



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

7th Session

Day 19

13th Assembly

HANSARD

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1999

Pages 471 - 489

Page numbers reflect printed Hansard

The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Erasmus, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Rabesca, Honourable Floyd Roland, Honourable Vince Steen.

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.

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Good morning. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 55-13(7): Year 2000 Status Report

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, later today, I will table a report on progress in Government of the Northwest Territories Year 2000 Initiative.

As my honourable colleagues may be aware, the Year 2000 problem, sometimes referred to as Y2K or the millennium bug, is a potentially serious issue that can affect microprocessors in many types of equipment. Computers are the most obvious target of this bug, but other systems such as controls for buildings' mechanical systems, medical equipment or vehicles may also be affected.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has taken this problem very seriously. Work began back in 1996 to evaluate the potential impact and to develop a strategy to deal with it. Given the distributed nature of many of the Government of the Northwest Territories information technology systems, and the wide variety of other systems that may be affected, each department was asked to develop a plan to address its specific needs. The Financial Management Board Secretariat coordinates this work.

I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in tackling this problem. Eighty-one percent of the Government of the Northwest Territories major computer systems, systems that keep this government functioning on a daily basis, have been evaluated and corrected. Also, 85 percent of the personal computers currently in use have been evaluated and are ready for the Year 2000. The local area networks that allow our computers to communicate with one another have also been evaluated and 83 percent are Year 2000 compliant.

Systems with embedded chips pose a particular problem. It is often not obvious where embedded chips are in use. Of the embedded systems identified to date, fully 98 percent have been identified and deemed to be Year 2000 compliant. Efforts in this area continue.

This report provides much more information on both the nature of the problem and the work that has been done so far. It is this government's intent to make this information available to the public, and to any other parties who may have an interest in our Year 2000 efforts. It is the nature of such a project that this information will change, virtually on a daily basis. This report will be updated monthly to keep it current. Copies of the report are available from the Financial Management Board Secretariat, or on the Government of the Northwest Territories Website.

It is important to recognize that the Year 2000 problem is enormous in scope and has no precedent. As a result, it is impossible to guarantee that every single eventuality can be addressed through this initiative. It is our intent to ensure that our most important services are not interrupted by this problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 56-13(7): Community Recreation Leader Development

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the week of April 12-18, the Town of Inuvik hosted the NWT Recreation and Parks Association annual general meeting and meetings of community recreation leaders.

What was satisfying about these two events was that most communities in the NWT were represented. Fourteen of the community recreation leaders present were aboriginal Northerners and an additional nine were long term Northerners. Most of these leaders were educated at the Recreation Leaders' Program at Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers demonstrated a strong point. For 12 years, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and Aurora College have partnered in the delivery of the Recreation Leaders Program. Seventy-one students have graduated and many are working on the job and continue to contribute. Of these graduates, most are Northerners who have learned the value of a good education. They are now contributing to the positive development of our communities through their sport and recreation services.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate our partners, Aurora College, in this initiative and make special note of the contribution that has been made by other groups such as the NWT Recreation and Parks Association, Sport North and the NWT community governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

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DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 144-13(7): Hay River Parents' Concerns Regarding the Education System

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled in the House a letter addressed to the Honourable Michael Miltenberger from a parent focus group in Hay River. This group of concerned citizens mobilized because they were so concerned about the impact of government cutbacks on educational programming. They are just now in the midst of completing their work. They are compiling the results of parents' concerns through the use of questionnaires and a telephone survey. Although the results are not concluded at this time, they note that, and I quote, "it is obvious that the concerns are not isolated to a few parents."

I further quote from their letter:

How long does the government plan to ignore what the taxpayers are telling them? We are not happy with the slash and burn approach to reduce educational spending. Large class size increases the stress for students, teachers and parents, which directly affects student's learning. The implementation of inclusive schooling, which is the integration of special needs students into a regular classroom without sufficient support and resources cannot continue.

The consequences of the careless and short-sighted education cuts affect our whole community. We have high levels of dropouts and too many young people with insufficient skills to help them survive in the workplace. When will the government realize that money spent wisely on education will give our youth the skills that they need to be productive contributors to society and as a result will reduce the government's expenditures on social programs.

Mr. Speaker, I fully understand the frustration and anger of parents who are rightfully concerned about the education of their children. The dire needs in education are not an illusion or a perception, they are real. These parents in Hay River and others are not asking the government to solve the problems by themselves, they are willing to do what they can to help arrive at solutions. I believe them when they say that they will pursue these issues as long as it takes to get results. I applaud and thank them for their efforts and I encourage other communities to form similar focus groups to demand action from this government in the area of education. Later today, I will be questioning the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment further on what direction he will be taking on these serious matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 145-13(7): Meeting to Discuss Highway 3 Reconstruction

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform this House of a meeting that will take place this afternoon, here in the Legislative Assembly. This meeting is very unique because it

has members of the Rae-Edzo Hamlet and the Band Council together with the city of Yellowknife, the N'dilo Band Council, Dettah Council, myself and my colleagues from Yellowknife.

The main focus of this historic event will be discussions on how we as a group can help our government in accelerating the highway 3 construction. I believe this is a very important issue and by having this unique group coming together as one united body is a testament of the importance of this highway. This is the first time ever that this group has assembled and I am hoping to have very positive discussions on this and other important items that have our combined interests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 146-13(7): Yellowknife Constituency Meeting Issues

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, on Tuesday evening, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Henry and I held a joint constituency meeting. I would like to briefly summarize some of the issues that constituents raised: Education funding, people are concerned about the lack of dollars in this year's budget. They urged us to try to find additional monies for education. On the budget, people are concerned that our \$34 million surplus is being used this year and they are concerned what will happen next year.

Constituents told us that over the last two years they have tolerated reduced spending on key public services because they believed it was important to have a balanced budget for division. But now, with the budget balanced and our surplus committed, there are no spare funds in the bank for after next year.

As our population continues to grow, programs in Education, Health and Social Services are already underfunded now. What will the future bring? Clearly, we need to continue our efforts in finding new revenues. Royalties from resource developments are one possible source.

On another matter, a number of constituents involved in running non-profit organizations are very concerned about government support in this area. The non-profit

service sector is a major employer and program manager in many of our communities. For example, at our meeting, representatives from the YWCA and the Canadian Mental Health Association pointed to a crisis situation in the lack of multi-year funding commitments. When they are running an operation with rental and staffing commitments based only on year-to-year funding, these

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organizations suffer from high staff turnover and program interruption.

The government provides funds to these organizations. It is also a major referral agent, directing individuals to these organizations for counselling, emergency care and work placements. It would seem to me that it is in our best interest to work at ensuring stability and success in program delivery.

I would like to see the government do a review of how it funds non-profit organizations and how both the government and the non-profit organizations can better meet the public's needs. These were some of the issues. Another issue included the Highway 3 acceleration, and the situation at Giant Mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement 147-13(7): Mothers Day Wishes

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will be recessing this afternoon, I understand, and we will not be back until May 10, 1999. Since Mother's Day is May 9, 1999, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the mothers in my riding, young and old, a happy Mothers Day. In particular, my wife and my daughter Tina. We all know the amount of work mothers go through and the contributions they make to the family. We should all be encouraging our children to be good to our mothers on that particular day. Thank you.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 148-13(7): Appointment of Board Members to the NWT Development Corporation

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about appointing board members to the NWT Development Corporation. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the honourable Minister responsible for the Development Corporation had indicated that I was twisting what I had read in Hansard late at night about who was responsible for the appointment of board members to the Development Corporation and why board members had not been appointed since 1996. I just wanted to indicate that what I was trying to do was to get a clear indication from the Minister that it was his responsibility to ensure that there were enough board members on that corporation. To date we have not had that. I wanted to indicate, for everyone to see, exactly where he has tried to lay the blame or avoid his responsibility. Mr. Speaker, on page 521 of Friday, April 23, 1999, Hansard, the Minister inferred that it was because of division that he had not had seven board members. On Monday, on page 554, he had inferred that the Auditor General said that it was okay. On Monday, on page 555, he blamed it on his staff. On Tuesday, page 608, he said that it was the MLAs fault. Again on Tuesday, page 608, he indicated that it was Cabinet's fault. Who is next on the list, the paper boy?

