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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1989

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Titus Allooloo, Mr. Angottitauruq, Mr. Arlooktoo, Hon. Michael Ballantyne, Hon. Tom Butters, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Mr. Crow, Mr. Ernerk, Mr. Gargan, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Lewis, Hon. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Morin, Mr. Nerysoo, Hon. Dennis Patterson, Mr. Pollard, Hon. Red Pedersen, Mr. Pudluk, Mr. Sibbeston, Mr. Whitford, Hon. Gordon Wray, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Red Pedersen): The House will come to order please. Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 22nd, 1989.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Proposed Tobacco Tax

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to make a statement on the proposed increases of tax on loose tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco. I have had quite a few calls about this and I feel this is an unjust tax. It is going to affect the lower economy people in the NWT as well as a lot of our elders. I will not support or vote in favour of passing the budget until the Minister of Finance reviews this and looks at some other way of raising money rather than tax on elders and people that do not make very much money. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Morin. Members' statements. Mr. Lewis.

Member's Statement On Appreciation To Minister Of DIAND Re Announcement On Handling Of Boundary Issue

MR. LEWIS: I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to give my appreciation to the first public comment I have heard from the new Minister of DIAND, who has indicated that northerners will be allowed to come to their own decision on a boundary in the Northwest Territories. I know this will annoy some of my Inuit friends perhaps, who figure they should get involved, but I think it is a good beginning for a new Minister to let us decide in the Territories how we wish to proceed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Members' statements. Mr. Whitford.

Member's Statement On Success Of Northern Dog Racers At World Championship Dog Races

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to report some good news to the House. I would like to recognize the success of our northern dog mushers at the World Championship Dog Races at The Pas, Manitoba, this past weekend. I am pleased to inform this House that the first four of the top positions were won by Yellowknife mushers. First was Richard Beck; followed by Frank Kelly; then Grant Beck in third; and John Beck, the 17 year old son of Richard Beck, in

fourth place. In seventh place was Arthur Beck from Fort Resolution. Further, Mr. Speaker, Richard Beck is the defending champion dog derby from our own dog race here in Yellowknife, soon to be held again. He has been taking those awards almost year after year.

In a world of trouble and strife and bad news it is refreshing to hear news of our home town boys doing good. I would like to inform the House of the recognition that this family has brought to the Northwest Territories and to the sport of dog racing, a sport that has attracted world attention.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question O39-89(1): Funding For School Bus, Pangnirtung

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. This is in response to a question asked by Mr. Kilabuk on February 10, 1989, regarding funding for busing school children in Pangnirtung. The busing of children to and from school was introduced in 1975 at the request of the Pangnirtung hamlet council. At that time the airstrip was not fenced and the Commissioner gave the hamlet a small bus on the understanding that busing would be handled locally at no additional cost. Since then the airport runway has been fenced and a warning light installed on the gate. However, busing has continued in this community partly because residents have come to expect the service and partly because of continuing concern that children may still try to cross the runway. The Department of Education purchased a replacement bus in 1986 and provided funding for the driver's salary and every year the amount of financial support requested by the community to support this service has increased.

After many discussions between the hamlet council, the community education council, Baffin Divisional Board of Education and the Department of Education, a decision has been made that is satisfactory to all. The hamlet council has agreed that the Baffin Divisional Board of Education will take over responsibility for busing. The Department of Education will provide the divisional board with funds for a part-time driver. The Department of Public Works and Highways will handle bus maintenance and fuel requirements. This arrangement will resolve the hamlet's concerns and ensure that a reliable busing service is provided for all eligible students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Wray.

Return To Question O129-89(1): Checks For Drug Use In Dog Racing

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a return to Question O129-89(1), asked by Mr. Lewis, regarding illegal substance abuse in dog mushing. When I first got the question I sort of laughed to myself and wondered if we ever had a problem how we would get the dogs to testify at an inquiry as to whether or not they knew they had been given steroids. But, in fact, although some of us took the Member's question last Friday in jest, there is in fact a very real concern with illegal substance use to enhance the performance of dogs in dog racing.

Members are most likely aware that there is a circuit of dog mushing races in the Northwest Territories and in neighbouring territories and provinces. These events include a substantial prize structure and have organized associations which have strict rules in place for testing the use of any performance enhancing drugs or substances for dogs. In a recent international race, dogs were in fact tested for the same drug, anabolic steroids, that Ben Johnson was tested for in Seoul.

Although testing for illegal substances has never actually been conducted in the NWT, the races held in conjunction with Yellowknife's Caribou Carnival have, for instance, provision in the rules

for taking either urine or blood samples from the dogs. The Yellowknife Veterinary Clinic has the necessary equipment to take such samples but points out that this would be an expensive procedure since the samples would have to be sent to either Alberta or Saskatchewan for analysis.

With dog mushing in the junior age category a part of the 1990 Arctic Winter Games for the first time, there will be a need for the AWG Corporation to develop rules for this competition. I do not expect, however, any problem with substance abuse for the event. The government need not be deeply involved with testing or enforcement of illegal substance use in dogs as long as procedures are in place with the appropriate governing body to ensure clean and fair competition standards are met. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Wray. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms Cournoyea.

Return To Question O105-89(1): Rates Paid For Home Boarding Patients

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Gargan on February 16, 1989. Mr. Gargan, wished to know the fee the Department of Health pays private home-owners for boarding patients who are in Yellowknife or Hay River for medical purposes.

In Yellowknife the fee is paid by the Department of Health. Boarding homes may be approved by requesting the public health nurse to inspect the premises. In Hay River the service is arranged through the Hay River Dene Band. The public health nurse inspects and approves all boarding homes. The fee per patient per day: in a boarding home approved by public health nurse, \$30; in any other home, in Yellowknife, \$20. However, Mr. Speaker, we expect to review the fee schedule during the fiscal year 1989-90.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Returns to oral questions. Ms Cournoyea.

Return To Question O91-89(1): Increase In Cancer Cases

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, I have a reply to an oral question asked by Mr. Pudluk on February 15, 1989. Mr. Pudluk was concerned, and quite rightly so, over the increase in deaths in the NWT which are attributable to cancer. I have some facts which indicate the seriousness of the problem. By 1987, 20 per cent of deaths in the NWT were due to cancer. With the high use of tobacco in the Territories, this percentage will continue to rise.

Since 1950 there has been a continuous slow rise in some cancer death rates. These slowly rising rates include breast cancer and cancer of the bowel. Although we might expect cancers in general to occur more often as our population gets older, both of these cancers are known to be related to diet.

There has been a dramatic rise, however, in cancers that are related to cigarette smoking, especially lung cancer and cancer of the cervix. From 1950 to 1960 there were only four deaths reported from lung cancer. In the period from 1980 to 1990 it appears that there will be almost 200 deaths from this cancer, which can rarely be cured. Cancer of the cervix is definitely linked to tobacco smoking. This type of cancer can sometimes be treated successfully if detected in its early stages. From four cases of cancer of the cervix reported between 1950 and 1960, it is now projected that there will be approximately 30 cases between 1980 and 1990; and half of these women will die.

What can we do to help ourselves? A decrease in the use of tobacco products will definitely lead to a reduced number of lung cancer cases and other related cancers. Regular Pap smears for women will increase the detection of early treatable cancers of the cervix. The rising rate may reflect changes in diet and the eating of generally less healthy food in the NWT. A regular diet containing less fat and more fibre is recommended by the Canadian Cancer Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, oral questions. Mr. Lewis.

ITEM 5: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question O151-89(1): Revenue From Tobacco Tax

MR. LEWIS: My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Finance, following up on Mr. Morin's concern about taxes on loose tobacco, chewing tobacco and snuff. Could he tell the House how much he calculates that he will be able to raise in taxes from these commodities?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ballantyne.

HON. MICHAEL BALLANTYNE: I do not have that figure right here, but I can get it for the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Question O152-89(1): VHF Radios For Correctional Staff, Iqaluit

MR. ARLOOKTOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question that I have is directed to the Minister of Renewable Resources. It is with regard to VHF radios. I wonder if the Baffin correctional staff are given VHF radios with respect to their work. This refers to the Baffin Correctional Centre employees in Iqaluit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Allooooloo.

Return To Question O152-89(1): VHF Radios For Correctional Staff, Iqaluit

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware who gives VHF radios to those employees in the Iqaluit area.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Supplementary To Question O152-89(1): VHF Radios For Correctional Staff, Iqaluit

MR. ARLOOKTOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason I asked this question is that the Baffin correctional employees are given VHF radios, and they have channels .5031 and .5032. We have the same frequency as they do. It seems as if the Baffin correctional employees should not have the same frequency as we have. The traffic created by inmates talking on the radio to their families interferes with hunters and campers on the land. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look into this problem that the Member has raised.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. That part was taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Lewis first, Mr. Whitford and Mr. Arlooktoo.

Question O153-89(1): Review Of Hay Plan

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Personnel. Would the Minister tell us whether she has looked very carefully at the Hay Plan and convinced herself that this plan is working well? I may have a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Return To Question O153-89(1): Review Of Hay Plan

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Hay Plan status is being reviewed. I am not convinced that it is working well, therefore I have asked for a thorough review of the whole Hay Plan system. I will be able to give the Member an indication of how the review is going at a later date but along with a number of initiatives in the Department of Personnel it is being reviewed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Whitford was next.

Question O154-89(1): Potential Health Hazard From City Dump Smoke

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. I raised the issue yesterday with the Minister responsible for MACA but the buck was passed so I will ask the Minister of Health today if she is aware of the potential health hazard from the smoke from the dump. I will bring it to her attention. All she has to do is to go there now. She will see her brand new \$42 million hospital enshrouded in a blue haze from the dump. Is she aware of the potential health hazard to the patients in an institution where they should be protected? You pass by there and you can smell it.

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

Return To Question O154-89(1): Potential Health Hazard From City Dump Smoke

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Yes, I believe that we should all be concerned about the potential health hazard that the garbage dump creates not only to the people who are in the hospital, but to Yellowknifers in general and people who visit the city.

Certainly at this point in time I cannot say the Department of Health has gone out there and measured any kind of residue factor that is coming and floating over Yellowknife. I have had a number of people from Yellowknife ask if it was at all possible, not only with the garbage dump but with other health hazards scattered around Yellowknife, that perhaps we could pay a little more attention to the looks of this community, being the capital city. I certainly did not turn anyone away from my office when we spoke of it but at this point in time I can tell you that I have not instructed our officials to make any measurements. I see your point, acknowledge your concern and I believe that Yellowknifers in general, and certainly the City, should be paying special attention not only to the garbage dump but other garbage that is around the city. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Question O155-89(1): Licensing Of VHF Radios

MR. ARLOOKTOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice -- I am really not sure which Minister it should be directed to. It is in regard to licensing of VHF radios. We have obtained licences for our own VHF radios in the communities, all the people who have VHF radios. I was just wondering if the Minister was aware if all the people who have VHF radios have a licence, especially in the area of the Baffin Region. I am not really sure if they have obtained licensing over there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said earlier on, I will be looking at the problem of the Member regarding VHF radios and I will also look into the VHF licensing system.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The question is taken as notice. Mr. Sibbeston.

Question O156-89(1): Review Of Big Game Hunting Zones

MR. SIBBESTON: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Renewable Resources. A number of years ago, on the suggestion of people in Fort Liard and Simpson who were interested in starting big game lodges up in the Mackenzie Mountains, I had occasion to talk to officials of the Department of Renewable Resources about the possibility of opening up these big game zones to some of the local people.

Apparently during the Hodgson years, when local people were not very involved in such endeavours, all of the Mackenzie Mountains, the area bordering to the west of us, was given out to big game outfitters and most of them were from the South. These outfitters have generally been very jealous and leery of anyone else going into these areas to start similar types of business.

I had occasion recently to talk to Mr. Bourque, the deputy minister, about that and he says that work is progressing on this. Can the Minister review the situation to date and advise when his department may come up with a conclusion to this matter?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Sibbeston. Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I can do is to get back to the House on the progress of the big game hunting now currently under review by my department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ernerk.

Question O157-89(1): Aboriginal Languages To Be Official

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Culture and Communications. The matter concerns making aboriginal languages official. I mean, Mr. Speaker, in law, in every day practice, in our government, that the use of aboriginal languages becomes big "O", official. Mr. Speaker, my question is, Mr. Minister, could you advise me when the Official Languages Act will be amended to allow for aboriginal languages to be official in the Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ernerk. Mr. Allooloo.

Return To Question O157-89(1): Aboriginal Languages To Be Official

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, currently my department is working on the enhancement of aboriginal languages in terms of their becoming some of the official languages that are used in the Northwest Territories. I am hoping that I will be able to come back with the amendments to the Official Languages Act by this fall session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Ernerk.

Supplementary To Question O157-89(1): Aboriginal Languages To Be Official

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where is the funding coming from and how much is allocated?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question O157-89(1): Aboriginal Languages To Be Official

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The amendment to the Official Languages Act is currently being drafted and my department is soliciting an input from all other government agencies within our government as well as the federal agencies to see what sort of funding will be required to put this legislation into effect. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Further supplementary, Mr. Ernerk.

Supplementary To Question O157-89(1): Aboriginal Languages To Be Official

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could table his implementation plan for official language?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take the question under notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. That part of the question taken as notice. Mr. Nerysoo.

Question O158-89(1): Charges Regarding Fuel Spill, Peel River Crossing

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last session on Tuesday, October 18, 1988, I had the opportunity to ask about a particular fuel spill accident that occurred at the Peel River crossing. Upon review of that particular answer by Ms Cournoyea, it was indicated that all aspects, including the possibility of charges being laid against the individual, would be reviewed. Could I ask the Minister of Renewable Resources whether or not charges have been filed and if not, could he indicate why charges have not been filed against the particular individual?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the specifics with me at this point. I will get back to the Member tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Mr. Morin.

Question O159-89(1): Reply Requested Re Hanging Ice Bison Ranch

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. On February 10th in this session I asked you a question on whether or not the government was going to help Hanging Ice Bison Ranch in Fort Smith and you told me then that you would have an answer in two weeks. Time is up.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O159-89(1): Reply Requested Re Hanging Ice Bison Ranch

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you. We have not had a chance to have a cabinet meeting yet to review it. We are hopeful to get it on the cabinet agenda this week but with the level of work with the cabinet we just have not had time to have a proper cabinet meeting. As soon as the first cabinet meeting comes along we will be discussing it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question O159-89(1): Reply Requested Re Hanging Ice Bison Ranch

MR. MORIN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I understand this project has weather conditions to meet, ice crossings to make and the time is coming; spring is coming quite quickly. Could you give me any idea of when you would make that decision at all? Give me a time limit please.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question O159-89(1): Reply Requested Re Hanging Ice Bison Ranch

HON. GORDON WRAY: As soon as I can get it on the cabinet agenda. It could be tomorrow. It could be the next day. As soon as I can get it in the cabinet. I cannot put a definite time on it but it is there for the next cabinet meeting.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ernerk was next.

Question O160-89(1): Meningitis In The Territories

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health. I understand from watching the CTV national news last night that there is an outbreak of meningitis in the Province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, my question is this, what is the policy of the GNWT to review the course of meningitis in the NWT?

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question under advisement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. The question is taken as notice. Mr. Nerysoo.

Question O161-89(1): Day-Care Services At Post-Secondary Institutions

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question directed to the Minister responsible for Education. In light of some of the comments that have been made in the CBC news this morning with regard to concerns being raised by students at Arctic College, in particular at Thebacha Campus, with regard to financial support for day-care services, is the Minister reviewing this particular situation as it applies generally to all post-secondary students with a view to ensuring that they maintain some kind of support to allow them to attend post-secondary institutions?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Mr. Sibbeston was next.

Question O162-89(1): Transplanting Buffalo To South Nahanni River

MR. SIBBESTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to Mr. Alloo regarding buffalo. It seems everywhere the buffalo go there is controversy. In the early 1970s there were 30 or so buffalo transplanted up the South Nahanni River. Over the course of time some remained in the area and some were seen to be travelling in the Fort Nelson area, south into BC. Some have remained, and just recently when I was in Nahanni Butte the people there heard rumours about the possibility of the government taking some more buffalo up the South Nahanni River. My initial reaction was that I would have thought that people would be pleased to have more buffalo, but the local people say they are a bit concerned about having more buffalo because apparently the moose and the buffalo occasionally fight over territory. The local people think that the buffalo may have won out and may have scared some of the moose away. Obviously there needs to be some more discussion in the community by your officials, and I am wondering if the Minister has considered this. Firstly, is it true that more buffalo are being transplanted in the South Nahanni area, and if so would he have officials go to Nahanni Butte and talk to the people there?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O162-89(1): Transplanting Buffalo To South Nahanni River

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether it is true or not, that we plan to have bison moved to that area. I can assure the Member that if that is the case, I will make sure that my departmental officials go into that community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Angottitauruq.

Question O163-89(1): CBC Outlet For Kitikmeot Region

MR. ANGOTTITAUURUQ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Culture and Communications, and it is with regard to a regional broadcasting station for the Kitikmeot Region. The Kitikmeot is active in the hope of getting a broadcasting corporation in that region for the purposes of information and to be as updated as the rest of the NWT is. We believe that we are the only ones that do not have a broadcasting outlet, and I am wondering if your department would support, and if you could support, that region getting a CBC outlet; and how would you give your support as a government department? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O163-89(1): CBC Outlet For Kitikmeot Region

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Firstly, I am not aware of any plans by CBC to have a regional broadcasting centre in the Kitikmeot. Secondly, we do not have control over CBC as to where they should have their regional headquarters in the NWT. I could take the Member's concern to CBC and seek their plans for more broadcasting centres in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question O164-89(1): Date For Second Buffalo Draw

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Renewable Resources, since buffalo was brought up again. On Friday, I think it was, there was a motion passed by this Assembly to recommend that your department look into having a buffalo draw for the 35 or 40 people that were not put in the original draw. Did you take that recommendation, and if you are going to have a draw, could you give us a date when it will be done?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O164-89(1): Date For Second Buffalo Draw

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell the Member the date for that draw. I am looking into the matter, and I am taking all aspects into account, and I will get back to the Member on what our plans will be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question O164-89(1): Date For Second Buffalo Draw

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, if you cannot give me a date of the draw, can you give me a date when you will make up your mind if you are going to do the draw or not?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question O164-89(1): Date For Second Buffalo Draw

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I have directed my officials to look into the matter, to give me advice as to what we should do as a department in terms of getting more tags for bison. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Whitford was next.

Question O165-89(1): Air Quality Testing For Yellowknife

MR. WHITFORD: Mr. Speaker, the question I have is directed to the Minister of Health. I want to know whether or not the Minister will take the initiative and do some air quality testing in order to establish once and for all whether or not there are any effects from the smoke from the dump in Yellowknife. It is particularly annoying to Yellowknifers to hear this issue again and again. No one seems to want to take responsibility for it. No one seems to want to take any kind of responsibility for initiating some form of testing to assuage the fears that people may have that the smoke is hazardous to their health. I just wondered if the Minister of Health would undertake to do something like this. It may not exactly be in her department, but an area of her jurisdiction is directly affected, that being the hospital. I live in that area and I see this happening more frequently for some reason or other. When we get slight breezes from the north the hospital seems to be directly in the path of this, and I wonder if the Minister would undertake to at least look at this possibility of establishing an air testing unit in that area.

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

Return To Question O165-89(1): Air Quality Testing For Yellowknife

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Member has certainly hit on an initial problem. It is difficult to point a finger at any particular department or jurisdiction because generally environmental controls are handled by the federal government. Certainly, with your initial question, I was going to come back to the Member with some plan of action on how that can be approached. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. McLaughlin.

Question O166-89(1): Deposits On Liquor Containers

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Government Services. I direct this question to him because he is responsible for the liquor control system, which is involved in transporting tons and tons of non-biodegradable containers into the NWT. I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to look at the issue again of having deposits put on these containers which come into the North so they can be collected and returned down to the South where they came from? It is especially important because of the crowding of garbage dumps and the fact that some of these containers, outside of the liquor containers, have aerosol sprays in them which damage the ozone layer and these are broken in garbage dumps and this is released into the atmosphere.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O166-89(1): Deposits On Liquor Containers

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for giving me notice of his question. I also thank him for the support that appears to be embodied in the question as well, to do something about reducing the litter in our countryside on the land. As Members will recall, during the discussion of the Government Services estimates, I did receive similar encouragement from other Members and as a result of that encouragement, I have instructed the department to look at the type of process which the Member has described in his question. Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary.

Question O167-89(1): Gases From Discarded Refrigerators

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is also directed to Mr. Butters, but this time in his capacity as Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I have seen in Pangnirtung and in Cape Dorset when we were there this summer, old used fridges, and I believe some of them might be taken there by Public Works as well, that are taken to the garbage dumps. These fridges have aerosol-type chlorine and Freon gases for refrigeration purposes and I was wondering if the Minister could advise this House, possibly at a later date, what procedure is used by the government to make sure that the gases from these refrigerators never get into the atmosphere?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O167-89(1): Gases From Discarded Refrigerators

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I also give the Member thanks for giving me notice of that question as well, however, I just do not know. I will have to inquire and at the same time I could also ask my colleague, the Minister for DPW, to advise on how that department handles similar products that are being tossed away.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Morin.

Question O168-89(1): Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to my question to the Minister of Renewable Resources, Mr. Minister, you answered me and you said you were going to get advice from your department and recommendations on whether or not to draw this extra buffalo. I and other Members approached you last fall with the same request and at that time that was your answer then and I think you have had a lot of time to get this advice from your department. The only thing that is really changed since last fall until today is that you have a motion from this House making a recommendation to you. Now you, as Minister, have the authority to make a decision on whether or not there will be an extra buffalo draw and that is up to you to make that decision. What I am asking you again is, when will you make that decision?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O168-89(1): Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I would want to make a decision without the necessary background that my officials from the department would give me, including their scientific data. What I would like to see before I make my decision is to see the scientific background, the numbers, and their advice to me and I will take into account all aspects, including the Legislative Assembly motion recommending to me to increase the quota by one. I can assure the Member that I will take his concern into my consideration. Qujannamiik.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question O168-89(1): Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

MR. MORIN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this issue has been in your hands since last fall and that is approximately five months, I believe. With you being the Minister of Renewable Resources now for a little over a year, do you have any idea how long it will take your department to give you that advice and do you have any idea how long it would take yourself to make that decision? What I am looking for, Mr. Minister, is the time, because the buffalo hunt does end March 31st, and once again we are running out of time. What I am looking for is the time limit on how long it will take you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question O168-89(1): Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that I will make my decision before the end of the hunting season.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Zoe.

Question O169-89(1): Treatment Of Common-law Relationships Compared With That In Other Jurisdictions

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Would the Minister inform the House if the people who are living in common-law relationships are treated the same here in the Northwest Territories as they are in other jurisdictions? Specifically, Mr. Speaker, when one has a serious accident or where there is a loss of life. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O169-89(1): Treatment Of Common-law Relationships Compared With That In Other Jurisdictions

HON. MICHAEL BALLANTYNE: I am aware of the concern of the Member and we are looking into the definition of a married person and whether it includes common-law definition. That is something we are looking into and we might have to change legislation at some future time but I will get back to the Member when I have a more definitive analysis of the problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Nerysoo.

Question O170-89(1): Time Of Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the questions being asked by Mr. Morin of the Minister of Renewable Resources. Could I get an indication by the Minister whether or not we could have an answer with regard to the issue of the additional tag by the end of or within the next week or so?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O170-89(1): Time Of Decision On Extra Buffalo Draw

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I will try to have the answer within a couple of weeks, within that period. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Pudluk.

Question O171-89(1): More Authority For Justices Of The Peace

MR. PUDLUK: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This concern was related to me and I would like to direct this question to the Minister of Justice. The justices of the peace have the authority to imprison someone for six months and they can make summary convictions up to \$500 fine. They are training for justices of the peace in communities. Can they have further authority for the justices of the peace in the communities?

In regard to actual justice, the judges do not arrive in the communities for long periods of time. Has this ever been considered by the Department of Justice?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ballantyne.

Return To Question O171-89(1): More Authority For Justices Of The Peace

HON. MICHAEL BALLANTYNE: Thank you. I think in the area of more responsibility for justices of the peace, it is a question that has been looked at. There are criminal code implications over which we do not have authority. One thing that we are trying to do, I think the recommendation of the committee that Mr. Whitford was on was to better clarify the role of JPs, look at different categories of JPs so that JPs would handle more difficult cases. It becomes for us in our jurisdiction something that is difficult to say. I think now it is six summary convictions, six months, \$500 or whatever. It becomes difficult. We do not have the authority, really, in a lot of those areas to give them extra authority so we are trying to work within existing parameters to clarify their role under the existing rules.

It is obvious we can do a lot more in the area of training. What we want to do is make sure that JPs are well enough trained and have the sort of support they need so that they can carry out their roles under the present system. After we have done that, we will be looking at possibly giving them a more enhanced role. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Whitford.

Question O172-89(1): Status Of Task Force On Justices Of The Peace

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is directed to the Minister of Justice. I have been biting my lip and sitting on my hands here over this topic of justices of the peace. I do have an awful lot of questions coming up for him but I will just ask him the one for today. However, he is going to take notice that over the next little while I will be asking a few more, now that the issue is on the table. What is the status of the task force on justices of the peace and the recommendations made by that group of people last year or a year and a half ago now, is it? What is the status on the task force, Mr. Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ballantyne.

Return To Question O172-89(1): Status Of Task Force On Justices Of The Peace

HON. MICHAEL BALLANTYNE: The Member made it very clear at a constituency meeting that we had that he does know every clause of the legislation dealing with JPs. I do welcome his advice. I can go over just a quick outline. We can get more details when I do my budget.

I have given instructions to the legislation division to draft amendments to the JP act to make the term of appointment indefinite and to establish a JP review council. I hope to bring that forward in November. The JP review council will be set up to act in an advisory capacity until the statute is amended. I think we asked Mr. Whitford about ideas as to who should perhaps sit on that. We are waiting to get those names from Mr. Whitford.

We are contracting with a Mr. Roy Ballam who is a retired JP from BC who trained JPs there. He is going to set up training programs in the NWT which we hope to get under way in the next month. He is going to be in Yellowknife the week of February 27th to meet with Judge Halifax and contact some JPs. Judge Halifax has made his services available to help in the training. We hope that perhaps Mr. Whitford could attend that meeting to give us the benefit of his wisdom. We have established contact with the director of the native JP program in Ontario and we will be looking at their training manual to see what sort of advice they can give us. They have also offered to give us some short-term assistance.

I do agree with the Member that it has taken a long time. We are finally getting things put together in this area. I hope to be able in November to report some very meaningful progress in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Sibbeston.

Question O173-89(1): Use Of Winter Roads To Get Housing Materials To Communities

MR. SIBBESTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the Minister responsible for Housing. Every year at this time through the winter road system the road is used to haul housing materials to the communities for the various housing programs, HAP being the biggest program. Is the Minister doing everything he can this coming winter to get housing materials to all of the communities? Some of the smaller communities, the only way to get materials to them is by the winter road. Is the Minister doing everything he can during the short time remaining until the end of March to get housing materials to the communities and will the Minister agree that whether he is successful in bringing all the materials to the communities could be an indicator of his competence as a Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Return To Question O173-89(1): Use Of Winter Roads To Get Housing Materials To Communities

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Yes to the first question. No to the second. I do know that the orders have gone out for materials. I do not know what the situation is with regard to delivery on the winter roads. I will check and advise the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Sibbeston.

Question O174-89(1): Update On Government Leader's Activities

MR. SIBBESTON: Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot have the Government Leader not answer an oral question today. He has been away for quite a number of days and we have been feeling his absence and there has also been some information that the federal DIAND Minister was in Iqaluit. What in the world was he doing there with the Minister and could the Government Leader give us a brief update or report on his activities over the last few days?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: What in the world is he doing, was he doing?

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Patterson.

Return To Question O174-89(1): Update On Government Leader's Activities

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed the honourable Member is correct. The honourable Pierre Cadieux, who has been appointed the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, I believe on January 30th of this year, has made his first visit to the NWT. I took an opportunity afforded to me by the new Minister to spend several hours at his office and also several more hours on an airplane to give him an overview of issues of current concern in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, it was his idea that he should travel to the territorial capital last night via a community in the Eastern Arctic, where he had the opportunity to meet with the chairman of the TFN and the chief negotiator of the TFN, Messers. Donat Milortok and Paul Quassa, to talk about the important issue of the TFN claim. I also understand he has had similar meetings with the Dene/Metis today in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, this was the Minister's first visit to the NWT and I was pleased to be able to accompany him up north and also through an Eastern Arctic community where he had a chance to meet elders, meet some community leaders and generally have a very informal and, may I say, warm introduction to the people of the NWT. As Members know, they will have a chance to brief Mr. Cadieux informally later today. I think we should all take the opportunity to welcome Mr.

Cadieux to this important portfolio and, hopefully, begin a co-operative working relationship. I hope that answers the Member's question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Patterson. Mr. Whitford.

Question O175-89(1): Search For Child Care Money

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question directed to the Minister of Social Services. There has been, and there continues to be, concern raised about the child care program and the lack of adequate facilities for child care and the need for additional space. The question I have for the Minister is, is her department looking, at this point in time, at finding the extra moneys to assist new facilities in starting up and to assist in upgrading facilities in order that they can become child care centres that meet standards that will make child care safe, and also to anticipate an agreement that is going to be coming when there should be more money and there should be a flood of funds going out to these facilities? I wonder if she has instructed her department to search for money. Can she tell me that?

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

Return To Question O175-89(1): Search For Child Care Money

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this year's budget, as I had indicated, we anticipate to create new spaces. However, there is a specific area for contribution to day-care centres, to the operation of day-care centres, and we do anticipate to assist for new day-care centres to start up in this year's budget and basically ensure that we provide subsidies to support licensed centres. As I had indicated to the Member, the emergency funding that we were able to identify last year was to try to attempt to allow current centres and to ensure that they bring their centres up to standards that we have imposed and the standards that came into effect as of July 1st, 1988. This year's funding will certainly attempt to address the need. However, as I had indicated, we will attempt to address the need and we basically have to identify how many new centres are anticipated to start up in the new year and what type of funding is going to be required. But I anticipate with our program in place we are going to be attempting to address the concerns the Member has brought forth. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Whitford, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question O175-89(1): Search For Child Care Money

MR. WHITFORD: I hate to put pressure on the Minister, as you are aware. I would like a time frame for this. Will she be able to come up with some kind of an answer shortly or an indeterminate period of time between the time she can give me an answer, say in the next month?

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

Further Return To Question O175-89(1): Search For Child Care Money

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: The Member does not have to worry about putting pressure on me, Mr. Speaker. I recognize day-care is a problem in the North and I am attempting to deal with it. As I had indicated, I would not say we will be coming up with exactly what the Member wants to hear in the next month because the program does not come into effect until April 1st. However, having said that, Mr. Speaker, with this funding, as I had indicated in my Minister's statement, new child care spaces will be created which will assist day-care centres that want to start up to ensure that they adhere to the standards that the government had imposed on them back in the early part of 1988. I hope this answers the Member's concerns. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Morin.

Question O176-89(1): Priority For Child Care Support

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to Mr. Whitford's question to the Minister responsible for child care. Madam Minister, as you are aware, Yellowknife and the major communities like Yellowknife, Hay River, etc., they all have these facilities so I am glad to hear that you will make money available in the smaller communities. Will you be looking at the communities that do not have any facilities first? Will they be a priority on your list? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Return To Question O176-89(1): Priority For Child Care Support

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult to indicate as to who is going to be on our list. I have been emphasizing to my department to ensure that there is equitable distribution of funds to programs that are in need across the NWT. However, I anticipate that whoever does put in their submission to implement a day-care system or centre or want to implement a centre will certainly be given consideration. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question O176-89(1): Priority For Child Care Support

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, as you are aware, usually communities such as Yellowknife have all the high-priced help and the people that are there and ready and able to write proposals and usually they are basically well paid government employees that live there and then take advantage of the system, but in the smaller communities we do not have those types of people. Is your department going to assist the smaller communities, for example, supplying a person to go in and assess the need and, as well, help them with proposal writing?

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Further Return To Question O176-89(1): Priority For Child Care Support

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will be attempting to deal in assisting the small communities in the North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Zoe.

Question O177-89(1): Start-Up Money For Renovations

MR. ZOE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister's remarks when she indicated the start-up money that is available as of April 1st, is that money also for renovations of old buildings if a group wants to start up a day-care? I was not quite sure if that was part of it or not because my understanding was it was not. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

Return To Question O177-89(1): Start-Up Money For Renovations

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Mr. Speaker, the funding is identified for contribution of day-care centres to ensure that they operate -- the operating costs of day-care centres. However, taking into consideration that standards are anticipated or requested to be adhered to, I know there are centres that do want to start up and probably require renovations. We will be looking at dealing with the areas that require minor renovations. However, having said that, we also intend to try to address the problem of centres that will be wanting to set up in old buildings. I guess the initiatives that communities want to take will have to be assessed and a determination made as to what type of funding is required to ensure that our standards are adhered to. So it will be assessed, I anticipate, on a community basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. With two minutes to go for time allocation, Mr. Nerysoo.

Question O178-89(1): Regulations Applicable To Communities

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the questions that have been asked with regard to child care. In view of the concern that may arise with regard to the legislation that exists and the possible inability of communities to meet those standards, is the Minister prepared to consider a review of the legislation and the regulations with a view to considering changes that would be applicable to communities in the immediate future?

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

Return To Question O178-89(1): Regulations Applicable To Communities

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Mr. Speaker, that request certainly can be considered. However, we certainly hope that the Child Care Act will be looked at in the near future. However, the standards that we do have in place, in the absence of a Child Care Act, I can ensure that those standards are reviewed. I can give the Member an indication that probably by the fall, in the event that the Child Care Act is not passed, our standards must be such as to ensure that we can get funding. Once our act is in place we can look at it and review it accordingly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. The time allocation for question period having now expired, we will go to Item 6, written questions. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 6: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question W12-89(1): GNWT Position On Chlorofluorocarbons

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the Minister of Renewable Resources. Is the Minister developing a strategy and plan of action for review and decision by the Executive Council which clearly outlines the Government of the Northwest Territories position on chlorofluorocarbons?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Written questions. Mr. Lewis.

Question W13-89(1): Direct Appointments To Public Service

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, this is to the Minister of Personnel. Would the Minister of Personnel provide a list of direct appointments to public service positions, by department, since she became Minister of Personnel?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Written questions. Item 7, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 7: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Question W4-89(1): Funding For Mechanic Position At Pelly Bay

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, return to written Question W4-89(1), asked by Mr. Angottitauruq to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Hon. Gordon Wray's return to Question W4-89(1), asked by Mr. Angottitauruq on February 15, 1989, regarding funding for a mechanic position at Pelly Bay. The hamlet of Pelly Bay is funded in the same manner as the other 35 hamlets in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs provides sufficient funding, through the hamlet operating contribution, for a qualified mechanic to be hired. The hamlet of Pelly Bay also has other

budgetary revenues at their disposal. Pelly Bay currently had an individual employed in the mechanic's position. If the hamlet is concerned about the mechanic's qualifications, they have the autonomy to hire whom they wish and to budget in the manner consistent with their priorities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions.

Item 8, replies to Opening Address.

Item 9, replies to Budget Address.

Item 10, petitions.

Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, tabling of documents. Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I have two documents that I would like to table. One of them is Tabled Document 38-89(1), Northwest Territories Education Annual Report 1988, in English and in Inuktitut; the second is Tabled Document 39-89(1), Arctic College Annual Report for 1987-88. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Tabling of documents. Item 13, notices of motion. Mr. Lewis.

ITEM 13: NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice Of Motion 5-89(1): Appointment To The Special Committee On The Economy

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 24, 1989, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for High Arctic, that notwithstanding Rule 89(2), that the honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Sibbeston, be appointed as an alternate Member to the special committee on the northern economy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Notices of motion.

Item 14, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

Item 15, motions.

Item 16, first reading of bills.

Item 17, second reading of bills. Item 18, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1-89(1); CR 1-89(1); Bill 8-89(1); CR 2-89(1); Tabled Documents 23-89(1), 24-89(1), 25-89(1) and 26-89(1), with Mr. Zoe in the chair.

ITEM 18: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER COMMITTEE REPORT 1-89(1), REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 1989-90 MAIN ESTIMATES; BILL 1-89(1), APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989-90

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): The committee will come to order. The committee will be dealing with the Department of Executive. At this time, maybe the Chair will recess. We will be dealing with the Department of Executive as soon as we return from our coffee break. I would like to ask the Members to meet in the caucus room immediately after we recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Department Of Executive

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): I would like to call the committee back to order.

(Translation) The Minister will do his opening statement right now. Mr. Minister. (Translation ends)

Remarks for the Department of Executive.

Minister's Opening Remarks

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, the activities included within the Department of Executive main estimates include the Commissioner's Office, Ministers' Offices, Executive Council Secretariat, statistics bureau, audit bureau, regional operations, Priorities and Planning Secretariat, office of devolution and public affairs. There are other activities which are part of the Department of Executive budget, but which report to other Ministers, Mr. Chairman. These are the Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development Secretariat, Women's Secretariat and the Highway Transport and Public Utilities Boards. The information item for the Workers' Compensation Board is also contained in the Department of Executive main estimates. As in the past, the responsible Ministers will deal separately with those particular areas, Mr. Chairman.

The document before you reflects a number of changes within the department. The main changes are as a result of adjustments brought on by the devolution of functions from the federal government and are in keeping with our guiding document, Direction for the 1990s.

The key changes to the Department of Executive's budget include, as previously addressed by the Minister responsible, the Energy, Mines and Resources Secretariat has been removed from the Department of Executive. It is to become, on the first day of April, the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

Mr. Chairman, our budget also reflects the transfer of the public affairs function from the Department of Culture and Communications to the Department of Executive. With this move, I believe the government will be in a much better position to co-ordinate the various elements of its information service and concentrate on improving communication. The public affairs activity will continue to serve the whole government, and the public affairs officers will retain their present employment status. In other words, Mr. Chairman, these positions are not and will not be political appointments.

In addition, responsibility for funding the Science Institute has been transferred from the Department of Renewable Resources to the Department of Executive. This coincides with the transfer of responsibility for the northern scientific resource centres from the federal government to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our government, in turn, delegated this responsibility to the Science Institute. I am pleased to add, Mr. Chairman, that in my view bringing the Science Institute into the Department of Executive under my office will also serve to highlight the important functions of the institute.

More Active Role Of Ottawa Office

Mr. Chairman, I am also responsible for intergovernmental affairs activity and the recently established circumpolar affairs program both of which are delivered from the NWT government office in Ottawa. I am pleased to report that our Ottawa office is successfully taking on a more active role in territorial, national and even international affairs. At the territorial level, this office has provided assistance to Deputy Commissioner Hanson and Eastern Arctic organizations which are seeking a return to the North of the Inuit art collection. At the national level this office has assisted in the development of revised guidelines for territorial participation at First Ministers' and other interprovincial conferences. At the international level, intergovernmental affairs has also been active. For example, this office continues to represent our government at multilateral trade negotiations associated with the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The budget I am presenting to you reflects these additions and new initiatives in the department, that is \$14.6 million compared to the restated main estimates of \$13.2 million last year. Over half of this increase of \$1.4 million is a result of the transfer of the northern scientific resource centres. In addition to the \$796,000 increase in contributions funding for the Science Institute for this transfer, there was also a \$282,000 increase for the technology development program.

You will notice, Mr. Chairman, that the mandate of the department is, and I quote, "to provide overall management and direction to the Executive branch of the Government of the Northwest Territories". That is a broad mandate for a department which covers a diverse spectrum of functions. Everything from the protocol office with its one person year to the regional and community offices where a full third of the department's person years are allocated.

The department functions primarily in a support and advisory role. As a result, the Department of Executive has relatively few of the time-limited definitive objectives. Indeed some activities have none. That is not to say that they are not fully occupied, they are. But it indicates that the nature of their work is different from that of other departments.

Overall, the budget presented here has attempted to ensure the funding within the department is allocated to achieve our overall mandate, goals and objectives. It is a budget that applies financial resources where needed, not where they have been traditionally budgeted. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks.

I would of course be pleased to address any questions that the Members may have. I would ask however that Ms Louise Vertes, deputy minister of the Executive Council and Ms Janet-Marie Fizer, director of finance and administration for the Executive, be invited in as witnesses to assist me during the discussion of my department's budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you, Government Leader. Does the committee agree that we bring in the witnesses at this time? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Patterson, you may proceed to the witness table. At this time the Chair would like to recognize Mr. Walter Kudelik, mayor of Hay River. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Member for Hay River, as chairman of the standing committee on finance can we have your committee's comments at this time?

Comments From The Standing Committee On Finance

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all dealing with the responsibility of the Executive with regard to the Ottawa office, the committee noted that big developments are taking place in the Ottawa office to increase the Northwest Territories' profile and involvement in Canadian and international affairs. The committee has two major concerns with the enlarged presence of the territorial government in Ottawa, Mr. Chairman. The first concern is that there is no similar expansion in western Canada to explore opportunities in the West and Pacific Rim. The second concern is that the national/international outward looking view taken by the government may be at the expense of the internal needs of the NWT. Members of the committee felt that the Government Leader may not be able to adequately address both internal and external objectives. The committee awaits the Government Leader's response to this concern.

With regard to the role of the Commissioner, Mr. Chairman, this role has changed drastically over the past 10 years as the government has moved toward a ministerial form of government. Therefore, the committee recommends under recommendation 11, "that the ceremonial role of the Commissioner be enhanced". Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. General comments on the Department of Executive. Mr. Nerysoo.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to speak initially to two specific items that were raised in terms of the issue of western Canada and with regard to the issue of looking to explore economic opportunities with regard to the Pacific Rim. I think, Mr. Chairman, the Government Leader is fully aware of the initiatives taken by the western provinces in trying to develop a better relationship with Pacific Rim countries to the extent, in some cases, of establishing offices of their own in these particular countries. I do not necessarily say that is what this government should be doing, but we must begin to recognize the economic opportunities for people of the NWT in that area. We must try to find a way of trying to resolve, or at least develop a strategy and a plan, that allows us to take advantage of that particular situation. I do not believe, at this particular time, that we have the capacity to do that. Many of the major institutions and representation of Pacific Rim countries are, in fact, being established in Vancouver. Whether or not you are dealing with financial institutions or representatives of particular countries, it seems that a higher profile and more emphasis is being placed on establishing representation in Vancouver to deal, not only with western Canada, but also the western United States. I just wanted to make the Government Leader aware that we have to at least look at that situation.

The other aspect, obviously, deals with political relationships. What is interesting is -- and probably our Government Leader has found -- that it is easier to probably meet with the Premier of Quebec or the Premier of Ontario or the Premiers of the Maritime Provinces than it is to meet with the Premiers of western Canada. They are more open to dealing with us than the Premiers of western Canada, in fact to the extent we have not even yet to date received an invitation to attend the western Premiers' conferences.

I think yourself, Mr. Government Leader, and probably Mr. Penikett now after this election, should embark on a strategy of trying to have some role or at least an opportunity to speak to the western Premiers in participating in this particular conference because it is for us anyway, in many instances, politically and economically to our advantage to have a relationship of some sort. I think it is an opportune time now for you to take that particular initiative, particularly as I said since the election in the Yukon is over.

Enhancing Responsibilities Of Edmonton Office

One other aspect of course deals with the question of the Edmonton office. The Minister knows that there is a need to deal with or at least review that situation in that office and its responsibilities and consider the possibility of enhancing the responsibilities of that office. I do not say it in the context of enhancing the responsibilities at the expense of the Ottawa office, but rather to complement the work being done in Ottawa, while ensuring that we are at least developing a mechanism to take advantage of those opportunities that we have, both politically and economically. I just thought at least in that context I wanted to make those particular comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the views of the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta. I would like to perhaps make a few comments in response, Mr. Chairman. First of all with respect to the Pacific Rim, obviously this is an area of enormous economic growth and opportunity. This is a matter that Mr. Wray may well be addressing in his economic strategy. I can tell the Member that I know consideration has been given in the past

to joining the Asia Pacific Foundation as one means of access that our government might have. I am prepared to review that option again in the spirit of improving our contacts with this important developing market.

I just would like to point out that of course our office in Ottawa, since it is located in the nation's capital does have good access to all the international embassies. I have asked the Ottawa office to seek to begin to make contacts with the embassies. In fact just recently while I was there I did have an opportunity to meet with the Danish Ambassador to Canada and I have asked him to set up other similar opportunities that would be relevant to the NWT. I would also like to assure the honourable Member that I do believe we should be participating in the western Premiers' meetings and I did raise that very point with Mr. Horsman, the Alberta Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, and Mr. Russell, then Deputy Premier, when we hosted a visit by them this summer.

I can also mention incidentally that I had actually a tentative confirmation of a meeting this very week on Friday with Mr. Getty to discuss that and other matters but he has called an election which has unfortunately jeopardized that meeting. I would like to state that, as far as federal/provincial relations are concerned, the first and most immediate priority that I have been vigorously pursuing -- and I did meet with Premier Vander Zalm and other Premiers over the past year on this issue; Premier Vander Zalm in January. Our first priority is to get access to the First Ministers' Conferences other than as observers. We have been working closely with Yukon in this regard. We have proposals before the provinces and the Prime Minister, and we are very anxious that there be a breakthrough, so decisions like that taken around Meech Lake will not be taken without our participation, in the future.

Function Of Edmonton Office

I would also like to mention that I do agree that we should try to enhance and complement the work done by Ottawa. I do have capacity in my office in Yellowknife to do some of that work, particularly the contacts with provincial offices, and I think generally we do have quite a good working relationship with our immediate neighbour in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, on the Edmonton office, I must be honest and say that I cannot see expanding it to include an intergovernmental affairs capacity in the near future. The day may come when that can be justified, but I think the Edmonton office is providing a very important service role to people of the NWT in areas such as motor vehicle licensing, birth certificates, those kinds of issues, labour inquiries and with regard to tourist information for the public; and of course it provides useful assistance and administrative support to our officials and staff while in Edmonton. There is boardroom and office space for personnel interviews and the like. We have actually noted that the revenue taken in by the office for motor vehicles and other activities, and the cost savings that our staff have experienced using that office, have probably matched, or even exceeded, the actual costs of running that office. It is a worthwhile operation. Bearing in mind the warning of the standing committee on finance that there has to be a balance between what I think they describe as internal and external objectives, I think that we have an adequate capacity with what we do in Yellowknife and the enhanced role of the Ottawa office. I am not inclined to make dramatic changes in the near future in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Nerysoo.

Level Of Service To Post-Secondary Students

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the Government Leader's comments, I think that one aspect of the discussions we have had with regard to the Edmonton office has been that we, having moved some responsibilities back to Yellowknife under your direction, find ourselves in a situation now of not having the level of service necessary, for instance, to post-secondary students. We have to recognize that when we talk about internal objectives, that deals with people that are also going to post-secondary institutions that are resident in the NWT. We cannot say that internal only refers to people living in the NWT. It refers to the program and service responsibilities we have to residents, whether they are in the NWT or outside the NWT.

A few days ago in this Assembly, and I note that when the Minister responsible for Finance took advantage of the recognition given of the expansion of the numbers of people taking advantage of post-secondary funding -- this government wanted credit for it -- the thing that we have to recognize is that we have a responsibility to deliver a service to them. If we are going to take credit for something that we are doing in terms of post-secondary students, then let us provide them with a service that they will be satisfied with. It seems that we are backing out of that responsibility -- maybe not intentionally -- but I believe it is now time to take a clear look at that situation and to look at the possibility of increasing service to those students.

I think that our Minister of Education had to go to Saskatoon to look at the possibility of organizing those groups of students so that they could better receive service from our Ottawa office, and for that matter from offices in the NWT, because we did not have the capacity to do it in Edmonton. I think you have to recognize that prior to looking at what the objectives are, or looking at the recommendations that have been made. That issue came up during the standing committee on finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I certainly do not disagree with the concept of improving services to students, but I would respectfully suggest that this is not my responsibility, nor the responsibility of our intergovernmental affairs offices, although we have from time to time tried to assist students when they contact us for assistance. I would respectfully suggest, Mr. Chairman, that this is a matter for the Minister of Education and I have drawn to his attention the fact that the subject was raised during the discussion of the Department of Executive during the standing committee on finance. I think it is really more that department's responsibility than mine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. NERYSOO: Maybe, Mr. Chairman, in dealing with this issue, who does the director in Edmonton work for; is it the Executive or the Minister of Education?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Government Leader.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, the senior liaison officer -- I believe that is the person's title -- reports to the Government Leader through the deputy minister of the Executive Council. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Locating Deputy Minister In Ottawa Questioned

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concern, and it was a concern I expressed during the standing committee on finance review of the Executive, is that we have continued to have a function in Ottawa which was never very well described. My question is, how can we have a deputy minister, if my understanding is that the deputy minister is somebody that has the administrative responsibility for running the department, then how can we have that responsibility located in Ottawa? So that would be my first concern, that we seem to have put together a number of functions that relate somewhat, I suppose, but we have not recognized that so many things have now been devolved from Ottawa.

There used to be all kinds of issues that we were still negotiating to transfer from the federal government to the territorial government. Most of those things are now done. There are only a couple of things left, perhaps. At one time I could see perhaps there was a need to have somebody there because so many things still went on in Ottawa. But now everything really happens here, with the exception of a couple of things. So does it not make more sense for us to have an intergovernment deputy in Yellowknife rather than in Ottawa? Because what we are

interested in is not just simply relations with Ottawa. Let us not treat it like our mother any more. We have cut the apron strings. Mothers let us go, practically, at least we hope they have. What we would like to see is to have somebody looking after our affairs right at home here in our own house and developing relationships with other governments all over the country. My question is, how can we have a deputy minister responsible for something that is not a department the same as all other deputies run departments? That is my question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Government Leader.

Access To Federal And Provincial Deputy Ministers

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, there is one very practical reason why we have located the deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in Ottawa and that simply is, and I am sure the Member with his experience with government can appreciate this, that the fact that our representative is a deputy minister gives that person access to federal deputy ministers and provincial deputy ministers but particularly federal deputy ministers and senior federal officials that a more junior official simply would not have. That is a very concrete reality in the world of protocol between governments.

Mr. Chairman, the Member suggests that nothing more is happening and that Ottawa is no longer our mother. I agree that Ottawa is no longer our mother but I certainly would not agree that things are not happening. As proof, perhaps, of the importance of maintaining contacts with the federal government in Ottawa I would cite the Province of Quebec as an example. Now Quebec certainly does not consider itself to be a colonial subject of Ottawa but they have an office in Ottawa; so do the governments of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and our sister territory, the Yukon. Mr. Chairman, this reflects the fact, I think, that there are major issues that we must deal with the federal government on. They come up in this Legislature every day: the airport transfer; the issue of formula financing; the issue of day-care. These are subjects in which decisions taken in Ottawa are critical to what happens in communities in the NWT.

We just cannot ignore Ottawa, whether we would like to or not. It has nothing to do with devolution; it has to do with the fabric of the federal system in Canada. There are powers, national powers that are of importance to the North. Defense is another one I will mention. It is of critical importance to the North. That is a federal responsibility. By having the presence there and by having the access to the deputy ministers and through them, through our Ministers to the Ministers, we can have significant influence on decisions that are going to be taken, with or without our advice, which profoundly affect the NWT.

I would like to assure the honourable Member that this is a very active and busy office. True, there is a small staff of two, although we are about to hire a northern trainee, which will allow a northern person to gain some experience in that office with a view to taking a responsibility in future but I can assure the Member that it is very busy. It is in constant touch with the office in Yellowknife.

As I mentioned, Mr. Chairman, my principal secretary works in a very complementary way with the deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in Ottawa and between them I think we have established quite a presence in provincial capitals as well as the federal capital. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Member for Pine Point.

MR. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to make a Members' statement sometime related to the services out of the Ottawa office but I will make my points now in favour of maintaining that office and enhancing the services that are already there. I have noticed that over the past nine years that that office, when it used to be located within the DIAND building over in Hull, got busier and busier and provided more services to the cabinet and to individual Members of the Assembly. I would like to speak in favour of maintaining and enhancing the services of that office.

Excellent Services Provided

I would like to say for the record that when Mr. Allooloo and I went to New Brunswick for the Meech Lake hearings, the services provided by George Braden both before we went there and while we were there were excellent. He and Cindy Clegg were very important factors in making sure that the presentation that Mr. Allooloo and I made was organized and well made and well received by the press afterwards.

I would like to just take this opportunity to commend the Government Leader on the staff that he has right now. I know the secretary there, Sandi Briscoe, and when you are in there the whole day, like I have been on several occasions, the phone is constantly ringing. I have had quite a few contacts with friends of mine who work in various Ministers' offices and I know Mr. Braden has touched base with almost all of the new Ministers' staff who have functions within the department relative to the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Minister? Member for Mackenzie Delta. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. SIBBESTON: Mr. Chairman, one of the things that I did when I was Government Leader, because I come from the West, was that I made a special effort to go to the Eastern Arctic and the present Government Leader will know that I spent a fair amount of time in the Eastern Arctic trying to make the government's presence known there, and educate and show them in a small way that although the Yellowknife government was afar, the Government Leader could come around. One July 1st I was in the Baffin and spent a week or 10 days there. The following summer I was in the Keewatin. That time I was in Eskimo Point, Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet for July 1st celebrations. I am just wondering whether Mr. Patterson, because he comes from the East, would make a special effort to go, not just to Yellowknife or Fort Smith, or even to Inuvik, the larger centres, but to some of the smaller Dene communities and just show them that as the head of the government he really does care for the people and is willing to spend the time to get to know the remoter parts of the North. Would Mr. Patterson undertake that in the next year or two?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly would like to say that I was very impressed with the trouble and time that Mr. Sibbeston did take to travel in the region I am from, particularly, and other eastern regions when he was Minister, with his family on occasion. I would certainly hope to be able to do as well as he had done in that regard.

Plans To Visit Communities In West

I might say, Mr. Chairman, that I had quite ambitious plans my first year to do some travel of that kind. I had even considered a trip by river on the Mackenzie to visit communities by water on the route beginning at Simpson. Unfortunately, with the intervention of the Northern Energy Accord and the other items that were thrust on our agenda last year, including land claims and the other transfers that we were involved in, my best plans simply did not materialize. I did manage to make it to Snowdrift and Fort Resolution on Canada Day. In fact, I was wrestling in the mud in Fort Resolution on Canada Day -- I will never forget that in my life -- but I do plan to make more extensive visits, particularly in the West where I need to learn a lot and meet a lot more people. I can accept the Member's suggestions, and I will undertake to visit those communities and indeed the smaller communities. I will look forward to that, and I will hope that perhaps some members of my family could come along as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Supplementary, Mr. Sibbeston.

MR. SIBBESTON: Mr. Chairman, in that regard, I do not know if Mr. Patterson has seen all the mail, but in his absence I wrote to him, I missed him so much. I suggested when you get back, consider coming to the Fort Simpson area, the Deh Cho and Nahendeh constituencies, and come

for a tour sometime after the Assembly -- to Liard, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and Wrigley, some of the very nice communities that are typically Dene communities -- and see for himself the state of things and also just the way people feel about government, particularly the regional administration in Fort Smith. I invite the Minister to launch his familiarity tours in the West with a trip to the southwestern part of the North. The Government Leader may also consider going down the Deh Cho River this summer, heading the canoe pageant or canoe race. This would further enhance the whole undertaking and really make his presence in the North -- do like Mr. Mackenzie a couple of hundred years ago. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly am pleased to accept that invitation. I do not know if I will behave precisely like Mackenzie behaved when I take a trip down the Mackenzie, but I will look forward to doing so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Ernerk.

Assistant Regional Director In Keewatin

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I should ask this question first before I make some comments about my concerns. Mr. Chairman, to the Government Leader, the position of assistant regional director in the Keewatin Region has been vacant for a few months now. What is the problem in filling this position?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Government Leader.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I have directed the regional director to look very carefully into staffing that particular position. What I have asked him to do is work hard to identify an appropriate person, preferably a person resident in the Keewatin or with experience in the Keewatin, preferably a native person who might work with the regional director with a view towards being trained with the necessary skills to take over that job in due course.

I have not recently had an opportunity to get an update on how that work is going, but that is the assignment I have given. I would assume that if the position is not yet filled, it is because the search is being undertaken with great care. That is the direction I propose to take, and I trust it has the Member's approval. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Ernerk.

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am aware that a gentleman by the name of Mike Kusugak was an assistant regional director, who is an Inuk from the Keewatin Region, to be more precise, from Repulse Bay. This issue of native employment at the highest level in terms of positions has always been my goal for a long time. When I thought about the remarks of the Minister of Economic Development the other day, I became more concerned about the fact that many southern Canadians are filling those positions of higher responsibility, while the Inuit of the Keewatin Region that I represent -- and I often try to speak for them because I feel that they are the underprivileged and underemployed people in the Keewatin.

Mr. Chairman, this issue concerns me very much because when you take a look at the well-being and the future of our native people across the NWT, the question I come to as I watch the system of this government, is, are we always going to be looking to southern Canada to get expertise in technical positions such as those of senior level government positions? Mr. Chairman, for years and years now, when I was with this Legislative Assembly, when I was an Executive Member, I worked hard to try and place more native people at the senior level within this government. When I left the government, and when I was with the Keewatin Inuit Association, I fought -- maybe I fought too hard and maybe that is why nobody listens to me -- but when we are taking a look at the future of the native people up here, the native people who are going to be here for ever and ever, we must -- not we should but we must -- begin to make sure that we start to train native

people to the senior positions of the Government of the Northwest Territories. That is the direction we should be taking. With this particular position, Mr. Chairman, I have recommended to the Government Leader as far back as November of 1988 that this person, that this position be filled by a native person. I am aware of a number of native people from the Eastern Arctic who could fill this position.

Responsible Positions For Native People

Our native people have so far had positions in government offices as secretaries and interpreters. We must move beyond that cycle. We must begin to place the native people into responsible positions so that we do not end up the way the Alaskan natives did when they had their land claims settlement act. We must begin to put our native people into responsible positions and one way of doing it, and the Government Leader knows, the Executive Council knows, is to place them into training positions. We have got to do it. If we do not do it now we are going to be a little bit too late. We are going to continue the cycle that the government is following right now.

Having said that, maybe I will make a recommendation again to the Government Leader. Why do you not put the regional director into a term position so that a qualified native person from the Keewatin Region or from Nunavut region could take on that position and eventually take over that position as a regional director? The reason why I say this, Mr. Chairman, is because of this. A few years ago there was a position within the GNWT in which an Inuk person, a lady, applied for the position. In the meantime, an economic development area officer was hired by the GNWT to be an EDO in Rankin Inlet. A position opened in the community to be an economic development area officer but the spouse of that area economic development officer got the position, got the job. The Inuk lady had all the same qualifications to fill that position and yet a newcomer who had lived in Rankin Inlet for a mere two to three months got the job.

I made a lot of noises then as the president of KIA. So did a number of people. We put together a resolution, a petition. A number of the Members of the Legislative Assembly are aware of that resolution because I sent it out to every Member of the Legislative Assembly. We put together a resolution, petitioned the GNWT. We will accept your request. We will accept the direction that you are taking. We ask you to start placing southern Canadians into term positions so that native people can be trained to take on those positions once they are trained. So that is the kind of direction, the kind of request that we the people of the Keewatin Region provided to the GNWT. Nothing up to this point has been visible in terms of being at work or working at the community level. Do I make myself understood?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Government Leader?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I am beginning to wonder if I have made myself understood because before the Member's eloquent speech I indicated that is precisely the direction that I propose to go in the Keewatin. I have directed the regional director to find a qualified person from Keewatin preferably, and preferably a native person, who can take on that job and be ready to take that job on when the regional director leaves. I can assure the honourable Member that I have told Mr. Vaydik that his job is to find and train a replacement along the lines that Mr. Ernerk recommends.

I do believe that we have to make sure that such a person has the requisite education and, perhaps more important, experience which can be acquired working on the job. I would like to affirm again that is my intention. The fact that the position has not yet been filled does not mean any lack of resolve in that regard.

The Member also stated nothing visible has developed. I would point out that we are very pleased that the superintendent of MACA in Keewatin, having worked his way through the system, is an Inuk from the Keewatin Region and very much better able to deal with the communities and the communities leaders in that region. So there is some progress being made. We have a long way to go but I generally agree with everything the Member has said and I am committed to moving in that direction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ernerk.

MR. ERNERK: Mr. Chairman, supplementary and maybe by way of clarification for the Government Leader. I said that term positions should be established in the communities so that native people could be trained to take on certain positions once the term position is completed by a qualified southern Canadian. I am aware that Tom Sammurtok from Chesterfield Inlet has been in his position as a regional superintendent of MACA and I am very proud of that. I said that last year during the debate on MACA.

Lack Of Ministers' Visits To Aivilik And Keewatin

Mr. Chairman, if I might move to another subject which is very much of a concern to myself and to the people that I represent within the Aivilik riding and, generally speaking, the Keewatin Region, and that concerns the lack of visits of Ministers to the communities in our region. I should explain that when a government is elected, there is quite a large amount of responsibility that is placed upon them and I can appreciate that to a great extent.

When the government Ministers do not visit the communities enough to meet with them, to talk with them, it becomes very much of a concern of mine because I am directly involved with this whole process of government. I can recall Jack Nakoolak, the mayor of Coral Harbour in late 1988, when he hit the news headlines saying that he would like to see the government Ministers coming to the communities more often. He, along with many other people, said that instead of looking at their signatures he would like to see them in person, so that they have a chance to meet with the Ministers, talk with the Ministers and start to recognize each other.

When the Hon. Tom Butters visited my riding back in January of 1989, I should say that he was very well received by the people in Repulse Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour and Rankin. I see a lack of visits from the Ministers. By the way, I should clarify myself first, the Minister of Social Services was in Rankin Inlet last year. The Minister of Education was in Rankin Inlet last summer and I am very thankful and very pleased about those even though they happen on a once-a-year basis.

Talking about the Ministers' visits, Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Health, Minister of Renewable Resources, Social Services, Education, these to me are very important departments to be able to be seen, in terms of the Minister themselves, to be seen by the people and to see the people themselves.

The people of Repulse Bay up to this point still talk about Tom Butters' visit. The mayor of Repulse indicated to us that he was very pleased that no one has forgotten about them yet. When you govern, not only is Iqaluit your responsibility, but every other community in the Northwest Territories. I have also noticed the Government Leader coming into our community to attend one day of Keewatin Regional Council last fall. He came a second time around for a couple of hours, but that is not enough. Mr. Chairman, I recommend strongly to the Government Leader that he encourage all Ministers to visit the communities more often.

A number of things have been said about the former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Stuart Hodgson, but the thing he did, as a government leader of the NWT then, was to visit and talk to the communities and get to know the people. That is the kind of Government Leader that I would like to see.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Government Leader?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I agree that I would like to see Ministers visit all of the communities more often, and I have asked regional directors to recommend the best times to visit their regions with regard to community events and appropriate times of the year. I will be making an effort, along with the Deputy Government Leader, and in conjunction with other Ministers, to do our best to cover this vast territory and to make our presence felt.

Government Leader's Responsibilities Exist Beyond Constituency

I can assure the honourable Member that I do know that my responsibilities exist beyond my own constituency. I do not need to be told that. I know it, and I govern myself by that reality in everything I do, I can assure the honourable Member.

I believe I mentioned to Mr. Sibbeston that I had some plans to do more travelling last year, but with the health transfer, the purchase of NCPC, the intense work on the Dene/Metis claim, the Northern Energy Accord, we were kept very busy and some of the work, unfortunately, took us out of the Territories. However, I recognize our first obligation is to the people of the NWT, and I must say that I am happy that I have been able to visit the Keewatin Region twice this year, and that I was able to meet with senior staff of all departments on one occasion. We should be seeking to do more in the coming years and I take that general advice well, and I will hope that perhaps by the next time we meet, I can have done some touring in the Member's region.

I made an extensive tour of the Kitikmeot Region in December and found it very enlightening, and I want to assure the Member that I enjoy visiting communities and meeting people. I think it is a great way to find out what is going on, as opposed to what we are told is going on, and I accept that advice and if there was some gentle criticism in the Member's voice I will try to do better in the coming years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Ernerk.

MR. ERNERK: Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to say in this statement is that I represent a group of people in the Keewatin Region who very much care about what happens to their future. I do not mind talking so much about the issue of the Meech Lake Accord and its problems, but I think that is the issue we all know exists and will exist for a number of years to come. It is just not going to go away. The reason I particularly suggested those very important departments is because the average constituent of mine, when he or she sees a Minister, a decision-maker, they want to be able to tell the Minister, "I want a job; I want to see the education system improved in my community; I want to see the management of renewable resources improved; I want to see health improvements; I want to see further training at the community level." I am not saying that they do not care anything about the Meech Lake Accord, or those major issues that happen in Ottawa, but we have to start representing our people more and more, because the communities, both in Nunavut and in this region, demand a good representation. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I can do only so much, and I need the people over there to be able to see the decision-makers themselves face to face, more and more. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I think the Member has made his point of view very clear and I have taken note of it, and I will discuss it with my cabinet colleagues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Nerysoo.

Importance Of Edmonton Office

MR. NERYSOO: Mr. Chairman, I will not take, hopefully, a lot of time, but I do find, having reflected upon some of the answers that were given, that I am quite disappointed with how people treat the issue of the Edmonton office. Maybe people like Mr. Patterson do not know the value of that office. Maybe this government does not know the value of that office. A very significant amount of the economic investment that occurs in the West comes out of the western provinces. I do not know what gives George Braden the intelligence to know that all these things are happening; that people in the oil and gas industry, the small independent groups, might be looking for an investment opportunity. They do not call George Braden. When there are people that are interested in western Canada, in the area of mining, they do not call George Braden. Who do they call? Where is the contact for northern Canada? Nowhere. I am sorry, but to be honest

with you, I probably have more discussions with the oil and gas industry than Mr. Braden does. I do not know how you can possibly justify the comments that were made earlier, that there is no intention of looking at improving the services delivered by this office.

One experience, for instance, that Fort McPherson encountered was that they could not find a Canadian commercial bank that was prepared to loan them money to get into business, but the Bank of Hong Kong called them -- the Bank of Hong Kong -- they were interested in lending them money. How in the world did the Bank of Hong Kong recognize there was a need in a community as far away as Fort McPherson, and how do they respond to that? Who is the contact person that gives them those numbers? I cannot believe that this government can sit in the dark and not recognize the importance and the value of that office. I cannot understand, for the life of me, how we can sit in this Assembly and say that the Pacific Rim is opening its doors to us, but we have no contact whatsoever. I am sorry, but George Braden does not talk to the people in the Bank of Hong Kong in British Columbia. They probably do not even want to talk to him.

It is distressing that after all these months, probably about a year, there is no long-term strategy. I do not know what it is. The suggestion made earlier by the Government Leader is that it is up to Education to deal with the students. No, it is not only the Minister of Education. It has to do with the government leadership. I do not know how in the world we can deal with a public government strategy in improving the economy of the NWT and not have any idea of what we are going to do with that office. If you want to disband it, then disband it, and move the people back to the NWT. My suggestion and my feeling is that you cannot do that.

I find us also in a situation where for instance in the last couple of days we are trying to deal with this issue of pulp and paper developments in Alberta. How many documents have come out of our Edmonton office? They should be on top of those developments. Why is it that we do not get that information? I know I can at least say about Mr. Braden and that office in Ottawa that I do not think anyone here is saying they are not doing a good job when there is an important item that affects one particular constituency, including mine. I have had information delivered and sent to me by Mr. Braden so I appreciate the need for that office but I really find that it is pretty distressing that we do not realize the value that we have in the Edmonton office.

Plans For Future Use Of Edmonton Office

The worst thing is that I do not even hear plans of how or what we are going to do with that office. I recall a year ago when this particular item came up that Mr. Patterson said he would look into the matter and consider some of the options. I think the reason I raised it was to hear some enlightening suggestions from our Government Leader. That is not the case. Maybe it would be best just to indicate to the general public that the office is there for government only. I am always under the impression that when we use government money for establishment of any kind of offices it is for the general public. Anybody should be able to use that office but that is not the case. We are too interested in protecting our own little turf and not recognizing we have a responsibility to the public of the NWT.

One other aspect that is distressing to me is this idea of senior appointments. I do not know where Mr. Braden all of a sudden develops so much skill that you have to find someone in the NWT to train to take over his job. When that man became Government Leader he had no more knowledge than Richard Nerysoo and in fact less knowledge than Tom Butters about the Legislative Assembly. But he became the Government Leader and all of a sudden when he decided not to run for Assembly we decided to make him the commissioner for Expo '86. You go back a little further to the Drury years, Mr. Braden was a policy person, writing a document. In fact writing a document that is collecting dust, so how in the world can we all of sudden say that he is an expert, that somebody has to train to do that job. There are all kinds of people in the NWT that I know that are capable of doing that job and being ambassadors for the NWT.

We have people that are no longer Members of the Assembly that could do as good a job as Mr. Braden and I just find it pretty distressing that we have to now suggest that native people who have been political leaders are not capable of doing the job, that we now have to train someone.

That is too bad because if that was the only reason we had for not appointing native people in positions of deputy minister I know for a fact Mr. Jim Bourque would not be where he is, Mr. Jake Heron would not be where he is. It is a reflection on the leadership we have now is basically what it is. It is too bad because I find myself in a situation where we have to fight tooth and nail to get where we are, and then we are all the way back to where we started. It is too bad. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Any comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are a number of comments. I will try to deal with them. First of all, the training position I referred to is not to replace Mr. Braden. The training position that has been established is to obtain a native person who can train in the circumpolar affairs area and replace the incumbent who will be retiring within a fixed time. It is not a deputy minister trainee position.

Mr. Chairman, just generally I have to say the Member suggests I do not support the Edmonton office or I do not consider it important. I would like to remind him that I believe in the last budget session I spoke at length about the extremely useful services provided to the members of the general public as well as government users by the Edmonton office. A lot of people call or visit the Edmonton office. It is extremely useful to the public and the territorial public travelling in Edmonton.

Economic Initiatives Based In Ottawa Office

Mr. Chairman, on the issue of economic opportunities being promoted by Intergovernmental Affairs, let me report to the Member -- I believe I have already made a statement in the Legislature on this matter -- let me inform the Member that since the budget was last presented I have developed with the deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, a number of initiatives based in the Ottawa office in the economic area.

I mentioned the international trade negotiations. We are monitoring developments in Ottawa respecting replacement of the EDA agreements. We are disseminating information, with particular emphasis on Canadian embassies and trade offices abroad, on NWT products. We have plans to promote and market NWT products, particularly food products, to eastern based buyers and distributors. We are disseminating information on tourism. We are working at identifying research opportunities and the opportunity for investments which could be made in the North, on research and development work which has a relevance to the North. We are also sensitive to potential opportunities with circumpolar nations in the economic area. My deputy has been working very closely with the Department of Economic Development in this regard and I would say it is a new initiative that is a response to the Member's recommendations at the last session.

Purpose Of Edmonton Office Clarified

Now I have to explain, Mr. Chairman, that the Edmonton office was never staffed with the purpose of having an intergovernmental affairs capacity. It was staffed in the past and was presently staffed with the view to the service functions which are performed. I suppose I could agree with the Member that it would be very nice if we could have an expanded intergovernmental affairs presence in Edmonton and in fact, in Hong Kong and other nations as well. But I have to be realistic about the extent to which we can have the sort of offices that the Government of Alberta is establishing in the US and in China and in London and the like, as well as throughout Canada. I do not believe that we have the resources to spread ourselves that thin. I guess what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that we are mindful of the tremendous trade that we do with Alberta and unfortunately most of it is in Alberta's favour.

But with respect to the oil and gas industry, Mr. Chairman, I would think that the honourable Member would be recommending that we encourage the oil and gas industry representatives to come to the NWT to deal with our Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources; to deal with our government in the Territories, especially those who operate in the Territories, rather than

dealing with us in Alberta. The thrust of our activities with the energy accord and with the new department, and I hope it will eventually include responsibility for mining as well, is to get people to do business with our government in the NWT. I feel that we are very actively promoting that. We have regular visits of the Canadian Petroleum Association and I can assure the honourable Member, frequent contacts with oil and mining companies through the good offices of the Minister responsible and we are constantly promoting investment and opportunities. One of the examples would be the efforts to which we have gone to try to see that the Neptune mine is established and succeeds. We have gone far out of our way and far beyond our jurisdiction in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I think our objective should be to have the locus of consultations and activities in the North. For many years we have been concerned that decisions have been taken outside our jurisdiction and that is one of my responses to that concern. Mr. Chairman, again I will say in conclusion, if we had unlimited resources -- and I have presented a very tight budget I believe; it has not provided great provision for growth here, or great amounts for growth -- if resources were unlimited and more generous than fiscal realities permit I suppose I would be willing to consider expanding our intergovernmental affairs outside the presence we have in Ottawa at the moment.

Upgrading Of Economic Initiatives

But given the realities of our resources, my philosophy is to upgrade the economic initiatives that will be undertaken in Ottawa, which include an international component, and continue to do our best to contact all provincial governments -- and there are at least six provinces that neighbour on the NWT, not just Alberta -- so that we can continue to promote economic opportunities. I think the Minister of Economic Development is similarly looking outside the borders of the NWT in developing his economic plan. We are well aware there are markets for seal leather in Asia and that it is a global marketplace now. I take the Member's advice in the constructive spirit it was intended but I would respectfully differ with some of the strategies he is suggesting for the reasons I explained. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Nerysoo.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Firstly let me indicate that I never ever suggested that you should be opening offices in the States or in Pacific Rim countries. I indicated that there was a need to review the responsibilities of the Edmonton office with a view of expanding its responsibility. I am not going to continue with the debate because I know if there is a suggestion of not expanding that service then I assume it is maintaining what the Government Leader did previously and that is not to consider including additional responsibilities in the medical area or for that matter in the area of education. Overall, it is a government policy as to whether or not you will increase the responsibility in that area and it is not individually what each Minister wants to do but just public policy. So my impression is that there is no intention so I can end that debate there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Minister.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I would just say what I said earlier, that matters of education and health are not my responsibility and I would suggest they be directed to the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Patterson. It is the Government Leader that is up. It is the main estimates, the Executive. We are on general comments. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the SCOF meetings I had an opportunity there to also encourage the continuation of the government offices in both places, Ottawa and Edmonton. I just wanted to speak just briefly in support of the Edmonton office, and probably a certain amount of appreciation for the fact that this office is there. I do believe though that it

can be enhanced by the representatives of the other departments, Education, Health, and Justice, somewhat. In all fairness to the Government Leader, the service that is provided there is of benefit to the North.

Former Function Of Edmonton Office

I have had an opportunity of using that office personally and while I was with the Department of Justice, it does serve in an excellent capacity in co-ordinating activities for the coroner's office for example and for the Department of Health for patients that are going to hospitals in the South. The part that I was sad to see diminish was the use by the Department of Education as a staging point for contact with the students. At some point in the 70s it was probably in its heyday and did an excellent job. I feel that they were premature in pulling out the particular people that were there, the counsellors that were there, or changed their jobs such that it made them ineffective as counsellors and I think that should be returned.

We have a lot of students going out and it is important to the NWT that these students receive the proper care and attention in order to keep them there in the South while they are going through the trauma of a university or college education, far from home and things like that. But again that is a matter for another department. I will be bringing that up accordingly.

The point I want to get back to here is in the representation in the regions, in the regional offices. As far back as 1977 I have had an indirect contact with the executive and the senior positions in the regions. When you look at the numbers of native peoples that have enjoyed for only a brief moment the position of regional director, I think there are two regions right now that have that distinction. There is Inuvik with Mr. Norris and there is the Kitikmeot with Helen Adamache. The others do not. Not since Mr. Bourque in Fort Smith in 1984 and his sad passing we have not had anyone there. Nor does the government appear to be making any efforts to recruit and to put someone in a senior training position. There are a lot of people in the territorial government, within the rank and file of the territorial government that can fill these positions adequately. All they need is an opportunity. I do not feel that the Executive are making a conscious effort to find these people. We do have an office that should be responsible for making the recommendations strongly to the government that native peoples be adequately represented in these senior positions; in the Baffin, the Keewatin, and in the Fort Smith Region and we cannot for the other two at the moment because they are adequately filled.

Native Trainees For Senior Positions In Regions

When I checked back and I looked at the list of people who are there -- good people unquestionably -- but there are no trainees there to take over when these people are ready to move on, and move on they will. It is like a domino, they move from one region to the other, and gain experience, and eventually land up in Yellowknife, but there is no one coming in to fill their positions from that region. There are no native people waiting in the wings to take the training from these people and eventually step into those particular positions as they become available.

I wonder if the Government Leader would take that under advisement and make an example of this government's intentions to increase its representation of native peoples, not only in the 28 to 31 per cent that we have now, which includes trades people -- all honourable jobs of course -- but look at the senior positions. There are very few native people in those positions, yet they are out there. Some are being seconded away to the private sector, to our loss.

The native employment policy and the native employment programs were talked about as far back as 1976 and 1977, and it seems that they are dying on the vine there somewhere. I want perhaps the Government Leader to take another look at this and maybe set the example for the other departments, so they will say, "If the Government Leader and his group can do it, so can we." I just want to leave with that comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Mr. Government Leader.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, I just would like to inform the honourable Member that I have also had discussions with the regional director in Baffin along the same lines as I outlined to the honourable Member for Aivilik; that we should plan for that person's replacement with a permanent resident of the region. Fortunately, in Baffin, with the management training program that is in place there, there are good candidates emerging. There are good candidates emerging for superintendent positions as well, which I can assure the House I am actively encouraging. I think it is fair to say that there are plans under way. It cannot happen overnight because, of course, we cannot risk setting people up for difficult positions by parachuting them in without some experience and training. They need that background in order to have credibility with their employees. I can inform the House, however, that there are plans under way in the Baffin and Keewatin Regions to move native people into senior management positions. I am totally committed to that. In the Fort Smith Region, as Members know, there is still some lack of clarity about precisely where we are going with that position -- which I hope to work out in the next short while. I can assure the honourable Member that I am thinking along those lines, and I am confident we will have some real gains to report during the life of this government in that regard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Government Leader. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD: Just a further comment to that. I want it to be understood that we seem to have no difficulty in finding people, at the moment, from other departments. We just pick a guy out of Economic Development or from another department, and put him in that region as a regional director. I wonder why we cannot pull a native person out of one of these departments the same way.

Progress Will Be Monitored

I will accept the progress that is going to be made in the years. I just want to remind the Government Leader, however, that it has been 11 years that I have monitored this; 11 years is a long time. It takes four years to train a person to a degree in a university, seven years to train him to be a doctor. Surely in 11 years we could have trained umpteen regional directors. I think that I will leave it at that, but I will certainly monitor it again -- I hope not for another 11 years -- and see what progress is made over the life of this particular Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pollard): Thank you, Mr. Whitford. We are on Department of Executive main estimates. General comments. Is it the wish of the committee to go into the main estimates? Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the Department of Executive, similar to the Department of Health. We had Highways in there, and we also had Municipal and Community Affairs. This department is also the same way. It is getting more confusing, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the responsibilities being designated to the Ministers. The departments have increased quite a bit to include Transportation, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and other departments. There is no consistency with regard to the delegated responsibility. In other words, if I could refer to Aboriginal Rights and also the responsibility of the Minister of Renewable Resources, as well the Minister of Education, Women's Secretariat, Minister of Social Services. There is also the Workers' Compensation Board, Highway Transport and Public Utilities Boards. So we are, further and further, sort of losing touch with a lot of the programs that could actually be designated for one specific Minister. And so we run into the same situation that I have been observing during the last two weeks and that is we keep ending up with Ministers passing the buck. "It is not my area of responsibility. You should refer to this particular Minister." Presumably the next Minister that we have will probably have the same type of answers as the Ministers that we have to date.

Ministerial Responsibilities Confusing The Public

This is the difficulty, Mr. Chairman, that I have. I do not know what the Government Leader's intention was when the delegated responsibilities were increased from last year to new areas of

responsibility. I am just wondering, Mr. Chairman, I am kind of confused about what the people out there in the smaller communities would feel like when they have to address specific problems to a number of people. So I would like to ask the Minister whether or not he has looked at that situation and whether or not he intends to do anything about it. If he does not then maybe he should tell us then, that we just have to further expand as far as our responsibilities go that we deal with, so when we are requesting meetings or requesting the Ministers to come visit my constituency I have all the proper Ministers visiting. Not just one Minister but a number of them, so that we do not run into the difficulty of what a Minister has said before, and so it is his responsibility, that Minister's responsibility.

I would like to ask the Minister whether or not the direction that the government is going is the direction they want to go and not necessarily to comfort the general public there but maybe to confuse things more. I do not know. It is coming to a point now where you do not require just one individual Minister to address an individual issue but you need a number of Ministers to address a certain issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Your comments, Mr. Government Leader.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe that in earlier days in the Territories' history, the Commissioner, and particularly the first Commissioner, would visit communities and without hesitation make commitments on behalf of various departments that a water truck would be provided; the commitment would be made as soon as it was requested at a council meeting that a particular facility would be built.

I do not know if the honourable Member is asking that we go back to that sort of a system where the Government Leader perhaps might be able to exercise that kind of authority. However, Mr. Chairman, I feel that while I have the responsibility for overseeing the operation of the Executive branch of government and providing some measure of leadership to the cabinet, I do not think it is my place or appropriate or in the interests of good government if I were to make commitments on behalf of Ministers in their absence. I am not, however well-informed I try to be, I am not privy to the plans, financial and budgetary, of the departments and their financial commitments. I simply trust that the Member will understand that no one Minister, even the Government Leader, can make those kinds of commitments without causing some kind of chaos in the system.

I guess a few minutes ago I suggested that if they were health issues or educational issues of concern in Alberta for NWT patients or NWT students in Alberta that those matters should be addressed to the Ministers of Health or Education. I was not trying to pass the buck. I was just saying that within the resources available to me within the Department of Executive, I do not see being able to provide health or education services through the Edmonton office. In fact the Ministers of those departments might have some more flexibility than I would have with the budget that I administer through the Executive branch.

Visits To Communities To Hear Concerns

Mr. Chairman, I think that I should be making efforts along with the Deputy Government Leader to visit as many communities as possible and we should be prepared to receive concerns and act on concerns as soon as possible in a broad range of areas. I have deliberately not assigned myself major program responsibility so that I would have that freedom and flexibility to take on that role. I can assure the House that I am more than willing to do that. If I am present then I certainly would be willing to hear concerns that cover a number of departments.

I think the honourable Member is getting at the fact that our government is getting larger and increasingly complicated. Look at the functions that we have had to take on just in the past couple of years; totally new areas our government has never dealt with, such as forestry, energy, perhaps mining will be next.

I can appreciate that it is confusing to the average citizen who wants a straight answer when a government Minister visits a community. Unfortunately government is becoming more complicated and our system is not as simple as it used to be in the days of Commissioner Hodgson. Having said that, I think it is my responsibility and that of regional directors to try to represent all departments of the government and be as responsive at the community level as we can. I take the Member's concerns. I note the Member's concerns. I agree with them but I think in many ways they are a function of the increasing complexity of government whether we like it or not. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. GARGAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Minister for his comment. Another area that is within this department, or some of the objectives again with regard to Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development Secretariat. If you look at the direction that the government has taken with regard to, for example, constitutional development, the government has already established a position which indicates that they retain all program delivery. Then you sort of question the intent of constitutional development if that is the case. You have already established a position, so how do you get around it if there is a spirit of intent there to constitutional development?

Also the Executive did indicate that the government is getting bigger and more complicated. Actually there is a simple answer to that. Give those programs to the communities. Either that or else really shuffle your programs so that at least they are related to each other. In other words, housing for example could very well be with MACA or with Highways. Like MACA, Housing and Highways could all be combined because they deal directly with local community and municipal areas. Then you have programs such as health and social services that are related closely; culture and aboriginal rights and constitutional development. Those are the types of programs I was referring to. The connections are being unconnected. It is like the Minister said, it is becoming bigger and bigger and more complicated. It looks like we are the ones creating that complication, when we should not be.

Losing Touch With Reality

We keep referring, Mr. Chairman, to consensus government. As far as I am concerned, this consensus is losing touch with reality. It is getting to a point where I will probably have as much reluctance to go to the sixth floor as anybody else on the street. I have not been too successful with letters, either. That is the difficulty I have been going through and naturally the communities at the local level, or anybody on the street, would have that much more difficulty, not being specifically exposed to government, or having any kind of relationship with government. That is the difficulty, I am sure, the general public is having.

I would hope that the Government Leader, as my spokesperson -- I will put it that way, Mr. Chairman -- on the Executive Council would bring this to the Executive Council and say that that is the problem, that is the difficulty. Perhaps he would take the appropriate action, as my representative on the Executive Council, to say that maybe we should try to change that direction. Maybe we should make it simpler, or even go as far as saying, "I need your support to give these programs to the communities. In the spirit of constitutional development, let us start negotiating what programs the communities could directly take on."

I do not hear that from the government. In fact, they have already established a position on that, so I wonder what constitutional development is all about. I really do not see any place where there is a spirit of intention here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like the Minister to respond. This is going to be my third time, but it is probably going to be the same answer again.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Government Leader, do you have any comments?

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, let me say that our government is totally committed to devolving responsibility to the community level, and I have made those statements on a number of occasions. One of them was at the South Slave Regional Council recently. We

made that announcement and that commitment after our strategy session this past summer. We reinforced our commitment to the community governments as the prime public authority. I am sure the Member has heard that phrase many times, and it is not a hollow phrase. It means that we want to strengthen community governments. The political and constitutional development paper, which was tabled last fall and which we hope to discuss this session, makes the same point very clearly: the community government as the prime public authority.

What that means, Mr. Chairman, is that we are very open and willing to devolve responsibilities for delivering government programs and services within our jurisdiction to the community level. That is what the Charter Communities Act was designed to permit, and that is what the prime public authority concept is designed to deliver.

I can assure the Member that it is a priority of our cabinet, and we are very open to negotiating with communities who wish to acquire more responsibilities at that level. The Member wants a clear answer. I hope I am clear. We are committed to devolving programs and services to the community level. The Member has suggested that our government has established a position that we maintain all program delivery. That is not true. It is simply not true. I will cite the paper and the public statements I have made on the prime public authority, and those that other Ministers have made. I would like to make that very clear. We are not trying to hold it all close to our chest. What we have said is that we do not see devolving further responsibilities to other bodies. We see the community government, or combined community government, as the main vehicle. That is where the people are, and that is where the services should be devolved.

Useful To Realign Departments

The other point the Member made, Mr. Chairman, is that it would be useful to align departments with Ministers so that they are broadly working in areas relating to municipal services, relating to the social side, and I think that makes a lot of sense. I would like to think that we have gone some way in reorganizing and realigning in the creation of the Department of Transportation, which brought together a whole lot of pieces that were scattered throughout the government in the transportation area, and said "Okay, the public needs one focus, one window." That is why we have set up that department. Similarly, we have done the same thing with the Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources department, and similar consolidation has taken place with the new Department of Safety and Public Services.

I take the Member's advice that we should go further in that regard. I am open to that. I think that, in considering the issue of cabinet assignments, the Member is correct. I should try, wherever possible, to make sure that Ministers have related cabinet responsibilities and I will do that. I will take that advice and do that when cabinet assignments are made, as much as possible, recognizing that sometimes one has to look at an individual Minister's experience and interests as well. I agree with that point and I will work towards that end. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Gargan.

Land Claims Agreement In Principle

MR. GARGAN: Mr. Chairman, in March of 1990 the agreement in principle will be signed. The final signature. The situation right now is that under the agreement in principle, the aboriginal or the Dene people, anyway, which I am referring to in this case will have lands, sections of land that they will own themselves. In order for any kind of final agreement to be signed, this government should be able to say with regard to constitutional development, "These are the lands that you own. These are the lands that you are landlords of. We recognize that, and for this reason we have to make an agreement with you, a third party agreement to say that as the landlords of these areas we will make agreements to take on responsibilities for certain areas, within those areas."

Naturally if during the process the Dene people decide not to take on land in any of the communities, then good. But I believe that they will select lands within and around municipalities.

So in order for us to be sure or even comfort ourselves with regard to the fact that inevitably with that there will be some form of public government, the aboriginal people have to be assured that will be the case, which is not the case now. I am concerned that in the final analysis, the AIP might not be signed because we are not too sure where constitutional development is at. That is within a year from now, Mr. Chairman. So the government has got to establish its own position with regard to what they mean by constitutional development and what they mean by absolute responsibility and in what areas. Because if that does not happen, then it very well might mean that the land claims, the AIP, is killed.

That is a concern I have. I am sure a lot of the Members do have the same concern, including the Members from the Eastern Arctic. I know that for the last five years as a Member I have heard the Government Leader and previous Government Leaders saying that it is their intent to devolve to the communities. But as far as the reality of that goes, I do not know. It is still being governed by regulations, policies, acts, legislation so what you end up with is that there is not really the responsibility being devolved because you are still governed by a central government that holds the purse strings as well as the regulations to keep you from going beyond that control.

Mr. Chairman, it is a concern I have. I cannot hold back on this particular issue because I am an aboriginal person. I am also a beneficiary of any, at least, Dene land claims but I am also concerned as a Dene person, as a Member of this House that we have not worked on how constitutional development will take place and how it would reflect the final AIP of land claims that will be coming into effect within the next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Mr. Government Leader, any comments?

Government Must Clarify Position On Political And Constitutional Development

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all let me say that I agree with the Member that the government has to clarify its position on political and constitutional development and that is precisely why we have tabled a lengthy and, I hope, comprehensive discussion paper on which I hope we will get directions from this Legislative Assembly during this very session.

I may say that I hope that I and other Ministers involved in political and constitutional development, including the Ministers responsible for claims and the Minister of Justice, will be able to participate fully and take an active role in these discussions to clarify our vision of where we might be going. I would like to also say, Mr. Chairman, to the honourable Member that I think there are other interests in the Territories that must clarify what he describes as the position on political and constitutional development.

I think we should include those other representatives, including the members of the Constitutional Alliance, in the debate because I would like to know what Dene government on Dene lands actually means. I would like to know what the Dene Nation means by aboriginal self-government. I think that once we have a clear definition of just what that might mean in the context of claims settlements in the NWT, then we can as a government work, hopefully in a complementary way, to provide people greater control over their lives at the community level. What we have offered is the prime public authority concept and the Charter Communities Act.

There may be other approaches that would be effective to this end. I think it is time, as the Member said, that the positions be clarified. I would hate to see the Dene/Metis claim derailed because of this issue of self-government being undefined before the final agreement. I agree with the Member; it is urgent that we clarify these questions. That is why we have been recommending that we have a proper debate even during this session. Take the two full days if we have to; bring in witnesses and get the direction emerging. I am all for it and I agree totally with the Member.

MR. LEWIS: Point of privilege, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Your point of privilege, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: A point of privilege, not a point of order. I find it impossible to concentrate because the air is so polluted in this Chamber from the city dump that I will have to leave the Chamber, Mr. Chairman. But I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Your motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. I have a motion on the floor. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

At this time I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing before us. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order please. Mr. Zoe.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF COMMITTEE REPORT 1-89(1), REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 1989-90 MAIN ESTIMATES; BILL 1-89(1), APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989-90

MR. ZOE: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1-89(1) and CR 1-89(1), and wishes to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. The House has heard the report of the chairman of committee of the whole. Are you agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Item 20, third reading of bills. Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would seek the House's consent to return to question period so I could ask a question of the Minister of Health, whether or not the air is safe for...

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to question period. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: I hear several nays, Mr. Whitford. You got your point across.

Item 20, third reading of bills. Item 21, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Announcements, Mr. Speaker. There will be a meeting of the special committee on the northern economy at 7:30 this evening downstairs in this building. Meetings for tomorrow morning: at 9:00 a.m., a meeting of ajauqtit; at 10:00 a.m., a meeting of the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions; and at 10:00 a.m., a meeting of the rules, procedures and privileges committee, meeting in the committee room.

ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 23rd.

1. Prayer

2. **Ministers' Statements**
3. **Members' Statements**
4. **Returns to Oral Questions**
5. **Oral Questions**
6. **Written Questions**
7. **Returns to Written Questions**
8. **Replies to Opening Address**
9. **Replies to Budget Address**
10. **Petitions**
11. **Reports of Standing and Special Committees**
12. **Tabling of Documents**
13. **Notices of Motion**
14. **Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills**
15. **Motions**
16. **First Reading of Bills**
17. **Second Reading of Bills**
18. **Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: CR 1-89(1); CR 2-89(1); Bill 1-89(1); Bill 8-89(1); Tabled Documents 23-89(1), 24-89(1), 25-89(1), 26-89(1)**
19. **Report of Committee of the Whole**
20. **Third Reading of Bills**
21. **Orders of the Day**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 23rd, at 1:00 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

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