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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Erasmus, Honourable Sam Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Morin, 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.

SPEAKER (HON. Sam Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. Good afternoon. I would like to thank the Member for Mackenzie Delta for serving in my place while I was away.

--Applause

Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 57-13(7): Northwest Territories Investment Tax Credit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring Members up to date on the status of the Northwest Territories Risk Capital Investment Tax Credit. This initiative was announced in last years' budget, and approved by the House last September. The program allows investors in Northwest Territories and Nunavut businesses a credit of up to 30 percent of the amount of their investment against Northwest Territories income tax payable, to a maximum credit of \$30,000 a year.

The purpose of the credit is to encourage Northerners to invest in northern business operations. I am pleased to inform Members that the administration of this program is now in place, and eligible businesses may apply. The government has appointed Carron Business Services as administrators of the program. Northwest Territories businesses interested in raising capital through the plan should contact Carron Business Services directly for information.

Information is also available on the Department of Finance Web site.

To date, two businesses have registered to raise a total of about \$1.5 million through the program, and several more are working on applications. I am confident this program will encourage new, small and medium-sized northern businesses to start-up, and existing businesses to expand. Smaller businesses create most new jobs for Northerners and contribute to the growth of our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 58-13(7): National Nurses' Week

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise the Members of this House and the public that May 10-16, 1999, is National Nurses' Week. Nurses across Canada are being recognized this week for the valuable contribution they make to the country's health care system. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all the nurses in the NWT for the work they do to help all Northerners lead healthy and productive lives.

Nurses play an important role in keeping our communities healthy. Through their public health, health promotion and disease prevention services, nurses help to provide us with resources to lead healthier lives. Nurses are the backbone of the NWT health and social services system. They make up almost 85 percent of our health care workers. In most northern communities, a nurse is the first person you see when you need health care. As the first point of contact, northern nurses are expected to provide a broad range of services, requiring special training and knowledge.

A new initiative announced in the budget, if approved, will commit \$3 million over the next two years in nurse compensation to help us attract and retain competent nursing professionals. But compensation is only part of the solution. People also want to feel that their job matters and that they make a difference. A qualified nurse can choose where she or he wants to work. Nurses are in great demand, not just in the North, but right across Canada and internationally. It is important to let them know that they are welcome and appreciated in our communities.

Communities can play a critical role in making the North a more attractive place for nurses by supporting and respecting their role at the community level. Nursing is a challenging profession.

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While at the International Council in England, there will be an opportunity for the NWT delegates to do some recruiting, and hopefully attract new nurses to come to work in our territory. National Nurses' Week provides all of us with the opportunity to say thank you to our nurses for the dedicated professional care they continue to offer us. I encourage my fellow Members to take some time during National Nurses' Week to recognize and thank the nurses in their communities for the important work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 150-13(7): Recognition of Mother's Day

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mother's Day is a special day of the year to recognize and cherish all the mothers in the Northwest Territories for the caring, loving, guidance and patience they have given us. We all have been given physical attention as newborns with the love and care of our mothers. They were always there when we needed them. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend all my wishes to all the mothers of the Northwest Territories in recognition of Mother's Day, which was yesterday. I sincerely wish that they all had their day with their loved ones and not just for recognition of one day, but throughout the whole year. I would like to recognize all the mothers in my riding of Mackenzie Delta at this time and wish them all the best for yesterday and for the year to come. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 151-13(7): Consultation by Cabinet and Government

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are times that I am sure the average resident of the Northwest Territories gets very confused when they listen to the goings-on of this Assembly. We constantly talk about consultation, between ourselves as MLAs and Cabinet Ministers, between ourselves as MLAs and our constituents and, even, as a government, consultation between ourselves and our aboriginal partners.

While the other side of this House certainly tries to paint a positive picture on the amount of consultation that they do with the Ordinary Members of this Assembly behind closed doors, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the consultation is not quite as all-encompassing as the Cabinet Ministers have led the public to believe. Mr. Speaker, I do not have to try very hard to think of examples of this government spending significant amounts of public money with no consultation with Ordinary Members of the Legislative Assembly or other affected stakeholders.

--Applause

The recent Minister's Forum on Education was formed and mandated with no consultation with the Ordinary Members or the Standing Committee on Social Programs. The \$4 million and rising MDAP where any resident of the Northwest Territories could access up to \$10,000 was announced by the previous Minister Responsible for the Housing Corporation with no consultation with the Ordinary Members or the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

In last year's budget there was \$400,000 extra for the City of Yellowknife so that it could market itself as a potential diamond centre, again, there was no consultation with Ordinary Members.

This Government under the auspices of the former Minister of Finance spent \$500,000 on an Economic Strategy, again, with no consultation with the Ordinary Members. Where was this item carefully considered in the Main Estimates?

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that by just mentioning a few examples from the past couple of years residents will realize that the Ordinary Members of this House are not consulted over every decision made by this government. And, that there are several occasions

where Ordinary MLAs find out about new government programs and initiatives at the same time as residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this up because the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has stated that the Ordinary Members of this Assembly have had eight months to adjust the budget, behind closed doors, somehow implying that the failure of the government to address financial shortfalls in the education budget had to do with the inability of the Ordinary Members to make this happen.

This is not true, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Thebacha well knows having sat on the committee that considered the budget of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for seven of those eight months. He is well aware of this. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

For the benefit of the translators, I would like to ask the Members to please slow down a bit. The Member for Hay River is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mrs. Groenewegen, you have unanimous consent.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout the budget process, Ordinary Members have stated that there is a need for more money in education. The government has stated that they agree, but instead of

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dealing with the issue they have put the ball back in the Ordinary Members' court, by asking us where we should make the cuts.

--Applause

Mr. Speaker, this government appears to be able to make decisions that cost the taxpayers of the Northwest Territories money, without consulting the Ordinary MLAs or the affected stakeholders, when it suits them. However, Mr. Speaker, it appears that when there has to be a major decision made on the future of education funding in the Northwest Territories that requires a major governance decision to be made, this government is content to sit back and point fingers at this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 152-13(7): Recognition of NWT Nurses

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on a more subdued note, Mr. Roland spoke about this being Nursing Week and I would also like to make some comments on that. I want to begin by also recognizing and thanking all our nurses for their dedication and professional commitment to the health care system in the Northwest Territories. We have often heard visitors and even residents within the territory comment that our health service workers are outstanding. We have many nurses who have been providing care in our communities for 20 to 25 years. That sort of commitment and continuity is of tremendous benefit to everyone. As a front-line profession, the trust and working relationships established by nurses is crucial to the health of our communities.

The vacancy rate for nurses in the NWT is between 25 to 32 percent, I understand. That compares with what is considered a normal vacancy rate of 7 to 9 percent. The turnover rate in the nursing profession is not an isolated problem, nor is it to the territories. Similar turnover is being experienced in the teaching profession. Some of the circumstances, of course, contributing to the high turnover have to do with wages and benefits, but also with stressful working conditions. Nurses need to be better recognized for the important and crucial role they serve in our communities.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 153-13(7): Education Funding Concerns

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in this Chamber ready to continue our discussions regarding our current year's budget as well as working on various other important items.

Recently, I received a letter from a concerned educator working in my community. Her concerns, of course, are in regard to the limited amount of funding available for our education system and our children's future in education.

Recently, we have seen the Minister's Forum on Education come forward with a number of very good recommendations, as well as receiving petitions regarding this important issue from across our territory. Yet, our government continues to inform us that we do not have the dollars to implement these recommendations. I ask this House, do we want our children to suffer from the highest pupil/teacher ratio in Canada, when we already have the highest level of special needs students in Canada and the highest illiteracy in Canada? Not to mention the highest dropout rate and the highest suicide rate among the youth in Canada, as well as the lowest funding in Canada.

We must find a solution to this very grave problem or our children's future will be a very dismal sight. We need to work together to ensure proper funding is in place for all of our educational facilities. We must also ensure that our children, have the opportunity to succeed as well as any child across the country has. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 154-13(7): Development of a Northern Accord

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to comment today on the development of a Northern Accord and the reasons why we need it. Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier and a couple of Cabinet Ministers made a presentation to the Dene chiefs here, in Yellowknife. They had indicated that they had wished to develop some kind of, what we have called in the past, a Northern Accord, to bring control of the northern resources to northerners. In the past the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has indicated that she would not proceed unless all the aboriginal governments were in agreement.

Mr. Speaker, a good example of why we need to act quickly in this regard is that the federal government refuses to act in the best interests of Northerners.

You just have to look at the federal government's refusal to include recommendations on the secondary diamond industry in its comprehensive study of the

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Diavik Diamond Project. Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of the socio-economic benefits from diamond mining come after the diamonds are taken from the ground. If we cannot ensure northern access to rough diamonds, we may as well just leave those diamonds in the ground.

--Applause

Right now, we receive virtually nothing, no benefits, while the federal government receives over 90 percent of the royalties.

Mr. Speaker, the guidelines for the environmental assessment of the Diavik project state that the project must provide opportunities to diversify the northern economic base to produce and supply new goods and services. The federal government is refusing to put this into their guidelines and we cannot force Diavik to provide rough diamonds for a local secondary diamond industry or to provide jobs to Northerners because the federal government has legal control of our resources currently. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? Mr. Erasmus, you have unanimous consent.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, we currently cannot do much to force resource developers to provide rough diamonds for a secondary industry and we know that we are probably going to have a \$60 million deficit in a couple of years here and aboriginal governments need money to implement self-government. Mr. Speaker, this indicates to me that the aboriginal governments and the GNWT should focus on developing a process as quickly as possible so that, hopefully, this would provide enough extra revenue so we can maintain current levels of programs and services. I applaud the government in its move and I urge the aboriginal leadership to accept the offer and to move quickly. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I also would suggest that the aboriginal leadership do not try to solve all the problems

between us while coming to an agreement. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Morin.

Member's Statement 155-13(7): Dealing with Special Needs Children

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my Member's statement today I will be reading a letter I received from one of my constituents.

As a parent, I would like to say to you, the Minister of Education, the former Minister of Education and the Assembly, the following:

Do any of you know what it is like to teach a child with special needs, along with 20 or more other children in the classroom? I am a parent with a special needs child that is ADHD and I have volunteered my time in the classrooms to help out. As a parent this is not an easy job, to raise a child with special needs. Could you imagine a teacher with just one child with ADHD, ADD, FAS or FAE with no help in the classroom? It would be like trying to teach 40 children all at the same time. In our school a lot of the classrooms are split classrooms. Not only are the teachers frustrated, but the children are as well, not to mention the special needs children. We fail to help them for no other reason than for money. Our children want to learn and are not getting the help they need from their own government. Please do not pass the buck to the next set of MLAs. We need the help now. We are pleading to you for help. Find the money that is needed to help our children, do not tell us there is no money when we hear that \$1 million is going to adult education. Put some of it into our young students, and if you do it now, then it will not cost you more in the future. Make sure you know what is important to our future. As a parent and a Northerner, I believe our children's education is our future. I keep hearing that education is very important to our elected officials and yet it is the last to get help.

Our former Minister of Education spent approximately \$350,000 on a forum, yet everything that the forum found out was put on the table with Mr. Dent last May by all District Education Council Chairpersons. Do you not think that the money spent should have gone into the classrooms? Do not forget it is taxpayers'

money, so do not put us aside. In closing, I would like to thank everyone for listening and I would like you to reconsider your decision and put more money in the classrooms for the benefit of our children.

A parent in need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement 156-13(7): Union Representation for NWT Power Corporation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling a petition signed by over a hundred employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. I would like to give a little background to the issue raised in the petition. Under our Public Service Act, the Union of Northern Workers is designated as the employees' association for all employees of the Northwest Territories. The employees have no right under Northwest Territories legislation to decide who will most effectively represent their interests.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of association as a fundamental freedom of each Canadian citizen. Our Public Service Act expressly denies that right. I have raised this issue before with the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. I appreciate that he has said that he would be willing to change our act if he was

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convinced that a majority of Power Corporation employees wanted changes. Mr. Speaker, the petition that I will be tabling today bears the signatures of a majority of the unionized Power Corporation employees in our territory. These employees all want the ability to explore alternative representation. I believe the Minister's condition has now been met.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that even without this petition, the Public Service Act should still be changed for all government workers. Employees must have freedom of association, the right to

choose, at all times, not just when the Minister agrees. Employees may or may not choose to stay with the UNW at any time, but it must be their choice, without interference from outside parties.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that once this petition is tabled, the Minister will act with the utmost urgency to bring the necessary amendments to the Public Service Act to the House. As he is aware, negotiations are ongoing and this issue is extremely time sensitive. Changes must be made now or the Power Corporation employees' rights will be denied for a further three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Oral Question 89-13(7): Policies to Assist Small Business

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by the honourable Mr. Krutko on April 21, 1999, in regard to policies to assist small business.