Mr. Speaker, has it ever occurred to the honourable Minister, as I am sure it has to others, that perhaps, if he had appointed board members when his president advised him to, the Cabinet would not have thought that he had done such a poor job that they had to direct him to do an operational audit on the Development Corporation. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement 149-13(7): Court Decision Regarding Possession of Child Pornography

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in January of this year, there was a landmark BC Supreme Court ruling that may have a detrimental effect in keeping our children safe from sexual predators. In British Columbia, the Supreme Court struck down a section

of the criminal code that outlaws possession of child pornography, ruling that the law violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Mr. Speaker, it is only a matter of time before the production and sale of child pornography increases. Although this ruling only applies to British Columbia, unless there is a successful appeal, this ruling may have national implications. The sexual assault of children is a serious issue in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is protecting pedophiles from prosecution and yet, children are being sexually exploited in order to produce this material. Is this not a blatant infringement upon the rights and freedoms of our children? The Liberal Party first put forward a motion urging the Prime Minister to take immediate action to override this ruling. However, the federal government believes that the existing child pornography law is constitutional, therefore, it would have to reach the Supreme Court of Canada for a final decision.

Mr. Speaker, how should we balance equal protection of an individual versus freedom of expression? Children are entitled to equal protection from sexual exploitation yet, according to one court, pedophiles are entitled to possess this material. There is a serious imbalance in this supposed constitutional framework. Mr. Speaker, this decision must be challenged and corrected to ensure the proper protection that our children not only need, but deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 119-13(7): Closure of White Rock, BC Outlet of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral questions asked by Mr. Morin on April 26, 1999, regarding the closure of White Rock, a BC outlet of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. As of April 30, 1999, Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. is no longer involved in any lease arrangements in White Rock, BC. A local business person, who operates another store in the White Rock area, known as

Gallery 24, has taken over the lease. Her name is Lora Read. Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. is negotiating with her to continue to carry their product lines in her store.

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Return to Oral Question 121-13(7): Closure of Calgary Outlet of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd.

Mr. Speaker, next is a response asked by Mr. Erasmus on April 26, 1999, regarding a closure of the Calgary outlet of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. IMI Marketing is a company owned by Judy Greening. She was contracted by Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. to manage our operation in Calgary for a six-month term that ends on April 30, 1999. Her objective was to manage the retail store in Calgary, and to evaluate the markets in Calgary and Alberta in general, to see if there is sufficient business to warrant continuing operating in this area. Based on this review and our sales history over the past two years, the management of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. decided to close this store.

Return to Oral Question 124-13(7): Closure of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. - Retail Stores

Mr. Speaker, in response to an oral question asked by Mr. Morin on April 26, 1999, on the closure of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. retail stores. On Monday, April 26th, Mr. Morin asked a question about my role in making decisions on the closing of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. retail outlets in southern Canada.

The decisions to close these retail outlets were based on sound business economics and the authority for making these decisions are within the jurisdiction of Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. is a registered company in the Northwest Territories and has licences to operate in three Provinces of Canada - British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

It is true that under the Northwest Territories Development Corporation Act, section 22(1) and section 22(2), guidelines for the sale of shares or other interests are subject to the approval of the Financial Management Board. However, in these cases, where Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. has made a business decision to close the southern retail outlets because they were not making money, this does not fall under these provisions of the act. In

fact, as a corporation, the Northwest Territories Development Corporation owns subsidiaries and interests in joint ventures and all of these subsidiaries and ventures are legally registered companies. As such, the management of each company can make decisions on their operations. It is only when the Northwest Territories Development Corporation is divesting its shares or interests in these subsidiaries or ventures that section 22 of the act comes into effect.

So in these circumstances, Financial Management Board approval was not sought as the authority and responsibility to make the business operating decisions are within the jurisdiction of the subsidiary company, in this case, Arctic Canada Trading Company Ltd. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce several people in the gallery. They are very honoured visitors to Yellowknife. First I would like to introduce one of my constituents, Ms. Cal Smith. Ms. Smith is here today with her parents, Russ and Betty Smith, from Ottawa. Mr. Smith is celebrating his 71st birthday tomorrow. Mr. Smith was a long-time civil servant for the Ontario and federal governments after he retired from the Canadian Air Force after serving 26 years.

What is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that for the first time, the family has four generations visiting here in Yellowknife together. So it is a special occasion for Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Welcome to our gallery. Thank you.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Welcome to the gallery. I hope you enjoy your visit. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 161-13(7): Establishment of Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. On the forum that he announced earlier this week, could he indicate how long he expects this process to take? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 161-13(7): Establishment of Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Minister's statement on that subject, I hope to have the forum members appointed in three weeks' time. We hope to have them out doing community consultations the first two to three weeks in June so that we can catch residents while they are still in their communities before the school season is over and many people go out on the land or on holidays. There will be a wrap-up in the fall, in October. We would be hoping to present a report to Cabinet, and this government possibly in October, if not to this government, to the next government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 161-13(7): Establishment of Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure I saw a letter go across my desk the other day asking for names to be appointed to the forum. Could the Minister indicate how long we have to submit names?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 161-13(7): Establishment of Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

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HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The timeline we have given for submissions has been reduced so that we can have this forum prepared to go out into the communities, as I said earlier before the school season is over. We know it is difficult to try to do community consultations during the summer months so we have shortened the time frame. I believe it is May 7, 1999. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 161-13(7): Establishment of Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to indicate I believe this is very valuable work that the Minister is undertaking. I would like to thank him for allowing us to submit names for the forum. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

That is a comment. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 162-13(7): Government Position on BC Child Pornography Case

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, Mr. Antoine. It is in regard to my Member's statement earlier today when I talked about the BC Supreme Court and the whole pornography issue and the important rights children should have for their protection. My question, to the Premier is, has his government taken any action in the form of writing to the federal government encouraging them to appeal this ruling? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 162-13(7): Government Position on BC Child Pornography Case

