



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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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, Mrs. Groenewegen. Good afternoon. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 59-13(7): Community Wellness in Action

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling Community Wellness in Action: 1997-98. Community Wellness in Action is published annually by the Department of Health and Social Services based on reports received from the communities. The report summarizes community wellness activities that took place at the community and regional level during the last fiscal year. This is the third year that the Department of Health and Social Services has produced this report.

The activities reported in Community Wellness in Action reflect priorities set by the communities themselves. In 1997-98, communities identified mental health and child development as priority areas. Many projects in the report were planned and delivered by community organizations and agencies to address those areas.

Community wellness funding in the Northwest Territories comes from a variety of sources. This year's report includes information on activities that were funded through a number of different programs including:

- Brighter Futures;
- the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program;
- the Healthy Children Initiative;
- Aboriginal Head Start Initiative;
- AIDS Community Action Program; and
- the Community Action Program for Children

In 1997-98, these programs saw over \$6.3 million invested in community wellness initiatives in the western NWT alone. While much of this funding originates from Health Canada, the success of our Community Wellness Initiatives depends on the work of many partners. These include:

- Health Canada;
- the Department of Education, Culture and Employment;
- regional and community health and social services boards;
- tribal, hamlet and band councils;
- community groups and non-government organizations; and
- the Department of Health and Social Services

Mr. Speaker, being healthy is about more than whether or not you are sick. You cannot measure health by just looking at the rates of illness in a community or region. You cannot tell how healthy people are only by looking at the kinds of treatment services available to them.

Being healthy means being able to prevent sickness and avoid the need for treatment. People and communities need to be able to address the root causes of individual and social illness. In 1986 the World Health Organization expanded its definition of health to include, "the ability to identify and realize aspirations, to satisfy needs and to change or cope with a changing environment." We can help Northerners become truly healthy by building their capacity to maintain wellness at the community and individual level.

Community wellness funding in the Northwest Territories builds capacity and helps individuals and communities develop their own wellness resources.

Promoting health and preventing illness is an important goal for the Department of Health and Social Services. The Community Wellness Initiatives carried out across the North help us work toward that goal. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Members to review the report and support the Community Wellness Initiatives underway in their communities. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 60-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal to be Held in Ottawa

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, last week the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing the equal pay complaint filed by the Public Service Alliance of Canada against the Government of the Northwest Territories decided to hold its hearings primarily in Ottawa. This government is disappointed that the tribunal did not recognize the significance of holding a majority of the hearings in the North. That way, Mr. Speaker, the process would have been open to those most affected by the outcome, which as the tribunal acknowledges, is at least three years away.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that the tribunal has, in its decision, stated the federal government has a "supervisory responsibility" over the territories, and assumes that the federal government will pay for any award made. The NWT receives

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funding from the federal government through a formula that is similar to the equalization arrangement for the provinces. For the tribunal to make the assumption that the federal government will pay for any equal pay decision in the Northwest Territories is irresponsible unless they have a commitment from Finance Minister Martin that we are not aware of. Further, to suggest that the Government of the Northwest Territories is simply an arm of the federal government is to deny decades of progress that has resulted in an independent, autonomous and responsible northern government.

The Government of the Northwest Territories spent considerable time and resources providing evidence

to the tribunal concerning the importance of holding these hearings in the North. We asked the tribunal to allow us to call Northerners as witnesses to explain the importance of the tradition where hearings that affect Northerners are held in the North. Mr. Speaker, they refused to hear them. The tribunal's decision states that there is nothing to be gained by exploring the issue of bringing justice closer to the people. Further, they state that, according to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the people most affected by and interested in this case are in Ottawa.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission both asked that the hearings be held primarily in Ottawa. The tribunal stated that convenience was a serious consideration in its decision. The Tribunal Registry, its staff, the PSAC and the Commission are all resident in Ottawa. By deciding to hold the hearings in Ottawa, the tribunal chose to ignore the fact that Government of the Northwest Territories documents, staff and ordinary witnesses are in the North. Obviously, whose convenience is most worthy of consideration depends on your point of view.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners have fought for decades to move decision making on northern matters from Ottawa to the North. The tribunal is ignoring this tradition. This decision allows for the opening and closing statements to be held in the North; however, the remainder of the hearings will take place in Ottawa. Given how long other tribunals have taken, we are probably talking about three weeks in the North and as long as five years in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories argued that an important part of educating the northern public on this issue is to ensure that the hearings are accessible to northern media. In response, the tribunal stated that the public interest in Canada will be better served by having the hearings in the national capital where it will be closer to the national press.

My understanding is that in most cases the hearing is held in the place that appears to be most substantially connected to the subject of the litigation. Given that the complaint was filed against the Government of the Northwest Territories on behalf of employees in the Northwest Territories, it is difficult to understand why the tribunal would consider holding these hearings anywhere other than in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, over the next 30 days I will review this decision with officials to determine if we will seek a

judicial review of the tribunal decision. I will update Members on any further developments. Mahsi.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 61-13(7): National Children's Agenda

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Members of this House that last Friday in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the provinces and territories, in conjunction with the federal government, launched the National Children's Agenda.

The National Children's Agenda is an initiative that offers all Canadians the opportunity to determine priorities with respect to children. The agenda will support the critical and primary role that parents, families and communities play in the lives of children.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments worked together to identify key issues in the development of two publications that have just been released. The first is titled, "A National Children's Agenda - Developing a Shared Vision". There is also a supplementary document titled, "Measuring Child Well-Being and Monitoring Progress." Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling these documents in the House later today.

The vision documents are intended to guide a national consultation process to help frame social policies for children. National aboriginal organizations participated in the development of a special chapter that addresses the specific issues affecting aboriginal children, including a perspective on children's issues written in their own voice.

The vision documents identify the following four goals for the National Children's Agenda; to ensure that Canada's children are:

- healthy physically and emotionally;
- safe and secure;
- successful at learning; and;
- socially engaged and responsible.

The launch of a public dialogue on a National Children's Agenda reflects the commitments made by governments in the Social Union Framework Agreement, to ensure that Canadians participate in developing social priorities and that governments share information on successes in their jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services will coordinate NWT participation in the consultation process for the NCA. The NCA documents will be sent to stakeholders and organizations. Residents of the NWT will also have opportunities to contribute through:

- a 1-800 number;
- a national website; and
- a national mailing address.

It is important that Northerners participate and provide input, particularly since 37 percent of the NWT population is under the age of 19 years as compared to the national average of 26.5 percent.

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Mr. Speaker, the National Children's Agenda also coincides with work currently being undertaken in the NWT in relation to children and youth. In conjunction with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and my other colleagues in the social envelope, we are working to develop a Territorial Agenda for Children & Youth. The national initiative will complement this work. I encourage all NWT residents, both young and old, to take advantage of the consultation process for the NCA, to help create a shared vision of, and commitment to, a brighter future for our children. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 157-13(7): Environmental Liabilities Associated with Northern Development

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one thing that we do not hear much of in this House and in the discussions that go on in the Northwest Territories,

we seem to be discussing a lot in the area of development, diamonds, in consideration of opening up our resources. Mr. Speaker, the environment in the Northwest Territories is sensitive and must be viewed as such, in regard to the challenges that we face in the Northwest Territories compared to the rest of Canada and the world. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to consider those challenges such as tundra, permafrost, river systems that flow from high populous areas in the south and north to the Arctic Ocean.

But yet, Mr. Speaker, we have to learn from our past experiences that we have had in the Northwest Territories when it comes to development. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about issues such as the Cannoll Trail which was built in the 1940s in regard to running a pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse in the Yukon. Also, consideration of the Dew Line sites that basically spread across the Arctic from Alaska all the way to Greenland. Also, uranium mines which were developed during the 1940s on Great Bear Lake which is now becoming an issue with the people of Deline. In regard to those issues, Mr. Speaker, we have to consider, how are we going to deal with abandoned mines such as Pine Point, for example, the arsenic problem that we have at Giant Mine and also the abandonment of camps on the tundra, the cause of the prospecting rush that took place. Also, the consideration of the increased mining claims in the Northwest Territories, the possibility of abandoned mines and exactly what the cost to this government is going to be in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, as aboriginal people in the North that live in unity with the environment, we have to realize that the environment is probably one of the most sensitive things that we can deal with at this time. Mr. Speaker, we have not had an opportunity to really look at the implications of the greenhouse effect that is presently underway and the effects it will have on permafrost in the Northwest Territories, from the experience on the east coast of Canada with the problem with their fishery and now we are seeing it in the west coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? Mr. Krutko, you have unanimous consent.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In consideration of experiences elsewhere in Canada, such as the slaughter of the buffalo herd in the Prairie Provinces in the early 1800s, recognizing that this problem is not only unique to the buffalo. You look at our neighbours in the west in the Yukon where they are presently having to find ways to replenish the caribou herds in certain areas because of overhunting and overharvesting. I strongly believe, Mr. Speaker, that we must keep in mind that the environment and development has to work hand in hand, but also realizing we do have a sensitive environment in northern Canada. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 158-13(7): Safety Concerns During Reconstruction of Highway 3

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, as spring has now brought new opportunities, we also see ourselves driving a highway that is badly in need of repair. Every year we go through this and I hope this year the Department of Transportation will act in a prudent manner and get the equipment out to repair the last 75 kilometres of gravel highway left on Highway 3. As both ends of this section of road between Rae and Yellowknife are now under construction, this leaves only approximately 75 kilometres of Highway 3 for the department to repair and maintain. I hope the department will work extra hard to ensure the safety and standard of this road is maintained to the premium it should be in.

This is the time of year when many people travel and with this road in its present condition, it is not only very dangerous to travellers, but also to the many people that hunt and walk along this road. So with that in mind, I hope the Department of Transportation will start to repair the last 75 kilometres of gravel road on Highway 3. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement 159-13(7): Leaders Meeting to Discuss Highway 3 Reconstruction

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To follow up on the statement from the Member for North Slave on the highway, I would like to state that two weeks ago community leaders from Rae-Edzo, Yellowknife and the surrounding area met to discuss the upgrading and reconstruction of Highway 3 between our two communities. The meeting was co-chaired by Fred Behrens, Mayor of Rae-Edzo, Dave Lovell, Mayor of Yellowknife, and Grand Chief Joe Rabesca. In attendance were council members from Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife, the four chiefs of the North Slave region, the Yellowknife MLAs and the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Mr. Steen. In all, about 35 of us gathered in the Caucus room here at the Legislative Assembly

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to discuss this important issue. It was a very productive meeting. Collectively, we all want the same thing; a safe and efficient highway system.

There is dissatisfaction that the reconstruction of Highway 3 is being scheduled over a ten year period which those at the meeting felt was too long and people stressed the need for fast-tracking this project. In the NWT the highway system is of major importance. It provides the most economical means to connecting our communities. It is vital to our tourism industry and it is the backbone to mineral and resource development. A review of the national and international highway studies confirms that investments in highways can generate significant productivity, growth and support economic development.

We are now awaiting word from the Minister on the results of his further meetings and the level of funding the federal government may commit to a possible National Highway Strategy. My opinion is that public safety is being compromised by not moving faster in upgrading Highway 3. Further meetings of leaders from the North Great Slave region are being planned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 160-13(7): Recent Comments by Cabinet Ministers Regarding Education Issues

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, today in my Member's statement, take the opportunity to jog the memory of a couple of the Ministers on the other side of the House. I am not sure what happens when you get elected to Cabinet because I have never had that privilege, but something happens to their memories, I am afraid. I will refer to Mr. Miltenberger after, but as far as the remarks of Mr. Dent in the unedited Hansard from yesterday on page 843, Mr. Dent states, "We did not talk about the budget on Friday the 30th. We could at least have started and done some consideration." I just want to remind Mr. Dent that, in fact, we did hear all of the Minister's opening remarks on the department on Friday, the 30th. Then, if he forgets the committee report, I thought it was quite memorable myself, but I was in the chair. He said we did not consider it, so I just wanted to remind him.

As far as Mr. Miltenberger's comments yesterday in unedited Hansard, Mr. Miltenberger seems to have forgotten that any Ordinary Members ever thought that putting money into education was a priority of this government. I quote:

I sat on the committee up until recently on social programs. Nowhere in there is there indicated anywhere in my reading of this document right here of the need to move money to take money from other sources or other departments.

To that end I would like to remind Mr. Miltenberger of a motion that was, in fact, passed in this House on June 1, 1998. I am going to read the motion, if I may.

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories has the highest student-teacher ratio in Canada;

AND WHEREAS teachers in the Northwest Territories are facing increasing challenges, including diverse and multi-grade classes, with fewer and inadequate resources;

AND WHEREAS nearly one half of the students in the Northwest Territories require special supports in the classroom, and approximately half of these students receive them;

AND WHEREAS the majority of Northwest Territories students who participated in the national School Achievement Indicators Program tests ranked below an acceptable level in most areas;

AND WHEREAS there are 18,000 adults in the Northwest Territories who can be classified as illiterate, or semi-literate;

AND WHEREAS most communities in the Northwest Territories do not have stable funding for Adult Basic Education with only 35 Northwest Territories communities having permanent adult educators;

AND WHEREAS Adult Basic Education includes academic upgrading, pre-employment training, and personal skill development;

AND WHEREAS alternative delivery approaches, supports for students, community involvement and accredit programs are necessary to achieve success in adult education;

Mr. Speaker, I am just about finished. I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Hay River is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mrs. Groenewegen, you have unanimous consent.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AND WHEREAS most jurisdictions have been revising their curricula to place more emphasis on the core subject areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science; to return to more objective criteria and expectations; and to return to more traditional teaching methods;

AND WHEREAS about 45 percent of new jobs created in this decade will require a minimum of 16 years of education;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories high school graduation rate is 25 percent of enrolment, while the national average is 68 percent;

NOW THEREFORE, I move seconded by the Honourable

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Member for Iqaluit, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the Executive Council increase base funding to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the current 1998-99 fiscal year by

the minimum of the 6 percent reduction that occurred over the past two years.

This is a motion passed in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 161-13(7): Proposed Beryllium Mine at Thor Lake

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about the proposed beryllium mine at Thor Lake. Mr. Speaker, the proposed beryllium mine would mine some radioactive-like material and the idea is to bring the ore across Great Slave Lake and process it in a processing plant near Hay River. To do that there must be an environmental assessment report and the current environmental assessment is deficient. It must address concerns about human health, provide information on potential effects on fish and consult aboriginal groups about traditional knowledge. Mr. Speaker, the project did not provide adequate information and one of its corporate partners is Royal Oak Mine, 40 percent, I might add, of it. Now, we all know that Royal Oak is now in receivership. I guess we can assume that the receiver is now 40 percent owner of this project. It is probable that the other owners will be looking for investors, but it must be known that most local people reviewing the proposal are opposed to it. In opposition to the processing plant in Hay River, the Hay River First Nation spoke against it, the town of Hay River passed a motion against it, the MLA from Hay River also issued a statement against it. In relation to the total mine and the other project, the Dene Nation also spoke against that and businesses in the vicinity of the proposed mine site also spoke against it. The Yellowknives Dene First Nation actually said they want to see the file closed. Obviously the file cannot be closed as far as the federal government is concerned, so the environmental assessment will continue. Highwood Resources wants to be given an opportunity to give more information that they did not provide the first time.

Mr. Speaker, it is safe to say that most say that most people in the NWT are not against orderly and safe development, but it is important for potential investors to realize that local people do not want this project to proceed. In fact, considering such high local

opposition to the project, perhaps it might be appropriate to consider stopping the project now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. (Translation) I would like to remind Members that when you are making a statement in English and you talk too fast it is hard for the interpreters to keep up. I would like to ask that you slow down a bit when you are reading from prepared materials. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Kakfwi. (Translation ends)

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Erasmus on April 28, 1999, regarding Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan.

The final draft of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan has not yet been provided to the Government of the Northwest Territories. We anticipate receiving the final draft from the Government of Nunavut within the next six months.

It is my understanding, based on earlier drafts, that the plan will contain recommendations with regard to managing visitor activity in the sanctuary to ensure that visitor use is consistent with the conservation and wilderness values of the sanctuary. The plan will also recommend that Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Authority be established as a vehicle to implement the management plan. If these recommendations are accepted by government, the management authority would advise government on issues such as permitting and access regulations needed to manage visitor activity. This could include such things as establishing controls or restrictions on aircraft traffic. There will be an opportunity for further public input prior to any specific regulations being put in place, both through the Management Authority and directly to the responsible government agency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to my opening statement, I would like to ask a few questions to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is concerning the amount of energy and resources this government is putting into the diamond industry, as well as consideration of the environment and protection of the environment when we consider funding such activities, and realizing that we do have a sensitive environment in northern Canada. I would like to ask the Minister exactly how do they deal with the environment component or concerns in northern Canada when they are dealing with a mining company?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a process set up to receive proposals from the mining companies that propose to get into mining activity, mining production, here in the Northwest Territories, and they are primarily federal processes. In the case of BHP, there was a process set up by the federal government to review their application to get into diamond mining. With Diavik, another federal process was set up to review their application as well, and our government takes part in these processes, primarily by advising the federal government and assisting in the review of the applications as a government. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one mine that comes to mind right away is the problem we see at Giant Mine, yet this government continues to put money into that project, and also there is the question of investing \$2 million in the previous budget at that time. I raised concerns at that time about the question of liability of this government when it comes to dealing with concerns of environmental cleanups, ensuring that there are bonds in place to protect the public so when we do have a situation like we do with Giant Mine where we are looking at \$200 million to clean up the arsenic in that mine. Yet this government continues to invest in that mine and also consider human resources and energy to continue to put money into a mine yet, at the end of the day, the government is going to get stuck with the \$200 million cost of the cleanup. So can the Minister tell me exactly how does he see that issue being worked out?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the liability at Giant Mine is largely federal. The federal government, we believe, will assume liability for the \$250 million estimated amount of liability with Giant Mine in the event that the owner is unable to cover that liability. The Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for the surface reclamation and remedial work that would be required, estimated in the neighbourhood of perhaps under \$10 million. It is true that we are working to find ways to keep Giant Mine operating, at least in the short term. We know that the huge environmental liability, much of which has happened under previous governments from a time when environmental laws were not so stringent, and environmental knowledge was not yet of the state that it is in today. We are working on the Giant Mine issue, primarily to keep it going so that, while it is still possible to be productive and marginally profitable, we should continue that operation to protect the jobs that are at stake there. In the meantime, we are also working to pressure the private sector or the federal government to address the environmental liability, that is the massive amounts of arsenic that are stored underground, to see if we can start to address some work and some resources towards perhaps starting a cleanup program of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me exactly where does he see the \$10 million coming from for the cleanup of Giant Mine, and what plans are in place to get this cleanup started as soon as possible?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is just an estimate. We are not assuming that we are going to do it. We have the view that the private sector should be still interested in Giant Mine as a property, as an operation, and we are hopeful that some work will be done to find a new owner and/or operator to keep this going, and that will give us time to address the questions that the Member is raising. As long as the mine is operating and the private sector is involved, it is possible that some or all of the liability will be covered by the private sector. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me if there are any plans in place for this department to strengthen our environmental regulations and bring them in line with other jurisdictions across Canada to ensure that we do have mechanisms in place to ensure the public that we are considering protecting the environment and we are looking into legislation to have a look at that. Can the Minister answer that?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 181-13(7): Environmental Impact of Mining Developments

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All lands and inland waters are still under the jurisdiction of the federal government, so we do not have the capacity to deal with environmental issues that deal with most of the land and the resources and the water in our territory. The environmental jurisdictions we do have we believe are adequately covered at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance, and the questions are in relation to the statement that he made earlier today on the Equal Pay Tribunal to be held in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am very disappointed to hear that the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decided to hold the vast majority of the hearings in Ottawa and, obviously, even more disappointed to hear that the union wanted to have the vast majority of the hearings in Ottawa. What I would like to know is if the Minister could indicate to me whether holding these hearings, the vast majority of the hearings other than the opening and closing remarks, I think he said, is this going to be an added cost to this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my statement, because the government

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has its records and its witnesses in the North, there is probably an increase in cost to hold the majority of the hearings in Ottawa, yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister in his statement also indicated that according to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the people most affected by and interested in this case are in Ottawa. Could the Minister indicate what was the rationale behind that statement if there was any provided?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot provide the rationale for why the PSAC would make that kind of statement. Considering this is a complaint which has been lodged against the Government of the Northwest Territories on behalf of employees who, for the most part, are still residents in the Northwest Territories, I do not understand how that statement could be made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had also indicated that he understands that in most cases the hearing is held in a place that appears to be most substantially connected to the subject of the litigation, and I could certainly understand why that would be. Could the Minister indicate if he has any examples of when this has occurred? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have with me, in the House, specific examples of other hearings that have been held. I will endeavour to provide that information to Members within the day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister in his statement also indicated that the government asked the tribunal to allow us to call Northerners as witnesses to explain the importance of the tradition where hearings that affect Northerners are held in the North. They refused to hear them. Is the Minister indicating that we were not even allowed to have witnesses to speak to the tribunal so that we could try to explain to them why it is important to have these important hearings here in the North? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 182-13(7): Equal Pay Tribunal Hearings

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right, we were not even allowed to call witnesses to explain the importance of holding hearings throughout the North so that people in the North could be educated and aware of what the issues are. This, I think, Mr. Speaker, is unheard of. In my history in the North, from the time of the Berger Commission, almost every time there has been an issue of importance to Northerners, the hearings have been held in the North and this government is extremely disappointed that these will not be held here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I would like to ask the Premier if there is such a thing as transitional compensation available to Cabinet Ministers who resign or depart prior to the end of their term in office as Cabinet Ministers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier, Mr. Antoine

Return To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there are ministerial severance benefits that exist for Cabinet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I assume that these ministerial severance benefits come into play when a Minister is departing earlier than anticipated. It would not be at the end of any term of office as a Cabinet Minister, is that correct? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the procedure, the Minister has to either resign or has to be removed from office. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Premier please describe what the components are of this ministerial severance package, whether it be for travel, housing, pay, benefits, vacation allowances? Could the Premier please describe what the components are of this severance package that would be given to Cabinet Ministers departing earlier than anticipated? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you. The honourable Member is asking about severance. The severance payout, I believe, is about two months. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question was, and I do not understand the answer, are there various components to this or is the Premier saying that it is two months' compensation based on what they normally are paid including all the various components of remuneration for Cabinet Ministers? I did not understand the answer to that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 183-13(7): Transitional Compensation to Departing Ministers

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under this procedure, when Ministers resign or are taken out of

office, they are eligible to receive severance pay up to a maximum of two months as a Minister. There are also things like vacation leave credits that are there that have to be taken into consideration. There is a matter of accommodation expenses and so forth that has to be worked out from the resignation date so there is a period, I believe, of about 90 days to try to take care of that. Also there is a whole thing about leasing furniture and so forth that is also 90 days. There is the matter of removal type of assistance if their residence is outside of Yellowknife. These are all kind of calculated into and taken into consideration in the ministerial clearance procedure. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Housing. Mr. Speaker, we have heard and the question is in relation to the Minimum Down Payment Assistance Program. Mr. Speaker, we have heard glowing reports of how many people have been able to purchase homes using the \$10,000 homeowners grant to help people with the minimum down payment. I wish I could say that all my constituents are able to participate in this very worthy program, however, I have received complaints from people living on Ingraham Trail that they may not be able to participate in the program. Could the Minister indicate how people living on Ingraham Trail, if they are eligible to actually participate in this program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the situation that is happening out at Ingraham Trail has to do with the lots that are out there. The majority of lots that are out on Ingraham Trail are leased through the federal government and are leased on the basis of cottage or seasonal use. The MDAP program is for your principal residence so that, in a lot of those

cases, they would not qualify on that basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister saying then that anybody that is not on, I guess you could call it a recreational or seasonal lease, anybody that is not on a seasonal lease then would be eligible for the \$10,000 MDAP?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if there are lots out on Ingraham Trail that are leased for a permanent site or permanent residence, then they would be eligible for the MDAP. The concern is that it has to be the principal residence of the individual, and the lot has to be leased on the basis of, a full lease, not as a cottage or a seasonal use lease. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated something about a principal residence. I think that this government is well aware that quite a few people actually live out on Ingraham Trail in what was originally supposed to be seasonal leases, but now these are principal residences. In the case where it may actually be called a seasonal lease but it is a principal residence for someone, would that family or couple or that individual, if it is an individual, would they be eligible for the MDAP?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

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Further Return To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again the issue is one of the conditions for MDAP is that it would go to purchase or to build your principal residence as well as the issue on the Ingraham Trail is that the lot they are on has to be on titled land, I think that is the proper term, that the land it is going on or the existing facility, the house that is out there, is on titled land specifically for the purposes of permanent residences. Those are a number of the conditions that would have to be met before MDAP could apply. If there are people out there, and we know people do live out on Ingraham Trail, but if it is not on titled land, then they still do not qualify for the MDAP.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am starting to get a little bit confused here. I think originally the Minister had indicated that if the people were on leases that did not say seasonal leases, that they would be eligible, but in his last answer he indicated that only titled landowners would be eligible. Could the Minister clarify that please? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 184-13(7): Access to Down Payment Assistance Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Mr. Speaker, I will try to get this correct for the Member. The issue is that the lease or the titled land would have to be one of a principal residence or not indicated as being for seasonal or recreational use. It has to be their permanent area that they have the permission of the governments, whether it is the federal government or the territorial government,

depending on which area, the Commissioner's land, for example, falls under, it has to be approved for the use of a full-time occupancy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Honourable Mr. Steen, Minister of Transportation. Earlier today I made a statement regarding the upgrading of Highway 3, and I made reference to the National Highway Strategy. I understand the Minister attended a meeting of his counterparts, provincial and federal, several weeks ago at which there was some discussion as to the possibility of reviving a National Highway Strategy. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what that strategy may be all about? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the meeting the Member referenced actually was a meeting set up by the Liberal Caucus, and it was to do with a plan the federal government has whereby they would direct money in a new budget, next year's budget, toward transportation infrastructure, and highways in particular. The proposal at this point in time is just a proposal, the federal government would put in \$3.5 billion over five years into highway infrastructure, in particular, national highways infrastructure. The territorial government, at this point in time, has 535 kilometres of highway that would be considered as part of the national highways infrastructure.

The thought, Mr. Speaker, is that over five years \$700 million a year would be put in by the federal government towards national highway improvements. The plan is, of course, that provincial, territorial and industry would meet that money. What the ratio would be is still up in the air, but we would definitely have to come up with our share of whatever the ratio

would be. It could be 2/1 or it could be 50/50, but we would definitely have to come up with our share to meet the federal contribution. We are hoping the formula will be based on our portion of the national highway system, in other words, roughly 2 percent of that funding would be available to the territories. That would work out to approximately \$80 million over five years, Mr. Speaker, however, we would have to find our share to meet that in the budget, whether it is 50/50 or 2/1. There was another meeting scheduled for later this week in Ottawa to further discuss and arrive at some decision on exactly what the ratio would be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell us, it is restricted to certain highways within the territories and the Minister referred to the mileage. If I understand correctly, perhaps the Minister could confirm this, it would apply to Highways 1, 3, and 2. Is that correct? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the particular portion of the highway this would apply to would be the highway from the Alberta border to Yellowknife and then a portion of the highway, I believe, into Hay River. That is what qualifies as a national highway. In there, as well as planned capital funding of our own towards the project, the federal funding would be used to finalize and possibly accelerate construction on Highway 3 between here and Fort Rae. I doubt if the acceleration would be any faster than five years because that is what the funding is based on, a five year program. We would still have to find our share of capital funding. The other portion of the highway funding that we would get from the federal government could be applied towards putting a bridge in place at Fort Providence. The estimated cost of that bridge right now is \$60 million. Again, it depends

on whether the funding is, in fact, put in place by the federal government in the next budget.

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Previous to this the federal government had a program called Municipal Funding National, this time they have a program called Transportation Infrastructure, so that is the idea the federal government has at this time. Encouragement from the provinces and territories is for the federal government to go forward with this program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly encouraging that there is a possibility for this funding and certainly, while I believe there is a need to fast-track it even beyond the five years, at least, it would be welcome news even if it was five years. Perhaps the Minister could tell me what is the next stage of the Minister's process, along with his counterparts on a national basis? He mentioned they were meeting next week, I believe, or later this week, perhaps the Minister could clarify that for me. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, there was a meeting planned for this coming Friday in Ottawa, where the provincial and territorial Ministers and Mr. Collenette, the federal Minister, would be at the particular meeting and we would hopefully arrive at some kind of conclusion or agreement on formula funding. I understand now that there is a possibility this meeting may be postponed, so I cannot say at this point in time when the next meeting will go forward, but we hope that everything will be in place so that the federal government's plan for their federal budget, presumably over the summer, plans would be made before then to give direction to

the federal government as to have it included in the federal budget for next year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell us if we might know ahead of time so that we can plan our budget process properly this fall? We do need to fast-track this highway, and if we are going to tackle this, and there is a possibility of federal funding, then we have to allocate a certain amount of funding in the budget next year to meet the federal funding. If the Minister could tell us if he might know by early this fall? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen

Further Return To Question 185-13(7): National Highway Strategy Meeting

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe, if this government reached an agreement with the federal government on a funding formula, it would be through a MOU whereby we would be committing x number of dollars and they would be committing x number of dollars per year for five years, so obviously it would have to be in time for our budget and it would have to be in time for their budget. If the House is sitting or whatever way is available to me as a Minister to make the other Members aware of what the plan is, I will use that approach. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable Member of the Department of Finance with the responsibilities for the Power Corporation, the Honourable Mr. Dent. Mr. Speaker,

yesterday I tabled a petition signed by over 100 employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. These employees wanted the freedom to choose their employees' association rather than having their representation dictated to them by the government under the Public Service Act. As I stated yesterday, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom guarantees freedom of association as a fundamental freedom of every Canadian citizen. Our Public Service Act expressly denies that right, not only for the Power Corporation employees but for all government employees other than teachers. Employees may choose to remain with the UNW but it must be their choice, not the government's.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board. Given that the Public Service Act appears to be in direct contradiction to the charter, will the Minister make a commitment to amend the act to ensure that employees covered by the act can exercise freedom of association? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wondered which Minister was going to get a chance to answer that because the honourable Member used three different titles in the question. I would like to indicate that while I have received the petition, and we are examining it to determine which way to go, I am not sure that I can accept the Member's allegation that our current act is in contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We did in fact, go to court when this government took over health in 1988 with the health care workers. The ruling indicated our act is in compliance with the Canadian Charter.

I do take seriously the request by the employees of the Power Corporation, however, I choose to be cautious in predicting how I can respond. I am advised that there are 217 unionized workers at the Power Corporation, members of the union. As the Member noted, the number of signatures on the petition was 108, which is one short of being 50 percent, and I do understand that this is an important issue. I have received letters from both the union and

from unionized workers and am working with the staff at FMBS to examine the situation to decide the best and proper way to respond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister noted, I had addressed him with by three different titles, I can assure him that a number of times in the hallways there are more titles that are contributed towards him. Mr. Speaker, my second question is, the Minister mentioned that when health was transferred from the federal government the Public Service Act was looked at as to be constitutional. Was that specific part in the act looked at or was it just the act in general as to meeting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in regard to the association part? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, the question to the courts was whether or not health professionals had to belong to one union, as stipulated in the act. The courts found in the government's favour. The act was found to be constitutional. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the Minister for that. Could the Minister indicate when his officials will have reviewed the concerns that I have brought to his attention and report back to the House? He

mentioned earlier he would do that, but did not set a time limit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 186-13(7): Union Representation for NTPC Employees

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will endeavour to do that with all haste, however I doubt that I will be able to report back to this House by tomorrow. I will report to the Member on what we have found and to the employees who have written to me within the next two to four weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had some more questions for the Premier on the issue of the ministerial severance packages. I believe that the Premier said that the ministerial severance only comes into play when a Minister leaves his office earlier than the end of a term. We have had some resignations from Cabinet recently, so my question is when the resignations of Nunavut Members were announced in the House, were they deemed to have resigned their positions prior to the end of their term on March 31st? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Premier.

Return To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would follow then that even though some of them only left a couple of days earlier than the end of their term that that would have made them eligible for a ministerial severance package? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the policy, yes, it makes them eligible for this ministerial clearance procedure. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Nunavut Cabinet Ministers had not resigned prior and had just let the clock run out on their terms and had left after March 31st, they would not have received ministerial severance packages? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to this policy, if they would have let their term run out to the end of March, they would not have been eligible for the severance pay of the two months of their salary. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 187-13(7): Ministerial Severance Packages

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, was this unique to Nunavut Cabinet Ministers leaving this department and would it be within the Premier's knowledge whether Cabinet Ministers would have done the same thing, for example, resigning two days prior to the end of their term at the end of the 12th Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

I will rule the question out of order. The Members cannot ask questions about the previous Assemblies. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. It is in regards to an issue that I have raised in this House. It is about the increased number of highway fatalities on our highway system. In 1996, there were some 160 highway accidents. Mr. Speaker, in 1997 there was an increase of 130 accidents on our highway systems. Mr. Speaker, also the record shows that there has been a decrease in the number of registered vehicles and licences issued in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the concern I have is the cause of the increased number of fatalities on the road systems. I travel a lot on the highway systems, and one of the biggest concerns that I see on the highway system is the question about dust control. Also, problems driving on the highway system especially in the summertime with 24 hours sunlight where you have a hard time seeing if there is a vehicle in front of you and also of the vehicles coming to you. You cannot always determine exactly where these vehicles are on the road or if there is a turn coming up. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister about the number of fatalities that are on our road systems, and the large cause of these accidents are because of the dust problems we have on a lot of our roads which are gravel highways. What is this department doing to improve, repair, and maintain those highway systems

so that we can decrease the number fatalities on those roads?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about highways in general. The department, as everybody knows, is working towards hard topping the highway from the border to Yellowknife. Those other highways that are heavily used are normally calcium-applied for dust control. If the Member is referring specifically to the highway in his region which is the Dempster, at this point in time, the department is working towards widening that highway, and we are applying dust controlled-calcium in those areas that are critical at this point in time like approaches to the bridges or approaches to the communities. We are also, at this point in time, considering whether we can afford to put or apply more calcium to the Dempster.

Mr. Speaker, as all the Members know, whether the department is going to be able to have more funding to apply more dust control to the highways, we are also competing with the funding that the House has been directing towards the social programs in the last couple of days like education. The government needs direction as to what the priorities are. Right now there is no doubt my department places a high priority on dust control. But again, it depends on how much money we are given to do the job with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the highway system, as we know it, from Enterprise to Yellowknife is some 333 kilometres, yet the Dempster Highway from the border to Inuvik is 272 kilometres with a difference of almost 60 kilometres. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if Highway 8 is in Alaska or whatever, but it is part of the Northwest Territories. This is the second longest stretch of highway we have to maintain in the

Northwest Territories. Why is it that that highway is being treated any differently than any highway. When you talk about money, I just heard the Minister mention earlier that there is some \$60 million to build a bridge across the MacKenzie River. I would like to ask the Minister, why is the dust control such a problem with this government, yet we are spending some \$50 million to upgrade Highway 8? Why is there no money for dust control?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, highways have designated ratings, we would call, depending on traffic volume. Also the highway from the border to Yellowknife has been designated as part of the national highway system, so therefore it gets priority treatment as far as federal funding is concerned. I do not know who, in the past, designated that as the national highway system versus the Dempster or versus Highway 1 all the way to Wrigley, but it is designated. We have to accept that. I presume it was in relation to the amount of traffic. That is why the portion of the highway from the Alberta border to Yellowknife is, in fact, getting more capital funding directed towards it than the Dempster. Of course, again, everybody is going to use the arguments that even though the Dempster is longer, it does not make it more heavily travelled. The department is directing the funding towards the heaviest travelled portions of our highways, and that is from here to Alberta, from Yellowknife to Alberta at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was under the understanding that the National Highway Strategy was to link the capitals of all provinces to Ottawa and because of it being funded from the federal government, why is it that there is not any access funding from this government internally over and above the money that we get from the National

Highway Strategy? Are there two pots of funds for funding the highway system in the Northwest Territories? The National Highway Strategy is a federal program. Do we have funds in the Government of the Northwest Territories budget to maintain our existing highway systems besides Highway 3?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

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HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not 100 percent sure, but I would suggest that the national highway program is not strictly a federal program. It was a program agreed to by the provinces and the territories, as well as the federal government. I am told by my honourable colleague here, Mr. Roland, that part of the National Highway Strategy was to connect capital cities. Yellowknife is a capital city and I suppose until Fort McPherson becomes the next capital, then we are not going to get highway funding down the Dempster or a recognition of the Dempster Highway as well as the capital funding. I do not know.

Again like I said, this was made long before my time that these decisions were made as to what portions of the highway get what portions of the funding. In response to the Member's question as to this government's share of the funding, like I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the department gets its money for highway maintenance and highway construction from this Assembly. If the Assembly places highways as their priority, then the department will respond accordingly. But right now, highways is not a priority in this government. Priority is education and health. I cannot speak towards whether we are going to obtain any more funding than we already have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it was clear in my statement that the concern I have is the whole question about public safety. I think public safety is not a priority of this government. We are definitely in the wrong boat. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, one of the conditions of the Department of Transportation is to ensure the public has a safe means of transferring themselves from one point to the other without being concerned of having an accident on the road systems. I would like to ask the Minister, what is his department doing to improve the public safety of our highway systems to ensure they are maintained and also improved so that everybody feels safe driving on our highway systems?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 188-13(7): Reducing Accidents on NWT Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that safety is the highest priority of the Department of Transportation. We would not build new highways if we could not maintain our existing ones to a safe standard. That is priority number one, to keep the existing highways to safe standards. We are, at this point in time, investing \$2.5 million on the Dempster capital every year to improve the safety of that highway. We invest as well, I am not 100 percent sure the amount of money we put into dust control, but we do put money into dust control for the Dempster as well. Like I advised the Member, we are reconsidering how much more we can add to that in order to improve dust control on the Dempster. But that is what the department is doing as far as improving safety on the Dempster Highway. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, at the end of March I had asked questions about summer student employment. I had received a reply that there was going to be a central hiring agency in Yellowknife and that all our departments

can access the central registry and hire students listed in the registry. Mr. Speaker, not too long ago there was an interview on CBC, in fact on April 13th, and one of the coordinators of the program indicated was interviewed there. There was an indication that this program would ensure that all qualified students would be matched up with relevant and suitable summer employment. Could the Minister indicate whether this program actually is done by that central agency? Do they actually place the students or are the students hired by the departments or whoever they want from those students that place their names on the registry? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am not familiar with that level of detail on that particular issue. I do know that the million dollars that we have sitting there waiting for student employment is sitting their gathering interest and we are looking forward to hopefully very soon being able to put that money to work through the process that the Member outlined for Yellowknife. As to the level of detail, I cannot tell the Member, but I would be happy to commit to get that information for him.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since that money is collecting interest, I suppose we will have a little bit more to spend later on that we would have normally had with that interest. Mr. Speaker, since the Minister is committing to bring this information, could he also commit that the central agency would actually place the students because if the central agency does not place the students there is a possibility that people will not actually be getting jobs on a fair basis. Since then the departments can cherry-pick the students that they wish? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Member for clarification on his question? He is talking about a central agency for government jobs in Yellowknife?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I had asked about a central hiring agency and there was an indication that, particularly in large centres like Yellowknife, and then one of the coordinators from the central agency in Yellowknife spoke about it. What I would like is a commitment from Cabinet, from the Minister that it will actually be the central agency that places the students so that we can try to reassure the students that they will be treated fairly, because it is not fair that the students are going to be putting their names faithfully into the central agency and then they are not placed fairly by an independent agency such as that central agency. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Further Return To Question 189-13(7): Central Student Hiring Agency

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue that the Member asked is an important one. The information I have is that there is a central agency where they drop off resumes and such. Whether, in fact, the central agency, in fact, does the placement among all the boards and agencies, I am unsure of. I will take the Member's concerns into consideration and I will pass them on to the Premier's office and will

ensure that they are given the attention they deserve. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 7, written questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 6-13(7): Renumeration and Benefits of Cabinet Ministers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1. Could the Premier table in the Legislative Assembly, at the earliest opportunity, the policies that detail the remuneration and benefits to the Members of Cabinet?
2. Could the Premier provide the total annual cost to this government, of providing remuneration and benefits directly to Cabinet?
3. Could the Premier provide a detailed statement by fiscal year indicating by Minister the amounts received directly and indirectly by each of those who served as Minister or Premier since the beginning of the 13th Assembly and up until March 31, 1999.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 46-13(7): Community Wellness in Action: 1997-98, Summary Report of Community Wellness Initiatives

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents to table. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled, Community Wellness in Action: 1997-1998. A summary report of community wellness initiatives.

Tabled Document 47-13(7): A National Children's Agenda: Developing a Shared Vision

As well, I wish to table the following document entitled, The National Children's Agenda, in developing a shared vision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Ootes.

Tabled Document 48-13(7): Attributes of Librarians

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document I have received from librarians in the NWT. It relates to their educational levels and their work responsibilities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the first reading of Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member for Sahtu is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with Bill 19. Do I have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Kakfwi, you have unanimous consent.

Bill 19: An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 19 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the first reading of Bill 20, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member for Nunakput is seeking unanimous consent to deal with Bill 20. Do I have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Steen, you have unanimous

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consent.

Bill 20: Municipal Statutes Amendment Act

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik that Bill 20, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 20 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member for Sahtu is seeking consent to deal with Bill 19. Do I have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Kakfwi, you have consent.

Bill 19: An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Labour Standards Act to provide a method for calculating the regular wages for employees whose wages are computed and paid on a basis other than time or on a combined basis of time and some other basis, for the purposes of determining the minimum pay for overtime and general holidays. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 19 has had second reading and accordingly the bill stands referred to the committee. Second reading of bills, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 20, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable Member for Nunakput is seeking consent to deal with Bill 20. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Steen, you have consent.

Bill 20: Municipal Statutes Amendment Act

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik that Bill 20, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Charter Communities Act, the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, and the Hamlets Act, to enable municipalities to make by-laws to prohibit trespassing on private or public property. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 20 has had second reading and accordingly, the bill stands referred to committee. 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 Mrs. Groenewegen, in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I call committee of the whole to order. Before the committee of the whole today we have Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000, Committee Report 1-13(7), Report on the 1999-2002 business plans and 1999-2000 Main Estimates and Tabled Document 31-13(7), Report to the Minister, Public Works and Services, April 15, 1999, regarding issues raised in the Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. What is the wish of the committee today? Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 17 and Committee Report 1-13(7).

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Then we will resume with general comments under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment after a brief break. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I would like to call the committee back to order. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Yes, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Agreed. Thank you. Would the Sergeant-At-Arms please bring in the witnesses. Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger, could you please introduce your witnesses for the record? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. To my left, lightly bronzed and refreshed from a quick trip to Hawaii is the deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment Mr. Cleveland. To my right, after yesterday, slightly harried and worried looking is the director of finance from Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Devitt.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. What is the wish of the committee at this time? General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can the Minister explain the whole concept of private schooling regarding to the department of Education, Culture and Employment? I see in the budget it is \$326,000, an increase from \$278,000. I would like to ask the Minister, is that used for students when they do home education?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The money for private schools goes mainly to denominational schools such as Pentecostal College in Fort Smith. Apparently there is a Pentecostal College in Fort Smith, but they do not get funding. The deputy has indicated that there is a Christian school in Yellowknife. So that I get the details right, I will ask the deputy to respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department included the possibility of creation of private schools when the Education Act was last revised. We fund a

series of private schools that are subject to meeting the curriculum requirements of the GNWT, and we fund them at a percentage, 40 percent of the annual grant made per student basis to other institutions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could the Minister tell me also in regards to private schooling, it references the Western Arctic Leaders' Program. How much of the \$326,000 is for that program in Fort Smith?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The funding is \$165,000 approximately, including the funding for the building.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The \$165,000 does not include the housing of the students for that program. What is the total cost of running that program in Fort Smith?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

The Department of Education contributes \$166,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Could the Minister tell me where do the majority of the students for this Western Arctic Leaders' Program come from?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

The students, depending on the year, come from across the Western Arctic.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I find it kind of ironic that a community like Deline that is trying to get their students to larger centres such as Yellowknife to get a better education, yet we are able to fund \$160,000 to a special interest group to run a similar program in Fort Smith. What is the difference between this program and a community such as Deline having the opportunity to run a similar arrangement in Yellowknife?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The department currently assists with funding for three small residences. There is one in Fort Smith, there is one in Rae, and there is one in Fort Simpson that are run and have been running for a number of years. The Leadership Program is one of those three. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In regards to the way those programs are funded, are they not funded through the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education and the Deh Cho Divisional Board of Education? Is that where the funding comes from?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The deputy is more familiar with that particular funding issue than I so I will ask him to respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The funding for the Deh Cho residents is funded through the Deh Cho Divisional Education Council and the funding for the Dogrib residents in Edzo is funded through the Dogrib Community Services Board. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Why is there such a discretion between funding these things through the Divisional Board of Education which are allocated funds for such programs yet we are also funding a private school, an exclusive private school, to a small handful of students?

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is not an exclusive private school. It is a school that has students, at this point, from all over the Western Arctic, many from small communities. Just about all of them are from small communities. It has been in operation for approximately eight years. The Dogrib currently get about \$216,000 for the operation of their student residence. In addition, the department has funded the Dogrib School Board for another \$553,000 for the operation of the high school programs in small communities. In the Deh Cho, they get about \$88,000. In addition, the department has funded the amount of \$539,000 for the operation of high school programs for smaller communities under the funding formula which the divisional board has chosen to put some of that money towards the residents. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Is the Minister or the department considering doing away with this program in light that you made the statement that the funds are already going to the Divisional Board of Education and they should be handling and maintaining their funding within budgetary items, yet we have a special category here for an interest group which is over and above those which are already being funded, so we are basically funding two groups at this time and I do not think we are fair to all the students in the Northwest Territories who may not have access to this program? On the one hand we are short of funding in our education system but yet you are still funding a so-called unique program, yet we have unique problems in all our other schools. What is so unique about this program which is costing us some \$326,000 which could be better spent in the overall budget of all the divisional boards?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am not sure where the Member got \$326,000. The Department of Education is putting in \$166,000 for the running of the program and it is open to all the students and it is in the budget for this year and there is no intention to remove it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Does the Minister have a list of students and where they come from?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not have the list for this year, but I have the list here up to 1998. In 1998, students came from Rae-Edzo, Tulita, Fort Resolution, Wrigley, one from Fort Smith, Fort Providence. The year before that there were students

from Fort Providence, Yellowknife, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson. We had one from Paulatuk in 1995. The students are from across the western territory. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. What is the average number of students in any one year which are attending this program?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe the capacity of the building that they are in is for 17. I think at this point there are about 14 or 15.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe that serving 14 or 15 students, yet we are having shortages of funding to assist high schools in a lot of our smaller communities. I think this money could be better spent in those communities, so at the appropriate time I will move a motion to have that program deleted from this item.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is the Member's right to make whatever motion he wants. It is just gratifying to see he is consistent in his concern about issues and programs in Fort Smith. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The comments from the Minister saying I am after Fort Smith. I am not after Fort Smith. I am after trying to be fair and equitable to all students in the Northwest Territories where they all have the same education. It does not matter where they come from. Instead of having a handful of students getting special education where there are limited resources in all our classroom at this time because of the lack of funding. This is one area where I see this funding could probably be used to assist us with the problems we have in our small communities to benefit all communities and all students in the Northwest Territories. I take the remark from the Minister to be out of line, and I think that maybe he is stepping the basket from Fort Smith, being the Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is not really an education discussion, but if the Member wants to stand forward and make specific charges that I am, in fact, pork-barrelling then by all means stand up and cite chapter and verse. My concern about my community goes back to issues like airports where there is a move by this Member to try to remove an airport project. My concern goes back to issues attempting to shut down the fire centre in Fort Smith. I do not know if people want to consider me overly-sensitive, but the Member very clearly has made it known that a community the size of Fort Smith should be carved up obviously to his satisfaction. It is not something I am in a position to support. In fact, I am here to defend the education budget and it is a budget

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for all of the students and all of the people in the Northwest Territories and the intent is to provide the best quality education we can for all those students in the Western Arctic Leadership Program. In fact, go to the school in Fort Smith, they do not get a special education that is not open to all other students in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will have to recognize the clock now and come back to Mr. Krutko for further general comments, later if he wishes. I have on the list, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, yesterday the Minister talked about graduation rates and he mentioned the number of statistics. I think we have all realized in our time here that you can get statistics to say whatever you wish them to say. The Minister tells us that the graduation rate is up. I do not doubt that, that the graduation rate is up. I guess my concern is, is at what expense is the graduation rate up? I have had a number of concerns brought to me by employers who have certain expectations about what a high school diploma or a grade 9 or a grade 10 education is. With the advent of social advancement, I think we are not only doing our students a disservice by telling them that they have something more than they really have and we are doing a disservice to potential employers who have certain expectations of what employees can do in their positions. I think it is important that be recognized by the department and serious consideration given to this phenomena that they call social advancing or social passing. I think they are not doing anyone a good service in that area. I talked yesterday about the potential of recognizing much earlier on, what individual students' capabilities are and designing programs and life skills to better adapt to that individual's abilities and to give them the skills to make them productive in society and, take emphasis off of an academic education if the individual is not capable of attaining that and to give much more serious consideration to the social passing, if you will.

Something that has bothered myself in my short time here at the Legislature, and it is a sore point with members of my constituency. It is a shortage of funding that is provided to my community. My understanding is that all high schools in the Northwest Territories receive 100 percent funding. Where the high schools in Yellowknife receive quite a bit less. I know the Minister is aware of that situation and my question to him is, has the department given any consideration to make what Mr. Krutko, and the Minister himself have talked about, a fair and equitable resources to all areas of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Member made statements and comments yesterday and raised this concern about not forcing those students that would benefit from a different approach to education and then rather than trying to force them through the academic stream. We have noted those concerns. He has made references now to the issue of social passing. I shared this document with all of the MLAs, it is called, Promoting Achievement in School and What Works. I would ask that the Members take time to read it. The point that the Member raises is a good one that social passing is considered only marginally better than keeping children back a grade. Both are considered less than satisfactory. Ideally the situation would be the system has enough funds where work can be done to keep children at the grade they are at and move them through the system. So, it is an issue that we are aware of and that we are going to be attempting to deal with.

In regard to the shortage of funding in Yellowknife, the situation in Yellowknife is that grade 10 to 12 receive 100 percent funding and that grades K to 9 receive 75 percent funding. The other 25 percent is raised because of the size of the community and the choice of the community to move to the divisional status and greater latitude in decision making and autonomy. In fact, the information from the department is that when you combine the numbers in Yellowknife that there are about 105 percent of what other communities are receiving for funding for education. It is an issue that has been talked about, in fact, I had lunch today with both the chairpersons of YK 1 and YK 2. That was one of the issues that was touched on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Again, we are into statistics and 105 percent sounds like more than we are entitled to. Could the Minister maybe explain how the K to 9 students in Yellowknife are receiving 75 percent of the funding and the 10 to 12 receive 100 percent of the funding? Could the Minister tell me how he can turn those figures around to make it 105 percent of what we are entitled to because it baffles my mind? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. I did not follow your calculations either how you arrived at 105 percent, but

I will let the Minister try and figure that one out. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. What the 105 percent is arrived at is that 75 percent funding for K to 9, the 25 percent is raised locally through education taxes, mill rate which is a trade-off for the greater autonomy and decision making. The city I understand, or the two school districts, have chosen to raise more than the 25 percent so that when you combine all the figures together they are raising closer to 30 percent. So it comes to about 105 percent. The government is throwing in 100 percent 10 to 12, 75 percent K to 9. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would have to assume then that there is not much incentive for any other divisional education board to have greater autonomy as the Minister puts it because they are going to lose 5 percent or their residents will have to raise 5 percent. I am going to pass my questions on to someone else right now because I still have to figure out how they have 105 percent. I mean that is the parents that are obviously contributing in excess to that.

My final question in that area is a number of residents from other

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communities move to the city of Yellowknife, some for medical purposes, many for the facilities that are available in treatment centres or battered homes facilities set up for spousal abuse victims. We, in the city, also receive the children of those fallouts. They also come to the school system. Is there any provision to ensure that the funding that is provided in their home communities could be transferred to the school districts when they come to either district 1 or district 2 in Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The first issue in regard to incentive for other communities to take on the autonomy that Yellowknife wanted, the Member is right. No other community in the North has the size or the tax base to be able to take on that kind of role. I do not anticipate it happening in any other jurisdiction outside of Yellowknife. The issue that the Member raises, we touched on briefly as well yesterday. That is Yellowknife being a magnet community. The funding, in fact, formulas do not recognize that. What is now recognized are magnet facilities. There are people and students coming in and out of town. It is an issue. Mr. Cleveland indicates that we are aware of that. It is something that as we look at the other issue of special needs we are going to be trying to address. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I have Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yesterday I had an opportunity to say a few words about the potential difficulty of attracting teachers to the Northwest Territories in the future, not because of where we are at, but because of competition that we potentially face by other jurisdictions, not just in Canada but internationally it appears. I am wondering if because of what I said yesterday, I know the Minister, I believe, talked about the turnover possibly being down according to their figures. Are the figures they have given me their indicators to date or is that the indicator for next year, for this coming fall? It is of concern because we have to solidify our teachers' retention rate here in the territories.

As I said, it is an international problem and several teachers that I know have in one case, one has been attracted to New Zealand and this was mid-term. In another case it is a couple and they are planning to go back to the far east. They have taught there before. There are some reasons why they are interested. They are making less money there, but just as a side note here I would like to make a comment on it because I think this is important as well. They are going there because they feel the discipline in the schools is much better there than it is in our circumstance. It is not money reasons why they are going there. It is strictly because they get more respect from the students. More respect from the parents.

Now, I am not saying that all students and all parents are disrespectful to teachers, but in their particular case it is an element of concern. A while ago I heard a comment on the radio from a person in Saskatchewan or Manitoba, I believe, a teacher commenting as well about the problem of discipline within classes and that it is leading to a problem for teachers. I guess I am addressing two questions here in one. First if I can get back to my latter comments. If I can ask the question of, are the statistics the Minister used yesterday, do they refer to the upcoming year starting this fall, is that the projection? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, they do. The statistics are based on information that was supplied by the divisional education councils as of the week of May 3 to 7, 1999. What happens is that teachers have to submit their resignation by April 30, which has come and gone and we have collated the numbers since then. Yes, the numbers that I gave you yesterday are accurate unless there are unforeseen resignations which would be with prejudice and would be outside the normal process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Despite what the statistics may be, we will have a percentage of turnover and will, no doubt, face competition to get replacements. Could the Minister tell me, do they have any concerns in that area about how to attract the turnover numbers that we have to replace for teachers?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Yes, Madam Chairperson, we are concerned. We are aware, as the Member indicated, of the increasing scarcity of teachers available for hire in competition for their services. We are, as I indicated earlier on, myself and the other Ministers in the social envelope

are looking at some of the side issues like housing and such in the small communities for essential services like teachers and nurses. We are in the midst of starting the collective bargaining process, which will, I am sure, bring a lot of concerns to the table. The turnover this year is 12 percent down from last year. Hopefully, it is a trend that will continue, but it is an issue that we are monitoring so that we can hopefully, avoid the same situation that we are in with nurses where we have to basically go into crisis mode to make sure we have enough nurses. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

It really leads me to the question and I guess we could discuss forever and a day, how we are going to attract teachers. In the end it really boils down to teacher satisfaction. I alluded to that with my previous comments about teachers, no doubt, are becoming a little more frustrated in the classroom with the methodology of discipline and how they maintain discipline and the treatment they receive within the classroom. I had, last fall I believe, asked some questions in regard to a policy on violence in the classroom and the Minister had stated that, yes, there is a policy on violence, but the Minister, I believe, said it was left up to the boards. I wonder if the Minister can tell me if that subject has been further addressed because, to leave it up to the boards, as I stated last fall or spring, I do not think that you

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can just leave that to the boards. I think there needs to be a directive to state you must have a policy on violence in the classroom and how you address that. There should be certain criteria associated with that. The object, of course, here is to provide some comfort for those who are in the teaching profession that we care about them and that there are systems in place for some protection for them. As I say, there are not perhaps tremendous widespread incidents of violence in the schools, but it does occur.

Also, I think we need to ensure the respect for teachers on the part of all students. I am sure there are a lot of students who have respect for their teachers, probably the majority, but there are those who do not. We have to ensure our system provides a mechanism to ensure that teachers are respected. I just made reference to two cases where people are

leaving because they feel that in other jurisdictions they are much more respected, they have much more authority. Can the Minister tell me what the department's position is on the policy on violence in schools.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, the issue that the Member raises initially, the one of respect for the teachers by parents and students, I think is a very critical issue. It is not a money issue. It ties into the role of the family, the support at home, how close the students and parents work with the schools and the need for communities, schools, families, and DEAs to support and nurture that close working relationship to set the values and the standards of what is acceptable and what is not. It is a critical issue for a whole host of reasons, but one of the big ones is we want to have schools that are safe places, that are non-violent places of learning. The government has heard the concern.

They have funded and have now provided training for certification in crisis prevention in the schools. As of October, 1998, there was a course held in Yellowknife of which there were 28 people certified to be able to go back to their communities to start working with the students, staff, and volunteers to ensure that the schools are safe.

As well, there is work being done with the DEAs and DEC's to develop student support plans that address that issue. I am also going to be meeting with the board chairs on the week of the 25th and I will be adding that to the list of issues that I would like to touch on with the various divisional boards. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. About a week and a half ago now, we had talked at some great length about a motion to the department so the department would investigate the possibility of developing territorial-wide tests and a territorial-wide evaluation scheme for grade 11 core subjects, namely math,

social studies, and sciences. Madam Chairperson, I believe it would be a very worthwhile undertaking. I am just interested in what the Minister's reaction is to the recommendation as he was on the social programs committee that made this particular recommendation. Could I get an indication of what the Minister intends to do in response to this recommendation that the committee had made? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, one of the first things I did as Minister when we received the committee report was pull out all the recommendations that were made to ensure that I could talk to the department about them. This issue of the suggestion for testing is being actively investigated. We have been looking at jurisdictions in terms of cost. One of the quotes that we have, for example, to develop our own grade 12 diploma exams, just initial discussion, is about \$4.5 million. We want to do a little more homework on this. Things have been relatively hectic, but we are following up to see in fact what is doable, what the costs are and what the benefits would be. We will be sharing that information once we have it compiled. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am glad to hear that the Minister and the department are actively looking into this recommendation that we had made. Previously, as well, the committee had asked the department to look into year-round schooling. This is something that we know has been tried and we hear has been tried successfully in other jurisdictions. I was wondering if the Minister could indicate whether the department has had enough time to look into this particular recommendation that we had made in the past. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there has once again been some initial work done on that particular recommendation which is an approach that has been used in other jurisdictions. We are looking at the literature in the field for one thing, but the other issue for us is that the majority of our schools are not at capacity, especially once the latest round of capital projects and renovations are complete. So, we anticipate that for some time to come, the issue of space and putting facilities to year-round use to help offset bulging or increased school enrolments is an issue that we do not have to face. The DEAs and DEC's have been canvassed a bit as well. Their concern initially, of course, is the effect on other issues in terms of going year-round schooling, what that would mean to parents and families and even changing the hours of schooling as proved to be somewhat problematic. We have not finished the work, but we are looking at that. It is a relatively complex issue with a number of factors, as I have indicated, but once again, once we can complete the work we will be sharing that information with the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated that we are not necessarily in a situation where the populations of our schools are so great that perhaps they do not warrant year-round schooling, but I do not think that that was our greatest consideration for looking at year-round schooling. If I

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remember correctly, one of the greatest concerns is that the summer break, which is two months long, is too long. If there were perhaps three semesters with a month in between, or shorter periods in between, that type of thing, then it would be better for the students and perhaps for the parents as well, who have to make all types of adjustments so that you can accommodate having your children out of school for two solid months. I know that last year, looking in the papers, that some school-age teenagers were interviewed and they had said that the summer break was too long and some kids are glad to get back into school so that there is an organized consistency to their day-to-day activities. I just wanted to indicate that although this may be one way of dealing with a burgeoning school population, that was not, I believe,

meant to be the main factor in looking at this. It was to try to ensure that our kids can make it through high school and I suppose, in particular, to get over that grade 10 bump that we find all too often. If I could get a comment on that please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may just quickly quote from this very well read, previously well read committee report I will do it at regular speed just for the sake of time. A multiple term year would allow for greater flexibility for parents, school programming, and increase the use of school buildings. The committee recommended that the department explore the option of year-round schooling and multiple shorter terms for all grades and share their findings with district education authorities. Mr. Chairman, the Members raise good points. The idea of year-round schooling, I think should be looked at, and we are going to look at it.

There are issues beyond as he indicated, the need to make sure that we use our facilities to the fullest to avoid any more capital expenditures. We will do the work that I have indicated we started on. The thing with this is that we have the time to give it careful consideration and get more input and feedback and involvement from the communities that would be using this particular innovative approach if it were to go ahead. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had also indicated earlier from the reports that were done in the Minister's forum that there was concern in the communities about the high school extensions in that, although there was indeed a higher rate of participation in the schools that the rate of graduation had not kept up with the increase in participation, and that there were a lot of problems that were identified by the students, parents and teachers I guess, that the quality of the education was not as good, that the students missed the ability to interact with other students and that students had a problem with distant learning. Not everybody is suited to sitting in front of a computer for hours. I would

suggest that most people are much better suited to sitting in a classroom interacting with other students and being able to ask the teacher questions and the teacher to respond to those questions and to teach one-on-one if necessary. This is not available in those grade extensions because sometimes there is only one student in grade 12, or two students.

I have a very hard time understanding how this type of thing could be added to a student's academic upgrading without adding more students to the equation, putting more students into that classroom that are grade 12 or grade 11 or whatever that student is in. I cannot quite remember what the response had been in that area, but if the Minister could indicate what types of things they feel can be done to try to deal with this particular problem associated with the grade extensions into the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this process of grade extensions has been going on for almost 20 years. Between 1979 and 1988 they looked at the larger communities putting grade extensions in places like Fort Simpson, Clyde River, Arviat, Sanikiluaq and then phase two was between 1988 and 1998. In June, 1991, the Legislature passed a motion of support to continue the grade extensions. In the west we have seen the high schools be expanded and developed in Rae, Fort Good Hope, Fort Providence, Aklavik, McPherson, Liard, Deline, Norman Wells, Resolution, Tulita, Wha Ti, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic and Kakisa. It has been a process that has had its problems. The Members raised issues of concern over the quality of the education, the variety, the breadth of the curriculum. This is one of the issues that given the fact that this is now a 20 year process it is being looked at as part of the strategic plan, the longer term and where do we go from here and how do we improve on that.

At this juncture there are some very small communities that do not have grade extensions and we have to look at the cost and the impact of trying to do that. We do have the three residences that I mentioned earlier. We are looking at this. The Minister's forum information is being looked at. We think that it has been a wise decision, not without, as I

indicated, its shortfalls but a better course of action than what was there 20 some years ago with the large residences and all the attendant difficulties and problems that have come out of that. We are going to be taking a very serious look at how we move ahead and address some of the concerns that have come up like the Members mentioned. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a chance to make a few general comments yesterday but I have a few more that I would like to make today. Just in follow up a little bit to what I was talking about in the House today. The need for more funding in education is not something that has just sprung up here at the eleventh hour for the benefit of people in the gallery or for anyone's benefit. This is something that we have been talking about for over a year now and it is something that there have been at least two motions passed in this House already by a majority of Members. One was the reallocation of departmental surpluses which was passed on March 2, 1998, and a subsequent one which I spoke to in the House today which was passed on June 1, 1998, which was for the reinstatement of the 6 percent. Although some people may lead us to believe that this is just something that has cropped up here

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at the last minute, this is in fact not true. This is something we have been talking about for some time. Hopefully we will be addressing the issue of the need for more funding but I also wanted to speak to a few other general areas.

In the area of special needs, this is an area that affects almost all the pressures that are on the classroom right now and we do not know the number of children in the NWT that require special needs programs. Mr. Chairman, the Ministers' Forum on Education recommended that a major research project be undertaken to determine the number of children with special needs and to gain a better understanding of the range of needs that are evident in NWT schools. Contingency funding should be available to ensure the results are addressed within an appropriate time frame.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education estimates that 35 to 40 percent of NWT students require special needs support and other sources indicate that the numbers may even be higher than this. Further to the department's estimates that only half the students that require special needs services, only half of the students who require them actually receive special services in our schools. This causes me some concern. If the majority of the students in the NWT have special needs, why would not the individuals without problems then become a group requiring special programming. If we have 40 to 50 percent of our students that are there with special needs, what is being done for the children as well who are in a classroom situation who are wanting to advance and progress and move on with the curriculum. Information supplied by the department indicates that only 8 percent of the monies given to schools is for inclusive education. It is very important that individuals with special needs be identified and helped earlier in their school years. If not, problems are compounded as I mentioned yesterday, and success in school for children with special needs is linked to early diagnosis and help.

On the area of special needs, I do have some questions for the Minister. Unless the magnitude of special needs in the NWT is determined, our present system will continue to be dysfunctional. Has or will the department make plans to implement a research project to determine the number of children with special needs and to gain a better understanding of the range of needs that are evident? I am not sure how they are going to do that without the people who have the expertise to diagnosis and identify special needs but, some way in working with the educators and with school boards, there must be some way of coming up with a more accurate evaluation of this problem. Could the Minister please speak to that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would just like to address the initial comments of this budgeting process. The Member is of course correct that this issue with education and shortfall has not just come up, just blossomed, in the last two weeks and yes, motions were passed in this House but those motions are only a minute part of the process for this budgeting and that for the last nine months we have been working on these budgets. The fiscal picture

was painted for us by the previous Minister of Finance. The committees for the first time in the Western Territory were set up to deal with the budgets solely for the west and for nine months we have worked at that, and I was recently involved in as well.

As I indicated before, when you look at this report very clearly it addresses a lot of education issues and it addresses issues in every department and every facet of the government, but the reality is that at this eleventh hour there is a lot of passionate debate about the need for more money but no where has there been any suggestion that we should cancel Highway 3 and put that money into education or that or any kind of suggestion of that nature. So that, yes, there was a lot about the motion made but Cabinet had a role to play and the role of the committees is critical in this process and they made the recommendations which we are doing our best to act on but the Ordinary Members did not take it upon themselves to say anywhere that I have read in this, other than those motions, but when the hard detail work of budgets was being done that we should be looking at this priority, let us cancel transportation, let us cut back housing, let us role up block funding agreements with the municipalities, whatever. What we have come forward with is a balance, trying to meet competing needs and granted there is not enough money, everybody is recognizing that fact. I am happy the Member had brought this up because I want an opportunity to clarify that. There is a role for all the Members in this. There was a key critical role of the committees in this and this is a shared responsibility. The Cabinet has a decision making role but we have to be clear on where the input was and what it was.

The issue of the special needs project is going to be looked at. I committed yesterday to reviewing the issue of special needs, the fact that there is no definition of special needs. At this point it is very broad so 35 to 40 percent could encompass children at one end of the spectrum that have very mild special needs to the other end of the spectrum where there may be severe special needs requiring a full-time special needs assistant and everything in between. As the Member indicated, we do not have a clear sense of how that breaks out. We are going to look at that if, in fact, we want to plan properly we have to be able to define the problem and come up with some terms, common definitions that we can use. We are going to look at that very clearly and it is part of, once again, the strategic planning review plus the

commitment I made in the House yesterday. It is going to be looked at. Once again we would like to avoid, as some Members have pointed out, spending any more money on studies and reviews and research so we want to be very careful and measure it but we want to respond in a timely fashion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The area of special needs in the classroom is no doubt something that we are going to have to take a very hard look at. I understand that special needs children, if their needs are not being met, if they are not identified and evaluated, if there is no plan of education developed for them. This, in turn, can turn into behavioural problems compounded with social passing. We just will never really get a handle on it. It also has to play a role in, as one of the Members already mentioned, the issue of the stress that is placed on the teachers and our ability to retain teachers if we do not have proper resources in the classroom so they can actually do their job. Can the Minister indicate the number of trained

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special needs teachers and assistants that are presently employed by the school systems of the NWT?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that level of detail, but we will take the steps to get that. I do know, or at least I understand, that there are special needs, every divisional education council has a special needs consultant and that some training has been done, but we will commit to getting those specific numbers and I just ask the Member to clarify what she means by trained special needs teachers, just so we are clear on what we are looking for. Is it just teachers who have some training? If you could clarify that I would appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Yes. My question was trained special needs teachers and assistants, so I was asking for teachers who have specific training in the area of special needs and also trained special needs assistants who assist in the classroom who are not, perhaps, the primary teacher but assistants. So I was actually asking for both. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Mr. Chairman, thank you. The numbers I have for the 1999-2000, if this would assist the Member, is we are funding seven inclusive schooling consultants for a total of \$530,000, program support teachers 37.5 PYS for \$2.4 million, and then support assistants 59.25 for another \$1.7 million. There are 604 PYs funded for magnet facilities that I talked about yesterday for dealing with special needs for \$600 and some thousand and there is \$374,000 in the budget for staff development. Another \$356,000 in the budget for student transportation, \$50,000 for student placements, and \$100,000 for emergency southern placements, for a total of \$6.5 million that I referenced yesterday.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is there a possibility of making copies available to the Members so it would be easier for them to understand? Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we would be happy to provide that information to all the Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask some questions in the area of student financial assistance, and I have some paperwork here I would like to refer to. In December of 1997 the Minister's Forum on Student Financial Assistance was held and it made

several recommendations on redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program. While not recommending that access to the SFA Program be limited to a specific number of clients, the Minister's forum made several recommendations that would tighten up access to the program, and it was recommended that the focus of the program be indigenous aboriginal and non-aboriginals who had received all or part of their education in the Northwest Territories and persons who did not meet this criteria would still be eligible for loans on a needs assessed repayable basis.

Other problems with the SFA Program include the refusal of the federal government to recognize Metis and Inuit recipients of the basic grant as eligible for tax-exempt status. This means that Metis and Inuit students are taxed for the money they receive from the program. Dene students are not taxed and non-aboriginals in receipt of a forgivable loan and grant are also exempt. My question for the Minister is, I understand the Minister has done some preliminary work on the implementing of the new Student Financial Assistance Program. Can he tell us when we can expect to see the new program up and running?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in fact there was a briefing done, and I think the Member was there, on the Student Financial Assistance issue. A lot of work has been done. The work that I am attempting to move forward is in no way preliminary. It is ready to be taken forward for a decision as I indicated to the Members when I did the briefing. The plan is, since there are legislative changes required to address the specific funding issues and deal with the issues of remissibility and the concerns of the aboriginal students, I would anticipate to be able to bring something forward in, hopefully, our next sitting for consideration. That, I am confident, while it may not please everybody, that it will address the issues that the Member raised. As well, it will also make more money available to students within existing budget by making some other changes in regard to the requirements to pass and to have to pay back if you drop out and those kind of issues. I would hope to be able to move forward on this so that we are ready for the next session. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. I made reference earlier to the fact that some individuals are taxed on monies they receive and others are not. My first question is, I understand the Minister has consulted and discussed this matter with the Metis Nation, but I noted that the South Slave Metis are contemplating suing, I believe, the federal government to resolve this issue. Is the Minister doing further consulting work on this and checking with various groups on this matter?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Dene, the Metis and the Inuvialuit have been consulted. The issue with the South Slave Metis is that they have very legitimate concerns about the current system. What I intend to bring forward as a proposal will address that, I believe, and the issue right now is that the federal government taxes the grants for Metis, Inuvialuit, because they are not given the same consideration as treaty people and we have come up with an option that addresses that at our end and that will, I think, meet the concern of the federal government and avoid taxation in the future. So there has been a lot of work done on this. This has been in the works for two years or so. It is just an issue of moving it forward to the final political decision making and approval so we can implement it. If we can get it approved, we

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would hope they would be ready for business in terms of the new financing arrangements by the 2000 school year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

The 2000 school year being this coming fall, is that what you mean, or the following year, the fall of 2000? Okay, so we are about a year and a half away as a possible solution to this, is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct that there is not time from a logistical and implementation point of view to be up and running for the coming school year in September, so that, yes, we would be anticipating having everything in place, information and advertising done and students and all potential students being notified and all the systems in place for the fall of 2000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Could the Minister tell us if any tracking has been done on the SFA Program and if you have done such tracking what kind of success rate is there for students?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member raises a good point. We track enrolments, we track our expenditures, but we do not track in any comprehensive ongoing way at this point the graduation rates or indicators of success. It has been pointed out as a deficiency in the Student Financial Assistance system and it is one that we are taking steps to address so that, in fact, we can speak specifically to how the money is being spent and is it in fact achieving the goals that we are putting in place through this program to achieve. So that is a good point. We do it on a spot basis, but we intend to come up with a thorough ongoing way to do this so we can in fact come to this House and answer that very question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. I understand that the revised program does have certain criteria in it, but there is a need for

a certain success factor along the way in order for a student to continue to receive funding. Can the Minister maybe explain that a little further for us? For example, if a student drops out part way through the year, but restarts the following semester, what happens? Is the funding continued then, or what is the process?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are some of the issues that we are waiting to put in final place, but the intent is to have a requirement to show success that if a student drops out or fails, that there is going to be a payback qualification where we will be able to recover the cost of the Student Financial Assistance and it is through that particular process that we intend to finance the higher funding for tuition and books and travel. We are confident that we can, through making these changes, increase the levels of Student Financial Assistance that are currently available to students. I addressed the issue of the Metis and Inuvialuit students in terms of admissibility within the existing budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to switch to a different topic and Mr. Henry referred to it earlier and that is the social passing program that we have. The Minister had referenced the fact that neither system seems to have sort of, what would we call it, great attractions to it. If we have social passing, there is some detractions to that, but if we do the failure program long away there are some detractions to that. I wonder if the Minister could tell me if we are looking at perhaps a compromised system or a different system to address this issue? I think there are criticisms of the social passing system, but, as the Minister pointed out, there are some detractions to the other system that used to be in place as well. Are we looking at and can we look at different possibilities in our school system?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my mind, and I think based on at least this article I have read, that the issue of social passing, as well as the issue of holding students back, neither are perceived to be very adequate or effective. What we are looking at is the issue of early remediation, working from a very early age through things like the Healthy Children Initiative, like promoting greater parental involvement, working with the families and the schools, trying to come up with better training and support for teachers to deal with children at the very early ages from K to 3 or 4. Social passing is still there, but if we want to do truly, significant and effective changes, we have to look at that approach dealing very early with the family and the children and then making sure we are at the front end, from K to 3 or 4 that we have a strong system in place to make sure the children get the sound basics or get up and running so that they can progress on to the higher grades. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

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

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Relating to my Member's statement I made yesterday regarding the education budget, I guess again we sit here today discussing the education budget and how we can improve our children's education and at the same time stay within the very tight budget that we see ourselves in. Yesterday we heard from colleagues all stressing the need for the government to listen to the residents of the Northwest Territories, as small as our words here in the committee of the whole. This is one of the few times that we have had so much interest in one topic and that alone shows how important the concern is. During discussion yesterday, we saw a very dismal sight. What can we do to ensure our residents receive the highest possible education? We see the highest percentage rates of many troubling items, we have the highest pupil/teacher ratio in Canada, the highest literacy problems in Canada and the list goes on. We must find solutions and we must find them soon.

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This morning on the radio I heard on an interview from a younger mother, her topics, of course, was the poor education levels she is witnessing within the

capital. She went on to say that if our education system did not improve, her family would have to leave Yellowknife and move south in order for her children to get the education they deserve. This is what is happening here in our capital. Where are we when we are told that we have been the best system in place in the Northwest Territories, what is to be said in the smaller communities and regions. Recently I was told that there would be no more adult education offered in Rae-Edzo and this is a real blow to our residents. Where are our older residents supposed to get education? Currently we have many residents waiting to increase education levels. Some have decided to go back to school and are attending Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, possibly sitting next to their own children or grandchildren. This is not the way of offering our adult education within the communities.

In my community, we have a fairly new building designed for adult education and with everything else, is under utilized because of lack of funds, to hire staff. It is a shame to see this. Although my community is the largest Dene community in the Northwest Territories, we are not the only ones to have this and many other problems dealing with education. I believe this gives us just one more reason why we must continue to lobby for more funds in this area. If we, the largest community, feel the effects of under-funding for education, what do the smaller communities feel? Is their education system in such bad shape that it is almost hopeless? I certainly hope this is not true. I stress again, that we need to increase the education budget, but more importantly, we must also look at levels of education in the North to ensure that we are not just throwing more hard-earned money into a system that needs to be totally rebuilt from the ground up. The children are our future, we cannot gamble their lives like we are currently doing.

These are my general comments relating to my Member's statement yesterday. Some of the items at the community levels are really an essential need for improving their funding and more needed at a community level like Mrs. Groenewegen said. I guess I can believe her too, because we all speak for the residents of the Northwest Territories is to make sure we have more funding. I certainly have touched on the great concern the community had about the possibility of having some insertion or a reinstatement of the funding towards the adult education programs. I believe we will be having some older people have a better education system, a system by now relating to

them, because when I mentioned about some of the older students who are going back to school and are sitting next to their children or classmates in the past. That is not a way to treat our adult education. I guess we pretty well have to have a good facility back in our communities and we hope that we can utilize them better and have the adult education system re-instituted in a community level. These are some of the areas that I am concerned about. I was wondering if the Minister would be able to give us some comments on the topic of adult education at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the first thing I would like to respond to is I understand the concern the Member's concerns are. They are similar to what we have heard in this House over the last week or so. I think it is also important to point out that things are not hopeless, that we have an education system that is doing the job, that we have funnelled hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars into and are continuing to do that. There are needs and improvements necessary and we are going to try to take the steps to do that. I think the message we want to send to the people of the Northwest Territories is that we do have a system of education that has evolved over the last 30 years. Hopefully, if we make the right political decisions in terms of revenues, we will continue to evolve.

We are also faced with, as was discussed earlier in this House, if I could bring this up once again, the issue of competing priorities and needs, motions passed on accelerating, things like Highway 3, were raised again today. The Minister of Transportation was asked to in fact do that. We all know what the budget figures are, we also want to put money to education. We have parcelled out the money to the best of our ability we think at this point.

The issue of adult basic education, once the budget is passed, when it is passed, there is \$1 million in the budget for a revised, it was called last year, Investing in Peoples, now called Community Skills for Work Program. There should be a letter on its way back to the Member's community, if not to himself or the mayor, about the issue. Once the budget is passed there will be money available for this fiscal year to continue those programs in conjunction with whatever

Pathways money and other funds are available at the community level to provide adult basic education services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Rabesca.

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess just some other general comments that I have been concerned about and I guess have been brought to my attention, some have had great response from the Minister and I appreciate that. Some information will be passed on to the mayor and to the education board at the community level to know what is happening with their budgets. Like I said earlier on, the budget seems to be kind of hopeless at the community level because what I gathered from this morning's interview on the young lady at the city of Yellowknife that regarding the education system that the community people are going through here and at the community level, this is where I felt that people may have some more concern about and then the bigger centres like Yellowknife having some difficulty, I guess what the regional communities look like and then especially smaller communities, for example Wha Ti and Snare Lakes. That is the reason why I brought this whole issue to the Minister's attention so that I would like to thank the Minister to give an appropriate response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the interest of the Members in regards to K to 12, the Beaufort Delta education council gets \$16.7 million dollars for the upcoming year. The Deh Cho gets \$8.2 million, the Dogrib divisional board will get \$9.3 million, the Sahtu division will get \$7.1, the South Slave will get \$14.8 million, Yellowknife public

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denominational district education gets \$9.4 million and Yellowknife district education authority gets \$14.007 million. As the Member from Mackenzie Delta indicated, private schools get \$326,000, for a total of \$80 million and \$13 million, capital plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

General comments. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was interested to hear the response to the Member from North Slave concerning the adult education program over there. One of the reasons for that is because the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, who live next to the largest single source, I suppose you could call it, source of jobs or number of employment opportunities in the North have only very recently received funding for adult education, although they had been putting on adult education courses for a great number of years using their own dollars. I was wondering if the Minister could confirm while he is confirming other communities' funding for adult education, whether he could confirm that the Yellowknives Dene First Nation adult education funding would continue for this year as well?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I will check into the funding situation that the Member raised and will respond and ensure that an application is put forward and considered and carried on with. I do not know the specific number that was funded for last year, but we will try to ensure that things continue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for his response because as I had indicated, while Yellowknife does have huge numbers of jobs, unfortunately the Yellowknives's Dene First Nation members are not that highly educated. Because of that, they do not participate in the workforce to that great of a degree. Unless something is done differently, there does not seem to be that much of a change, I suppose, that would participate any greater in the future because they have been living next to Yellowknife ever since Yellowknife has been here and they still have very poor education rates so this adult education class is a very, very important program for them. Mr. Chairman, yesterday I had spoken for a

short period of time on special needs and my colleague from Hay River indicated earlier that dealing with special needs would help in a lot of areas and this is certainly true if we look at the Minister's Forum on Education, there is an indication in there that special needs children tend to disrupt classes and they take a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time and educational budgets and there are greater dropout rates, greater problems associated with that as well. There have been comments in here from community people like this where one person says the workload for staff is very heavy and we feel fragmented and torn and drawn until we are exhausted in mind, heart and spirit.

The present allocation of monies to school does not take into account the higher costs of educating some special needs students over others. This is what we are talking about, Mr. Chairman. We feel that if we put more money into special needs, and if it is actually spent on special needs, that this will alleviate problems tremendously in the schools. First of all, it will lower the pupil/teacher ratio and it would help the teacher that now has to spend a disproportionate amount of time with special needs students to be able to spend more time with the other students.

Mr. Chairman, a very good example of the importance that the former Minister of Education placed on special needs is that he lobbied last year for \$7.7 million in additional funds to be put into special needs and now that he is the Finance Minister I am sure that he is going to put more money. Mr. Chairman, I think that this just indicates the importance the Minister and the department themselves place on special needs. Otherwise, why would the Minister have been trying to access more money to put into this area before any other area, even before trying to lower the pupil/teacher ratio, because he could see that by dealing with this it would free up teachers, dollars, the whole works.

Mr. Chairman, when I hear words of cancelling Highway 3 in order to put money into special needs it does not make me feel good. Just because a committee did not recommend that more money be put into education does not mean that people cannot change their minds. People get overtaken with different things at different times and committee Members have changed dramatically, Mr. Chairman and new Members now feel that this should occur. I must add that not all of the Ordinary Members are on the social programs committee, only half of them are so I do not think we have to be consistently reminded

that in this little book here it does not recommend there be more money put into education.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, what I wanted to ask the Minister, is there currently a formula for providing money for special needs to the school boards. Could the Minister indicate that the money that is designated through this formula for special needs, does it actually have to be spent on special needs, training, classroom assistants or whatever or can it just be spent on anything, and perhaps put the special needs student in the corner to play by himself or herself so you do not actually have to deal with that problem and you could use that money for something else? Can this occur? Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member indicated hearing discussion about possibly trading off Highway 3 for education does not make him feel good. Sitting here as Minister of Education for the last two or day and a half, listening to the demands and pressure for more money, it does not make me feel good either because I do not have any more money to offer up. It is unfortunate if the Members are distancing themselves from their report and I am sure the Member for Hay River was just joking when she said who cares what we recommended. They are very serious about what they put in that report and possibly things have evolved as the Member indicates, but I think it is a situation where we want the same thing. We both know the fiscal reality and we are trying to deal with that and the issue of special needs funding is part of the block funding arrangement to school boards and, it is initially similar to the formula we had with the federal government, part of the calculation of the overall big number. Once it goes to the

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school boards, the school boards, at this point, have the latitude or the authority to decide how it is portioned out and whether, in fact, they want to put it towards strictly special needs. This is an issue that is of concern once again and that is one of the reasons why we are looking at developing an accountability framework in conjunction with the DEC's so we can have a better sense, as can they, about key indicators of success and the effectiveness of the money that is being spent and it also points to the need of better

clarity in regard to the whole special needs program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the bottom line is that we need more money in education. Now we can sit here and quibble about whether we said it in the recommendation or in the report of the committee or whether we did not, it does not matter. I mean, there were a lot of factors that affected what went into that committee report. Number one we had division, so there was a totally different kind of reporting mechanism, two Members of the committee were brand new. I was new on there and even if we did not recommend it, what we are telling you now is that we have heard much more from the people in our constituencies since then and people have put a lot of effort behind their words and they are saying that we need more money for education. So, let us not point fingers any more at who should have put what into a report or who should have done whatever. We are not pointing a finger at the Minister, but we are seeing that as a group of legislators and politicians and caretakers of the budget of the Government of the Northwest Territories, we do have responsibility for what we designate as priorities and what we deliver that money to. Whatever has been said or done in the past, the bottom line is that we need more money for education and surely the government, the Cabinet, in conjunction with the Minister, can take a look at that.

Now, you have asked us, where do you want to take it from, where do we find the money? Well, we have been suggesting various things in the House here about where this government could find the money and there is not a person out there in the public in this western Arctic that does not know that there are areas still, even though we have gone through budget cuts and everything else, there is money. If the budget is a shopping trip, for years we have been pushing that cart around and we have been buying certain things and now the reality is we have to come back to the basics. Maybe there were luxuries in the past when Ottawa gave us more money. That is what we had then, this is what we have now and still within the framework of what we have now, I believe that there is more money that can be found for education. As I have pointed out in the House and I will say it again, amazingly there is a picture painted that somehow the Ordinary Members micro-manage the expenditures of

departments and we do not and yet we sit here in amazement when initiatives are announced.

I just opened the News North the other day and read where the three apartment buildings here in Yellowknife went into receivership out of Mr. Pocklington's estate, someone from down south bought them and now they are going to condominiumize them and tell all of the tenants, come and get your \$10,000 down payment. I do not know what kind of economy that creates, I do not know what it does, but I am just saying that there seems like there is no cap and there is limitless money for other things. Does anybody agree with me? I mean that is over \$4 million. Is there any cap on that program? I mean you get some Realtors or developers from down south who are going to come here and flip those apartment buildings and make a fortune. I know it sounds a little off the subject but that is millions of dollars we are talking about, millions of dollars and we are asking for a few million dollars for our special needs in our schools because we see that as a really important area.

One more time for the Minister, I want to take the opportunity try and simply paint the picture as it is and I am not saying that he is not perceiving this, he is not understanding this, so I want to do it one more time. If the Minister will do this for me, I would like him to imagine a classroom with 25 elementary school students in that classroom. I would like him to consider widely varying levels of achievement because of our policy of social passing. I would like him to then add to that mix the fact that 40 percent of those students are sitting there with some form of possibly undiagnosed special need. Then I would like him to add a couple of children with a profound challenge because we have an inclusive schooling policy and therefore we do not want to segregate children with special needs of a profound nature, so add them into the class. Then add to the mix one teacher. Take away from the class any support in terms of classroom assistants or special needs assistants in that classroom because we do not have the money for it. Take away from that teacher who is a person and has to live, take away from them affordable housing, take away their VTA so they cannot get away for a holiday. Cut the pay when other jurisdictions are launching comprehensive recruiting programs and different working conditions than what we have to offer here. We do not have, like the Yukon, the majority of our communities on a highway system. There are different working conditions here in the North. Now add to that mix

new curriculum every couple of years and, Mr. Chairman, tell me what all of that adds up to.

If that does not add up to, if it is not a crisis right now, I think people with foresight can see that that is what is looming. That is what lays ahead and if we cannot as a government at least educate our children then I wonder, seriously, what we are doing here. When Mr. Miltenberger was asked in the House last week if he thought education was in a crisis, Mr. Miltenberger said "No, I do not", and perhaps things are not as bad now as what we foresee they are going to be in the future, but I believe the problems if they are not addressed are going to be compounded and I do not believe things are getting better. I think we are going to continue having a younger population here in the Western Territory and we are going to have increased, not decreased, but increased demand on education and educators.

We need to be proactive and look at this now and try and do what we can for the children that are even in the system now who have special needs, who have challenges in receiving their education. I mean our social challenges in our society here in the North affect our ability to educate our children but at the same time if we do not educate our children it is a catch 22. It is a vicious circle. That affects our social challenges and it just becomes a never-ending problem. So I agree with the Minister, we do have some things to be very pleased about and there are some accomplishments, there are some things to be proud of in

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our education system and we do not want to diminish that but we have a large problem and it needs to be faced, and it needs to be addressed with funding. More money. That is all I have to say, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will restate these comments and if the Member will imagine with me, 14 Members in the Legislative Assembly like this, all with roles to play, working for nine months on a budget for all the departments, for all the needs across the Northwest Territories where days ago the budgets of all the departments except the Department of Education, Culture and Employment were passed and

approved. Now tell us that they have changed their minds in the eleventh hour and want millions of dollars moved from somewhere into education. I respect the need for the MLAs to, in fact, bring forward these concerns and they are concerns that we all share but we are in the eleventh hour of the budgeting process and, yes, we will do what we can, yes, if there are new revenues I will be front and centre making sure that education is given the priority consideration that has been put on it by the people of the Northwest Territories but I would ask the Members to consider that process as well.

It does not diminish the issues that have been brought forward in this House but we are involved in a process and it is the final act of this play and to say now, on the second last day of the House, we have changed our mind on all those budgets that have been passed, I am not sure where that leaves us. I know I am left defending this budget and I am prepared to move ahead with this. We will do what we can but if, in fact, the intention is to reopen all the other budgets and look at things I do not know how that would work. I am prepared to sit here as long as necessary. We are concerned. We have passed the budgets as a group of 14, as I have indicated, so I am at the direction of the House. We have heard the concerns loud and clear. We have responded now for a day and a half and will continue to respond as long as there are questions but the revenue picture, the budget numbers stay the same. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mrs. Groenewegen, you have three seconds.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a motion to 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. Steen. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Meeting of Caucus at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 12, and the Standing Committee on Government Operations at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 12.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 12, 1999:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The House stand adjourned to 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 12, 1999.

--ADJOURNMENT