The Business Incentive Policy is the government's main procurement policy. The policy provides existing northern businesses with a level of business incentive that compensates for the higher cost of operating a business in the Northwest Territories. The business incentive provides a 15 percent bid adjustment for approved northern businesses and an additional 5 percent for operating the business in a specific community, resulting in a combined preference for local content of 20 percent. Despite this, it is still the responsibility of individual businesses to bid competitively on government contracts.

A negotiated contract for the design and construction of a new school at Fort McPherson was awarded to the Gwich'in Development Corporation by the Beaufort Delta Education Council. Tetlit'zheh Construction Ltd. is a sub-contractor under this contract. The parties to this contract are currently under mediation in an effort to resolve outstanding issues.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Returns to oral questions. Mr. Steen.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Henry on April 30, 1999, regarding microfilming government documents.

The GNWT has made substantial progress in recent years toward improving records keeping and records storage processes. The Department of Public Works and Services has been working with departments toward effective records management in a variety of areas. The adoption of a standard classification system was a major step, as are the ongoing efforts towards computerization.

As part of its advice and support to departments, PWS provides regular information concerning the best form for keeping records, whether it be paper, microfilm or some other format. For example, filming records that must be kept longer than 25 years may be done to save storage space or it may be done so that a backup copy is readily available. Information about these types of issues is provided and discussed at regular meetings of department records coordinators. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Return to oral question, Mr. Kakfwi.

Returns to Oral Question 169-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you Mr. Speaker, I have two returns today, both to Mr. Erasmus from questions he asked on the 30th of April. The first is in relation to alternative mining technology.

As required by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, proponents are required to consider any alternative means of carrying out the project which are technically and economically feasible and assess the environmental effects of each alternative means. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as the lead regulatory authority under the environmental assessment process, evaluated the three alternative mining

technologies presented by Diavik. DIAND hired a consultant who evaluated Diavik's assessment of alternatives and provided a written critique.

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

Mr. Speaker, the second return is on the question about the evaluation of diamond mining proposals. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for evaluating mining alternatives rests with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as the lead regulatory authority under the environmental assessment and review process. The Canadian Environmental Assessment

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Act requires that the environmental impacts of any technically and economically feasible alternatives be considered. The overall purpose of the environmental assessment process is to ensure that projects do not cause significant adverse environmental effects. Therefore, environmental effects are the key criteria government uses in evaluating alternative technologies. However, safety aspects and employment opportunities are also factored into the decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Pat Thomas with the NWTTA.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from my Member's statement people might think that I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, but before I would turn my questions to him, I have some questions for the Minister of Finance. As everyone knows, Mr. Speaker, we concluded three weeks of consideration of the budget a week ago Friday. We had some times during that when there were some unusual circumstances in the House, whereby we had few members here and we did have an unanticipated break in the budget session for a one week period.

Now we are back, after that one week period, here in the House. So, Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed on the Friday night after we rose for the week break to come back when I heard the Honourable Minister of Finance being interviewed on the radio on Friday night, making comments about the fact that the education budget had not been passed, and in fact, university students now returning home to look for jobs would probably be delayed, in part, thanks to the Ordinary Members for the budget not being passed and this would not be considered until sometime in May. That was on CJCD radio, Mr. Speaker, that was on Friday night and all day Saturday. I have never heard a piece run so many times, and I perceived it as bullying, badgering and browbeating the Ordinary Members for what happened.

We had good cause and good reason to postpone dealing with the education budget last Friday because we had few Members, we wanted to go home to consult our constituents, and we were pressed for time. We had been here for three weeks and we needed time to do research.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Finance is, did the Minister of Finance anticipate that we were actually going to consider the \$167 million in education last Friday in two hours and walk out of here with a concluded budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget process has been going on for sometime. It started last fall when the business plans were presented to the committees of this House. It carried on with presentations of the budgets to the committees and then, finally, it culminates in the budget session in the Legislature. As the Member indicates, we were here for three weeks and, yes, it was the expectation of the government that we are here to work on the budget and we would probably conclude the budget. Mr. Speaker, the Member asks specifically about the Department of Education, Culture and Employment budget. It is within \$1 million or \$2 million of the amount for the Department of Health and Social Services and, perhaps, the Member would like to check how long it took this Assembly to consider that budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Mr. Speaker, now I have so many questions. I will try to fit them into three supplementary. Could the Minister of Finance agree that education was the last scheduled department for consideration, and that the Department of Education has created a tremendous amount of concern amongst the people of the Western Arctic who have been contacting us as MLAs, unlike other departments of this government at this time? Would the Minister of Finance, in view of the scheduling, not agree, and come clean and tell the public that there was an unanticipated break in the budget session, a one week break? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there was a break in consideration of the budget as we were not sitting last week and we are here today considering the budget. I had not anticipated there would be a break, and there was. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there was an unanticipated break, Mr. Speaker, in for one week, the budget session, would the Minister not concur that we would return to

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this House to conclude consideration of the budget? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have said previously we are here today to conclude consideration of the budget. I hope we are able to conclude consideration of the budget today, tomorrow or however long it takes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Finance, since he seems to be very keenly aware of this particular program he referred to in his radio interview called Working Together, would the Minister please tell us if the one week delay on the consideration on this very important Department of Education, Culture and Employment has caused a delay in the hiring of any students or has this caused any hardship that he is aware of, or was this just an issue he raised to, as I said browbeat the Ordinary Members? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 172-13(7): Dealing with the Education Budget

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, April 30th, the Members of Cabinet may have felt browbeaten by the actions of some of the Ordinary Members.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there has been a delay in the implementation of that program because that program was not included in the Main Estimates. Therefore the Interim Supply Bill that was passed did not include any funds for that program. It is, therefore, in contravention of the Financial Administration Act for any funds for this program to be expended. The program cannot be funded until the budget is concluded and that amount of money is approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from the Fort McPherson Joint Council which is made up of the Band Council and the Hamlet Council. Mr. Speaker, the letter is in regard to concerns with the social worker in Fort McPherson. Mr. Speaker, the letter states that at the present time there is only one social worker in the community, and that person will be leaving the position on May 14th, which will leave the community with no social worker to deal with the social services and problems in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the letter also states that at present the social workers are seeing an increased workload and administration in regard to client visits. They state that it is due largely to the closure of the Tl'oondih Healing Centre and having limited consultation resources to assist social services in the area of care. Mr. Speaker, I sent the Minister a copy of this letter to make him aware of the issue, so I would like to ask the Minister, what can his department do to assist the community of Fort McPherson so that they can continue to deliver health and social services programs in the community of Fort McPherson? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services Department, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises a very important point, that social workers all over the territories are feeling the pressure that we have in the system of demanding services or increases in the demand for services and increasing difficulty to complete their tasks. I did receive a copy of the letter from the Member this morning. The department is in contact with the regional health board to see what is occurring and how we can help to reduce the concerns and have qualified workers in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort McPherson has almost 800 people, yet we are leaving the responsibility to one individual. I would like to ask the Minister if he can also consider looking at the increased workload on other social workers in, say, Aklavik and also in Tsiigehtchic, who presently have to depend on limited resources for social workers. Can he also look to assist those other communities and see if there is also a problem with shortages of social workers in those communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to go back to the department to get more information in that area. I am sure that, as the Member and the Members of this House are aware, that we are quite concerned with the number of workers we have in the smaller communities. We are struggling to try and deal with that and come up with a solution. I think we have

showed, as an Assembly, we are committed to that by approving the \$3 million which is part of the retention package for health and social service workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 173-13(7): Social Services

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Delivery in Fort McPherson

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the joint letter, it clearly states that they would like this treated in regard to the concerns as the serious matter and that it be urgently dealt with. I would like to ask the Minister, how soon can he get back to the community and try to assure them that they will not have no one in the Department of Health and Social Services and they will ensure that there will be a social worker in the community?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has been working with all boards and the Inuvik Regional Health Board, as well, to try and deal with the shortages of nurses and social workers in the communities. We do take this very seriously. As I said earlier, I think this Assembly has shown the importance that it places on the quality and care of residents in all the communities, so we are doing what we can. I will get back to the Member as to the information I receive. The calls are just going out early this afternoon to try and get more information as to the specifics of these concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also note in my letter with regard to the increased workload that the social workers are having that they are also finding, that with the closure of the Tl'oondih Healing Society and the limited consultation resources, people in other portfolios, the alcohol and drug providers, will the Minister also look at ensuring that when we talk about community empowerment, we also allow the community to take on these responsibilities and have the resources to assist the social workers so that we can decrease the workload of the social workers?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 173-13(7): Social Services Delivery in Fort McPherson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of human resources, the health boards have been block-funded, and on a formula basis, it is worked out as to the amount of funding they would receive that they can apply to the different areas, whether it be nurses or social workers and facilities-wise. That is all included. We do not have more funding to go over and above what has been delegated to the health boards. As I stated earlier, we are trying to deal with the issue of the shortages that we are seeing throughout the territory and the extra funding we got will go a long way to ensuring that we can try and meet the needs of our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent. They also are concerning the Working Together Program, which is a program that was part of the budget. My question relates to the Interim Supply Bill that we passed in April, Mr. Speaker. I believe, on this budget, it was for three months of supply because we anticipated that

we could not pass the budget until May or June, depending on when we would meet. Therefore, I am wondering if the Minister could tell me why the Working Together Program was not a part of the interim budget that we passed, the Interim Supply Bill?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time the budget was presented to the committees, the Working Together Program had been presented as a sunsetted item, meaning one that would not have any funds attached to it. The decision to continue the funding for that program was made, I believe, seven or eight days before the budget speech. Therefore, it was not included in the Interim Supply Bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

That confused me, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister can just restate that for me because I guess the question I have from that is, was that a Cabinet decision not to include it in the budget, or was it a committee recommendation not to include it in the budget?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the program was initiated, it was presented as an initiative for two years, which expired on March 31st, 1999. In the business plans that were presented to committee and in the detailed budget presentations, that

program was shown as having no funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It still does not answer my question. Was it a Cabinet decision not to put this item in the budget or was that a committee decision not to put it in the budget? Since I am not part of the social envelope committee, I think it is a fair question for me to ask here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

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Further Return To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made two years ago to fund the program until March 31, 1999. That was a decision that, as part of the regular business planning process, came from the government, was presented to the committees, and was voted on by this Legislature in terms of the allocation of funds. In early April, when we were considering the budget as a new Cabinet, we looked at initiatives that we could undertake given our fiscal situation and felt that the Working Together Program had proved very worthwhile and one that should be continued for one more year. Therefore, this initiative was announced in the budget speech. It is now up to this Legislature to determine whether or not those funds are approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we are only dealing with \$1 million and since we, no doubt, in the next two

to three months, will pass this budget because we did provide, I believe, a \$40 million or \$50 million interim appropriation, could the Minister not see fit to apply the \$1 million dollars to this particular program? Surely they have that right within the department to juggle money between programs. I am wondering why that cannot be done in this particular instance instead of suggesting that this Legislature is holding up this particular program because we asked questions beyond last Friday. I do not think that is fair. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 174-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the Financial Administration Act does not allow funding transfer for programs not included in the Interim Supply Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister had made a reply to an oral question that I had asked him on April 30th concerning the alternative mining technology in relation to the Diavik diamond project. I had asked the Minister what was the government's position on the use of alternative mining technology to carry out this project. The Minister, in his reply, had indicated that, as required by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, proponents are required to consider any alternative means for carrying out the project which are technically and economically feasible, et cetera. However, he neglected to answer my question. I was just wondering, if the Minister did not answer my question, what is the government's position on the use of alternative mining technology, does that mean that the department does not have a position on Diavik using alternative mining technology to carry out their project? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet does not take positions on issues like this. We are involved in a process where Diavik is proposing to open a second diamond mine. The authority to decide that is federal. It is federal legislation that governs this process. The Minister of DIAND will decide the terms and conditions under which a license will be issued. As a government, we suggest that any technology should be considered that is feasible, that does well for the environment as well as for the people and wildlife involved. Every technology that can advance development, as well as protect wildlife and the environment, as well as benefit people should be advanced. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated that the government does not develop positions on this type of stuff, or mining technology. Could the Minister indicate why they do not develop positions on these things?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, as we have said, it is not for us to take a position and to make a decision on these. These are being advanced by the proponents of the mine that is being discussed with the aboriginal leaders and aboriginal communities to a federal process. There are a variety of interests here, and at the end of the day it is not the Government of the Northwest Territories that is going to make that type of decision.