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to take this question as notice. I do not know the details, but the Department of Justice would be responsible for it. I will get the information and get back to the Member. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The question has been taken as notice. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. My question is, from the information that the Minister has observed and from the departmental briefings that he has received to date, does the Minister concur that there is a crisis in our education system? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been briefed. I have heard the concerns raised by the people in the communities, my own included. Do I agree that the educational system is in crisis? No, I do not. Do I agree that there are issues to be dealt with and there would be a benefit from more revenue? Yes, I do. Are there many good and positive things about our educational system and is it still continuing to function? Yes, it is. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Minister has used up all of my supplementary questions. Mr. Speaker, I want to be assured that the Minister is

personally aware of how widespread the concern with regard to education are. Has he heard from the people, has he received the message? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A person would have to be blind, deaf, and dumb not to have heard the concerns raised across the Northwest Territories. I would like to think I have none of those disabilities, and that I am very well aware of the issues. I have the letter here that my colleague referred to in her Member's statement. I know it is an issue of great significant to a lot of people. It is an issue of high emotion, to the extent they make what I consider some very personal comments in this letter addressed to me, they say in big bold letters, our children are worth it, are yours? Implying to me, that somehow, I have less of a concern as a parent or grandparent than another person in the Northwest Territories about the issue of education, or any less concern than any other Member in this House about the issues of education and how it will affect my family. Very clearly, I would say unequivocally that my concern for my family is probably not one iota less than Mrs. King. Like most parents, I value my children more than life itself. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to hear that we have such an able-bodied Minister in charge of this very important portfolio. Mr. Speaker, what potential impact can the Minister realistically bring to bear on this Cabinet and this process of a government that could result in more funding for education? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last number of days we have raised the issue of the need for greater revenues in the longer term. In the shorter term, we have been taking the steps that I have indicated we are going to, they are all underway. I would also like to point out that this budget process has been going on for eight months. The committees have tabled for the first time publicly, their report, which I have read cover to cover and all the yellow stickies indicate the commitments that we have made to the committee. Well, we all agree education is a priority, as a Legislative Assembly we have talked for eight months about education. Nowhere in here do I see one recommendation about taking 10 percent of this budget and moving it to education, or let us cut this and move it to education. This process that we are now in is the final end result of the budgeting process. All of the work that we do has been done for the most part in camera behind closed doors. We now have the public process where we stand up, the committee says this, the Main Estimates say how much money is there, this is the end product. We have two choices; we approve the budget or we remove money.

We have to plan for the future very clearly. If we are really serious about this, I know we have to let our constituents know that education is a big issue, and it is. How do we productively and proactively move ahead on that? That is the question. We have been involved with this for eight months. There are lots of recommendations in here in terms of process, how to make the existing system better, because I sat on that side until recently and I know the recommendations that we made. In the longer term we are looking for revenues. There are adjustments we can make within our system for improvements and we are working with the people on that. Very clearly, we have an obligation as an Assembly as well to, when we speak, let us be clear about where we stand in this process and what input has been involved so far. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in this House yesterday, we as elected Members are representatives of our constituents, but I know that in Hay River at least, and I am sure in other communities, the people there who are concerned about education would like the opportunity to speak with the Minister to convey these concerns directly and in person. I would like to ask the Minister if he would agree to come to Hay River to meet with educators, parents, concerned citizens, with regard to the issues of education? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 163-13(7): Crisis in Education System in NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke yesterday morning with Mrs. King and I have talked to the Member, as well. I would be more than happy, at a mutually convenient time, as soon as our busy schedules will allow, to go to Hay River where I understand they are going to have a very warm reception for me. In fact, my sister-in-law told me yesterday at supper she may be one of the people carrying placards. I look forward to the trip to Hay River and a very interesting meeting with the friends and neighbours that I have there. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakwi. It is in relationship to comparison, Mr. Speaker, for the Yukon government. The Yukon Legislature apparently passed the Yukon Oil and Gas Act, in December, 1997. This act establishes a common regime for the oil and gas industry regardless of whether development is on the crown on First Nations

settlement land. An accord apparently was signed between the Yukon government and the Council of Yukon First Nations, KasKas and the Kwanlin Dun. Can the Minister tell me if this government has examined the Yukon Oil and Gas Act, to see and perhaps to look at to see how we pursue a possibility of resolution to the Northern Accord in this fashion? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Northern Accord negotiations, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our staff are aware of the developments in other jurisdictions including the Yukon, the type of legislation that governs oil and gas activity in places like Alberta, Saskatchewan, and including the Yukon. Our government is also committed to ensuring that aboriginal governments and aboriginal leaders in the Northwest Territories are fully involved in any developmental work we might undertake to prepare for devolution. We have not done any detailed work regarding possible legislation that we might implement for the day when we can and will become, with the aboriginal governments, the owners and the managers and legislators of our subsurface resources, lands and waters in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has been unsuccessful in working out an agreement with the aboriginal organizations in pursuit of this objective. This government apparently has tried to get a memorandum of understanding with the aboriginal organizations, but to no avail. I am wondering if the Minister would consider consulting with the Yukon government and their First Nations to see what worked and what did not work in drafting a potential agreement over here? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

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Further Return To Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would he then consider pursuing efforts to involve the territorial aboriginal organizations and work with them in relationship to the political accord that we are pursuing and the Northern Accord? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 164-13(7): Application of Yukon Oil and Gas Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to trying to initiate discussions with aboriginal leaders, with aboriginal government representatives in the Northwest Territories to see if they are interested in taking a collective partnership approach to assuming ownership of all lands and resources including inland waters within the Northwest Territories and developing an agreement and a process for advancing that to the federal government. Hopefully, we will have some indication of that when we discuss this issue with the chiefs next week here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, very recently this government and the union ratified a collective agreement. Under that agreement workers are entitled to some retroactive pay and I believe a one-time \$500 northern allowance. Could the Minister indicate if this retroactive pay and the northern allowance has been paid to date and if not, when it will be?

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some employees have already received the retroactive payments to which they are entitled, however it is taking as long as two and a half hours of individual calculations to determine how much an employee may be entitled to. Therefore, it will take the entire month of May before all retroactive pay has been issued to employees. As it is calculated, it is being added to their cheques. A large number of employees have already received their payments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that information. Is there a specific date that they will be finished this? I believe that there is a date timeline that they have to follow according to their collective agreement that this has to be done by. Could the Minister indicate when they will be finished implementing all this retroactive pay that is owed to the workers? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the final pay period in May is the one which people may expect to see their adjustments.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the agreement other things were agreed upon such as enhancements to medical travel, maximum for accumulation of special leave credits, shift premiums, duty travel per diem rates, that type of thing. When will these types of things be put into place, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 165-13(7): Retroactive Payments of Northern Allowance

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware when those will be put in place. I will therefore offer to provide the Member with that information in writing on Monday or Tuesday.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 166-13(7): Microfiche Government Documents

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen. Mr. Speaker, I am still trying to find savings for this government. I accept the fact that there is no more new money. I think we all have. We have to be more efficient with the money that we do have. Mrs. Groenewegen, a couple of days ago, talked about the amount of paper that is produced in this Assembly. In fact, we have it in many of the

buildings here, we produce phenomenal amounts of money to maintain, heat and provide maintenance to. We do have expertise in the North, Mr. Speaker, companies that are already established here, who have abilities to provide this government and other business with services in providing microfiching of documentation. My question to the Minister is, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Public Works and Services consider putting some speed into trying to assess the savings that could be generated for this

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government by microfiching some of the documentation that they have already produced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 166-13(7): Microfiching Government Documents

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, the department would definitely consider it. The department will look into the advantages of using this process and I will get back to the Member as to what the results of the department study is on this. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry

Supplementary To Question 166-13(7): Microfiching Government Documents

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for that response. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, I have approached every Minister of Public Works and Services since my time in this house, suggesting this be looked at and I received very favourable responses as I have from my honourable colleague here. Could the Minister advise me, or give me a date when he will have that research done and bring that information back to this House to show the savings that could be generated for the government? Could the Minister give me a time frame for that? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 166-13(7): Microfiching Government Documents

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my honourable colleague a definite date on that, however, I will try to bring it to a close with some kind of information on this as quickly as possible. I am sure the department is well aware of the question at this point, I am also aware that this particular question was put to the department when my predecessor, Mr. Roland, was involved. Obviously we are not moving fast enough on this as far as the Member is concerned, but I will commit to it again. I will bring it up to the department for a quick response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question for today is for the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi. It is in relationship to concerns that business people and others may have. It is to deal with the small claims court and the amount of dollars that an individual can go to small claims court on. At the present time it is \$5,000. My personal opinion, and some feedback I have received, is that it should be higher than \$5,000, Mr. Speaker. There are always difficulties on the part of a business if it is \$5,500, then you cannot go to small claims court, it has to be done through lawyers and by the judges. I believe even some of the legal people would probably agree with me because some of them are very small claims. Also it would save this government money in court costs if individuals were allowed to argue before the courts that the claim is owed. It saves court time. I know in other jurisdictions there are small claims courts and judges specifically dedicated for this. I am wondering if the Minister would consider having his department look at changing the level and the amount that could be claimed in court under the small claims court by changing it up from \$5,000? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the view of the Department of Justice that the limit for small claims is sufficient at this time. If there are some compelling reasons why that should be changed, I am prepared to consider it, so if the Member could advance those to me I would be prepared to review that again. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's approach to this that if I had compelling reasons, but I am wondering if the department has compelling reasons why it is not being changed. In my opinion, and I think if the department were to consult with the business community and the individuals in organizations they would likely find that there would be support for this approach, so rather than me coming up with all the compelling reasons which I think my comments are very logical in my mind, I wonder if the Minister can ask for justification from his officials as to why they will not change it? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister of Justice, Mr. Kakfwi

Further Return To Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it the Department of Justice has decided that there would be no change to the limit at this time. I would be prepared to give the Member, in writing, the reasons that the Department of Justice has for sticking to that decision. I will be prepared to do that, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could also ask his department if they could get comparisons from other jurisdictions, the provinces and so forth, what the amounts are, and some of the compelling reasons why they are at those levels in those particular jurisdictions? Thank you.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 167-13(7): Small Claims Court Procedures

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 168-13(7): Special Needs Students

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week sometime in the House I suggested to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment that we might take some of the money which has been allocated to some training programs and use them in conjunction with the students in our schools. I was thinking of young elementary school students with special needs. I have had a chance to think about it a little bit more. Mr. Speaker, apparently there is a need to train special needs assistants and as we know we have students that could use the benefits of remedial type work in some of the basics in education over the summer months. I know it has probably been tried to some extent, in some of the communities, whereby there are summer schools available to parents and students who need to get caught up over the summer, but I am thinking more of a remedial education programs perhaps in the morning and a summer camp program in the afternoons, something to that effect which would integrate employing students and training people in the area of special needs work in

the schools. Has the Minister had a chance to give any more thought to this idea in directing some of this funding he has allocated to training to this area of special needs students? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 168-13(7): Special Needs Students

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the area of training for special needs. A lot will be dependent, of course, on when the money becomes available once the budget is passed, but yes, it is an area we are looking at. If the Member would care to talk further about this in more detail with the officials of the department it may add to our deliberations. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 169-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development. The questions are in relation to the Diavik diamond project. Mr. Speaker, the Diavik project is a large undertaking and due to the location of the deposits and the mining method proposed, a large horizontal and vertical footprint will be left. Although the basic mining concepts proposed are well established, the location of the deposits under water requires some innovative engineering solutions to allow conventional mining methods to be executed. These innovations introduce a significant construction water management component to the project. The most substantial environmental impacts may well be during the construction period, and once the decision to proceed is granted and construction is commenced, the process will essentially be irreversible.

The mining options are: mining without a dike; mining with a dike; and, underground mining with open pit crown pillar. Mr. Speaker, both the public and DIAND have expressed concern about the impact of Diavik's proposed mining process will have. DIAND hired an

independent contractor to assess alternative mining technologies to address two main concerns. First, are there alternative ways to mine deposits such as these which could reduce surface disturbance and potential environmental impact, and secondly, is there some way that the currently proposed footprint could be reduced. The contractor came back and said that there should be a way to minimize this footprint and, in fact, indicated that perhaps, mining partly underground would be acceptable. Mr. Speaker, what I am wondering is, what is the government's position on the use of alternative mining technology to carry out this project? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi

Return To Question 169-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has taken to being very critical of the way I phrase my statements and how long they are. Because it was very long-winded on his part, the preamble anyway is extensive and I would not want to miss anything so I will take the question as notice. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus

Question 170-13(7): Evaluation of Diamond Mining Proposals

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is in relation to how the government evaluates diamond mining. In the Diavik diamond project, Diavik stated they would consider five factors in the evaluation of mining alternative. First, applicability; secondly, technical uncertainty; third, risk to work, health and safety; fourth, environmental effects; and five, economics. Could the Minister indicate what criteria does the government use when evaluating proposals?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 170-13(7): Evaluation of Diamond Mining Proposals

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that was an elaboration on the same question that I took as notice. I will take the question as notice, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I believe that was a new question, he was talking about the evaluation process. The question has been taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 171-13(7): Trespassing Legislation

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MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen. Mr. Speaker, in September of 1998, I wrote to the former Minister to bring to her attention the fact that there is no legislation in the NWT to deal with trespassing on private property. Property owners have been telling me they are having problems with trespassers and they can get no help when they call the RCMP or city by-law because the RCMP and by-law have no legal power to remove trespassers. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me, at what stage legislation, if any, is being worked on by his department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 171-13(7): Trespassing Legislation

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member raised this matter last fall with the former Minister and that a commitment was made to consider the suggestion for a change in the legislation. The appropriate change for different municipal legislation to give authority to the communities to pass by-laws to remove trespassers from private property was not included in the municipal legislation review. This proposed legislation was tabled in January of this year, and it did not include any suggested changes to allow for municipalities to pass by-laws to control

trespassing. However, this legislation is coming to the committee of the Assembly. At that point in time, I will respond to the Member and we will include the suggestion in the legislation at that time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise on a point of privilege on a personal matter.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Proceed.

Point of Privilege

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today during question period, I have been reflecting on my comments to the honourable Member from Hay River when she asked whether I had heard the voices and the concerns raised by the people about education. I used the phrase that I would have had to be blind, deaf and dumb not to. On reflection I think that was an inappropriate choice of words. I would like to clarify for the record my intent was not to denigrate or cast any negative connotations on those disabilities. Having a sister myself who is hearing impaired, I know full well the burden that those disabilities may be. While I cannot rewrite Hansard, I would like it noted that I am aware that I should have used better terms to describe how acutely aware I am of that particular issue. Thank you.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I recognize your comments and it will be noted. Item 7, written questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 5-13(7): Cost of Paper Products for Legislative Assembly Operations

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is for the Premier. Could the Premier please provide to this House an approximation of the dollars

spent in the areas of: paper products, printing, photocopying, binding, disposing, storing documents, related to the operation of this Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

DEPUTY 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. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 37-13(7): Year 2000 Status Report

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled, Year 2000 Status Report. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

Tabled Document 38-13(7): Minister's Forum Letter

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the letter I sent to Members requesting names for the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services in responding to a question earlier today I inadvertently gave the wrong date. The date for names to be returned to my office is 5:00 p.m., May 14th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion, 20-13(7): Extended Adjournment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 20-13(7): Extended Adjournment

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, that notwithstanding rule 4, that

when this House adjourns on Friday, April 30, 1999, it shall be adjourned until Monday, May 10, 1999;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 10, 1999, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon, the House shall meet at the time stated at such notice and it shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to at that time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Motions. Item 17, first reading

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of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, and committee report 1-13(7), and tabled document 31-13(7), 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 three items on our agenda today. Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, Committee Report 1-13(7), Report on the 1999-2000 Business Plans and the 1999-2000 Main Estimates. Tabled Document 31-13(7), Report to the Minister, Public Works and Services, April 15, 1999, Regarding Issues Raised in the Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to recommend the committee continue its consideration of Bill 17, and the committee report, specifically with the Department of Education.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. We will commence with the consideration of this item after a brief break. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call committee of the whole back to order. We have the items that were listed before, the committee has indicated that they would like to deal with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Would the Minister like to make opening remarks?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Yes, I would, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is my pleasure to introduce the 1999-2000 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. These estimates are based on the business plan that was presented to the standing committee last November. They have been modified to reflect the concerns raised by committee Members. At the appropriate time, I will be making a motion to add the additional \$2 million announced in the Minister of Finance's Budget Address for the Working Together and Skills for Work Programs. The total proposed budget for the department is 156 million dollars for operations and maintenance and an additional \$13.5 million for capital.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has a broad mandate with responsibility for early childhood education, schools, advanced education, including the college, workplace training, income support, and culture and heritage.

I would like to highlight a few of the activities that will form the basis of our work in 1999-2000. I have already talked in this House about the work associated with the Minister's Forum on Education. Depending on the outcome of the implementation

discussions with DEC's, DEAs, Members of the standing committee and other parties, we will be addressing a number of the recommendations over the next year. As well, the work on reviewing and updating the strategic plan will be complete by the end of June. This plan will help set the long-term directions for the department. I am confident that, as a result of the extensive public consultations the department has undertaken, the plan will very accurately reflect the priorities of NWT residents and we can make sure our resources are directed to those priorities.

While schools and government have an important role in education, culture and heritage, we cannot underestimate the fundamental role of families and communities in raising healthy, happy children who are secure with who they are. It is said that for every dollar you invest a child with difficulties, there is a future saving of \$7. As a government, we have recognized the importance of investing at the very early stages of a child's life. We are participating with all the other Canadian jurisdictions in the National Child Benefit. This initiative is designed to help reduce child poverty. The second phase of the NCB, which will be implemented in July of this year, will result in approximately \$160,000 in savings from reduced income support payments. This money will be reinvested into the Healthy Children's Initiative. Along with some minor internal reallocation, this will allow us to maintain the funding for community-based programs at their current levels.

As Members have pointed out so clearly over the past few weeks, effective schooling is also essential. There have been some very positive changes in our schools. Over the past few years, both attendance and achievement rates have been increasing. Last year saw the highest ever number of high school graduates. Three hundred eighty-one students graduated from high school during the 1998 calendar year, which is an increase of 29 percent over the previous year.

While it is great to see more young people staying in school, increased attendance puts more pressure on the education system. We are very aware that the pupil/teacher ratio is high and at risk of going higher because of increasing enrolments due to people staying longer in school and higher than national average birth rates. Last year, the department was able to increase the funding going to schools to keep pace with these growing enrolments. This year we will be committing an additional \$1.2 million to maintain the pupil/teacher ratio at its present level.

Adult and post-secondary training is critically important in the North as we prepare residents to take advantage of the many opportunities available in government and the private sector. In addition to the full range of programs offered through the college and in partnership with other organizations, we will place particular emphasis on the Teacher Education Strategy. This strategy sets clear directions for training northern teachers. There is also an additional investment of \$1.3 million to enhance the training for health and social work professionals and almost \$400,000 in training in the secondary diamond industry. As

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announced last week, \$1 million will be used to continue the community-based Skills for Work Program. This program supports pre-employment programs by community groups, as well as adult basic education, skills development and community job training through Aurora College.

Another \$1 million will extend the very successful Working Together Program for an additional year. Through a wage subsidy, this program encourages employers to hire young people. This program provides the employers with extra workers and gives the young people useful experience that will help them gain permanent employment in the future.

Another exciting area of investment in the coming year will be our information network system. We are rapidly connecting schools, libraries and college facilities to the DCN and Internet. We expect all facilities to be hooked up by the end of June.

One area where we plan to use existing funding in a new way is the area of language and culture. We are working closely with the language communities to develop a territorial language strategy that will focus on the preservation and promotion of our unique languages.

In a number of areas, we are working closely with the other departments in the social envelope. In the months ahead, we will be reporting on projects such as harmonization of income support and social housing programs, and a framework for an agenda for children and youth. The interconnections between our departments make this co-operation and collaboration essential to our success in developing and delivering effective programs. The activities of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment are extremely diverse. The budget

before you reflects the broad range of functions we are responsible for. I look forward to discussing it with you in more detail. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time, I will ask Mr. Erasmus if he would please read the social programs overview of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Erasmus, please.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department of Education, Culture and Employment offers a wide range of services. These include Early Childhood Programs, School Services, Education and Training for Adults, Income Support, Culture and Heritage and Information Technology.

During the review of the 1999-2002 business plans on November 23 and 24, 1998, the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Minister agreed that in the future, the department should make notes in the business plans as to the long-term financial commitments of the department. It may be necessary for Cabinet approval to occur before costs of long-term leases can be included. The committee was also concerned as to the lack of detail in the goals, measures, targets and strategies in the business plans. In reporting back to the committee during the Main Estimates review, the department committed to supplying more details in the 2000-2001 business plans.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs reviewed the 1999-2000 Main Estimates presented by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on March 14, 1999. The committee noted that there were organizational changes within the department's financial reporting format. The committee also noted an overall increase of \$3.292 million from the figures presented in the departmental business plans. The proposed increase is intended to offset the additional costs of nursing and social worker programs, the new job evaluation system, and the building and learning program.

Early childhood education. The committee recognizes the value of early childhood programs. Kindergarten is not mandatory in the Northwest Territories; there are few jurisdictions that require attendance in schools before the age of six years. During the business plan review some Members expressed concern that

kindergarten is not mandatory in the Northwest Territories. The committee requested that the Minister report back to the committee with the results of any studies that have been completed in regard to correlation between childhood programs and school success. The committee was supplied with copies of early childhood services for kindergarten-age children in four Canadian provinces: Scope, Nature and Models for the Future. This study investigates how kindergarten and child care combine to meet the needs of children and families but does not supply correlation between early childhood programs and school success. This issue remains outstanding. Programs that are part of the Healthy Children Initiative have been evaluated. During the business plan review the committee requested and have since received copies of that evaluation.

School years. Social passing. Presently the decision to use social passing lies with the District Education Authorities. As a result of social passing, teachers are required to teach multi-grade levels in one classroom. It is necessary that teachers be supplied with adequate resources to meet this challenge. In studying the numbers of students in different grades in the NWT, it is found that there is a high number of grade ten students compared to grade nine students, grade 11 students and grade 12 students. Some of these numbers may be attributed to students returning to school when grade extensions are offered in their community. However, when students reach grade ten, passing is based on ability. The committee felt that when some of the students who had been socially passed reached grade ten, they did not have the necessary skills to acquire passing grades and would be retained at this level. This could be a major contributor to the "bump" in the numbers of students at the grade ten level. The committee has reservations in regard to the merits of the "social passing" of students. During the review of the 1999-2000 business plans, Members requested and have since received documentation on this issue.

Multi-term school year. During the review of the 1999-2000 business plans, the committee discussed the possibility of year-round schooling with more terms than are presently offered. A multiple term year would allow for greater flexibility for parents, school programming and increase the use of school buildings. The Northwest Territories Education Act requires communities to develop and set their own school year. The committee recommended that the department explore the option of year-round schooling and multiple, shorter terms for all grades

and share their findings with district education authorities. The department has responded that they will circulate information on year-round schooling to all jurisdictions.

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High school extensions. Committee Members are concerned about the quality of grade extensions in small communities. Presently there is no tracking of high school graduates in the Northwest Territories in terms of employment and pursuit of further education. The committee encourages the department to develop a method to track the success of NWT high school graduates in acquiring jobs and achievement in post-secondary education. The committee looks forward to receiving further information as to the progress of this initiative. The department completed a high school review. The committee requested and received copies. The committee noted that this report only includes the preliminary findings of the review and looks forward to receiving a more comprehensive, final document.

Northwest Territories grade 12 diploma. The requirements for a grade 12 diploma have changed within the last five years. To acquire a grade 12 diploma, a student may only need to write one standardized test, in the subject area of English. The standardized examination used is the departmental exam from Alberta. Final evaluation is determined by combining 50 percent of the student's departmental exam mark and 50 percent of the mark achieved through course work. An additional two grade 12 courses are necessary to acquire a diploma but the courses do not have to be in subject areas where Alberta departmental exams are required. There are a greater number of grade 11 level courses required for a diploma; English, social studies, mathematics and science. The grade 11 courses do not have territorial-wide tests and a territorial-wide evaluation scheme.

The Minister explained that the NWT diploma is not used as a means to enter into post-secondary institutions and further explained that consistency between schools and school districts within the NWT is achieved through the common requirements laid out in the curriculum. However, the committee still feels that there are wide discrepancies in competency levels of students taking the same course in different communities. The committee has concerns in regard to the quality of the NWT grade 12 diploma. What is the value of an NWT diploma if there are no territorial-wide standards for evaluation or testing? In the

committee's view, the delivery of the standard curriculum alone is not an adequate measure. Further, the present method of evaluation does not have checks to ensure that the curriculum is being taught or evaluated competently. A great deal of power is given to individual teachers in the evaluation of students and the delivery of curriculum. During the business plan review, the committee discussed with the Minister the possibility of developing standardized examinations for the Northwest Territories for core subjects.

Madam Chairperson, I will pass the report to the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ootes, would you like to continue with the committee's review of the department.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will continue with the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the reports on the review of the 1999-2002 business plans and the 1999-2000 Main Estimates. I believe we are starting on income support.

Income support. The committee notes that there have been ongoing discussions between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in regard to 16 to 18 year olds who meet the conditions of the Child and Family Services Act. These individuals, under the act, are eligible to live on their own but are not recognized as being eligible for income support by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The committee would like to see this issue resolved and would like to be informed as to the solution.

Student financial assistance. During the business plan review, committee Members indicated that constituents have reported to them that there may be inconsistencies...

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Ootes, I am sorry to interrupt you. I should have thought of this when the report was passed between the two Members. I do not want to fail to recognize some visitors we have in the gallery. I will let you resume your report just in a moment because I realize they may have a game to go to, and I do not want to

miss the opportunity to recognize some visitors that we have here. From Aklavik Moose Kerr School, we have the boys soccer team, just wave when I call your name so we see who you are. We have Cory Greenland, Andrew Gordon, Marshall Sayers, Darren Archie,

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Ryan McLeod, Lawrence Ross, Joyce Storr. With them chaperoning we have Grant Potter, who is a teacher, Lorna Storr, who is the vice-principal of the school, and Carol Potter. These are Mr. Krutko's constituents, and we just want to welcome you to the Assembly. Good luck in your games.

--Applause

Mr. Ootes, I am sorry to have interrupted you. Could you please continue with your report?

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We are on page 31 of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. This is the report of the review of the 1999-2002 business plans and the 1999-2000 Main Estimates. I believe I started on student financial assistance in the collection of non-forgivable student loans. The committee would like the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to ensure that consistency is being applied in the collection of non-forgivable student loans and encourages the development of an adequate tracking system for the Student Financial Assistance Program. Further, the committee noted that aboriginal students not covered in the Indian Act, are required to pay income tax on their student grants. The committee requested information regarding income tax obligations for non-aboriginal students, aboriginal students covered under the Indian Act, and aboriginal students not covered under the Indian Act.

Culture and heritage. Aboriginal languages. During the review of the business plans, the committee raised concerns in regard to aboriginal language communities that have not submitted proposals for funding for the development of language strategies. As a condition of funding, organizations are required to have their language plans developed by March 31, 1999. To date, no proposals have been received for the North Slavey, Chipewyan or Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun languages. The committee recommended that the department play a lead role in the development of a strategic plan for aboriginal languages, in conjunction

with languages communities and the Language Commissioner. The department's response was that they "will continue to take a leadership role in working with the language communities in developing an overall framework of language programs." That is in quotes, Madam Chairperson. ECE has also offered to assist aboriginal organizations to develop their own strategic plans for revitalizing, developing and promoting their languages". The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is also the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act. The Northwest Territories Official Languages Act is due to be reviewed. The committee recommends that the role and mandate of the Languages Commissioner be examined as part of the review of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act.

Culture and heritage policies. The preservation and protection of culture and heritage is important to the people of the Northwest Territories. During the review of the business plan, the committee noted that there are government policies relating to culture and heritage that date back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. These policies may be outdated or no longer relevant. The committee recommended that there be a review of government policies relating to culture and heritage to make the policies current. The department committed to undertake this review in 1999-2000.

Madam Chairperson, perhaps I could take a moment and have my colleague, Mr. Henry, the MLA for Yellowknife South, continue reading the report? It is quite lengthy, if that is agreeable with the chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Henry, would you like to read a part of the report? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, I would complete reading the report, if that is your wish.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

You are not a member of the Social Programs Committee, but please proceed, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If the members of the Social Programs Committee do not have a problem with me continuing to read it, I would be

happy to do so, if you could inquire of them if they mind if I read it. We have a shortage of Members.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, are you agreed to allow Mr. Henry to continue with the report on Education, Culture and Employment?

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As you can see, we have a severe shortage of Members here. For that reason, it should be okay to share the reading of the report with Members who are not normally on the Social Programs Committee, but I think certainly it very clearly demonstrates the problem that we have with only having a 14 Member Assembly and that very clearly there are six Cabinet Members sitting on the other side over there and only four of us here. It is very difficult for the MLAs to properly do our work. I think that it clearly demonstrates this. I just wanted to indicate, while I have an opportunity, Madam Chairperson, that Members that are not here are at funerals. But we do agree that Mr. Henry can continue reading the report. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you very much, Mr. Erasmus. Yes, it is unfortunate that some other Members of the Social Programs Committee who would like to have been here to participate in reading this report and considering this particular department are unable to be here today. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. For the interest of the rest of the Members of the committee or committee of the whole, the Members on the social committee are Mr. Morin, Mr. Erasmus, and yourself, Mrs. Groenewegen. I would be pleased to continue reading the remainder of the report.

Culture and heritage policies. The preservation and protection of culture and heritage is important to the people of the Northwest Territories. During the review of the business plans, the committee noted that there are government policies relating to culture and heritage that date back to the late 1980s and the early 1990s. These policies may be outdated or no longer relevant. The committee recommends that there be a review of government policies relating to culture and heritage to make the policies current. The

department committed to undertaking this review in 1999-2000.

Human resources and affirmative action. The committee

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expressed concerns regarding the low number of aboriginal employees in managerial positions in the department in the business plan review. The committee recommended that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment study the affirmative action plan utilized by the Housing Corporation and try to implement a similar one for management positions within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The response of the department was the department has been developing an overall human resource development plan. A copy of the NWT Housing Corporation's plan will be obtained for use in developing the plan for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The committee also recommended that the NWTTA, that is the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, professional development training include an affirmative action priority for educational leave. The department will ask the central Professional Improvement Committee to address this recommendation. In the review of the 1999-2000 Main Estimates, the committee also noted the absence of the application of affirmative action policies in granting professional development opportunities for staff who fall under the Aurora College bargaining unit. The Minister has agreed to raise this issue when the next collective agreement is negotiated.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. For greater clarity, I just wanted to mention that the Member, in reading the report, had missed a word on the bottom of page 32. He had indicated that affirmative action policies, in review of the 1999-2000 Main Estimates, the committee also noted the absence of the application of affirmative action policies in granting development opportunities for staff. That should have been granting professional development opportunities for staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you for noting that, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could you just remind us what page we are on of this report please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Henry, what page did you leave off on?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would be pleased to answer that question. I believe we are reviewing the Standing Committee on Social Programs report on the review of the 1999-2000 business plans and the 1999-2000 Main Estimates. I believe, for the Member's information, we were dealing with the page after 32. We are just at the top of page 33.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Does that help you out, Mr. Ootes?

MR. OOTES:

Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Does the committee agree Mr. Henry should continue?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Erasmus, for pointing that error out. I will now carry on with the report on the review of the 1999-2002 business plans and the 1999-2002 Main Estimates. The next heading, Madam Chairperson, is affirmative action stipulations for training. During the Main Estimates review, the Standing Committee on Social Programs was surprised to learn that there are no aboriginal trainees in the Sirius Diamonds training program. Sirius Diamonds has received government funding for training. The Standing Committee on Social Programs was concerned that perhaps insufficient efforts were made to acquire applications

from individuals of aboriginal descent. The Minister will pass this concern on to the company. In the future, government should review how funding for training initiatives could be more closely linked to affirmative action policies of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Building maintenance. The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to determine if there has been less preventive maintenance being performed on its buildings in small communities, since the department of Public Works and Services no longer performs those duties. The concern was raised, during the review of the Main Estimates, that when contractors go into the communities to perform maintenance, they only perform the maintenance they are contracted to do. When DPW performed the maintenance of government buildings in small communities, it was not limited by a contract. Often, DPW personnel would perform more tasks than were listed on their work orders. The Minister agreed to follow up on this issue.

The final one on page 33, Madam Chairperson. Funds spent on administration. The Standing Committee on Social Programs noted that administration costs are involved in the delivery of programs and in the functions of the district education authorities and the department's directorate. The department has agreed to do an evaluation of its operations to determine the total amount of money spent upon administration and provide its findings to the committee.

Madam Chairperson, with your indulgence I would like to pass the report back to my colleague from Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, could you conclude the report for us.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to thank my two colleagues, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes, and the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Henry, who are on the Infrastructure Committee, but who have very ably read part of the report since we do not have enough Members on this side to properly address this situation. Madam Chairperson, we are doing the report on the review of the 1999-2002 business plans and 1999-2000 Main

Estimates. This report is a report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. We are on page 34.

Exit interviews. The committee was concerned to learn that exit interviews are not conducted with all personnel that leave the employ of the department. The Standing Committee on

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Government Operations had placed this as a priority within government. The Minister agreed to act upon this concern.

Madam Chairperson, under the heading informatics. The committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work in conjunction with other departments in the social programs envelope to develop common information system strategies where possible, and work with other government departments in developing common computer platforms.

Madam Chairperson, that concludes the report of the Social Programs Committee,

--Applause

On the review of the 1999-2002 business plans and the 1999-2000 Main Estimates. This report runs from page 27 to page 34. Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to, once again, thank my colleagues from Yellowknife who were able to assist me in reading this report since we do not have enough other Members from the Social Programs Committee. The Member who had to go to a funeral and to attend to a constituent, a very sick constituent, and we certainly wish that constituent well and a speedy recovery. That concludes the report. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Erasmus, I believe that there are some committee motions to be dealt with. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 26-13(7): Territorial-Wide Tests and Evaluation Scheme for Grade Eleven Core Subjects (ECE)

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The committee would like to make as a first motion, we have three motions stemming from the report. There may be

other motions as we proceed. I am sure that Members would probably have other motions as we know that in the last couple of weeks there have been many concerns brought up with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Madam Chairperson, I move that this committee recommends that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment investigate the possibility of developing territorial-wide tests and a territorial-wide evaluation scheme for grade 11 core subject courses, math, social studies and sciences to ensure consistency in curriculum delivery and an equitable evaluation of students across the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Erasmus, your motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will be voting in favour of this motion. Madam Chairperson, we have heard on many occasions complaints from the general public that there is a feeling that all regions of the Northwest Territories do not provide a consistent method of delivering core subjects and not even only the core subjects, I should say courses. What the people are saying is that, for instance, if you move say from Deline to Inuvik or from Lutselk'e to Yellowknife or from Fort Resolution to Hay River, because primarily what they are talking about is when the smaller communities cannot deliver the same amount of courses as the larger communities so...

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call the committee to order. I am having a difficult time, even with my ear piece on, hearing what Mr. Erasmus is saying. Mr. Erasmus, please continue.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will just start over so the Ministers will have the benefit of what I was saying. Madam Chairperson, as I was saying, we have received a lot of complaints from the general public that the programs from one region to the next are not consistent. Perhaps because the larger communities are able to use a greater budget that they can offer more courses, a greater variety of

courses and that type of thing. Sometimes when children move from one region, particularly from a smaller community to a larger community they find that their children, for instance, are supposed to be in grade 7 when they reach that larger community in a larger school and they have to get readjusted to a larger school and the rest of that, they find that the child is not at the actual grade 7 level that they are teaching in the larger community. I have heard that myself from several people who moved to Yellowknife and they were very disappointed when their child was starting school and very quickly found out that even though they had been doing quite well in the school that they had come from that they were actually at a lower level.

Although we are talking about grade 11 core subjects in this motion, you could use grade 11 as well in my example and that is what is being complained of. Madam Chairperson, we have asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on many occasions if the grade 12 courses are consistent across the Northwest Territories and he says, well, yes, because the grade 12 core courses have what are called departmental examinations and these departmental examinations are all exactly the same. For instance, if you take Math 30 in Hay River or if you take Math 30 in Inuvik or in Yellowknife, or Fort Smith for that matter. No matter where you take grade 12 math, Math 30, those students will all have to write the same departmental examination and those departmental examinations account for 50 percent of the mark and this is how the department rationalizes that there is consistency in the grade 12 curriculum and the way that it is taught across the Northwest Territories. Madam Chairperson, recognizing that the department feels that this an effective method of guaranteeing consistency in the core subjects of grade 12, our committee felt that the best way to ensure consistency with the grade 11 core subjects would be to institute a similar type of departmental examinations for those grade 11 subjects, math, social studies and the sciences.

We know that the departmental examinations for grade 12 are not actually developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. They are actually developed in Alberta. Our Department of Education distributes those examinations to all the schools where grade 12 is taught and our students write those examinations, of course, with our teachers supervising. What would be needed, Madam Chairperson, to implement these departmental examinations for the grade 11 core

subjects in the Northwest Territories, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, of which Mr. Dent who is now the

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Finance Minister and the current Minister is Mr. Miltenberger, what would be required is that the department would have to develop these departmental examinations for the Northwest Territories.

While we would not actually be able to compare or to say it that is consistent with the Alberta curriculum, unless we based our examinations on the Alberta curriculum. We could ensure that all the students in the grade 11 core subjects that their education is consistent, that they are all taking and learning and do know the basic things that they are supposed to be taught in those subjects. Madam Chairperson, this was the reasoning of the committee. I am sure that if the other Members who are not here, would have not been able to attend today for constituency reasons, I am sure that if they were here they would also vote in favour of this motion as I wish, I hope my other colleagues from Yellowknife South, Yellowknife Centre and North Slave are all going to vote in favour of this motion as well. With that I would like to thank the chair for allowing me to speak on this committee motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Your ten minutes is up. I would like to remind Members that they should try and keep their general comments within the ten minutes, because that was very good. Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, Mr. Erasmus has talked a lot about the need for consistency and, Madam Chairperson, my understanding is that we presently have a process where students in these grades have to sit departmental examinations prepared by, in my understanding, the Department of Education in the province of Alberta. The motion talks about ensuring consistency in curriculum delivery and an equitable evaluation of our students across the Northwest Territories. I think this is an extremely important position that the department and the government as a whole should be taking. We have a number of students in our school system that within the

territories we will not be able to always find jobs for the students. It is a common fact that in today's society you have to be prepared to move to where the jobs are. If we are out of step in our consistency with other provinces or jurisdictions, it is going to make it more difficult for the students in the Northwest Territories to compete for higher education and also for jobs in other parts of the country. Any initiative, Madam Chairperson, that is going to encourage and provide that consistency to give the students in the Northwest Territories an equal opportunity to compete with other jurisdictions, I am very pleased to support.

Madam Chairperson, I thank my honourable colleague from the Social Programs Committee for moving this motion and like him, I also hope that all Members that are with us today support this motion and that indeed the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger, MLA for Thebacha hears what is being said and the implications of not acting on the motion. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for the time allotted to me.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. To the motion. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Like my colleagues, Mr. Erasmus, who has moved this motion and Mr. Henry, the MLA for Yellowknife South, I would also like to speak on this motion. My position will be to support this motion which I think is warranted. There certainly is a need for consistency in our education system. The methods of delivering the courses obviously do vary from region to region and possibly from school to school. As Mr. Erasmus said, if you move from one community, to another community, for example, if you move from Paulatuk to a larger centre, perhaps Fort Smith, which is a large centre, then perhaps the courses delivered are much more expensive and there may be inconsistencies in the courses.

Children then have to readjust to that situation and there may be difficulty for them to catch up. They may be at a different grade level which does need to be addressed. I, too, like my colleagues, feel that in all likelihood, the other Ordinary Members who have been drawn away inadvertently because of constituency pressures and needs would likely support this motion. Madam Chairperson, at the appropriate time, I would like to ask, and I am not sure if it is my prerogative to do this or whether it is

the mover of the motion to do this, and perhaps I could pose it as a question to the chair, that we have a recorded vote on this motion. Perhaps Madam Chairperson could address that question for me if I may ask that there be a recorded vote.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes, it is appropriate for you to request that we have a recorded vote at the appropriate time. It is so noted that your request has been made and there will be a recorded vote. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes, Madam Chairperson. In that case, I do request that we have a recorded vote at the appropriate time that this motion is dealt with.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

So noted. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus, as the mover of the motion, you can speak to the motion again if you wish. I am sorry, in committee of the whole, the rules are a little different than they are in the House. Point of order, Mr. Steen.

Point of Order

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I believe rules say that all the Members should be allowed to speak before another Member speaks twice to a certain subject and, furthermore, before they speak twice to a certain subject, should be at the discretion of the chair or of the committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. I believe that you are correct that the ability for a Member to speak twice is at the discretion of the chair. If you would like to speak to the motion prior to Mr. Erasmus speaking to it again, your point is noted and your point is correct. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I do not wish to limit the Member's ability to speak but I did listen to his comments for ten minutes. Unless I can hear some new points to the comments and still address the motion, I am prepared to listen to some more, but I think that the fact should

be taken into consideration that we are trying to move along here within the timelines. Not to restrict the ability of

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the Member to speak but to speak to the motion. I would suggest to the Chair that the Member has had his opportunity to speak. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Your point of order is correct. It is the discretion of the Chair whether or not to recognize the Member again, and it is the responsibility of Member not to be repetitious but, unfortunately, until I have heard what Mr. Erasmus has to say, I would be unable to determine whether or not he is going to bring any new points with respect to this motion to the floor at this time. I would have to hear what he has to say before I could say that he is not bringing any new information to the motion. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, as I had indicated earlier, the intent of this motion is to have consistency across the Northwest Territories in the core subjects in grade 11. The reason for that is to ensure that students across the North receive the same education. Those students, Madam Chairperson, deserve the same education no matter where they live, and it is up to us to ensure that this can happen. The MLAs in this building were voted upon by their constituents to ensure that people are treated fairly and consistently no matter where they live. The Minister of Education, at least the former Minister of Education, Honourable Mr. Dent, who is now the Finance Minister, so he is a very Honourable Mr. Dent now. Madam Chairperson, the Minister of Education, the former Minister of Education has told us many times that most jobs now need a minimum of 16 years of education, I believe this is what he said. Sixteen years of education, Madam Chairperson. Sixteen years of education means that you have to finish high school and to be able to get into university or college and then you have to be able to have a good enough education so that you can complete your university or college program.

In order to prepare our students properly so that they can finish their university and college educations, we must ensure that when students move from one

region to another, when they start a new program at another school, that they do not have to repeat a grade. Madam Chairperson, this, of course, will save money for this government in the long run which, I am sure, the Minister of Finance will be grateful for and the Minister of Education as well. Whoever the Minister of Education is in the future, because if students are able to go to university and finish their education without having to repeat their courses over and over, then that saves us money because they only have to go once and go straight through for four years.

Madam Chairman, there are other reasons why we need to ensure consistency, why we have to ensure a quality education for our students. We need leaders in the future. Those children out there, these young Pages, those are our future leaders. We need them to become MLAs. We need them to become chiefs, presidents of Metis locals, mayors of hamlets, cities, towns, band counsellors. In order to have a good leadership in the future, Madam Chairperson, we need to ensure a consistent quality education across the Northwest Territories. Madam Chairperson, the way that we wish to ensure this quality education across the Northwest Territories is to ensure that at the grade 11 level, that the core subject courses of math, social studies, and sciences have territorial department examinations. With that, Madam Chairperson, once again I would like to indicate that I will be voting in favour of this motion. I am sure the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and the Minister of Finance will join me, as well as the rest of the Cabinet as I am sure they would also like to see a consistent, quality education across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

To the motion. Question has been called. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Madam Chairperson, I would like to request a recorded vote.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. That has already been requested. We will have a recorded vote. The question has been called. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte):

Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Henry, Mr. Rabesca.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. All those opposed please stand. All those abstaining please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte):

Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Dent, Mr. Roland, and Mr. Steen.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. I have the results of the recorded vote. The results are for, four, against, zero, abstentions, six. The motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 27-13(7): Examination of the Role and Mandate of the Languages Commissioner

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I move that this committee recommends that the role and mandate of the Commissioner of Languages be examined as part of the review of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Madam Chairperson, a large part of the reasoning for this is in the committee report, however, I wanted to indicate that there is a feeling that perhaps the Languages Commissioner's role should be expanded and clarified so that he or she can promote languages as it is not now being done by the commissioner. There are a few things like that, that have to be looked at and also the act, indicates that the Official Languages Act, has to be reviewed by 2000. This is why we are making this recommendation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 28-13(7): Departmental Coordination to Develop Common Computer Systems and Platforms

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education,

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Culture and Employment work in conjunction with other departments in the social programs envelope, to develop common information system strategies where possible and work with other government departments in developing common computer platforms. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Madam Chairperson, I move we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you. I will now rise and report progress.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 17 and committee report 1-13(7) and would like to report progress with three motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Seconded by Mr. Roland. All those in favour? All those opposed? 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):

Orders of the day for Monday, May 10th.

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 Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 18, Loan Authorization Act, 1999-2000
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000
 - Committee Report 1-13(7)
 - Tabled Document 31-13(7)
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned
to Monday, May 10, 1999 at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT