some financial responsibility. Yes, we can talk to the individual and once again, make sure the individual knows all the options. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the situation is serious. The individual is about to be evicted at the end of the month and as to finding a temporary solution, will the Minister provide temporary housing for this person until financial arrangements are made so the person can have shelter for his family? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The responsibility for housing in Gjoa Haven rests with the hamlet of Gjoa Haven. We transferred the power and authority and money to the hamlet this winter in a signing ceremony that I was involved in. What I will do is give the information to the hamlet council there to see if they can assist. We will do what we can to help in the housing field, but as I understand the case, there are other agencies that are involved, so our help will be limited to the housing area, but we will do what we can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ningark.

Supplementary To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me borrow a phrase from the Minister. As I understand it, the individual has exhausted all efforts at the local level to find a solution. Will the Minister influence the community so that there is, in fact, a place for them to stay until a permanent solution is found? Thank you.

Page 1411

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 543-13(5): Responding to Gjoa Haven Housing Concerns

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I will suggest to the Housing Corporation is that they tell individual contacts, Revenue Canada and other creditors to ensure they are aware of the situation to see if some arrangements could be made for an extension of credit, et cetera, and also with the individual's landlord. In the end, it is up to the individual to ensure their personal finances and bills are paid. It is somewhat limited what the government can do, but as I say, we will do what we can to help. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng. It is about the matter of the TI'oondih Healing Program and program delivery in general in the Mackenzie Delta region. Mr. Speaker, I find it awfully frustrating when dealing with the department in regard to alcohol and drug programs and the whole delivery of the system that we put in place where time after time, the TI'oondih Healing Society has put proposals forth to the regional office with not even a reply or a letter. Basically, within the last year, they have had an opportunity to run one program in which the only reason it got funding was because there was a surplus within this government. I would like to ask the Minister in regard to delivering alcohol and drug programs and the accessibility of communities to deliver these programs in the communities to deal with problems that are associated with alcohol and drugs. Also, in relation to the problems we have seen in the newspapers, the problems in McPherson with fires and all these other things, it seems like we have to have a major crisis on our hands before anything is being done. This issue has been passed through motions in this House. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what is the process to access money through the Inuvik Regional Health Board and exactly what do you have to do to access those funds? Why is the Inuvik Regional Health Board giving the TI'oondih Healing Society such a difficult time in accessing these funds?

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Health and Social Services. Two questions.

Return To Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say if the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board is giving the TI'oondih Healing Society a difficult time or not. I do not have the information in respect to what was submitted. I would like to say that in an effort to try to make services more responsive, we have supported boards in their effort to have decision-making at the regional level. That is reflective in establishing alcohol and drug specialists at a regional

level to work directly with the communities to beef up some of the services that are available in each community throughout the Northwest Territories. If there is a specific problem with a specific proposal that the Member wants clarification on, on the process or the determinism of why it was or was not dealt with, then certainly I would be more than glad to assist him in getting that information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there any possible way that we can basically try and find a way to downsize the regional bureaucracy? This is who is probably sucking up all the money, the bureaucracy you are setting up at the Inuvik Regional Office which seems to be five or six people with basically no funds being accessed by the community. I have heard the same concern out of Aklavik that they are scrounging around trying to get funding just to deliver programs in their communities. Why is that? Why is the bureaucracy taking so much money, yet money is being allocated in the communities?

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the boards have the autonomy to design their administrative component given, I believe, they are as streamlined as the government, if not more so. I cannot speak on which positions are or are not there. I certainly am favourable or supportive of taking a look to see if there are specific problems in that area of the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board and would be more than glad to report back to the Member on that issue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I found it awfully enlightening that the Minister is going to do something considering there was a motion passed in Committee of the Whole with regard to the TI'oondih Healing Program. There have been meetings and a committee formulated within this House including the Premier, Minister of Finance, and yourself. It has been almost three years in the process, yet nothing has been done to try to eradicate the problem. I would like to ask the Minister, when and how soon could he basically try to resolve this problem and do an investigation on exactly why this is taking so long to resolve?

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Page 1412

Further Return To Question 544-13(5): Access to Alcohol and Drug Program Funding

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in respect to what I have made commitments on, we will do that as soon as possible. I would like to speak specifically on the TI'oondih issue that the honourable Member has raised on numerous occasions. It is a two-sided sword, I guess, in respect that we ask for some information from the TI'oondih Society in respect to the assessment that they had done by an independent consultant. It is my understanding that some of that information was not received or followed up on by the society as well, but certainly, it is an issue that, because of the importance to the Member, I am more than happy to once again try to sit down with him and try to make some accommodation and try to assist him in moving this forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 545-13(5): Movement of Grise Fiord CARS Operation

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. I understand, in the community of Grise Fiord, the CAR station is in the hamlet office. A new ATB will be built by the airport. I understand that NAV Canada is not willing to move the CARS station to the new ATB. Will the Minister ensure that the CAR station is moved to the ATB building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 545-13(5): Movement of Grise Fiord CARS Operation

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is true that we are building a new ATB in the community of Grise Fiord this summer. There should be provisions in this new building to accommodate a CAR operation, and at the present time we provide about 40 hours a week. We negotiated on behalf of the community with NAV Canada to provide this service, and I will look into the matter and make sure that if there are provisions in the ATB, then the CARS operation should move to the new ATB. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Steen.

Question 546-13(5): Annual Cost of Contract and Pay Equity Settlement

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd. Mr. Speaker, we have been advised that pay equity is going to cost a one-time payment of \$40 million and also, we have been told that connected to the bargaining offer is a \$12 million signing bonus. I would like to ask the Minister what is the ongoing cost to this government if this collective offer is accepted and the pay equity offer is accepted? What are the ongoing costs to this government, on an annual basis, to assure that these employees receive their raise in pay and for northern allowance, et cetera? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 546-13(5): Annual Cost of Contract and Pay Equity Settlement

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleague for the question. As I said many times and I will try to clarify it today, \$25 million is on the retroactive side, in other words, the money that is owed employees. There would be \$9 million in ongoing costs associated with the Hay Plan Job Evaluation, and it would be approximately \$6 million worth of ongoing costs over and above that. The ongoing continuous costs to the government would be around \$15 million a year, give or take. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Question 547-13(5): Energy Costs in Private Dwellings

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation concerning privately owned housing regarding the energy and the utilities that come with it. As of April, we understand that the utility costs will be raised by 15 percent. This is the information that was passed on to me and I was asked to ask this in the House. Are we to expect rate increases for utilities for private housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 547-13(5): Energy Costs in Private Dwellings

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my answer to Mr. Miltenberger earlier today, after five years of hearings before the Public Utilities Board, the Public Utilities Board directed that the Power Corporation set its rates to reflect the actual cost of service. In the past, what has happened in many communities is that the government rate has been higher than the cost of service and the private residential and private business rates were lower than the cost of service.

The Public Utilities Board has directed us to change the rates so that both government and the private residential and business people pay the same rates. This means that government rates are coming down and private rates are increasing in many communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Supplementary To Question 547-13(5): Energy Costs in Private Dwellings

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have too much to add as a supplementary, but I think I will also be posing this question to the Minister of Education, perhaps when we come to that item. We could use more information as to how this will affect other

Page 1413

public departments. I will defer until then. Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 548-13(5): Continuation of Rental Subsidy

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, there is concern in Iqaluit with the potential major increase in market rents leased by the GNWT after December 31, 1998. Would the Minister for the FMBS update this House on the situation regarding discussions, if any, on the continuance of the rental subsidy put in place two years ago through the pro-active work by the Minister? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 548-13(5): Continuation of Rental Subsidy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not really have an answer for that question. I will have to check with Mr. Voytilla and I will try to respond to my colleague tomorrow. Certainly it would be the intention of the government that we could provide affordable housing and we did work, I thought, a reasonable compromise in what we did a year ago. I do not think the intention has changed but rather than confuse my colleague, which I know is a difficult task, I will discuss the matter with my deputy and get back to him.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 548-13(5): Continuation of Rental Subsidy

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I am not easily confused, but sometimes I am amused by the answers given to me.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 548-13(5): Continuation of Rental Subsidy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thought I had actually said that I did not have the answers to the questions. Therefore I would ask Mr. Voytilla so I could give it to my honourable colleague tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 548-13(5): Continuation of Rental Subsidy

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not know if the Minister was taking it as notice. I guess he was not. My supplementary question for the Minister would be, could he table in this House for my benefit, and the people of Iqaluit's benefit, any discussion papers or decisions being made by the FMBS

concerning the subsidies in Iqaluit on staff housing?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 548-13(5): Continuation
of Rental Subsidy

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take the
matter under consideration. As I said, I hope he does
not misunderstand me, I am prepared to provide him
the information and I do not have it today. I thought I
was very clear when I responded to the first question.
Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 549-13(5): Ministerial Administration
Procedures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question
today is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, is the Premier
aware of a document called, The Ministerial
Administration Procedures?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is this
document available to Members of this House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure
Members had a copy of that document from Caucus
this morning. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

Page 1414

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, we
received an excerpt of that document in Caucus this
morning, an excerpt entitled, Section 26. I have to
assume there are 25 sections which come before that
section and I would like to know if the entire document
is available to Members of this House? Thank you,
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be
pleased to look into that for the Member and let her
know.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs.
Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial
Administration Procedures

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would
actually like a copy of the Ministerial Administrative
Procedures document. I might have to reference it,
who knows, maybe some day I might be a Minister.