We do look at the different suggestions that are made and we do evaluate the merits, the pros and cons of them, but we do not take a final decision on these types of issues while they are still being discussed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated that it is not up to the GNWT to make a final decision. That is obvious, Mr. Speaker. However, it is up to the GNWT to look after the best interests of the residents of the Northwest Territories and looking after the environment and the wildlife, I would expect is included in looking after the best interests of our residents. What I would like to know is has the GNWT expressed a preference of how the mining projects are

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developed, whether they should be more actively pursuing different alternative mining technology to carry out the project? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The aboriginal communities and aboriginal groups are also involved in this process, as I have said. It would be premature and presumptuous of us to take positions in advance of their having an opportunity to give due consideration to some of the suggestions that are being made by the proponents. We try to make it a habit to hear out communities as well as the environmental groups, the aboriginal communities affected, to ensure that their concerns, economically, from a business standpoint, their concerns and interests regarding wildlife, the land, and the environment are all properly weighed and considered by themselves as well as by the process and that we take an active part in that. That

is generally how we carry out our part of the exercise in a process like this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated that I did not want to move prior to the aboriginal organizations reviewing and making some type of statement, I believe. I cannot remember the exact wording. However, does this mean that if the aboriginal organizations, governments, are basically in agreement that this project should proceed using alternative mining technology such as more underground mining, that this government will go hand in hand with that agreement and also indicate that this is the way things proceed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 175-13(7): Alternative Mining Technology Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it does not mean that we will take a position simply to be in agreement with any party involved in the process. What it means is we enter into the process with the best of intentions to work as best we can to make sure all factors are considered, so the process in everyone's interests are taken into account and given due consideration before the process concludes. That is really what it means and that we hope that the process will give due regard to the interests of everyone and that somehow we will all end up happy with the decision and the results of the work and deliberations we enter into. That is what it means. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity last fall because of the initiative of our local education society in Fort Resolution. Fort Resolution Local Education Society had the vision to bring in a Mr. Tom Hartman, a leading expert in attention deficit disorder into the community. They also had an opportunity to bring over to join in the workshop, a local education society from Lutselk'e, as well as many teachers and people from the South Slave district. To date, Mr. Speaker, I have never heard any negative response to that workshop that we held in Fort Resolution. I have only heard positive things about that workshop that was held in Fort Resolution. Also, at that same time, Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to have Mr. Hartman put on a small type workshop here at the Legislative Assembly and at that time there were also many teachers from Yellowknife that were able to attend as well as many of the Members. Mr. Hartman's theories are quite different than other peoples' theories. He is known as one of the leading experts in attention deficit disorder. He is renowned around the world. I do not know if Mr. Miltenberger had the opportunity at that time to attend the workshop. I cannot remember. But is Mr. Miltenberger, as Minister of Education, aware of Mr. Tom Hartman and his theories on attention deficit disorder? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I did have the opportunity to attend the workshop session over, I believe, it was a lunch hour, that was organized by the Member from Tu Nedhe. To that extent, I am familiar with Mr. Hartman. I am also somewhat aware of the issue of attention deficit disorder. It is one of the many special needs that we are trying to deal with in a constructive way as a government and, in fact, it is on the list along with FAS and FAE as I work with my colleague from the Department of Health and Social Services trying to pull together a more coordinated approach in dealing with those very critical issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to hear that the Minister of Education is working with his colleague, our Minister of Health and Social Services on the special needs in our classrooms. Mr. Hartman had tried to, he has never firmed up, but he made a statement at that time that he may be willing to come to the Northwest Territories to work with our teachers and our educators, our parents and our local education societies to help them with the special needs in our communities. Now, I know that there are many different special needs and he may not have benefit to them all, but I think that we do have to look and see how we can address the issues in our classrooms. It may not necessarily only mean just throwing dollars at the problem, but it may mean being innovative and trying things differently. Is the Minister, Mr. Speaker, willing to take a look at innovative ways and different approaches on how to meet the special needs in our communities and in our schools? Thank

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you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly, as the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, with a budget of \$170 million which everybody has pointed out quite eloquently is insufficient, I am definitely very interested and so are the officials of Education, Culture and Employment at looking at innovative ways to, in fact, see how we do business, how can we address issues working with communities and DEAs and schools to look at some of the issues that the Member has just touched on. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes the answers may lay just across the street in some of the issues that need to be addressed in our education system as well as in our schools. Mr. Speaker, I know that in some cases the government has worked in a cohesive manner with other departments to enable programs to be carried out in the school. Like the Minister has just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I believe he said it was a \$168 or \$170 million budget, the Department of Education has. But also, Mr. Speaker, I must bring to his attention there was approximately another \$500 to \$600 million that the government has out there and there are other departments that can assist with our educational need in our school systems. It does not necessarily mean the money has to be transferred to the education budget. What it means is that the government has to work as a whole on the education issue in the Northwest Territories whether it means creating economic development opportunities so our children can go there or creating opportunities through the Housing Corporation so that they can make use of the big shops that we have in our schools that sit idle. Those are the ways. Is the Minister willing to work with his colleagues to find other ways to work within the schools to develop programs, ultimately educational programs that we need in the school so that we can make better use overall of our government dollars? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger

Further Return To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has succinctly and quite, accurately outlined, I think, an approach that we are trying to take, that the social envelope committees Members with the Departments of Health and Social Services, Education, Housing, Justice and MACA are, in fact, at the table trying to come together with a work plan as we were directed to as well by the social programs committee. But yes, we recognize, along with the Member, that the \$170 million that education has is not the only money that the government has in the social envelope. We spend 60 percent or so of the government's budget

and there is a lot of room and a lot of potential to better integrate our efforts to better coordinate what we are doing to come up with, along with the communities and DEAs and health boards, ways to integrate and make sure we are as efficient and effective as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

MR. MORIN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary. As the Minister is aware the community of Fort Resolution is situated in my riding of Tu Nedhe. I have Lutselk'e in the riding as well. I know that local education societies are very, very involved as well as the parents in the educational needs of their children. I also know that sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when we seem to look too broad or talk a problem at too high of an issue, that sometimes you do not come up with the proper solutions and sometimes it is better, Mr. Speaker, that you tackle those issues at the grassroots levels right at the communities and right at the schools where our communities are willing to look at innovative new ways and look at everything in their community in order to move ahead on their education. Is the Minister willing to look at pilot projects or is he willing to also look, Mr. Speaker, at working with the communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e on new innovative ways to meet the education need in their community with all the other departments in that community as well? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 176-13(7): Attention Deficit Disorder Workshop

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member from Tu Nedhe raises a critical issue and that is, in fact, how important the family is and the child is. It is the centre and the starting point for the development of our programs. There is a need to work back from there, be it to preserve language or culture, come up with a way to improve the education system. That is where you learn your values. That is where you get

your start in life. Yes, as Minister, I am very interested as are my colleagues, as I have indicated, to sit down and work as closely as we can with the communities. I agree that a lot of the common sense, hands-on suggestions are going to be found in the communities. Very clearly, communities will not have a standard response to every issue and that the Member's communities of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution probably have their own unique perspective and suggestions in how to improve their situation. I would be happy to speak on behalf of my social envelope colleagues that, yes, we are interested and I hope to in the not too distant future get an opportunity to go down to the Member's communities to, in fact, talk to the DEA. Next week I am heading off to the Beaufort Delta, Holman Island, Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk and Tuktoyaktuk, but I am going to try to visit all of the communities. Yes, I look forward to the chance to sit down with the Member and his community to, in fact, touch on these issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

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Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions again are for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, since the Ordinary Members of this House are being vilified in the media for not rushing through the education budget, I think it is important for the benefit of the public that they understand the rationale of why the Ordinary Members took their time with this. To that end, could the Minister please inform the House why did the Assembly during the budget session in the middle...

MR. SPEAKER:

We have a point of order. Mr. Morin.

Point of Order

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the greatest of respect, a point of order. The Member from Hay River continually mentions the Ordinary Members of this House. I am one of those Ordinary Members and let

me assure you the Member from Hay River does not speak for me as an Ordinary Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good to get that clear. I am sure everybody understands that. Could the Minister of Finance please advise this House why we did break for one week in the middle of the budget session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will allow that question to be forwarded to the Minister of Finance, but I do not know if the Minister can answer for the whole Assembly. The Minister of Finance.

Return To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you have pointed out, I cannot answer on behalf of the Assembly. I can say that it was the government's expectation that we would come back this week after concluding the budget to see whether or not Bill 15 might be coming forward from the standing committee for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the interest of a thorough consideration of the education budget, perhaps the Minister could explain to us why he took it so personally that the education budget had not been concluded on Friday to the point that he would comment on this on CJCD radio and, did he truly expect that education and the budget as a whole could have been concluded that day in the two hour time period before we had to recognize the clock? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will rule the question out of order. The Member cannot ask a personal opinion of a Minister that is responsible for a department. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps then I could ask if the Minister could just clarify for us what was the intent of his comments on CJCD last Friday and Saturday? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was asked, as was the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, for a comment by the press on the budget not having been concluded. I said that I was disappointed we had not concluded the budget. When asked if there was any impact, I said yes, there are two programs we had announced, Investing in People and the Working Together Program that would be affected in terms of when access to funds would be available. My colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, made similar comments to other members of the media, and it was reported in other media in the same manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you. This is my final question then, Mr. Speaker. What the Minister of Finance is saying is that he wanted this House to conclude consideration of the \$167 million for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the less than two hours that we had last Friday before the planned break in the House, he wanted that concluded in less than two

hours in order to recognize the clock at 2 o'clock on Friday. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 177-13(7): Break in the Budget Session

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was not saying that we needed to necessarily conclude it, I said I was disappointed that we did not conclude the budget. I would point out that we did not answer any questions about the budget, nor did we get into the details of the budget. In fact, we did not talk about the budget on Friday, the 30th, when we could have at least started consideration. Mr. Speaker, there were at least two previous occasions during that week when this House voted to extend hours to conclude consideration of items or to carry on the consideration. We were not limited necessarily by the four hours less the lunch hour we had scheduled for ourselves on Friday. We could have carried on consideration if it was the will of the Members. Members did not have that will, and as a result, we took a break for a week. Thank you, Mr.

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Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. I would like some clarification in regards to the interpretation of designate aboriginal organizations. There are certain organizations which are out there at the present time, you have the Gwich'in Tribal Council which recognizes or basically represents a Gwich'in person who is enrolled in a land claim to implement the land claim. Myself, I am enrolled in the Gwich'in claim in which, ...basically the Gwich'in Tribal Council, who is the one implementing the land claim on that sector. Then you also have other organizations in the communities such as the Metis Local which

recognizes the Metis of the community. You have a band council which recognizes the band members who are basically enrolled through the Indian Act. I would like clarification from the Minister, is there a policy within the department which basically decides which organization you are with? Because I am an aboriginal businessman, does that mean that I am also an aboriginal organization? I would like clarification from the Minister on exactly how do you designate an aboriginal organization in the context of contracts?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation has some guidelines to follow in relation to negotiated contracts. To my knowledge, the negotiated contract policy does not specifically identify any set aboriginal group that would be recognized as eligible for negotiated contracts. It simply says that any group is eligible to be registered under BIP is, in fact, then eligible to approach the department for a negotiated contract.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the interpretation, it seems like it is pretty broad to incorporate everybody who is an aboriginal person in a category of aboriginal organizations. Yet you may have a non-profit aboriginal organization which is like a band council which may have a band development corporation under its or arm or a Metis local which may have a Metis development corporation under its arm. I would like the Minister, is his department considering looking at clarification in regard to how they designate so-called aboriginal organizations when they talk negotiated contracts?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has, as the Member indicated, in the past experienced problems identifying which group is the designated aboriginal group for a community or whether or not a person is aboriginal or non-aboriginal. Whether or not we can address that specifically in the negotiated contract policy, at this point in time, the policies established do not address that specific problem. However, I am under the understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the government is considering new guidelines for negotiated contract policy. It would be possible, at that time, that we consider some way of identifying specific groups and their eligibility under the BIP or under negotiated contract policies.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the whole contracting procedure, can the Minister tell me if a company is a registered company under the Companies Act, does that mean that that company, because it has a content of aboriginal ownership is classified as an aboriginal company under the BIP?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 178-13(7): Designated Aboriginal Organizations

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that question is getting quite specific, and it may require some information from the department of RWED who administers BIP. I will take the question as notice so that I get proper information for the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral Questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 179-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance again, on the subject of the summer employment program called Working Together. Mr. Speaker, there seemed to be some indication that the Cabinet was prepared to entertain discussions further on Friday, but I think we were as well, Mr. Speaker, but for some reason or other, we adjourned. I think personally I was quite prepared to sit Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, but there was a decision to adjourn until today. There is some concern on my part to have the suggestion that we pass this budget in the time frame that we did when the big issue is education, and it is of concern to many people out there.

Mr. Speaker, to get to my point of the question, we have been talking about ensuring employment for students for a number of years now. It seems strange to me that we have a special program called Working Together which becomes part of the budget and only if the budget is passed do we have that summer student employment program. I do not think that was ever the intent of any Member here. I cannot speak for everyone here, but certainly for some of my colleagues, I think it was an intent that we have a summer employment program. Can the Minister tell me, is this program predicated on us passing this budget with specifically this million dollars in order to have any kind of

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employment of students this summer? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 179-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that some students will find employment in programs that are not funded through the Working Together Program. This program would not support the salaries of all summer students who work for this government. However, the hundreds of students who

did have jobs that were funded by the program last year may have to wait until the approval of this specific million dollars. To answer the Member's question, yes, much is dependent on that specific million dollars. In fact, during consideration of the budget in committee of the whole, we will be introducing amendments to include that million dollars as it is not included in the Main Estimates at present. As we are going through the budget today, tomorrow, the day after or whenever we get to that specific line, we will be introducing amendments to add the money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 179-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this kind of program should have been planned out well ahead of time.

--Applause

It seems rather obvious that the students are going to be here by the end of April, early May. We were well aware that we were going to have an interim budget and, to me, I would have thought that it would have been in that interim budget or at least some understanding where there can be movement of money between programs. My question to the Minister is, when did he think we were going to pass this budget because we have control of that here? We do. We may be sitting here until June before we pass this budget. Does that mean we do not have a program? We cannot be dictated by that fact, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I will rule the question out of order. Again, the Member is asking a personal opinion of the Minister responsible for Finance. Members have to ask questions that are within the knowledge of the Minister responsible for that department. Mr. Ootes, do you have a supplementary?

Supplementary To Question 179-13(7): Working Together Program

MR. OOTES:

I wonder if the Minister could tell me when planning to include this in the budget was done for the Working Together Program?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 179-13(7): Working Together Program

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was not included in the business plans that were presented to committee last fall. It was not included in the detailed budget that was presented to the committees earlier this spring. In fact, the first time inclusion was talked about was after division in early April and was discussed by the Members of the current Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 180-13(7): Reviewing Past Reports and Recommendations

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not worry or quibble about what the Minister said last Friday in the press, but what I am interested in are some solutions to the education budget. My question will be for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, I know that you have been a Member of the Legislative Assembly for some time now. Also, in the past there were reports commissioned on behalf of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the government. One of those reports was written by a gentleman named Beatty. I think it was called Strength at Two Levels. In that report, Mr. Minister, there was mention at that time of approximately 450 boards and agencies throughout the Northwest Territories. I do not know if that number has dropped considerably over the past few years, but this would have been approximately two terms ago when this report was done and recommendations were made to decrease the number of boards and agencies in the Northwest Territories, thus freeing up some dollars for important priorities such as education, health care and economic development. Is the Minister, instead of commissioning a new report willing to have his staff take a look at old reports that were done by previous governments that may still hold some credibility and

possibly some solutions for our financial crisis?
Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Point of order. Member for Hay River.

Point of Order

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that Mr. Morin stood up and prefaced his question with he will not be quibbling over what the Finance Minister said on the radio last week. He used the word quibble and I resent that comment because I was the one questioning the Minister of Finance about his comments on CJCD radio last week, and that is not quibbling, that is asking respectful questions in this House and therefore I make objection to Mr. Morin's comments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. To remind the Member, a point of order can be made if a definition is used that is unparliamentary. I do not see the definition here being unparliamentary. The Member does not have a point of order. We are still in question period here. The more points of order we use the less time we have for question period. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 180-13(7): Reviewing Past Reports and Recommendations

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the number of board and agencies that are funded by this government have been significantly reduced in

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the seven years since the report Strength at Two Levels came out. I can assure the Member that I am quite prepared, and I believe that my colleagues on Cabinet are quite prepared, to re-examine reports that make recommendations for ways in which this government can save money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 180-13(7): Reviewing Past Reports and Recommendations

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time I checked I think there was approximately 15 or 16 boards, agencies and committees in one of my communities, for example, Fort Resolution, with a population of approximately 550 people. In that community there is an education society, housing authorities, band councils, Metis locals, band and community council, drug and alcohol, sport committees, all different types of board and agencies that all draw on the peoples' ability to donate their time to work on these committees in the community. But also it takes up the time and effort of many different people in the community. I know that there is legislation on the books and people have to do things in the community to access government dollars. They have to create these committees or organizations to access government dollars. Is the Minister willing to work along with his colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in Fort Resolution, for example, and Lutselk'e to look at the community government structures as to where they could possibly save money in order to put it back into the education system or what their priority is? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 180-13(7): Reviewing Past Reports and Recommendations

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is certainly prepared to work with communities to look at innovative ways to deal with community governance. It is important to point out that over the past three or four years, we have worked very closely with the Dogrib communities and helped them develop the Dogrib Community Services Board, which brings together a number of community agencies under one administrative board to cut down on duplication and overlap, and to ensure that administration costs are kept at a minimum and a larger portion of funds can be allocated to programs implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Henry.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 4-13(7): Dissatisfaction with UNW Representation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with a matter of employees of the NWT Power Corporation dissatisfaction over their representation by the UNW. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 108 signatures and the petition requests, we the undersigned, would like to express our absolute dissatisfaction with the Union of Northern Workers in the Northwest Territories. We feel that services we pay for have not been provided by this union, therefore, we further express our interest to seek and explore alternative representation within the Canadian Labour of Congress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Petitions. Mr. Kakfwi.

Petition 5-13(7): Sahtu Region School Bussing Services

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here to myself as the Sahtu MLA, to table here. My constituents write, we, the undersigned, as taxpayers and property owners and parents of Norman Wells, request the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, to review the funding allocation for the Sahtu region, to include school bussing services as an essential service for safe and efficient delivery of school children to and from school. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. 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. Antoine.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 39-13(7): Letters from DIAND Minister and New Commissioner Regarding Appointment of Commissioner

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a letter from the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of DIAND, regarding the appointment and the role of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories and a letter from the Honourable Dan Marion, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, transmitting the document to me. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabled Document 40-13(7): Report of Hay River Parent Focus Group on Education - Survey Data

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three documents that I would like to table. The first one is a report of a focus group on education survey data from the community of Hay River from the spring of 1999.

Tabled Document 41-13(7): Letter from Diamond Jenness Parents Advisory Committee Regarding Funding for Education

I would also like to table a letter with regard to funding for education from the Diamond Jenness Parent Action Committee.

Tabled Document 42-13(7): Letter from Hay River Educator Pat Burnstad Regarding Education System Concerns

I would also like to table a letter from a long-time educator and respected teacher in Hay River, with respect to the challenges facing our education system, and that is from Ms. Pat Burnstad. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Ootes.

Tabled Document 43-13(7): Letter from Martin Palasz Regarding Wasteful Spending

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter I have received from Mr. Martin Palasz of Inuvik. Attached to the letter to me is a letter to the

Honourable Mr. Miltenberger, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Palasz makes recommendations where possible spending areas should be looked at in the department and where savings can possibly be made. It asks that we keep the Minister in check for the taxpayers of the NWT. It says, please keep up the good work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Krutko.

Tabled Document 44-13(7): Letter from Fort McPherson Joint Council Regarding Social Services Workers

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter regarding the Fort McPherson joint council and the concern they have with the shortage of social services workers in Fort McPherson.

Tabled Document 45-13(7): Letter from Louisa Andre re: Health Care in Tsiigehtchic

I would also like to table a letter regarding health care in Tsiigehtchic from a constituent of mine, Ms. Louisa Andre. It is regarding the concerns of Tsiigehtchic during the freak breakup in which they will not have access to a doctor during that time, and also concerns of smaller communities have to be involved in any public consultation process that has been put in place by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 19: An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, May 12, 1999, I will move that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Mr. Steen.

Bill 20: Municipal Statutes Amendment Act

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, May 12, 1999, I will move that Bill 20, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, committee report 1-13(7), tabled document 31-13(7) with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

We are dealing with Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, committee report 1-13(7). I would like to ask what is the wish of the committee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to recommend that we continue dealing with Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, and committee report 1-13(7) and specifically with the department of Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

At this time we will take a short break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you. I would like to call the committee back to order. We are dealing with the Main Estimates, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. At this time, I would like to ask if the Minister responsible, Mr. Miltenberger, would like to call witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to call witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Can the Sergeant-at-Arms escort the witnesses in. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can you introduce your witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Ms. Pauline Gordon, the acting Deputy Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. To my right is Mr. Paul Devitt, the director of management services and finance for Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, we have concluded the Minister's statement, committee statement, and now we are under general comments regarding the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. General comments? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think by now everyone knows that there are problems with our education system in the Northwest Territories. The recent Minister's Forum on Education consulted with residents on their views on ideas for our education system. The forum made recommendations to better the education system.

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Unfortunately, the major problem with implementing all of the forum's recommendations is inadequate

funds. The Northwest Territories is using an education system that does not have the money to implement properly. As a result, we have watched the system deteriorate and become a major concern for the people of the Northwest Territories. In recent years we have seen stress placed upon the system with things like new curriculum, increased class sizes, higher education requirements for employment, and higher costs of supply and services.

Mr. Chairman, if we do not address the situation, the quality of education in the NWT will continue to deteriorate. We have choices to make as a government and I believe that we can increase the funding to education and this is the avenue that we must focus our efforts upon.

Mr. Chairman, most of us as MLAs have received documents and information, I really want to say how pleased I am with the members of the public who have given considerably of their own time and effort into communicating to us what the existing situations are in the classrooms, schools and education system. I find that people are not just sitting back and complaining, but they are taking a very proactive approach to this problem. When the people begin to get involved like that, I think it is very commendable and it should send a very loud message to this government that the people are not satisfied with the education system and the funding that is allocated for it at this time.

I have received excellent feedback from my constituents and I had received a copy of a letter that was actually penned by Mr. Kern Von Hagen, the principal of St. Patrick High School. In that letter, there is a list articulated of some of the challenges that are facing our education system and I just want to briefly read it. I think it is a very succinct and articulate list. It said, we have among the highest pupil/teacher ratio in Canada. We have the highest level of special needs students in Canada. We have the highest level of illiteracy in Canada. We have the highest dropout rate in Canada. We have the highest youth suicide rate in Canada and we have one of the lowest levels of funding. Only 28 percent of students in the NWT graduate from high school. Mr. Chairman, I think that everyone will concur that these statistics are very alarming and that if we allow this condition in our education system to persist, it will be a recipe for disaster in the future. We will see extra burden placed on all of our social programs and services in the Northwest Territories. I am not sure of the statistics on it, but a dollar not spent on worthwhile education now becomes a very much greater cost in

the future when we have to look after people who are incarcerated and who are very dependent on us as a government in the area that they have needs in their lives for.

We have heard from people who are on the front lines, in the classroom every day. It is not easy for us as legislators to really fully appreciate some of the challenges that are in the system. I have heard it said in this House that there have been no cuts in education. I think that everyone knows that we have in fact experienced an exodus of people from the North recently which has reduced the formula funding that we received from Ottawa. What we do have remaining in the Northwest Territories is a very young population. That population needs to be educated. This puts a growth factor on our system and it puts a stress on our system that we cannot be complacent about, but absolutely must address. If it would be appropriate now, Mr. Chairman, I do have a few questions for the Minister that I will incorporate under general comments.

It is in the area of administration costs. There have been comments made in this Legislature with respect to the fact that Ordinary Members sit on committees and that we do consider the Main Estimates in committee behind closed doors before they come into this House. In our education system, there are many levels of administration. They include departmental, regional operations, district boards, at which there are seven at this time, community administration, school administration, college, headquarters and campus administration, and even program administration. Administration at each of these levels, although very necessary, cost a lot of money. The Department of Education supplied the following information to us. They indicated that ECE was around \$2.2 million, the board administration is at \$4.1 million, community administration at just under \$1 million. That comes to \$7.33 million being spent on administration for schools alone. This is slightly over 9 percent of the total budget. Then there is, as I mentioned, the college administration as well. Further, the directorate has an operating budget of \$5.4 million. I was wondering, can the department and the Minister identify how much of its money is being spent on administration at the departmental, regional, board community and program level? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issues that the Member raised in her opening comments are concerns shared by, I would suggest, all people in the Northwest Territories. I think we all want the same thing, the question is how do we achieve that given the financial realities that are facing us. I would just like to clarify a number of facts here before we proceed into answering the issue of administration.

The numbers that I have since division, for example, the suicide rate in the west is significantly closer, if not at the national average. It is still too high, but it is not as high as people are saying. We are also spending, on a cost per student, second only to the Yukon. The teaching staff, depending on how you look at the pay grid, is either the highest paid or the second highest paid, once again, compared to the Yukon. Very clearly, we have issues with literacy, we have issues with the dropout rate, we have issues with increasing graduation. As I indicated in a Minister's statement when we were last in session, that when I look back 30 years, I think we have made significant improvements to the educational system. We do have a long way to go, a lot of issues to address. Should the revenues ever make themselves available, we could very easily put to productive use whatever revenues that this Legislative Assembly sees fit to put into Education, Culture and Employment.

The other figure is the growth rate. Since we have divided, the projected growth is slightly over 1 percent and a lot less than we experienced as a joint territory to the extent that we anticipate that we are not going to be needing a lot of new schools, that we can make do with what we have.

The issue of administration costs that the Member referred to, I

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could not quite follow all of her numbers, but I know that about 6 percent of the school's budget, about some \$90 million including capital is devoted to divisional and local board administration. At the departmental level, it is in the neighbourhood of, I believe, 4 percent roughly that is spent in the headquarters level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The point I was trying to make is that it would appear that anywhere between 9 and 10 and a half percent of the budgets between schools and colleges is spent on administration. I guess we have been challenged many times lately by our Cabinet colleagues to suggest areas where there may be potential savings. I realize that administration is an important part of delivering any services and programs, but in light of what has happened recently in Nunavut, I would like to ask the Minister, has the department investigated the possibility or even looked at the possibility of reducing the number of education boards in order to reduce administration costs to deliver more of this into the classroom to where the students are? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

The Minister responsible, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of looking at the boards and the role of divisional boards of education and councils has not been looked at by this department in terms of can we do without them, can we save millions of dollars. It is an issue that was raised in this House earlier about the need to look at the number of boards, committees and agencies that we do have as a government. We have to look very carefully if there is a political willingness to proceed down that path in terms of the cost offsetting that over the concern that we all have brought to the table in regards to community involvement, community empowerment, community control over education, and what would we replace DEAs and DEC's with, would we be reverting back to the ministerial model where the civil servants run education. Those are all the questions you have to ask. If the Member would like, the director of finance can speak in great detail about administration and the complex nature of what you describe as administration. The numbers were have, of course, are less than 9 and 10 percent and closer to the 6 and 4 percent range. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Director of finance, Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT:

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I think in the document referred to, it is the budget overview. We have tried to outline the different areas and how the budgets are broken down. I think the Member, in terms of percentages, is correct. In the case of the one chart, the reference though, the 4.4 percent was the breakdown of the headquarters to the regional budget. Not all of headquarters would necessarily be considered administration. Some of it is involved in program. I think the other numbers and the reference to, I believe it was just approximately 6 percent for boards, is correct. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you. General comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my ten minutes were up, and I would defer to another Member, but I have other issues I would like to address to the Minister. I will continue on then. Another idea with going back again to the cost of administration. I hear the numbers that you are using, but the information and our research would indicate from the numbers you have provided to us that it is more in the neighbourhood of 10 percent. A model that has been referred to earlier today in the House is that the Dogrib Community Service Board integrates decision making for education, justice, health, social services, and income support for the region with one decision-making body. This model must increase efficiency in the regions and reduce the cost of administration. Has the department or the social envelope promoted the use of this type of delivery in other regions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The social envelope has not discussed that issue specifically. We are, of course, looking at it I know from Education, Culture and Employment as well as from the social envelope perspective, we are watching to see how it works and is it, in fact, a portable kind of approach that would work in communities that are possibly not as homogeneous as the Dogrib people. There is a considerable amount of benefit if it does work in terms of the issue that my colleague has raised in regards to

how much you spend on administration and streamlining, decision making and lowering those costs. We are looking at that particular approach to see if, in fact, it is transportable as I have indicated. But there has been no firm decision to go elsewhere and encourage communities or regions to take on that particular model. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do think that is an area of administration. This is not to be critical of administration, but I think we really need to look very seriously at every area of expenditure to see not only from other sources but even if there are ways of creating more efficiencies within the department of Education, Culture and Employment, and certainly that does not preclude the fact that we need to also find new resources to bring to bear from outside of the department as the budget exists now. Another area that has been discussed and is putting a tremendous amount of stress on the education system is the pupil/teacher ratios. Mr. Chairman, in 1996, the Deficit Elimination Act led to budget limitations that now require districts to limit the number of teachers while the number of students continue to increase. The PTR for the NWT increased by 2.5 from the school year 1994-95 to the year 1997-98. The average actual class sizes are larger than presented in these numbers. As also included in the calculations are positions that do not require classroom teaching, for example counsellors, teacher librarians, and administrative staff. I think that these numbers that are given to use in terms of pupil/teacher ratios are a bit misleading, and I do not believe that they are reality as the classrooms operate.

Compounded with increasing sizes are classrooms with students with diverse level of abilities. Other challenges such as poor attendance, behavioural problems, learning difficulties,

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physical challenges, fetal alcohol effects, fetal alcohol syndrome. Mr. Chairman, according to the Minister's answer to my question regarding pupil/teacher ratios on April 28th of this year, individuals that are not teaching a full classload are included in the PTR calculations. For example, principals, vice-principals,

teacher librarians, and counsellors. Actually, it appears that only individuals that are excluded in the ratio are those who have less than two years of post-secondary training, classroom assistance, language specialists and janitors. It would seem that they are the only one excluded from the pupil/teacher ratio. When the department quotes a ratio of one teacher per 18 students, I believe that this information is somewhat misleading because this means that the teacher part of the PTR also includes people who do not carry full teaching loads and in some instances, do not even teach a class at all. These PTR figures are misleading, as I have said. Has the department ever calculated what the PTR would be if only the equivalence of full-time teachers in a regular classroom were used? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not that I am aware of.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister, are you going to respond to the question?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Chairman, I did not check whether my light was on. What I had replied, is not that I am aware of to the Member's question in terms of have we looked at just looking at straight teachers and students and not calculating in principals and support teachers and such who may not be full-time teachers, that the PTR is a funding ratio for the most part. We have not, that I am aware of, looked at strictly classes, although we are aware that the class size varies, as I indicated in the House, from the larger regions to the smaller regions, from the larger communities to the smaller communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question then to the Minister, is would the department be willing to determine what the PTR would be if only full-time equivalent of teaching staff were used in the PTR. I think this would give us a much better indication of the

kinds of challenges that are facing our educators. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the department would be able and willing to pull those figures together just to look at the actual operational classes and come up with the sizes across the territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another factor which probably, and you have alluded to it already, distorts somewhat the PTR ratio is the PTRs that were supplied by the Minister to the Assembly cover the full regions and all grades. Some communities may have smaller class sizes and also as the grade levels go higher, there is usually a drop in the class size. This means that when averaged out, there are going to be classes with high numbers that compensate for classrooms with low numbers. Are there a maximum number of students presently allowed within one classroom? This is another area, Mr. Chairman, where the numbers can be distorted. We understand how the average works, that there will be higher and there will be lower. But, in some cases in probably some of the higher grades in the smaller communities, they are is very small so you may have very much higher than the PTR that is indicated. Does the department set a limit on the number of students that can be in one classroom? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated, the pupil/teacher ratio is used for the funding formula and to determine the budgets for the various divisional boards. Once that figure is calculated, the money is then transferred to the various DEC's and it is up to the DEC's to determine the class sizes in their

community schools, but there is no educational policy or regulation that limits the size of the classrooms.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Mr. Chairman, educators recognize how important the first years are for the future success of students. It is important that there be the early diagnosis and intervention with children with learning problems. This would be difficult in classrooms where there are large class sizes. It would be difficult to pay that kind of close attention to each student to be able to identify these problems. Has the department any policies that recommend schools to have a lower pupil/teacher ratio in the lower classes so that these problems could be identified, diagnosed and picked up early on in a child's education as opposed to later on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The class size from K to nine, I believe is roughly 22 and from nine to 12 it is 17. Once again, there are no limits as to us dictating to schools, to teachers, to DEC's as to the size of their classes. Once again, once the budget is calculated, there is no requirement either way. The Member also touches on an issue that has significant implications, and that is the whole area of special needs and finding what is a special need, is it FAS, FAE, ADD, is it that level or how broad do you want to make it, I guess, is the issue which would affect the amount of money required. There is a recognition on the importance, as the Member indicated, of trying to get involved early with children and families which is why money was put and supported by the committee, put into the Health Children's Initiative, why there was money that was freed up, put back in to make sure we could keep the funding at that level. We recognize, as do the Members, that special needs is an area of significant concern.

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It is also our assumption, based on the numbers we do have, that special needs requirements in the

Northwest Territories are probably higher than southern jurisdictions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time I would like to welcome and recognize the many people who have turned out for this important issue in the public gallery. Also I would like to recognize the students, the teachers, and the parents who are here with us today. Welcome.

--Applause

We are presently under general comments. We are dealing with the department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the many people in the gallery today. It is nice to see this kind of turnout for such an important issue. I am probably going to be going over some areas that may have already been covered, Mr. Chairman, in previous comments. But I think it is worthy to make note of that in the record that we produce. Of concern, of course, and what we are really referencing all our material to is the ministerial forum report that was done. It made many recommendations for improvement of the education system, but the reality has become that we do not have the money to put into a number of areas that do need to be addressed. That is a concern, of course, to us as legislators, the Cabinet no doubt, but also everybody in the territory who is involved in the education field or who have children that people want educated. It is an extremely difficult problem, but I would like to touch on four areas of the report and make some general comments in those areas. They pertain to teacher shortage, the pupil/teacher ratio, the resources we have and new programs that the government introduces. Each to me is very relevant and does require dollars in order to have some resolution to the problem.

Let me first deal with the teacher shortage. I do not think that it is any surprise to anybody that we have a teacher shortage because of the conditions that we are facing here in the Northwest Territories but also elsewhere. We are in a situation where teacher competition is very prevalent in the provinces. As a matter of fact, the Ontario Teachers Federation, I believe, was predicting large teacher shortages. They employ quite a number of teachers. Also, the

Canadian Teachers Federation was saying one of the big factors facing the education system today was the potential shortage. I understand that recruitment offices have been set up in Ontario and various provinces to recruit teachers, and this is from other countries. The United States, as I understand, is looking to recruit teachers and of course there are some attractions there, so the whole question comes back for us is what can we do here in the Northwest Territories to retain our teachers? I pose it as a rhetorical question, not looking for an answer at this particular moment.

For example, how successful are we at our Teacher Education Program and where are we going with the Teacher Education Program? Is that successful and are we retaining those teachers that we are training or are they also going to the south? In other words, are we paying for a system and not succeeding at retaining those teachers? The teacher shortage area, while I recognize that it is not totally of our making, there are some areas that we have created some problems, I feel for our teachers and it is partially the working conditions that they have been placed under. It is the living conditions in the communities that some of them face. These are all areas that we do have control over and we can do something about. When Mr. Miltenberger said that only 32 of the 44 recommendations are non-monetary or let me reverse that, 32 of the 44 are non-monetary, there may be some truth to that but the 12 that were left as monetary are sort of the key areas. They are the ones that are really affecting our education system out there. So the dollar aspect comes into play and the big question, of course, is what is the government doing about finding those dollars?

I know we talked about this last week and there were some discussion on what recommendations do we have. Well I can keep throwing out recommendations, but I am not sitting in that chair, and I am not sitting over there, I am not the one who is governing. I am here as a MLA and I can throw out the suggestion. We can sit here all day as we did last week and give you people suggestions. But you have to go to work on this. You have to come up with the answers. We have thrown out the suggestions.

Let me deal for a second with the pupil/teacher ratio issue. Mrs. Groenewegen referenced that a little earlier and the pupil/teacher ratio, while the statistics were given to us of 18/1, believe it was, that was only a funding formula to the best of my knowledge. That does not indicate exactly how many students are in a class. It is only a funding formula to the boards. The

boards will put forward and say, okay we have this number of students and this number of employees and therefore the government says right, you get this many dollars. In many classes the 18/1 one, well that is thrown out as an average usage, 15/1, 16/1, 17.5/1, 18/1, that is not really true. What is really true is that may be far exceeded beyond those figures in many cases. I know in British Columbia they have already passed legislation, I believe, to limit class sizes. In Alberta a resolution has been adopted to limit class sizes to 22 students and that is for certain grades.

Let me carry on with another area, and that is resources in the classroom and other programs. We seem to take the approach, and I am going to delve into the other area that I was going to speak on, new programs that we come up with, ideas to introduce new programs, but what we do not do is provide the funding for those programs adequately. We seem to say, okay we have this kind of money, so divy it up across the territory and people will have to make do with that. The Grade Extension Program is one example of that, where we said, yes, there was a political push back in 1991, I have some of the debates here on that, and yes, we have grade extensions, but there was never adequate money put into this. Plus there was never an analysis done of the effect of that. I mean, what is the effect of grade extensions to all of the communities? We do need to ask that at some point. How many teachers does it take to operate in all of those communities? How many graduates do we have from those communities? I am not against those communities having grade extensions if they so wish. What I am saying is, how effective are they and if they are not effective, why? Are we not providing the funding for it?

When we talk about resources and I said that last week, that if you are going to introduce a new program, be like a business

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person, you do not say, well, we are going to expand our business into this area and then not put the dollars into it. I think that is bad management and I think we do that sometimes as this government. We have to take a look at all of our programs. One of the things we need to do is to say, put a halt on new programs and analyze the programs that we have. Make sure that there is top efficiency in all areas. I will limit my comments for the moment to that, Mr. Chairman, to let others have some general comments

and then I likely will have some questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a note, as the Member was talking that yes across Canada and probably North America, there is a teacher shortage, and that retention and training, keeping the teachers that we do have and training our own northern people to be teachers is an issue. The one piece of good news that I have in terms of this year is the teacher turnover is down from 18 percent last year to 12 percent this year which is, for us, a bonus. The issue of TEP, the enrolments are down. The idea, I think, is still a good one. We are looking at trying to go to our fourth year, but once again we have to look at recruiting Northerners to, in fact, apply and take up teaching. What we are finding is that a lot of the TEP graduates have moved on to other kinds of employment. There has been a total of 395 graduates out of TEP between 1969 and 1998. As of last year, 239 graduates were employed in education related professions, classroom teachers, principals, DEC administrators, education consultants, college instructors, etcetera. In addition, 17 of the graduates were employed as preschool teachers and paraprofessionals. Thirty were attending full-time bachelor of education or master of education studies. Fifty-one are employed in areas outside of education. Fifty-eight were retired, deceased or unknown.

The issue of funding that the Member raised is also an important one, but I would like to differ somewhat with the Member that while it is an issue, it is not the only critical issue facing education. To my mind, the issue of the role of the family and the parents working with the child, the relationship of the family and the children with the schools, with the DEAs and the DEC's are very critical. Ensuring that you have strong families where you learn your basic values, where you learn who you are, where you are from, where you have your mother and your family reading night time stories to you, where you appreciate the value of education are things that money is not going to solve. I have talked to the people from Hay River, the lady who was very involved, who submitted that survey about that particular issue, and she agreed. I do not think we can lose sight of that fact that, as a government, we have spent billions over the years on a lot of issues. In fact, we have a history of throwing

money at things to solve them, that before we had deficit reduction problems, before we had financial problems, we had the luxury of being able to throw money at all sorts of things to solve problems and we created a government that was humungous in size but it did not necessarily solve the problem.

Yes, money is an issue. Yes, the issue of revenues has to be pursued vigorously, but there are things we can do as people of the Northwest Territories, as communities, as DEAs and DEC's. I would be prepared to discuss that issue with anybody on the value of the family, be it with language, culture, education, what builds a strong society is a strong family. I share the concern for revenues and the need to look at special needs, but I also know that everybody here, anybody that has had the benefit of a strong family upbringing has been able to, for the most part, go on and that is the fundamental building block of our society. To lose sight of that fact would be to do so at our peril. Because money is not going to solve the issue of a strong family.

The PTR is not an attempt to mislead. It is a relatively standard funding approach used across Canada to determine budgets and budget allocations to schools and school boards. The issue of insufficient funds for new programs is a concern, but clearly the issue of grade extensions, in fact, save the government money. They were spending over \$8 million dollars a year on the various residences that they had running, Akaitcho Hall, Oukavik in Iqaluit, Grollier Hall, Kivalivik Hall in Rankin Inlet. There have been demonstrable benefits to grade extensions. Our numbers indicate that access has increased prior to grade extensions from below 65 percent to over 90. Grade 10 to 12 participation has increased from 30 percent to above 60 percent. Graduation rates have been climbing in the last few years, about five years behind the increase in participation rates, which is quite reasonable with the lag time for students to work their way through the system. I do not think we can just dismiss out of hand that grade extensions have not worked. Has it been a perfectly flawless exercise? I do not think so. Can it be improved? It probably can.

The issues we have talked about in this House in the past few weeks about the quality of education and the small communities not having the same selection of courses and program choice as large communities, those kinds of issues have been debated. I do not think, as I have indicated, dismiss out of hand grade extensions. Very clearly, in my mind, as I have indicated in this House, there is no going back to the days of large residential schools where the average

cost was about \$40,000 per student. That is the number I have been given. Yet, yes, there is a place for family oriented smaller programs, but very clearly, the days of the residential school that history has given us are over in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too, would like to acknowledge the many people that have turned out today to show their concern, interest in the education of our youth and not only our youth but also educating adults and I suppose whoever requires it. Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of concerns and I just wanted to indicate some of them before I get into the main thing that I would like to see changed. Mr. Chairman, we all know that we have a high pupil/teacher ratio. We have a lot of special needs children and we do not have an adequate way of financing that. I think a lot of this is reflected in our high social programs. We know that we have the highest alcohol and drug rates, suicide rates, high rates of people incarcerated, on social assistance, the whole works. I think a lot of that stems from the ability of our school boards and school authorities to adequately educate the people within their jurisdictions. When I see us funding training programs which may not necessary be restricted to long-term Northerners, I am a little bit concerned.

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When I see our kids and post-secondary schools, children that have been born and raised in the Northwest Territories go out to university and we have seen the tuition rates probably double or maybe even more than that in the recent years and tuition rates have remained the same. A couple of years ago, we had a Student Financial Assistance Committee or forum, whatever it was called, that went around, made a lot of recommendations, and we thought a new plan was going to be put into place for this year and that is not going to happen. We heard just recently from the Minister, he indicated that the teacher turnover had decreased from 18 percent to 12 percent. I am glad to hear that, but at the same time he did not indicate where the pockets may be where there were high turnover rates or was this consistently seen across the territories that it was a 12 percent turnover or did

we have some areas where maybe there is a 50 percent turnover and some with only a 2 percent turnover. It would be nice to know that. I know that, in the past, we have heard that we were having a lot of problems, it seemed like anyways, we were hearing just about every week that there were more people having problems because we had done away with the GNWT housing for staff, particularly young teachers coming into a community where they seemed to have been having hard times making ends meet.

Mr. Chairman, we can identify a lot of problems and one of the biggest ones I think is when we moved to the inclusive schooling policy to discontinue special education classes and allow all students to be taught and have their needs met in a regular classroom. This was supposed to mean that students with severe special needs would be provided with additional assistance or the one-on-one care of special needs assistants. Mr. Chairman, this is a noble cause and one I am sure that everyone would agree with. But if you can do this, you have got to have enough money to do it. There are a lot of problems in this area, I believe. A part of it is caused by the fact that we do not have a proper funding mechanism. We do not have a rating system, if you would call it that, for students who may have very severe special needs and who may all be concentrated in the larger communities. I have heard that people move from the smaller communities, to Yellowknife for instance, because they feel that their children are going to be dealt with better and when you do that, that places a special emphasis or it places these schools in a special situation because they are having to spend all kinds of money to deal with students who require one-on-one work. They may need one person to work with one student almost on a full-time basis. That adds to the pupil/teacher ratio situation.

I have noticed that the problem in the past, there were already wide-ranging problems with supporting the students who some may have attended classes regularly, some did not, some were very bright, some were not, some tried hard, some did not. But now, they also have children who may be very low grades. Say you are dealing with a grade 7 class but some of those kids are at a grade 3 level in certain areas. Some are at grade 7, some are at grade 5 and some may actually be over that. We do not have the adequate financing to ensure that there is classroom assistance to deal with all those kids. Say you have one poor teacher who has to try to break up all those kids into different groups or however they deal with them. I understand that each of those children are

supposed to have their own learning plan or whatever it is called, and the teacher may be trying to do that but when you have 20 kids in your class and you have to deal with them every day, I imagine it must be pretty hard. I guess the thrust of my general comments, Mr. Chairman, is that I think if we want to do anything, we have to properly address the special needs area. We have to make sure that they are getting adequate funding for this and the funding stays in those areas, and they need to make distinctions to account for the higher cost of educating some very special needs students over other special needs students. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make a side comment, if I could, that as my colleagues have recognized the interest of the people of Yellowknife, if that opportunity was open to the people in my constituency or I am sure other constituencies, I am sure there would be almost an equal number in there showing their concern about education. In regards to the comments from my colleague, I will address some of them and wait for the more specific question. The issue of student financial assistance, I do intend to come forward with an option to deal with the funding issue. I did a briefing with the Social Programs Committee a couple of weeks ago on this particular issue, and I do intend to move forward and try to conclude that long outstanding issue. In regards to the teacher turnover, if the Member will bear with me, I will go through the list. The Beaufort-Delta turnover for 1998/1999, according to the numbers we have as of last week is 14 percent, down from 25 percent last year. For the Deh Cho, it is 11 percent, down from 15 percent last year. For the Dogrib Divisional Board, it is 16 percent this year, up two percent from 14 percent last year. The Sahtu is 21 percent this year, down from 49 percent last year. The South Slave is 18 percent this year, up two percent from 16 percent last year. Yellowknife YK 1 is 8 percent this year, down from 11 percent last year. YK 2 is 4 percent, down from 11 percent last year for an average of 18 percent last year and 12 percent this year.

The issue that the Member touched on in regards to teachers mainly in the smaller communities, and that is the issue of housing is an issue not only for teachers but as we are aware, it is an issue for nurses as well. It is one of the items on the social envelope

agenda to try to come to grips with that particular issue that affects, as I have indicated, mainly the small communities. The inclusive schooling budget, as the Member clearly pointed out, would be better served if it was considerably larger. Though it has increased, it was initially \$1 million in the early 80's and is now \$6.5 million today. That is about 15 years ago, so very clearly it is not sufficient. It would be better if there was more, but it is what we have. One of the issues with special needs as well, as the Member indicated, is the need to come up with a definition of what we mean by special needs and possibly a ranking of special needs students so that, in fact, there is a differentiation in terms of needs. I do not believe that is there right now, so that is an issue that we are going to try to address as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like my colleagues before me, I would also like to acknowledge the numbers of parents, students and teachers who have, over the past, expressed their concerns about how education is going in the

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Northwest Territories and the lack of funding in that particular area. I feel very inadequate here, as a politician, trying to sit here and bring a resolution to the concerns that have been brought to me. I know that much of the resolution to the problems in education, the answers are right in the gallery here today and also in the classrooms all over the Northwest Territories. I think it would be very beneficial for the department and Minister to listen intently to what they are saying and also to take account of what the Members of this Legislative Assembly are also telling him because we get that feedback from our constituents. I think it is important, Mr. Chairman, that the public understands the process of how the Department of Education is before the committee today. I think many times we take it for granted because we are reasonably familiar with how we get here that the public may be also.

Mr. Chairman, for the interest of the public, the business plans for each of the departments are presented to committees of the government and Education, Culture and Employment, that department

is presented to the social programs and the committee Members on that program are Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Morin. After the business plans are reviewed by the standing committees, the department takes that information back, prepares a draft budget which again is presented to the committee, Social Programs Committee, that is also reviewed by the committee, recommendations made to the department and hopefully as many of those recommendations are incorporated into the Main Estimates which we deal with in the House today. Another little statistic I think that is worth mentioning, the process by which this department is reviewed is the same as every other department and this committee does not have the ability to transfer monies from one department to another. All we have is the ability to make recommendations or delete funds. We do not have the ability to move funds from one department to another.

Madam Chairperson, we hear much talk and feedback about the high pupil/teacher ratio. I am not so sure that the high pupil/teacher ratio would be a problem in a normal circumstance but I believe in the Northwest Territories we are not dealing with something that is normal or that should be acceptable. I think the high pupil/teacher ratio comes about mainly from the conditions that the teacher finds themselves in when they come to the classroom. I think it has been acknowledged by the department and by teachers across the territories regarding the numbers of learning difficulties that we have, particularly in the area of the problems which have been caused to the children's minds through the misuse of alcohol creating alcohol effect and fetal alcohol syndrome. I think that is probably where the largest problem comes for the teacher in the classroom and I believe that we have to take some of the pressure off the teachers. I think the Department of Education has to take some pressure off the teachers and if that means additional resources, reallocation of resources from within departments, I think that really has to be looked at.

The Minister did mention in his opening comments and I quote, "it is said that every dollar you invest in a child with difficulties there is a future savings of seven dollars". I think we have all realized the accuracy of that statement. The Minister also makes comments that the fact that if we do spend more money we have only so much resources available to the department and we are spending it as best they can. I believe that is an accurate statement on the department and

the Minister's predicament. They are doing the best they can. I believe that the department has got to look at some method of dealing with the difficulties that the teachers are finding in the classroom and maybe take some pressure off the teachers by not demanding higher graduation rates. I mean we have to face the fact that not all children that go to school will be successful in completing a grade 12 education. We have to accept that there has been damage that has been done to children, as I mentioned earlier, through the irresponsible use of alcohol that has created situations that the best teaching system will not contribute to making rocket scientists out of some of our students. That is not to say that we can not prepare them the best we can within their capabilities to be functioning adults in each of our communities. So I think the department has got to take some pressure off on the expectations of trying to increase these numbers unrealistically. I think there is also pressure put on the school boards and the teachers in the classroom by parents. Parents' expectations that their child should be able to graduate and in some cases this is not realistic.

The Minister talked earlier about grade extension and I think something that I do not have any statistics on but I would be interested in knowing how many of the students that do go on to further education become professionals, doctors, lawyers, dentists, teachers, nurses, how many of those go back to their own community? I suspect those numbers are not large. I believe in this day and age, Madam Chairperson, we have to accept the fact that you go where the work is. The sooner we teach our students that you do have to go to where the work is and that there is a good potential that you may not be employed in your home community. I think that with creating grade extensions in some of the smaller communities, I think you are creating an unrealistic expectation that you will be able to stay there for the rest of your life. I think that was a reasonable expectation years ago but in today's society you have to go to where the jobs are at. I think young people before they are set in their ways have an opportunity, and maybe through education that is one method that can be used to get young people moving out of their community. It does not mean that they can not go back but at least they will have the opportunity before they get too set in their ways that there is a life outside of their own community.

As I said, Madam Chairperson, I think there are many, many areas that the department has to look at reallocation of short dollars that they have. The

Minister, as I refer back to it again, said there was a shortage of funds and if we had more money, yes he could put more money into different areas. I think from that statement I would encourage the Minister and the department to prioritize and I know that we may well say that it is nice to have money at the grade level, it is nice to have resources and money to do adult education but if you are only doing half a job in one area, I do not think that in the long run you are going to be successful. So I would be encouraging the Minister and his department to look at doing a good job where I believe it is most important, right at the beginning, and we have to ensure that students in school continually get the message repeated on a daily basis if necessary, that you better take advantage of the education that is provided to you today because you may not have that opportunity to get it later on. Madam Chairperson, I recognize that my time has expired but I will have questions of the Minister during the line by line. Thank

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you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. I would suggest that there are still a number of Ordinary Members who would like to speak under the category of general comments so I will let the Minister decide if he wants to respond to each speaker, or if he would just like to run the general comments back to back and make comments at some point. Mr. Minister.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If it is agreeable with the Chair given the immediacy of the feedback that I would like to give, if it is agreeable I would like to continue to respond Member by Member.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Please go ahead.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I would just to speak briefly to the comment about the process that my colleague, Mr. Henry, raised. It is unfortunate that this debate is taking place at this late date in the budgeting process where as Mr. Henry indicated we have two choices either to pass or to cut. It is unfortunate that when this process started nine months ago that we did not

lock ourselves away to have the discussion where we wanted to take money from, how we wanted to put money into education, and I would like to reference the fact as I did a couple of weeks ago in the House that the combined committee reports from every committee very clearly addressed the issues of their committee, a wrap-up government operations report touches on common issues but no where in there, and I sat on the committee up until recently of the social programs, no where in there is it indicated anywhere in my reading of this document right here of the need to move money, to take money from other sources, other departments so, yes it is an issue.

In fact I recollect last week, for instance, a motion being passed to accelerate Highway 3. I believe it is a \$9.0 million project. At the same time we are being asked to look for money for smoking cessation and those kind of programs. All laudable and important priorities but, once again it is a question of balance, and it is taking this debate in regards to finding more money in the short term is unfortunately somewhat late.

In regards to not demanding higher graduation rates, that recognizing that there are a lot of special needs students that may need earlier exit points to other kinds of employment or education, I would say that at this point our graduation rates are still too low. We have to continue to focus on graduation rates. We guesstimate that it could be as high as 30 percent of our children in schools have special needs but that leaves 70 percent that we should be encouraging to graduate and we have not hit that number yet. I would say once again it is an issue of balance, trying to meet the needs and I think we have an obligation to try to meet the needs that are out there, that we do not have the luxury of only wanting to focus on one or two that this is not a case of a type of triage but it is more a case of trying to balance and meet all the priorities and competing needs with the limited dollars that we have.

Do grade extensions create unrealistic expectations of students that they can stay in their communities? It is possible. I agree that the issue of mobility is an issue that we have to reinforce that you will in all probability have to go out to further your education and there is a chance that you may not find employment in your community but we have to make sure that we, in fact, have sufficient numbers of educated Northerners to take the skilled positions that are currently going begging down south. So, yes, it is an issue within communities but it is tied into larger issues. The final comment I would like to make is that

I heard a couple of days ago, just to reinforce the issue of the importance of education, a documentary in which they were talking to a number of people from Greenland and they were getting a retrospective after twenty years of home rule and the final comment by one of the Greenland people was after 20 years of home rule and still having to import just about all their skilled labour was education, education is what you have to put your money to if you want an educated northern society that can in fact not only govern itself politically, but can also have the skilled people to fill the positions, the even more critical positions to do the work, to do the jobs. So, once again, I think we all have the same concerns, it is a question of how do we get there? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. On the list I have for general comments on Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think that one thing I seem to be missing here is the whole priority of where we are as a government and where we see ourselves going in the future. When we talk about 70 percent of our finances going into the social and health envelope implementing programs and services for this government and yet any bureaucracy, it does not matter if you are Japanese, American, German, whatever, is based on the economics of the country which is based on the strength of the people that are in that country.

When we talk about generating revenues, when we talk about generating jobs, when we talk about finding new entrepreneurs out there to get involved in businesses and trying to be independent from government, from society, from becoming a social burden on society, we talk about education like it is something that is costing us money, but I think we have to turn the focus on exactly what are we doing here and where is the priority of this government. I think you have to consider that statistics have proven that if people are uneducated and do not have the basic skills to manage life on their own or to be independent from government and also be able to be hired because of having an educational background to take on jobs, responsibilities, that we will continue to see statistics where the Minister made some comment if it is costing this government \$40,000 a year to house a student in a hostile setting. But you do not look at the other side where it is costing this

government \$80,000 a year to incarcerate somebody into our jail system. I think we have to look at where is this government spending its money and where the majority of these dollars are being spent. For myself, I feel that we have to put a priority on education and spend the money now because in the future statistics have proven that you either pay for it now or pay for it tenfold, ten years down the road. So we might be spending \$1.6 million now and if we continue on the way we are, then in 10 years we will be spending over a billion dollars on education.

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If you look at the statistical envelope of this government we are spending large portions of dollars to incarcerate people. People who are now a ward of the state in which by institutionalizing people, getting them into the social system without allowing them to continue on with their education and being able to succeed in life knowing that education is one of the most important aspects of life that we will have to go through and ensuring that those people who go through the education system at the end of the day will be successful and will not be a burden on society. So I think we have to take a look at exactly what has this government done to consider statistics of exactly what it is going to cost this government to continue running the system as it is by shortchanging the education system now and what will the cost to this government be in ten years?

So has the Minister's department considered the implication of the cost to this government for continuing on with the education system as it is going today which, from all responses we get from the government and this department, there is no money. So without the money we are having with regard to the dropout rates, the incarceration rates, the costs involved in health care and the cost for public housing of this government, has this department considered looking at the social and economic statistics in regard to this government, say five or ten years down the road, if we continue on the route we are going?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, this government and this assembly has spent the last three and a half years looking at the issue of budgets, deficit reduction, trying to keep our

financial house in order and at the same time meet the many needs that are out there with regard to education and social housing, social services, economic development and very clearly we know, having listened to the Finance Minister's Budget Address a week ago, that there are some clear realities out there. If we want to go back, if we continue unchecked even the way we are and just keep spending the money we do have right now without adding more, by next year we are looking at a \$60 million shortfall and the year after that we are back to a \$150 million deficit. With all the bad news that brings in terms of compound interest and how fast it grows, when we first got here we were told that if we did not deal with the budget issue we would be leaving the people of the Northwest Territories with a financial burden of close to \$400 million. We did not do that. We took the steps we had to try and remain financially solvent and I think we have an obligation as stewards to address the education needs but we also have the obligation to look at leaving a strong or as strong as possible financial base, that it is a balance once again.

Education is good, it is essential, but it also has a corollary that you have to look at - education and jobs. We need jobs. We need a strong economy to generate revenue. Once again, we have to balance the needs with the resources available. Very clearly we have very significant social problems as the Member indicated in regard to incarceration, the cost we spend to keep people in jail, the fact that if there was a reliable FAS/FAE test, once again, I would guesstimate that a significant portion of the people currently residing in correctional institutions would probably be, as well, affected by that particular disability. So yes, as a government and as a Legislature we have looked at the projections, the cost, if we do not spend money now we will spend it later but we have to balance that with trying to be able to, in fact, remain financially solvent enough to continue doing business as we now do it and hopefully look for the new revenues that everyone has been talking about in the near future. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I believe the Minister touched on the question of the quality of education, not just education in the sense of the word, but the quality of education that we are providing for our students in the Northwest Territories.

I think it is awfully disheartening when you see a student going through K - 12 and when they get to grade 12 they do not have the marks to get themselves into post-secondary education or off to college because they just do not have the marks in regards to the maths or science or the social envelope. We talk about the cost, but what is heartbreaking for me is that I come from a small riding and you see two or three students graduating a year and in the meantime we may have started off with a class size in grade 2 or 3 where you have 29 students and it kind of makes you wonder, where did the other 28 or 25 students go?

What is wrong with the system that we are not producing quality graduates at the end of the day and why is there such a high dropout rate in the Northwest Territories? When I come back to the original question I asked, the social and economic cost to this government, if we do nothing now to put the resources and the dollars into education and improving it, it is not just a question of educating people but it is a question of having the quality of education in our classrooms so that when someone is in the high schools in Fort McPherson, or Aklavik, or Tsiigehtchic, or wherever you want to have them, making sure that they have adequate resources to conduct their classes in regard to having the materials available in those classrooms. Right now there are students who are educating themselves by pulling curriculum together, by going out of their way to find the information in regard to the text or the subject matter they want to deal with, and having to go out of the classroom to try to get the information to get educated in our classrooms. Is that quality of education?

I think the Minister has to realize that you talk about numbers and you talk about the whole question about well we spend all this money here, but at the end of the day have we actually looked at having the resources available in all our classrooms so that we are teaching a curriculum, subject matter right across the board in the Northwest Territories, does not matter what school you are in. That is what I talk about as quality of education, not that one school has a subject they can teach and another school does not. I would look to ask the Minister, has the department considered ensuring that there will be a fundamental principle that it does not matter where you live or where you are being taught, but the subject matter in regard to the program or the subject you want to take in that particular classroom is available anywhere in the Western Territory, than having some students

without materials to meet the marks they need to graduate and be successful and know that once they graduate they can continue on to post-secondary education, or university, so that they can improve in the economic society of

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the west. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I recognize the concern of my colleague, but as a government, as a department, when we do look at numbers we do see that the graduation rates are up, that post-secondary attendance is up and that over the last ten years there has been a significant increase in student financial assistance. That is not to say that there are not problems. The issue that my colleague mentioned in regard to the leakage from when you start in grade 1 and you have 20 some students as he indicated, or in my community they graduate out of grade 7 about 60 students a year and we are not graduating 60 grade 12 students every year in grade 12, but that is an issue. Where do they go? Why do they leave? And do they come back into the system five or ten years down the road and take adult education? That is an issue that has not been addressed.

The core subjects, communities with grade extensions are there. Once again my colleague talked about the quality. That is an issue that the department, every DEC and DEA struggles with to ensure that the quality for those courses that are taught is the highest possible. Very clearly, small community school grade extensions do not have the same curriculum that is available to the larger communities, for instance I toured Sir John Franklin a week or so ago and it is under construction. They have automotive courses, they have fine arts courses, multi-media courses and they are all nice courses and it would be nice to have those in every community, but the reality is that they do not. Once again, that is an issue that is predicated on revenue and funding and no matter how you dice it or slice it in terms of these particular issues it always comes back to that particular matter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I have on the list to speak, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I spoke earlier about the issue of grade extensions in the communities and I want to preface my remarks again that I am not against grade extensions in communities but I am interested in knowing what the costs are. Mr. Miltenberger referenced the fact that it is cheaper or it makes no difference, if I recall, to do community education by grade extensions in the communities. I would like to make reference to the Hansard from back in July 2, 199,1 when Mr. Kakfwi was the Minister of Education and this was a subject discussed extensively at that time. The Minister came back with actual costs of grade extension in reply to a return to a question and it was pointed out that in this reference to Cambridge Bay where there were nine students and the total cost to run the program would be \$164,000. It would be \$50,000 cheaper to do that in Yellowknife. As I say, I am not advocating that we return to that kind of system, but what I would like to know, and Mr. Miltenberger gave me statistics that contradict this. I think these are the kind of issues that we need to tackle as a department. I think you can get real with your statistics. It is okay to say, well you know, this, this and this. I have heard a number of times today where statistics were used and we can sit here on this side and argue the total opposite. That is reality. I say, with grade extensions, it does cost money. As I say, that is fine. If we are all in agreement on that and that is what we want to do, but we do have one community that has been raising some concern about this and has stated they want to look at alternatives to doing higher education or grade extensions other than in their community. If we do not know the costs of this, then, that is where part of our problem is. That is number one.

The second is, today I tabled a letter from a gentleman from Inuvik who wrote to the Minister and commented about the fact that his wife could not get a permanent position. I do not know whether this information is correct or not in this particular letter, but it raises the question, since the person cannot get a permanent job, they are moved in and out of the community from the south to the North in order to fill term positions at some cost of \$18,000 to do this. There are apparently two or three other teachers who are in the same position looking at that. That is an extreme expense to fill those particular term positions. Like I say, I cannot verify this, but, if it has some truth to it, then we are spending an awful lot of money to do

this type of employment. Those are the kind of issues I think that are here that we have to put before the Minister to say start looking at your department, start looking at some of these programs. It is fine to say, well we cannot find more money, fine, we cannot find more money, but we also need to say then, what are we doing and are we doing it to top efficiency. That is very important. Let me perhaps, we have been rejoined by some of our other colleagues again, to allow them some comments and some questions too.

The other question I have is a general question on the People Our Focus For the Future. This is the Ministers' Forum on Education. Could the Minister tell us here, because we do have an audience that is disappearing rapidly, but, we do have a number of people here who would be quite interested in knowing what are we doing with respect to the forum report? The Minister commented previously that 32 are non-monetary, that leaves 12 that are monetary. Could the Minister perhaps address that issue for us here? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the issue of grade extensions and the comment that they do cost money, yes they do. The grade extensions were financed by the reprofiling of the \$8 million that was saved as a result of the shutdown of the various residences I mentioned earlier. Your reference to a community that wishes to possibly send their students outside the community to go to school is an option that in fact they do have, but they have to be prepared to, at this point, live within their existing budget, working with the DEC at the region in the Sahtu. As I indicated at one point, they have about \$250,000, I believe roughly for their grade extension. They have to look at, once again, if they wish to send students south, can they do it with \$250,000? If you pull x number of students and that money out of the community, there are implications down the line in terms of the effect that decision will have. They have to look at that. Very clearly at this juncture, as I indicated, there is no new money.

In regard to the letter that Mr. Ootes tabled today, I as well have seen the letter and was struck by the same

concerns that the Member raised about the seeming inefficiency of not giving

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permanent positions and spending, I think it was \$18,000 a year roughly to relocate teachers in and out which is a significant cost that is getting checked into by the department. That was one of the first things I asked that they do to find out what the situation is there.

Very clearly, like any organization the size that we are, the issue of efficiency should always be on everybody's mind. Are there efficiencies and economies to be realized? I think there are. Where they are, I think we have to look at some that have been identified like that issue raised in the letter.

The Ministers' forum, as I indicated previously, the plan is that we are going to be looking at the non-monetary recommendations that the department has already been doing that. We will be meeting this week with the forum members themselves to look at their further more specific suggestions in terms of implementation. As well, the week of the 25th of May, we are meeting for three days with the board chairs, DEC board chairs, to as well look at the Ministers' Forum, the strategic plan and accountability framework where we are going to try to touch on a number of critical issues. I still stand by the commitment that I will be able to bring back something in June to this House that will outline specifically how we intend to try and implement working with the communities and the DEAs, those non-monetary items raised in the Minister's forum. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, earlier I had spoken about special needs and I did not quite have enough time to properly state what I had wanted to. I am glad that the Minister had indicated that they are going to take steps to rank students with special needs. Hopefully, that will also mean that we are going to be finding a way to address the situation where there may be a huge number of students with special needs centralized or in one location as opposed to areas where there are maybe a lot of students, but where

there are not a lot of students that have special needs, particularly, not a lot of students with severe special needs.

The Ministers' Forum on Education had also indicated that teachers and support staff recognized the need for and strongly requested additional training to help them deal with the requirements of the special needs policy and, that most staff members have not received sufficient specialized training to be able to provide the best programs for such a wide range of student abilities and challenges. We were told that in service training has been sporadic and considerably limited by insufficient time and money. Mr. Chairman, this is a huge problem if, in the first place, we do not have a policy that recognizes that some students or that special needs students may be attracted to certain schools and that those schools would require additional funding because of the numbers of special needs students, and particularly special needs students with severe problems and a lot of one on one requirements.

If you add to that the fact that our staff are not properly trained and that there is not sufficient in-service training, this makes it even worse. I guess what I am wondering is the Minister had indicated that they were going to undertake to rank special needs students. Would it also include finding a way to provide funding to the schools that require it the most? For instance, if one school has several students with a lot of one-on-one required that they would receive additional funding over that of another school that may have no students that require one-on-one. Would this project also take this into consideration and make some adjustments for that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of magnet communities that the Member talked about is a concern. Right now Education, Culture and Employment recognizes what they call magnet facilities, but does not have any place in the formula for magnet communities which would be the regional centres with the better services. Yellowknife, of course, probably being the largest and the biggest of all magnet communities where people come for specialized services. As we look at trying to bring greater clarity to the issue of special needs in a more

coordinated and effective approach, that will be one of the issues that are looked at. This is going to be a complex undertaking, the issue of special needs is very diverse and wide ranging. As I indicated earlier, the broader the definition, the more people that will be included and the wider the range. We are going to have to look at that in discussion with the DEAs and DEC's and people that are involved in the work.

I agree as well that the issue as a government and as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the issue of training is one where we as well have to look at doing better. We have to be more coordinated, more consistent in the approach we take to training not only with special needs but in a whole host of areas, but special needs being the question at issue right now. We are going to be looking at how in fact you do that with what we have available, how is it done and how do we build it in so that it is done as a matter of course and not as a reaction or as a sporadic kind of attempt depending on who is there or where the interests may be. So the Member raises some points that we are adding to the mix as we try to move ahead on this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased to hear that the Minister is looking at improving the training. Would this possibly include mandatory training and possibly be offered or coordinated by the territorial government so that it is not left entirely up to the individual regional boards or local authorities or whatever?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a possible scenario. Once again, we have not, I do not think, reached that level of detail. I would also like to point out that when this budget is finally passed, the intention is to take \$150,000 out of the money for Community Strategies for Work and we intend to devote that and direct it to the training of special needs assistants. So, just another added incentive to all the Members to pass this budget to be able to move it along because there are needs out there that we would like to address,

in addition to youth employment, of course. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Added incentives, kind of like a bonus plan. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I understand that the federal government is also looking at FAS/FAE and taking a larger interest in this problem and, last year I think it was, well rather than mentioning a specific region, I recall that some specialists had done some testing in that area and they had found that numbers as startlingly high as 40 percent of the children in some communities had FAS or FAE. I am assuming that this will also be categorized as special needs. Does the Minister have any indication what type of assistance may be available from the federal government, whether it is to a new initiative or from Ms. Blondin's youth portfolio that we may be able to tap into for the FAS/FAE portion of the special needs children? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The federal government, as the Member indicated, has shown a marked increase in interest in the whole issue of FAS/FAE and I met a few weeks ago with our Member of Parliament who is also the Minister responsible for Youth and she indicated that they do want to get involved in initiatives both on their own and they are willing to, I think, sit down with ourselves. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, as well, just came back from a meeting of Ministers on The National Children's Agenda and that is looking at the information, that is one of the issues that they are looking at and trying to come to grips with. Of course it is early in the day yet in terms of the money, but there is a lot of interest in this issue and talk about working together but money has not really been identified or tied to these initiatives as of yet but we are going to, through the social envelope program departments, we are going to make this an issue and it is on our agenda of issues that we want to develop a common strategy for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any general comments? I have Mrs. Groenewegen and then Mr. Henry. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. 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.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO:

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. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Ootes. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Meeting of caucus at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 11, and the Standing Committee on Government Operations at 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 11. Orders of the day for Tuesday, May 11th.

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

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22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m., May 11, 1999.

--ADJOURNMENT