Would the Premier commit to providing me with a copy of that document? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 549-13(5): Ministerial Administration Procedures

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have no problem providing the Member with a copy of that document as long as I am allowed to do that, then I will do so. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 550-13(5): Speed Limit Increase on Highway 3

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine, regarding the speed limits on the highways. Over the past decade there has been a tremendous amount of work done on improving the highway between Yellowknife and the Alberta border. One exception though, is the piece of highway between Yellowknife and Fort Rae which is scheduled for upgrading beginning this year. Mr. Speaker, road travel south has been continuously improving and my thanks to the department for that. The question to the Minister is, now that the highway between Edzo and the Alberta border is improved to standards comparable to southern Canada, could the Minister tell me what process the department uses to determine how the speed on that highway could be increased from 90 to 100 kilometres per hour? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 550-13(5): Speed Limit Increase on Highway 3

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the highway speed limit is under our legislation and called the Public Highways Act. In this act it lays down the

speed limits in our road systems in the Northwest Territories. It is a matter of legislative change. The Department of Transportation, we are the ones who are responsible for introducing the amendments to change the speed limit. There has been a lot of talk within the department over the years about this speed limit and whether we should increase it or not. The department's view has been that we should wait until the whole system is complete between Edzo and Yellowknife before we revisit it again. So there has been some reluctance in pursuing it. Since you raise it, we did have discussions about it, but there has been no initiative or push to change it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 550-13(5): Speed Limit Increase on Highway 3

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Minister's hesitation about looking at increasing the speed. I would bring to the Minister's attention the distance between the Alberta border and the city of Yellowknife, where we do have a lot of tourist traffic who are used to travelling on highways of 100 kilometres/hour. Will the Minister commit to directing his officials to have another look at this? I am just talking about the portion between the Alberta border and Edzo because it is going to be quite awhile until the complete highway is finished. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 550-13(5): Speed Limit Increase on Highway 3

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we will look at it again if there is support here in this House to make this change. Then we will try to see what the points are in these arguments and make these changes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for MACA. Yesterday in the House, there was a question regarding the transfer of Arctic airports and the delay in this transfer. The Minister of Transportation indicated that the delay was caused by parties or individuals in Nunavut. As the Minister of Community Empowerment, I would like to ask the Minister if she is aware of which organizations or individuals are concerned or causing this delay in the transfer of Arctic airports? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Page 1415

Return To Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday evening, I had a chat with the Minister of Transportation. The transfers of the airports will be going forward because it is under our mandate to transfer infrastructures, whatever, to the community governments. They will still be going forward, and I believe that in the Keewatin region, the agreements have been coordinated so that everybody has the same agreement. Communities that are willing to take on the airports have been approached and it is in the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport indicated yesterday that there was a delay in the transfer. I was wondering if the Minister could tell me what caused this delay and what is the timeframe for these transfers to move forward? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just told the Member that I have discussed this project with the Minister of Transportation, and we have agreed that this will go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister indicate that. I was just asking when. Is there a time, a date, a month that the community could be made aware of? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 551-13(5): Delay in the Keewatin Airport Transfer

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the request of the community, any time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ningark.

Question 552-13(5): Hunter and Trapper Compensation Coverage

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I made a Member's statement yesterday in regard to hunter and trapper compensation coverage. Subsequently, my question is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, is there any form of compensation coverage provided to hunters and trappers in the event that hunting

equipment is lost during the hunting expedition or other mishaps to the hunting? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 552-13(5): Hunter and Trapper Compensation Coverage

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, there is compensation that is made available to hunters and trappers who incur loss of equipment in the course of hunting and trapping. Under certain circumstances, they are eligible to apply to the department for assistance. I would be happy to provide that to the Member by tabling it as early as possible. There is a brochure, a policy, that clarifies under what circumstances they may apply and be eligible for compensation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health, Mr. Ng. The other day, the Minister provided me with a return to a written question in regard to breast cancer screening. My question for the Minister in that regard is that there was to be a meeting of the stakeholders on March 13th regarding new guidelines and procedures and so forth that could be looked at. I wonder if the Minister could tell me if the boards that attended those meetings have reported back to the department or if the committee that was formed has reported back to the department regarding how they plan to implement the breast cancer screening program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, subsequent to that March 13th meeting that did take place, the boards agreed to advise us before the end of May on their plans and how they are going to address the guidelines that have been laid out to deliver breast cancer screening programs in their respective regions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the event that one of the boards is not prepared to address this issue to the fullest degree, what is the Minister prepared to do in terms of ensuring that the boards follow the national mandate that this is an essential service? Thank you.

Page 1416

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the boards have all recognized the importance of this issue and are working cooperatively in trying to reach the time lines they have agree upon. If it comes to the point where there is a board that is not as supportive or has not implemented the guidelines or does not plan to implement those guidelines, then we will take the appropriate action at that time. As it stands now, they are all working toward the time lines that have been laid out. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister will integrate annual clinical breast cancer exams and self-examinations into the Well Women's Program to

ensure that women in every northern community, and I stress we have the same access to this basic level of health care. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is part of the guidelines now, although I would have to confirm that for the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, I did speak previously about the need for translated materials and so forth to be distributed in all the health centres. I wonder if the Minister has addressed that with his departmental officials to be a subject of discussion at this meeting that took place March 15th, I believe it was, and if the Minister can assure us that the materials will be provided in the various languages. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 553-13(5): Breast Cancer Screening Program Implementation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the information is not provided in the actual languages, it is our position that the information is provided, at least if not written, orally to the individuals throughout the service areas, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent. It is in regard to your Minister's statement in regard to the Western Transitional Report. I would like to ask the Minister, are there any arrangements in place to take into account that there are presently self-government negotiations underway which should be completed within the next couple of years? Is there any room in regard to this human resource funding, to be considered by aboriginal organizations since they are going to be taking over public service and program deliveries as part of self-government negotiations? Are there any arrangements in this transition document to allow aboriginal groups to access this funding or training of human resource personnel?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no funding available at this moment. In fact, the argument the Member uses about capacity building is one of the arguments that I have used with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to suggest that the funds are justified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the Beaufort Delta self-government negotiation talks which are presently underway, the final goal of those negotiations to formulate some sort of a regional body to deliver programs and services on behalf of the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and people in the Inuvik Region, and the discussion between yourself and the federal Minister, has the subject of the self-government talks come up in those deliberations to date?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That topic has come up only in the light that the transitional supplemental report outlines, but there will be incremental costs to implement self-government. Those cannot be defined at this time. The report puts forward the premise that the federal government will have to be prepared to look at those costs when self-government negotiations are concluded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

Page 1417

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the whole idea that is put forth in the Western Transitional Document, this is a similar arrangement that presently has been negotiated with the east in regard to the Nunavut Act, which is developing a political structure which consists of the geographic makeup of Nunavut to allow Inuit people to be trained to eventually take over government and senior positions within government. Why is this arrangement not similar in regard to allowing the west to do the same thing with the aboriginal organizations in the Western Territory?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is referring to the Nunavut Unified Human Resource Development Strategy which is a result of the whole establishment of Nunavut as a result of the settlement of land claims and as part of the implementation of self-government in Nunavut. We are not at that same stage yet in the

west, and that would be the response that I am getting from the federal government. As I have said, I am advancing the argument that the federal government has the same responsibility in the west as it has in Nunavut and that they must, therefore, consider participating in supporting this kind of training program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not think there was a difference between land claims settlements in the east and land claims settlements in the west. Basically, self-government arrangements in the west are the same sort of autonomy that has been reached in the east for aboriginal groups to deliver programs and services through the self-government process. I would like to ask the Minister again, if there is, why is the west being treated differently in regard to the whole concept of the Human Resource Development Strategy and the monies that have been spent already in the west for similar arrangements? Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Do we have any nays? Mr. Krutko, you do not have unanimous consent. Question period is over. Mr. Dent, do you wish to respond?

Further Return To Question 554-13(5): Self-Government Considerations in Western Transition

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that the federal government will treat the West any differently than Nunavut when it comes to dealing with land claims. What I did suggest is that the difference in the approach right now is because the claims have all been settled in Nunavut whereas they have not all been settled in the west. Self-government is being settled through the implementation of the act in Nunavut, whereas, self-government negotiations have not been completed for any of the aboriginal

governments in the west. That is my response.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 7, written questions. Mr. Krutko

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 12-13(5): Western Arctic Drug and Alcohol Treatment Costs

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question to the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to the cost for drug and alcohol treatment.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services provide the amount of funds provided for alcohol and drug treatment to each of the communities in the western Arctic for the last two years? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Written questions. Mr. Henry.

Written Question 13-15(5): Cost of Contract Nurses Versus Unionized Employees

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is to Minister Ng.

1. Could the Minister provide an indication of the costs to the GNWT for hiring nurses on contract versus what a collective agreement employee would cost?

2. Information provided to me indicates that the cost of providing contract nurses far exceeds what is provided under the collective agreement. Could the Minister provide information on salary levels and accommodation benefits being paid to the contract nurses in those communities which have a nursing shortage? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 93-13(5): Package of Letters Regarding Pay Equity/Collective Bargaining

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table two different sets of documents. The first is, I have received 27 letters, some of which are form letters in regard to the outstanding bargaining situation between the Union of Northern Workers and this government. This is my first batch, Mr. Speaker. There are 27 letters in total.

Tabled Document 94-13(5): Package of Letters Regarding Education Funding

Page 1418

The second, Mr. Speaker, is I wish to table eight letters regarding the funding matter for education. I have eight letters in support of more funding for education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabled Document 95-13(5): Package of Letters Regarding the Kids Are Worth It Campaign

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a package of letters here that I have received from my constituents containing 70 signatures with respect to support for education for our children.

Tabled Document 96-13(5): Package of Letters Regarding Education Funding

Mr. Speaker, I also have a letter from a teacher in Hay River, Pat Burnstad from the Diamond Jenness Secondary School, again with respect to the state of education in the Northwest Territories and in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Henry.

Tabled Document 97-13(5): Package of Letters from UNW Members Regarding Pay Equity/Collective Bargaining

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table some documents, a package of 37 form letters from UNW members expressing their concerns with the pay equity and current collective bargaining impasse with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Erasmus.

Tabled Document 98-13(5): Package of Letters from UNW Members Regarding Pay Equity/Collective Bargaining

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table 10 letters from UNW members asking that this government deal with pay equity issues with the current collective bargaining process.

Tabled Document 99-13(5): Package of Letters Regarding Education Funding

I also have two letters urging more money is put into the education area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 18: SECOND 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 second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Territorial Court Act to provide for the establishment of the Northwest Territories Judicial Renumeration Commission.

This bill also amends the Territorial Court Act and the Justices of the Peace Act, to give Justices of the Peace jurisdiction under the Young Offenders Act. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the

Interpretation Act and the Young Offenders Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 17, has had second reading 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 State of Education in the Northwest Territories with Mrs. Groenewegen in the Chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have two items on the agenda today, Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act, and also State of Education in the Northwest Territories. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, that we continue with the State of Education.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We will take a short break right now. The Minister of Education has asked us to join in a celebration in the Great Hall on the launch of the Tools for Success campaign. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--Break.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I call Committee of the Whole back to order and ask the Minister if he would like to bring witnesses. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

For the record, we have Mr. Dent and Mr. Mark Cleveland, the Deputy Minister of Education at the table and we are on State of Education in the Northwest Territories and we are on general comments. Are there any Members who would still like to make general comments? If there are no further general comments then we will move on to Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Page 1419

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to make a short comment. I would like to thank the Minister of Education and his assistant. I know it is very hard work to deal with education and also the teachers. I know for a fact that the teachers are working very hard to educate our children. I know it is very hard being a teacher, especially when there are so many students in some communities. We have to recognize that the teachers are working very hard. I know there is not enough money in the Department of Education and I know there is a need for more schools and for more teachers. I know it must be very hard to deal with the money, especially with all the cutbacks and every year inflation is going up. I think we all know that.

There are some other programs that we have to deal with in each community and we need all those existing programs. For example, municipal services are very important in communities. This is an ongoing program. I would like to see them continued.

I never want to cut money for education. We have to spend money on education. There is a policy in place that we have to teach the children. The children have to be at school. This is a law. The children have to attend school. Back in the 1970s we tried to deal with the policy in the communities, but looking at the smaller communities, what they were saying was, if your child does not attend school, the parents will have to go to court. I know it is very hard to deal with education. There is a policy in place, why cannot we put some more money into the Department of Education? We have to work with the teachers and sometimes the teachers have to resign from their

positions because they are not making enough money. They cannot keep up with inflation. They have to pay for rent and groceries. That is why I have to say that teachers are working very hard to educate our children. Therefore, I do not want to see any more cutbacks. Today we all have to make money. That is all I have to say for now. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (Translation ends)

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

General comments. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe the communities through the elected representatives have requested maybe not an impossible but certainly a difficult task of the Minister and the Department of Education. I think it is fair to say that the rate that we are graduating students in the territories lags behind any of our counterparts in the provinces, but I think it is worth noting that there is a steady increase, at least in the figures that are being presented by the department. I think it would be interesting to know if the numbers of graduates from Yellowknife were removed from the statistics would, whether the number of graduates would, in fact, continue to show a steady increase. I would find that information interesting.

I think the department has an extremely difficult job. When we consider the percentages of students, whom we have in the Northwest Territories in our communities, including Yellowknife, with learning difficulties, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effect, Attention Deficit Disorder, Dyslexia. I think the department has to put more effort into working with the institutions that train our teachers to ensure that the teachers are being provided the best possible tools to deal with the situations that they are going to run into when they go into the classroom. I am not convinced that more work in that area would not benefit the students of the Northwest Territories. I suspect the teachers are not getting as much education on how to deal with these situations in the classroom and I would suggest that students who are not properly diagnosed early stand less of a chance of being successful in their schooling.

I am not convinced that more money thrown at education will solve the problem. I think we have, as a government and the department, to look and do some assessment as to why we are not getting a better increase in our graduate rate. I believe the

department and the government have to get the message across to parents and students that the government can no longer provide education and upgrading and more emphasis has to be put into communicating to parents and students that you have to get this education early on. The government cannot continue to provide an education to you from kindergarten to grade 12. It is a one shot where we are running and I believe the Minister has told us in this House before that during the budget cuts that he did remove money from adult education to put into education in the classroom, the kindergarten to grade 12. I think that message has to be continually communicated to parents and parents have to be encouraged to spend more time with their children and encouraging their children to realize the benefits of what an education can do for them and the necessities of that in daily life.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. General comments. Mr. Rabesca.

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, over the last couple of days we have come together to convince the government that there is definitely a need to increase funding levels for our education system. Before I get to concerns that have been raised before me regarding that, I would like to mention that today's education is better than it has been in recent memory.

Today, Madam Chairperson, we have more students young and old attending all forms of education. Our community leaders continue to stress education and our young people are responding. In my region we have experienced almost an explosion in an interest for education. Many things, of course, have spearheaded this move. Bringing high school levels to the region was probably the biggest motivator.

Page 1420

This one initiative has brought young people back to school that wanted good education, but they did not want to leave the community. Recently, factors have come into play which are also important for the development of interest in education. The opportunity young people are seeing with developments such as BHP and other mining companies and land claims settlements are close at hand, a constant emphasis

that our leaders are providing. All healthy youth realize they need to be educated.

In the fall of 1992, there were two Dogrib students attending post-secondary schooling, one in the north and one in the south. In the fall of 1997 there were 48 Dogrib students attending post-secondary schooling; 27 in the south, over 25 of these plan to go back again next year, others have completed their courses. We have students in the business of law, nursing, science, social work, renewable resources, teaching and mining, to mention just a few areas of concern. Over 20, are working on degrees, not particularly on diplomas. This is exciting for Dogribs, as well as for the future. As you can see, the youth are getting the message. They are going back to further education.

This coming Saturday, I will be attending the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School graduation, and will witness 11 youths walk down the pathways to the rest of their lives. We also hope that these students will follow the footsteps of previous grads by going on to post-secondary school education, so that they can come back and help our residents in the future.

Over the past years, while trying to meet the GNWT's mandate toward block funding, the department has moved toward a formula based entirely on student enrolment. This works for many things, such as operations and maintenance, but is very unfair toward smaller schools. While the formula allows a base for administration for small school boards, it does not allow a base for small schools. If a school board loses ten students, this could mean two families leaving schools for elsewhere, the school loses janitorial time, secretarial time, school community councils time, bus funding as well as teachers and classroom assistants and staffing. School facilities have not become smaller. A janitor still has to clean the same space. The principal is teaching, so that it is important to have secretarial assistance in the office during the day. The buses still have to run. This can mean a loss of approximately \$80,000 total of the board's budget. For larger schools, this would not be as big a problem as for smaller schools, with a little leeway in their prospective budgets.

We also see grade extensions offered in the schools, which is what we want. However, at the same time with a slight fluctuation in the number of students, schools could lose five teachers, which means that there is one teacher teaching all subjects from grade 10 to 11 students.

I can say that education is showing some good results. However, as good as these results are by not increasing the budget, it could possibly revert to an understaffed, overworked boards that just want out.

We have all talked about the need for adequate and affordable housing for our education staff and the need for increased budgets to ensure our future generations receive good education. These are very important concerns. Now, I understand, to add more weight to the arguments to increase the budgets to have the budgets we have, this Ardicom high speed communication system will allow schools to offer many of the new and exciting tools to be used. Again, the problem is, how can smaller schools be expected to pay for this service when they can barely keep the schools going now?

In closing, I would like to say education is a high priority for myself and my region. I am sure my colleagues must ensure these concerns are addressed. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. General comments. If there are no further general comments, is everybody agreed that we should go to questions? Questions for the Minister? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Are there any questions? Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I have a number of questions related to my comments yesterday. I suppose my first one to the Minister would be in regard to whole language versus phonics. I would like to know what the department's position is on this?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department does not have an official position on one or the other. It is an interesting debate that has gone on for a long

time. My parents are in their 70s. Both were teachers. One was taught phonics and one was taught whole language when they were going through school 60-some years ago. It has been a process that has gone full circle many times.

What appears to be happening, in most divisional education councils or in most schools teachers use a combination of the two, whichever works best for the individual student. That seems to be the most accepted method right now and it is not to say that one is better than the other. They both have their place and both can be used as circumstances require. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I understand the Minister to say that the concern, or the issue, has been around for a number of years, but it is my understanding that it is becoming a national issue whereby it seems to have played a large part on the ability for people to be able to read. I also understand, based on an article I read in Time magazine, I believe, that some Education Ministers in the provinces were refusing to take a position on it and refusing to take the stand that whole language holds a priority over phonics in their particular riding, territory or provinces.

Page 1421

What I am concerned about is, has the department looked at this from that perspective? Do we have any ongoing surveys that would actually support one or the other as being favourable or more productive?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department is not taking a specific position. Are there people in the department who are professional educators who read the journals to keep up with what the latest information is? The answer is yes. I understand the most recent information is that for some young people, phonics is the best way to learn how to read. For others, whole language is the way. There is no conclusive evidence to say that one way is better than

the other. What most experts today are saying is that a good teacher will use both as appropriate.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, my second question is in regard to the motion made by Committee of the Whole earlier this spring in regard to having career technology studies or shop programs and home economic programs compulsory in all classrooms. I have a letter here from Mr. Dent, or a memo to all Members, suggesting that career technology studies are available in all communities that have high schools. My question is in relation to, do they have the facilities? Do we have standards whereby we are assured that these facilities and the equipment necessary are available in the smaller communities, space is available, or do we leave that up to the boards?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We do not, of course, have facilities available in all communities because as school populations have grown so dramatically in the last few years and as schools have had to accommodate the increased grade levels in each community, there has been no way to keep up with space demands. In many cases, areas that might have been used for career and technology studies are now being used for classroom purposes.

We do, however, when we find the money for renovations, try and include space in the schools to allow for better career and technology study programming. For instance, the capital plan is being amended right now for Holman because we are planning to add onto the school to accommodate the high school grades. When we proceed with construction, we will be building on space that could be used for what has traditionally been called a shop program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, my other question is, considering the amount of pressure there is to have proper high schools in the communities - one of the issues that has surfaced in particular is, mixing high school students with the lower grades and students have caused a lot of discipline problems - are we moving toward separate high schools in the smaller communities with, say 1,000 or 1,500 people? What is the number? What is the magic number we use that justifies a high school in the smaller communities? The other half of my question is, are we moving toward having these high schools separate from the lower grades?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There is no magic number that the department uses to decide when to build separate facilities. In most small communities we will not be able to build two facilities. So what typically happens is there is some physical separation that the designers try and build into the school when we do the renovations to accommodate the senior grades. As I said in an earlier response, it has been rather difficult for us to keep up. The capital plan has just not been big enough for us to keep up with the renovations as quickly as we would like to get them done. However, as we get to them in the communities, you will see, the schools will encompass a design feature that provides for better separation of age groupings and I think that it will deal with the problem. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chairperson, we have a problem, apparently, attracting high quality teaching staff. It is starting to surface in the smaller communities all over the territories. I believe that salary and benefits may not be adequate to attract staff. What is the department's position, or what precautions is the department taking to assure that, for instance, if boards cannot attract staff in time for the next school year, what do we do in the small community where there are no teachers? What are the department's plans in that regard?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. So far, we have not had any indication from divisional education councils that they do not have sufficient applicants to cover the turnover that has been seen this year. We would have to wait until we were notified that there was, in fact, a problem before we could look at responding to it. We are hoping that there will not be a problem, but only time will tell. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I have Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I think one of the areas we have talked about, in our communities and regional board meetings, is compulsory education as we know it today. Is it working out in the small communities, I do not know? Rather than being a solution in the small communities, I think it is a major factor of having

Page 1422

created animosities between the teaching staff, the local education council and the parents. My question to the honourable Minister is, compulsory education as we know it is not working out. What are the consequences or penalties for those who are not attending school? I know one area is that there is the potential for the community, or the regional board, to lose some funding from the government if there are non-attenders in the communities, specific communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not have a copy of the Education Act with me in the House right now, so I cannot answer the Member's specific question about what the penalties are under the Act. I do know that over this past weekend, I had a meeting that had all the councils and chairs from across the north in attendance. A couple of councils have indicated that they are moving to have charges laid in instances where there are situations of non-

attendance. I do know that the department is assisting by requesting the Department of Justice to provide a reference on the Education Act in its provisions to make sure such prosecutions will stand up. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you. I say this in order to indicate publicly that I am one of those people who are not in favour of having a heavy penalty placed upon a relative of a non-attender in communities. Quite the contrary, Madam Chairperson. In my culture, we have never penalized or punished anyone for their wrong behaviour. I think we have to try and get feedback from the communities on what is working and what is not. One area that I was told about, one of the penalties - I understand I can speak to that - I support is a parent of a non-attender should not be a part of the local education council, and should be removed from that body in the community. The monetary penalties and other penalties, I am not in favour of.

I think we can prescribe something in the community and have, to a degree, some penalties that the people in the small communities can handle. This is sufficient as long as it has nothing to do with having to place a heavy penalty on a parent or having a jail term. I think that is a bit heavy. Having listened to some people and talked about what is working and what is not, I think compulsory education as we know it has never worked in the past in the small communities where local teaching staff is related to everyone in the community and where the local education council is related to everyone in the community, where a person who is charged with the responsibility of talking to parents of non-attenders is related to everyone in the community. There is little hope of having whatever penalty being enforced in the community. I think we have to step back a bit, reassess the situation and come up with something that can, in fact, work in the community. I hope the Minister will now communicate with communities and see what is working and what is not. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Decisions about whether or not to pursue the option of laying a charge against the parents of non-attenders are entirely local decisions. If the local community decides to pursue that, they may. It is not something that is directed by the Minister. It is not something that is directed by the department. This is something that local people are in the position to make decisions about and do. In response to the Member's concern about parents of non-attenders sitting on the district education authority, this too is a local decision. The Education Act gives a lot of control to the local community. The district education authority can set, under the Education Act, its own code of conduct, and if its code of conduct says that a member of the district education authority must resign if they are a parent of a non-attender, then that would be the terms and conditions that would have to be followed in that community. Again, the whole administration of education is something which the local community is expected to take a significant amount of control. The Education Act allows this, and it would not be right for the Minister to try and impose decisions on the local community. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you. I signalled that I was not going to ask further questions, but I thank the Minister for outlining what is the ability of a local or district education council. My understanding, Madam Chairperson, is that what is prescribed in the Education Act is what that group in the community is able to enforce. That was my understanding. What is not prescribed in the Education Act is not what the community group is able to do. That was my understanding. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not believe that under the new Education Act, there has been anybody charged because of non-attendance. As I mentioned earlier over the weekend however, we heard from a couple of board chairs that there are at least two divisional education councils in the territories that are considering moving in that direction. Again, that is a local decision. That is not

something that has been ordered by the department or the Minister. They have decided that they think it is important, and their residents in their communities have told them they think it is important, to follow this course of action. Therefore, the act allows them to do that, but it does not force them to do it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. On the list next under questions on the state of education in the Northwest Territories, I have Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question to the Minister is, are there any programs in place that identify students with FAE/FAS so that the teachers can know who they have in their classes and what level of students? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

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

Page 1423

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My understanding is that it takes a fairly specialized physician working with the mother who is able to provide some history before such a diagnosis can definitively be made. The answer is, no, we do not have physicians working in the schools to try and do that kind of assessment. It would take a fairly detailed campaign, to try and provide that sort of assessment across the territories. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Dent, I am Mr. Chairman. We have just had a changeover. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome. Mr. Dent, I am sure you realize that there probably are a number of these children in the classrooms who have this problem, and it must cause a great deal of concern for the teachers trying to sort out, in some cases, why certain children are not learning as fast as the others, and so on and so forth. Is there any thought or idea of how you might try to address this? I realize we do not have doctors on staff or medical practitioners, but is there some other type of testing that can be done

so that we can at least identify some of the individuals who may be affected with some of these disorders?
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

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

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not mean to give Members the impression that no assessment is done. The divisional education councils work with teachers to assess which students have problems, which students need individual education programs, which students need classroom assistance, support and so on. My point was that to make a specific diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is next to impossible. I know from personal experience that it cannot be done. That does not mean that there is not some assessment being done to determine how many kids need support and how many kids need what kinds of support, but to label the cause of the problem is sometimes impossible. We still have to find ways to provide support no matter what the cause is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just switching gears a bit here now and speaking of truancy. The number of children that do not attend school or attend it on a very irregular basis, hanging out on the street corners, in local stores, and so on; I remember years ago when we were going to school that if you did not show up at school the truant officer showed up at your door and spoke to your folks and you were basically told to have your children in school. Is there any thought of reintroducing some type of system that would force parents? I know you may say, well we should not have to do that because they are the parents, they will do what is right. As we all know, that is not always the case no matter what part of the world you are in. My question is, is there any thought of reintroducing some type of a truancy officer program where there would be more pressure on the parents to make the children attend school on a regular basis?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. School community counsellors have a role to play in this area. Again, as I indicated in my response to Mr. Ningark, the local community can make decisions in this area too, if they wish, in terms of how strict they want to be at enforcing what the Education Act sets out as possibilities. If the district education authority chooses to institute that kind of followup, it would be at the community's decision.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. The honourable Member for Keewatin District, Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think to a large degree, and I know I am speaking of my communities that, for example, the arcade owners will ensure that children do not hang around the arcade during school hours, the store owners at the Northern Store, the Co-op Store and other areas that the children may find attractive to hang out when they really should be in school. I think that is being done and I know that is what is happening in my community. There are other areas, I guess, and locations that the children tend to go and it is not necessarily known at the time whether they are in somebody's store or home. My question is related to the parents, how do we make the parents more accountable, without involving the hamlet? I think the onus is on the parents. I think that the communities are doing what they can to ensure that the children do attend school. Going back to my original question, would you not consider reinstating a truant officer program where someone would be in charge to make sure that the children did attend school and that if not there would be some type of a penalty or warning or whatever? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. The honourable Minister, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure that it would be tremendously appropriate to institute a program across the Northwest Territories that saw that sort of approach. It may be needed in some communities and not in others. That is why the local community has the control to place priorities where they see fit. A community may decide that the school community counsellor needs to get more actively involved in finding out why certain kids are not at school today

and to follow up with the parents that very day and if they wish to put their resources into that area, then they can; but we do not have any additional resources to put into the program right now. It is up to the local community to say, this is our priority. Therefore, we are going to put our resources in this area to get the kids to come to school and we are going to take them out of this area in order to accomplish that. In other communities there may be other priorities that they need to spend their money on. Another community; for instance, may say we do not have non-attenders here. We can afford to switch more resources into dealing with special needs kids. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Final minute for you, Mr. O'Brien. Thank you.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question reckons to financial support for graduates that want to attend university. A lot of times we hear that students when they leave the north to go down south to attend university, they find it

Page 1424

difficult because they are going to a larger centre and there is a culture shock, climate shock and all kinds of different factors that enter into their success whether they complete their university degree or not. Is there any thought about looking at it; for example, the territories could identify a university in a smaller sized community and even identify a section of the dorm where aboriginal students or northern students in general, if they choose, could locate in that area where they would be with the people that they know and have similar interest and cultural interest? I think, for the most part, picking a university or college that is in a smaller area, a reputable college, may give the student more of a chance at staying there and hacking it out for the duration of their degree. I think if we could tailor the program and the location and the actual university or college itself, I think we would have a greater chance at having students not only attend, but stay in the program and complete it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the Ministerial Forum on Student Financial Assistance, student support to which the Member refers was highlighted as one that was lacking. People across the north said we needed to find some way to better support students. The department is working to develop a program, which will see much improved support to students, beginning before students leave the Northwest Territories, with contact through the regional offices and followup once students are on campus down south. We have a number of locations down south where we have NWT Student Associations. We have managed to work with the private sector at places like the University of Alberta where a significant number of northern students attend to put in place a resident counsellor available on campus in the city to work with NWT residents. It is very difficult for us to identify one university because we have students all across Canada, depending in what area their interest lies and what university they see as best serving that interest. It would be very difficult for us to identify one over another. Right now, we probably have more students going to the University of Alberta than any other university in southern Canada, but I expect that students from the Keewatin will have typical ties to Manitoba, students from the Baffin will probably be more often headed to Ottawa or Montreal. When you divide it up, it is difficult to say we are going to select one college, because you would increase the costs significantly for some students and make it more difficult for them to get home at Christmas or in the summertime.

I think the Member is right. We have to find a better way to support students. That was identified to us very clearly in the ministerial forum and it is something that the department is committed to starting from the moment students apply. In other words, we identify students who will be heading out and have our regional offices work with them before they leave and follow up after they are on campus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Recognizing the allotted time for Mr. O'Brien is over, and he also indicated that was his final question, I will recognize the next person on the list. We have Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Picco and Mr. Ootes. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just prior to returning to the Legislature this time, I was approached by a number of my constituents with respect to a long standing tradition in the community of Hay River and that is the provision of religious instruction in the schools. On February 23, 1998, a letter was received by the divisional education councils and district education authorities from the Minister. The first sentence reads, recently a concern has been raised that some schools may be providing religious instruction. This is in contravention to the Education Act. Mr. Chairman, the people of Hay River felt that this tradition had been addressed when the new Act was being drafted. At that time, a local survey was taken which indicated a very strong, majority response for the provision of this instruction in the school. During the discussions, previous to today, and today the Minister has repeatedly said that it is up to the local community to choose their priorities. A motion was passed by the community education council at one point which said, "I move that the Hay River area community education council support the status quo of offering religion in the schools." That was moved and seconded and carried at the community level. My question on behalf of my constituents to the Minister is, this concern that was raised in this subsequent letter that went out to all directors, councils, superintendents, and district education authorities, how is this compatible with freedom of local education authorities to implement areas in education which are part of their tradition? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you kindly, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Education Act was drawn up as it is in respect of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Local freedom to act is always constrained by the Canadian Constitution and the Charter. That is really the bottom line here. The Member asks how this is consistent with local control. There are sometimes limits to local control that are set out by higher authorities. In this case the federal government has chosen to institute a higher authority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Is there not a component of religious or spiritual education in other curriculum which has been developed and offered through our schools in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There may be references in some curriculum to religious or spiritual matters. Within the schools, there is nothing that says that you cannot refer to religious or spiritual matters, but you cannot teach any specific religion.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way it works in Hay River is that the students are provided with a permission note and they take that home with them and they get parental approval and the courses offered are either in a

Page 1425

broad sense Protestant religion or Catholic religion. Those are the two courses that are offered. Approximately two-thirds of the students in Hay River, their parents do choose to have them participate in these programs that are offered. The other students are involved in an alternative activity during that time. The Minister states in his letter that a concern has been raised. Apart from sending out this letter, has the Minister done anything else to respond to the concern and what would his intention be if a community were to continue to operate under the status quo? First of all, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I do not think that anyone in Hay River raised a concern about this. All indications that I have are that people in Hay River would like to see this program continue. It is for the benefit of the children. It is provided by volunteers and I am just curious what the Minister plans to do about it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in response to the first part of the Member's question, there is nothing to bar the teaching of religion in school. However, it just must be outside the hours of instruction as specified in the act. As for the second part of her question, I doubt that a letter of consent from a parent would be considered grounds to contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada. I am not a lawyer or judge but I would suspect it would be found to be insufficient reason to contravene the Charter. Mr. Chairman, I would hope that we would not find a situation where people who are involved in teaching young students would be in a situation where they would be contravening the laws of the land. One of the things we teach people is to respect the laws of the land and I would hope that we would not get into the situation the Member refers to where we would have a school where they would not be respecting the laws. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Madam Chairperson.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, I would like to ask the Minister, did anyone in Hay River raise a concern about religious instruction in schools? I mean, we talk about community empowerment, we talk about the local authorities, did anyone in Hay River raise this concern?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. No. No one raised the concern. In fact, it was myself who noticed while visiting one of the schools, that the schedule showed a religion class during school hours. As Minister responsible for an act of this government, I felt it my duty to act upon it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Madam Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I will just ask the Minister's comments on this. In a letter received from a previous Minister of Education, Mr. Nerysoo, in response to this very question, Mr. Nerysoo pointed

out that the act enabled district education authorities to conduct local programs such as a local program of religious instruction, in a particular faith. Such a program must be, according to the Charter, outside of the regular school program, but if the school day is determined locally, it could be within regular school hours. Does the Minister have a comment in response to this assurance that was received by a former Minister of Education and if the local education authority has the right to set the school day. Let us say religious education is taught at 2:30 on Monday afternoons, could the school day be arranged to technically end at 2:30 p.m. on a Monday, so that this program could be incorporated into the children's school day and comply with bus pickup times, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I believe Mr. Minister does not have a copy of two documents, the letter, and I do not know if he has a copy of the document as prescribed. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. As I said earlier, there is nothing preventing the teaching of religion within the schools as long as it is not permitted during the hours of instruction. The Education Act sets out a number of hours during the school year that children must be instructed. As long as religious instruction is not counted in a part of the regular school day that goes toward the hours in the act, then there is no problem. If the regular school day ends at 2:30 p.m., and in the course of the year the students in the hours before 2:30 p.m. meet required hours that are set out in the act, it is perfectly acceptable that the courses are taught starting at 2:30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Your time is up, Madam. I have on the list Mr. Picco and Mr. Ootes. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to get right to some specific questions concerning education and I mentioned some of them yesterday in my opening address. Mr. Chairman, the Minister in this House, as before, mentioned the problems with the Grade 10 mathematics curriculum as an example of the problems that we are seeing throughout the Northwest Territories. Mr. Chairman, in the Grade 10 math curriculum in the Baffin, there are 361 Grade 10

students in the Baffin and approximately 24 Grade 10 math teachers. The text books are \$44 each; 44 times 361 equals \$15,884. Calculators, which are prerequisites for the course, are \$115 times 361 which is \$41,515. The basic math manipulative is \$43 a student, Mr. Chairman, which is \$15,523. The teacher's texts are \$107 each which is \$2,568 for the 24 teachers. Teacher support materials are over \$5,000. In total, actual cost spent by the Baffin Divisional Board of Education was \$80,526. The ECE contribution was \$19,000. My question, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister and his staff, concerns the allocations of funds to implement the new math curriculum and how we expect the divisional board of education to be able to deliver this new curriculum implementation with a shoestring budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I can hold up a pie chart here. I do not know if the Member can see it from his seat but let us say this is the budget the department provides to the Baffin Divisional Education Council. Our formula allocates funding according to these different pieces of the pie. However, we deliver the whole package to

Page 1426

the Baffin Divisional Education Council and they choose to cut the pieces of pie any size they wish. While the Member talks about us having given the Baffin Divisional Education Council only \$20,000 for math textbooks, he may not be aware that for material and supplies we gave the Baffin Divisional Education Council \$1.8 million and that was to buy books and so on. What we did this year is said because of the introduction of the new math curriculum, we will provide a little bit of a top-up here, but the normal expectation is that out of the ordinary operations and maintenance, divisional educational councils will provide their own supplies for the school year. It is entirely up to divisional education councils as to how they choose to allocate their funds.

We could easily, as we have in the past, provided nothing to divisional education councils when a new curriculum was introduced, and said it is all covered under the material and supplies part of the budget. In this case, we decided to top it up because of the

expense of the new curriculum coming in. We have to take a look at this in terms of the bigger picture and that is, all of the funds are going out to the divisional education councils. We use a certain formula to determine the funds each education council gets - so much for operation and maintenance so much for materials and supplies, so much for bussing, so much for senior secondary and so much for special needs. At the end of the day they get that package of dollars and it is up to the councils to determine how best to spend those dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the example I gave for the Grade 10 students was illustrated that we had 361 students. Simple math tells me that when \$1.8 million is divided into 13 Baffin communities with something like 20 or 21 schools and a student population well over 2,000, well, over 3,000 I believe is the figure I have seen, \$1.8 million is not very much money when you look at a textbook that is \$44 for each student. I am not here to debate the Minister, I am just bringing up information that has come forward from the divisional board of education and I take it at face value that they are having problems delivering education and having the teachers going out and buying textbooks and equipment for their classrooms out of their own pockets. We have letters attesting to that. We have a case of Shuvina Mike, and I will say her name publicly because she sent the letter publicly, who for the last couple of years has been teaching, I believe it is, over 200 students at Inukshuk High School, one teacher who has to develop her own institute curriculum. That is not acceptable.

What they do have at the board level, Mr. Chairman, is they come up with theme units and they introduce a theme unit. Then it is up to the instructor to go out and find themes on polar bears or families, or whatever it is going to be, and then she has to translate that into English. Most of the work that has gone into development of a curriculum in Inuktitut, as an example, has gone to the K to 6 level. There is practically almost nothing available for Grades 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. That lady has now resigned her position from the divisional board of education teaching because of burnout and stress. I know that the

Minister is aware of it because he has seen the letter and so has Mr. Cleveland.

All I am trying to point out, Mr. Chairman, that the formula that Mr. Dent talks about is not meeting the needs of textbooks and is not meeting the needs of the teachers. My second question to the Minister is, what does the Department of Education need to see or if they had a wish list what would they ask for? Would Mr. Dent, for example, we have got instructions from Mr. Todd telling us that if this House gives direction, then the government will move in and Mr. Ootes pointed out earlier and maybe we can find money? What does the Department need? Does the Department have some magic figure that they need? Do they need \$5 million? Do they need \$10 million? Mr. Chairman, if you could ask my compatriots, sitting in some of the wrong chairs, to stay quiet when you are trying to address a question, I would appreciate it. Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister of Education is, what does the department need in dollar terms to facilitate some of these concerns, like the math curriculum, at the community and local level? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would ask the honourable members to show respect of others, especially when they are speaking and asking questions. I think you would want them to do the same when you are speaking. Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make it clear to the Member that I was not saying the councils are not under pressure fiscally. I was trying to point out that it is not particularly productive to pick one particular area of the formula that we use because they get a total lump sum, no matter how we may come up with those dollars. They get a pot of money and they can spend it any way they want. If they choose not to spend money on bussing for instance, things can get allocated. That was the point I was trying to make. Yes, all of the divisional education councils are under fiscal pressure as is the whole government with the cutbacks. I cannot answer the Member's question about what it would take. It would take some time to determine what it is we need. We heard from Members around the table yesterday and today about the need to bring down the pupil/teacher ratio. Other Members noted that teacher supports are more important. I think it would take some time to say, well here is my wish list and then grant it by order of

priority. I do not know how productive that would be at this point, not seeing any pots of gold at the end of the rainbow right now. I think we are better served by working to deliver programs, as best we can, with the resources we have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Yes, you have a few seconds, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think that is just a little misleading, what the Minister said. I know the divisional boards of education get a total lump sum of money, but they do not have the flexibility of spending where they want. The Minister, and I realize, I think it is 75 percent of the total dollar value any individual board uses or receives goes to salaries. So they have about 25 percent of their money that they can expend. I believe the Department of Education itself, almost 75 percent of its available budget goes into salaries and

Page 1427

the Minister does not have that flexibility either. So I think that is a bit of a misnomer.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to follow up with one more question. Mr. Chairman, there is a new middle school being planned for Iqaluit. It has seven classrooms. That school is being paid for by the federal government because of the increase in enrolments anticipated because of Iqaluit being the capital of Nunavut.

Right now it would seem the school's classroom size of the seven classrooms are redundant before the school will be built because the idea is to move grade six and seven into the school, because of the increased enrolments already mentioned earlier. I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, I know I have asked Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Dent about this before in E-mails. Is there any way we can facilitate the extra four classrooms the education council and divisional board of education have asked for, for the school? What is the point of building a school at seven classrooms when it is not going to facilitate the need that it was expected for? The federal government is giving us \$6 million for this school, but we need an extra four classrooms. I think the idea was to move up the Joamie School renovations so we can enhance that school, so when the school is built next year, it will, indeed, be there to suit the purposes it was intended

for. At the present time it will not. I would like some type of response on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are continuing to work with the federal government to see if we can access more funding for that new school. The designs are actually being prepared for an eleven-classroom school instead of seven. To date, the federal government has only committed to funding the seven classrooms. As the Members of this House know, the capital budget of our department is severely stretched right now, so we have not yet been able to identify any additional funding and will continue to work with the federal government to see if we can pressure them to agree that this is a result of incremental growth, therefore should be incremental funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Your allotted time is up, Mr. Picco. On the list, Members who have not asked questions, I have Mr. Ootes, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Roland and Mr. Steen are on the list, but that will be his second chance to speak, so you will be down the list. I have Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last night at our constituency meeting, we had an individual present a sheet of paper, I believe he handed it to other members as well. Irvin Sumter-Freitag, he is a former educator. He has about 20 years experience. He raised a very good issue that I would like the Minister to tell me what is done in this area. Our turnover of teachers is significant in the territories. It always has been and will continue for some time, no doubt. The reasons for the turnover are, the public comments are, well, it is because no housing is available, because of VTA cutbacks and so forth. There may be some other underlying reasons such as displeasure with the way students act in classes or lack of support from the community in discipline matters, areas like that. Now what Mr. Sumter-Freitag in his sheet of paper, which he gave us, which had some good areas of comments in various areas, especially under education, pointed out; has the department thought about doing an exit report on teachers who leave the teaching profession in the Northwest Territories,

either depart from the north or stay in the north but just leave the profession? I guess my two questions are: has the department ever done this? Are they doing it now and if not, would they consider doing such an exit report, so we get an idea of perhaps the real reasons teachers are moving on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Many, if not most, of the divisional education councils do conduct those exit surveys with teachers right now. The information is consolidated and passed on to the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. A short and concise answer. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I am wondering if the Minister could tell us what some of the reasons for teachers leaving their profession, or leaving the position, is more appropriate?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

In the Baffin; for instance, a very high number, about thirteen, have accepted transfers to other divisions in the Northwest Territories. A number of others have suggested personal concerns like work related stress, the cost of living, salary reductions and housing as reasons for leaving.

In the Keewatin, a number of teachers indicated they wished to return to southern Canada to be nearer to family. Two teachers resigned and listed the reason as burnout. We have a fairly concise listing. I could go through all nine of the divisional education councils, but it would take some time to list them, Mr. Chairman. If the Member is interested, I would be happy to make him a copy of this and he could have the information himself.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

The Member has indicated, he nodded. I guess he wants a copy. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes, thank you. I would appreciate having a look at that report if it is available. An area I spoke about yesterday was education being not necessarily tailored to specific jobs, but at least having the ability to identify where future jobs might be in the territories. Whatever I think, all know the students who are in our school system in the territories in all likelihood want to stay in the territories. The question becomes where is it the students can possibly obtain a job in the future? I will make a statement. I think it is one I feel is there. I do not have any reasons for saying it other than I am making some assumptions. Part of the difficulty I think students face in the territories is there are no jobs out there. There is no real future to look forward to. If you are in school and are taking education but do not know where you are going to end up for a job, let

Page 1428

alone a profession, then it must become very discouraging. Can the department tell me if they have looked at the idea of identifying where potential large numbers of jobs might be in the years to come? If they are hypothetically in mining, then at least the department could tailor their programs more to that. For example, if you are in Nunavut, you have the establishment of the Nunavut government. Education systems then can be tailored to that. I am wondering if there is such a study being undertaken or statistics analyzed or some sort of identification?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Your opinion, Mr. Minister?

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the NWT Labour Force Development Plan was an attempt to do that kind of work. This is something that is updated every two or three years by the department and it is, in fact, an effort to try and forecast where job opportunities will be and project where we should target our efforts. Members may not be aware in grade eight, every school is required to ensure that every student has a session with a counsellor and their parents to talk about careers and where they might be going.

Over the course of the last two years, I am sure members will recall the department has prepared a number of booklets ranging from careers in mining, careers in the public service, and so on, to try and make sure students are aware the opportunities that are out there.

I think there has been a recognition that, in the past, we have not done as good a job as we could in preparing students to make choices about careers. The department is working to try and rectify this situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes, are you still on? You have a minute and a half, or thereabouts? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I just have a quick question and that was in the whole area of student support. Again, we spoke about classroom sizes. I think the difficulty, in my opinion, is there is more in the area, that there is such a diversity in the classroom and different needs in the classroom that is creating the problem. I am wondering if the department is addressing this whole area of student support; for instance, the need for teacher counsellors, teachers' aides, in language acquisition, when it comes to English as a second language, learning assistance teachers and so forth? Can the Minister tell us if they are addressing this particular area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my conversations with teachers, I would agree that most teachers seem to feel it is in the area of support in the classroom that they face their biggest challenge. Are we moving to deal with it? As the Member knows, we have not been given any extra money to deal with the problem. I think we have tried to recognize the importance of teacher supports increasing the amount of the formula which is allocated to special needs over the past few years. That has meant decreases in other areas in the formula, of course. As I have stated, the councils are still free to make shifts in the monies once they receive them. Just because the department has chosen to increase the amount of funding that goes into special needs, does not mean that the councils have to put the money in that area. They could put the

money into the pupil/teacher ratio, for instance. It is a difficult situation. I do not think anybody thinks that we are close to an ideal here. It is certainly a situation where our system is strained because of the special needs in the classroom and the teacher support that is somewhat behind where it should be, but we are doing the best we can with available funding. Teachers and divisional education councils are doing the best they can with what we provide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I did want to indicate to Members yesterday we had general comments, today is the question period. The longer your preamble is, the shorter allotted time for question period will be. On the list I have Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Krutko and Mr. Roland. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been quite a bit of discussion today about pupil/teacher ratios and what not, so I will focus my attention on adult education.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to review a little bit of information here from a brochure that I had received awhile back from the Prime Minister's office on Focus on Youth and Opportunities. Some of the information in here indicates that since 1981, employment for Canadians with high school diplomas or less has fallen by two million jobs, but for people with post-secondary education, employment has risen, jobs have risen by five million. In 1997 alone, employment for Canadians with post-secondary education grew by 431,000 jobs and decreased by 167 jobs for Canadians without it. The Prime Minister also indicates that graduates from universities, community colleges and vocational schools in Canada can expect incomes 45 percent higher than those with high school or less. That is almost double the income. It also indicates that in 1996 the unemployment rate for people with a post-secondary degree was only five percent, which is half of the national average.

Mr. Chairman, I have here a document called The Bridge to My Future, which was put out by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. On page six it indicates that adult basic education describes a range of programs or courses that include skill development from basic literacy to high school completion. This can include not only academic upgrading, but also preemployment and personal

development skills. Mr. Chairman, when we are talking ABE, or Adult Basic Education, we are not only talking about academics, but also preemployment and personal development skills.

The study that was done to do this report assessed all types of programs that were being done in the North and it talked to students. Those students in the ABE classes, over half of the participants had grade seven or less and adult basic education students are almost all aboriginal. On page 26 of this report, the students said when they went to school, they were more confident, had goals for the future, were more aware of their strengths, were less isolated, were more positive about the future, were learning about and participating in their community, felt more able to help their children with schools, felt that they were good role models for their children and other young people and had been exposed to new ideas. As a result of this

Page 1429

study, the department indicates that another indication here is that there are only 35 communities that have base funded adult education programs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The report that was released has been circulated widely and we have met with a number of different organizations and agencies involved in the delivery of adult basic education. During the 1997-98 year we have continued funding programs through the base that was described by the Member, as well as through investing in people programs and through several other mechanisms as well. A detailed plan, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the funding has not been produced at this point, but the funding has been maintained at past levels for the current year. We are continuing to work with the adult basic education steering committee on the development of core curriculum for adult basic education programs. That includes representation from the colleges as well as NGOs and the department. That process is, as I mentioned, continuing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A previous speaker had indicated that there is money being taken out of the adult education area. If that is true that is very unfortunate. The community adult educator stated in this report that sometimes it takes people all their courage to apply to come back to school. We cannot turn people away. Mr. Chairman, considering that it takes so much courage just to make a decision to go back to school, now we are going to institute some adult education programs and then take them away? Is that what is actually happening here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a previous speaker did say that we had taken money from adult education and put it into the K to 12 side, that is not accurate. What has happened in the overall scheme of things is that the cuts on the adult side have been larger on a percentage wise than on the K to 12 side. I think it is important to remember that a big part of the cuts that came on the adult side were because of just the sort of program the Member talks about where after a program was instituted, it was withdrawn. That was the cost-shared program investing in people. That was a program in which both the federal government and the territorial government shared equally for three years. At the end of that period of time, the federal government, which, to be fair, had initially said they would only participate for three years, did not opt to renew the program. We found the program to be so successful, that this government carried on with its investment, but we did not have the where withal to make up for the federal reduction. The program has continued through this year, with territorial government funds, but that is only 50 percent of what was available previously. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, we have Mr. Erasmus. We have a couple of seconds to spare. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a result of various things that occurred, last year there was more money put into the adult education area and for once, for the first time, some communities were able to institute

some adult basic education. Will all of those programs still continue this coming year and the following year, or will some of those have to be cut?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. That takes us to the end of your allotted time, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the funding has been maintained at the same level for this current year as in last year. Whether the programs will be in exactly the same communities, I cannot say. It would be up to the regional approval bodies to determine where the funding is being spent. In terms of speaking of next year's budget, at this point I do not believe that we have the money within our target to guarantee that the program can continue. It will certainly be something that we will work at identifying though.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have on the list Mr. Krutko, Mr. Roland and Mr. Steen down the list because he has asked questions already. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is in line with the other Members. It seems, because of the reduction in the number of teachers, the increase in the size of the classrooms and the differences that you see in a lot of the classrooms in the skill of the different students where you have students who may be in grade 7 or 8 and who are 15 or 16-years-old, compared to some other students who might be 12 or 13 years old, then combine that with the special needs students within those classrooms; it seems to really put a stress and a burden on the whole education system.

I think one thing that I have heard a lot about are the cuts that have taken place in the last couple years in regard to the Beaufort Delta region, where they have had to make special efforts to deal with this increasing problem which is basically in the area of students with FAE/FAS and that the special need's teachers are inadequate to deal with the problem. As I mentioned in my statement yesterday, what I got from the principal in Fort McPherson, from Kindergarten to grade 10 there are some 36 students who are in need of some sort of

special need's team to assist them on a day-to-day basis.

I would like to ask the Minister exactly what is being done to improve that general sector, especially where it seems to be the majority of the problem are the large numbers of special needs teachers and the number of students they have to service within the education system today, which is really having a burden on the whole quality of education that is being delivered to all students, not just a small sector of them. I would like to ask the Minister, is there anything that they are looking at in this area to deal with the problem of special needs and the problems we see in our classrooms with FAE/FAS students?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We have been indulging in side conversations? I would like to remind Members to keep it down or take it elsewhere. Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think we need to give credit to the Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council for their reaction to our fiscal pressures. The council has, over the past couple of years, chosen to reinvest a surplus it had into keeping the pupil/teacher ratio lower in that region than has been possible in other regions. The Member is talking about a situation that other communities had run into a few years ago and is now becoming more apparent in the Beaufort Delta because the surplus is being used up and they are quickly approaching the same pupil/teacher ratio as in other regions.

The reason for the change in funding was because these were the targets that we were given. We do not have the ability to provide more funding to education councils. I agree, the system is under stress. I wish I could say that I had funding available to provide to solve the problem, but I do not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Members to my right, could you please keep it down. I am hearing side conversations and it is very hard to hear the answers to questions. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister able to, or willing to, sit down with the Department of Health and

Social Services and the federal Department of Health to look at the whole area of FAE/FAS and see if there are funds available to assist in dealing with, not the educational side of the student, but the medical and physical stress that these students are under because of the conditions that they find themselves in with the alcohol related effects that they are born with? Which, basically, is no real fault of their own, but in order to educate them, there has to be a consideration of dealing with the emotional and mental ability of these students. This may mean looking at the health aspect of this condition. I think that is one area that has to be seriously addressed and it has to be taken into the whole and not only leaving it to the education sector to deal with, but also the medical community has to be involved in this sector through community wellness money or monies that are available through the Department of Health, or even federal dollars through the federal government. Will the Minister make an attempt to look in that area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The departments regularly meet as part of the social envelope, but I can assure the Member that I will make an extra effort to do just as he has suggested. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area that seems to have had a real effect on the education system is in the area of cuts that we have introduced in this House in the last couple of years. One of the major areas seem to be in the area of housing and the adequacy and expenditure increases that have occurred to teachers and the staff in our schools because of the inadequacy of housing or the increase in the costs of housing which may not have been there before because we have sold off all the government housing. Is there anything being done to look at that section of the bargaining, or negotiating some arrangement with the teachers to deal with that problem of housing concerns we have seen from a lot of our teachers in a lot of these smaller isolated communities and the increased costs associated with that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The directors of the divisional education councils are working together on a housing study for teachers in the Northwest Territories. The department is cooperating with the directors in the conduct of that study. It has not been completed as yet, so we do not have the information, but we have committed to work with the directors to examine the outcome of this study and look for solutions across the territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko, are you still on? Yes?

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area that seemed to be a concern to the teachers is the increased teacher workload in regard to preparation for the curriculum in the classroom where a lot of class in the communities have cut the budget for a lot of materials that were accessible in the past and are no longer there. They have to develop their own curriculum and their own materials, which basically, in the case of Fort McPherson, a lot of teachers have lost a lot of materials in regard to different fires. There is still that one area in which they seem to try and balance that between the day-to-day attempts and also having to take on this extra workload of dealing with the stress of the classroom in the daytime and trying to prepare your workload in the evenings. Has anything been done to try to look at formulating some sort of regime to look at the curriculum development and also that the government can put more money into that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Teachers are provided with a curriculum to work with. The curriculum is a framework that a teacher is expected to take and customize when they do their day plan into something that works in their classroom. Because no two classrooms work the same way, a curriculum has to

be customized by every teacher. The Member is right that given the fiscal situation we face, in terms

Page 1431

of material supports, that has been in most cases somewhat reduced across the territories. There is no question this is a problem. Again, this is one of those areas that I cannot say that we have a specific response. I do feel that by having high speed digital communication in all the communities this fall, some teachers will be helped because there will be an easier mechanism to share day plans and work that they have done preparing for the classroom. However, in terms of the material support which is lacking right now, I am sorry to so, I do not have a solution for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland, do you feel that you will benefit from the last four-minutes that we have left? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, I would defer my questions. I think my questions could be better addressed during regular question period, so I will step aside for the next person.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I think I will ask the Members of the committee of the whole, do you agree that the State of Education in the Northwest Territories discussion in this Committee of the Whole is concluded? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I hear an agreed, then says. I am having difficulty. Having been informed by the Clerk that the decision rests in the hands of the Chair, the voices that I heard seem to indicate that this matter is concluded.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister and the witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you. I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Good evening. 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 NWT and would like to report progress in that the matter. State of Education in the NWT is concluded. 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. Evaloarjuk. The motion is order. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Programs immediately after adjournment this evening. There are meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 11:00 a.m. and again of the Standing Committee on Government Operations at 12:00 noon.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 27, 1998:

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

8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, No. 2
 - Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1998-99
 - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Dental Profession Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
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 Wednesday, May 27, 1998, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT