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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 1989

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Red Pedersen): Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 8th, 1989. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Ministers' Statement 21-89(1): International Women's Day

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, March 8, is International Women's Day.

--Applause

Thank you. Every year since 1910, women in all walks of life all over the world have celebrated this day. Originally, it commemorated an historic strike by 30,000 women textile workers in New York City in 1908. Their slogan was "Bread and Roses" symbolizing their struggle for economic security and a better quality of life. Today it has come to be a special day for women to gather in celebration as well as to recommit ourselves to the continuing struggle for economic and social equality.

Today, several NWT communities from Hay River to Iqaluit are organizing celebrations. Here in Yellowknife, a cross-section of women from throughout the community gathered last weekend to celebrate and to discuss future plans. Such gatherings are important as they recognize the leadership women are providing in all aspects of life in their communities, as well as the progress we are making toward full equality.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask each Member of this House to take a few moments to think today about the role women play in the social, economic and political life of each of our constituencies and about what steps Members could take to improve and recognize that role. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. The Chair would like to recognize in the gallery today some distinguished guests who are here and are interested in today's topic of discussion: Mr. Mangitak Kellypalik of Cape Dorset, who is a member of the board of directors of the Inuit Cultural Institute;

--Applause

Mr. George Eckalook, chairman of the Baffin Health Board;

---Applause

and we have Stevie Audlakiak, mayor of Broughton Island with us today. Welcome.

---Applause

Item 3, Members' statements.

Item 4, returns to oral questions.

Item 5, oral questions.

Item 6, written questions.

Item 7, returns to written questions.

Item 8, replies to Opening Address.

Item 9, petitions.

Item 10, reports of standing and special committees.

Item 11, tabling of documents.

Item 12, notices of motion.

Item 13, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

Item 14, motions.

Item 15, first reading of bills.

Item 16, second reading of bills. Item 17, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: consideration of the matter of suicide; Bill 1-89(1); CR 1-89(1); Tabled Documents 23-89(1), 24-89(1), 25-89(1) and 26-89(1); Minister's Statement 15-89(1); Tabled Documents 58-89(1) and 59-8(1), with Mr. Zoe in the chair.

The committee will today stay in committee of the whole until the committee has deemed their work done for the day.

ITEM 17: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER THE MATTER OF SUICIDE; TABLED DOCUMENT 23-89(1), NWT SUICIDE STATISTICS 1978-88; TABLED DOCUMENT 24-89(1), SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STUDY; TABLED DOCUMENT 25-89(1), REVIEW OF MORTALITY DUE TO SUICIDE IN THE NWT 1975-1986; TABLED DOCUMENT 26-89(1), REPORT ON SUICIDE PROBLEMS IN THE BAFFIN REGION; COMMITTEE REPORT 1-89(1), REPORT OF 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. First business for the committee of the whole that we will be dealing with is consideration of the matter of suicide, and Tabled Documents 23-89(1), 24-89(1), 25-89(1) and 26-89(1). Madam Minister, do you have any opening remarks on the matter of suicide?

Consideration Of The Matter Of Suicide

Minister's Opening Remarks

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to this House Dr. Ron Dyck from Edmonton. Dr. Dyck is the provincial suicidologist with Alberta Mental Health Services, a position he has held for the past five years. He also teaches in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta. Prior to accepting his current position, he was a director of research and evaluation for that department for a period of nine years. His doctoral degree is in psychology. He has many publications to his credit, and he is considered to be one of Canada's foremost experts on suicide prevention and intervention.

Suicide is a concern for all of us, particularly as it affects our young people and the people of the Eastern Arctic. Dr. Dyck is here this afternoon as a witness during the committee of the whole to assist in our discussion of suicide prevention, in strategizing ways to reduce the incidence of this tragic event and to answer Members' questions. I would therefore like to ask permission from this House to allow Dr. Dyck into committee of the whole, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Does the committee agree that we invite Dr. Dyck to appear before our committee? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Madam Minister, you may proceed to sit at the witness table with Dr. Dyck, if you prefer. The committee would like to welcome Dr. Dyck. Welcome to the House, Dr. Dyck. Do you have any opening remarks at this time?

Dr. Dyck's Opening Remarks

DR. DYCK: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to participate with you to talk about a serious matter; to talk about a matter that affects all of us, regardless of where we come from. Whether it is the South or the North, the East or the West, it affects all of us. It is an honour and a privilege for me to talk about how we might prevent such tragedies from occurring in our communities.

This afternoon I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about the magnitude of the problem of suicide. I would like to talk a little bit about why suicide occurs and I would like to spend considerable time talking about how we might prevent suicide within our communities. So let me begin by reading a statement. "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better I cannot tell. I often forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is quite impossible. I must die to be better. I cannot write any more."

A 10 year old boy wrote the following letter to his mom and dad. It says, "Dear Mom and Dad, I love you. Please tell my teacher that I cannot take it any more. I quit. Please do not take me to school any more. Please help me. I will run away, so do not stop me. I will kill myself, so do not look for me because I will be dead. I love you. I will always love you. Remember me. Help me. Love, Justin."

A 10 year old boy who wanted to end his life because of the tremendous despair, the tremendous pressure that he felt. Why? What happens for people to bring them to the point where they want to end it all? Suicide is not an illness as some of us want to believe. Suicide is a way of coping with the despair, with the stresses that we face in our daily lives. Some of us choose to try to cope by talking to others. Some of us choose to cope by drinking, by consuming drugs. Some of us try to cope with becoming involved in crime, theft. Some of us try to cope by trying suicide because that is the last one. That is the final one. There is no survival. It is a way to end it all.

Reasons For Suicide

You see, some people want to end it because of despair. Other people want to get back at others. They feel that the person that they have become close to, the person that they love, no longer loves them and they cannot stand it any more and they want to get back at them. Sometimes I hear young people talk about, "My parents do not understand. My parents do not like me. Nobody likes me and I am going to show them how much they have hurt me by killing myself." So it is like revenge. Sometimes young people use suicide in order to manipulate you to help them in some way. Indeed it is a cry for help. They are saying like young 10 year old Justin, "Help me, please. Help me. I cannot take it any more." Sometimes young people will take their life because they want to be with someone that they love dearly but is now dead.

A young native girl that I had contact with had her mother pass away. She loved her mother. She did not want to be without her mother and a few months later consumed a lot of alcohol and froze to death in the middle of winter to be with her mother. So you see, suicide can occur because of despair, because of revenge in order to get something like love from somebody else and sometimes just to join with a lost one. But all of those methods are used to cope with the stress that all of these young people and sometimes older people are facing.

How big is the problem? The problem when we look at completed suicide may not be as great as we sometimes think. When I look at the province of Alberta, something like 35 or 40 young people committed suicide. That is not a lot in a population of two million and some. On the other hand, every young person's loss of life is a tragedy; they have a whole life to live in front of them yet and they choose to end it. So completed suicide is a tragedy and it is a problem.

Suicidal Behaviour

But you know, for me a bigger problem is that of suicidal behaviour. When I think about suicidal behaviour I am talking about attempted suicide. I am thinking of planning how one is going to commit suicide. I am thinking about just having ideas about suicide. Those are all different types or different levels of suicidal behaviour. That, ladies and gentlemen, is a much bigger problem and I will tell you why. In some research that was published in the US, the investigators found that one out of every 10 high school students admitted to attempting suicide at some time in their life. Ten per cent of normal high school students between the ages of 15 and 19 said they attempted suicide. If your child is in a classroom of 30 children or 30 students, that means three of those 30 students have attempted suicide.

Twenty five per cent of normal high school students have attempted suicide or have planned exactly how they are going to do it. Approximately 63 per cent of normal high school students have either attempted suicide, planned their suicide or have flirted with the idea of suicide. Sixty three per cent. I do not believe that it is any different here in the North than it is in the US. I believe that our young people are thinking about suicide. Why? What brings them to the point where they see suicide as the only choice to make?

Learning To Cope

Let me suggest several reasons. I indicated to you before that suicide is a coping behaviour. Where do we learn how to cope? Well, if you are like me, the best place that I learned my coping behaviours is from my parents; from the early social environment in which I lived. My family was important to me. My parents taught me to talk about some problems. My parents taught me how to be angry in the way that it was okay to be angry. You see, when you look at young people who commit suicide, very often they come from families where -- not all kids, not all young people but many young people who commit suicide -- come from families that are disorganized; families that have difficulty with children. There is a lot of conflict between the parents and the children. They come from families that model poor coping behaviours. Parents may be drinking a lot. That is how they drown their sorrows or they take lots of pills or drugs and that is how they cope. So what do the children do but learn to cope in that way?

The School

The school. The school is another part of that early social environment that puts a lot of pressure on kids nowadays. This 10 year old boy. What did he say? "Tell my teacher I quit. I cannot take it any more." Many of us put a lot of pressure on our children and our young people to perform well in school and some pressure to perform well is not bad. But I wonder sometimes if we put too much pressure on.

You know, one of the things that I have been thinking about recently is, how relevant is school to our young people? We sometimes make our schools irrelevant. We sometimes make our children take classes that do not do anything for them. I will give you an example. Here in the North, and I do not know the North well and I admit to that, but here in the North one of the things that I hear people talking about is that not a lot of young people finish grade 12. A lot of them drop out in grade seven, grade eight, grade nine, somewhere in there. A number of the young people in the small communities wander the streets because they are not in school. They do not think it is very important.

I also hear sometimes parents saying, "Our old traditional ways do not work. I mean we try to teach our old traditional ways to our young people but they reject them." And our young people say, "My parents' ways do not work for me any more. We have to make our own ways." Some of that is true, you know, but let me tell you, how do you make school relevant? I will give you an example or an idea.

Some of you who still are able to eat from the land, that is, you go on the caribou hunt, the seal hunt, the whale hunt, do your boys come with you? Would that not be a wonderful class to take in school when you take your boys out of school for several weeks, I do not know how long, and they come with you and go on the hunts so they learn some of the old traditional ways? Does that not give you an opportunity to talk to your boys, and your boys to talk to you?

What about the girls? I am sure that there are some things that girls do with their mothers in the old ways. Is that not what we should be teaching in schools sometimes, so you build a sense of community? Sometimes we put too much pressure on the kids to read, write and do arithmetic, and they cannot do it. I think of ways in which we can build parent-child relationships. That is suicide prevention, and I will talk more about that a little bit later. I think our culture sometimes gets in the way. I think sometimes our culture can also help us cope, and we need to think about ways in which we can make our culture meaningful to our young people so that they can cope appropriately; not inappropriately.

Why else do young people think about killing themselves? I think there is a societal problem. Part of the societal problem is that of unemployment. There is a lot of unemployment. How do people feel that they live a meaningful life? They cannot. That is not true. Some young people leave the community and they go into the white world and they get a job and they make some money, and they become successful. Then they feel lonely and want to come back. They come back to our communities, and when they come back to our communities we do not accept them. Do you know why? Because they are successful, and we have not seen that kind of success and we do not know what to do with that. The young people say, "I do not even fit here any more." So, what do they do? They want to go back to the white world, but the white world does not accept them either. The colour of their skin is wrong; the way they talk is wrong; but the community does not accept them either. They are successful, and guess what? They suicide. That is another possibility.

I think we have taken away some kind of power and authority from young people. They no longer have a say. We seem to make all the decisions for them without ever asking them. I think what a marvellous opportunity we have sometimes to go and talk to our young people and say, "What is happening?" To talk to our young people in the boarding schools and say, "There are some problems in residences; what is happening?" We need to talk; then you will find out some of the problems that the young people are facing.

What can we do with regard to all of this? What can we do with the problem of suicide that exists in our communities? Let me tell you in principle. I cannot tell you what is going to work in your own individual communities. I am a Southerner, so-called, even though I live in northern Alberta, or central Alberta; but I am considered by you, I think, as a Southerner. I do not know what works in your community, I have not been there; but I think I know some of the principles that we need to think about. You, together with the people around you, need to develop plans as to how this might work in your community.

Mental Health Promotion

Let me start off. Firstly, I believe very strongly in the fact that we need to do -- and here I will use a technical word or series of words -- we need to do mental health promotion. What I mean by mental health promotion is to help our young people develop coping skills so that they can achieve what they want to achieve; so that they can realize their aspirations; so that they can change their environment to meet their goals for life. Mental health promotion means education; it means recreation; it means helping fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, work together.

Prevention

Secondly -- and there are lots of things I can say about each of these but I will just give you a general overview. The second one is prevention. Prevention means to identify those who are high risk for suicide, and then to do something to keep them from ever engaging in suicidal behaviour. In some of the reports that were tabled in the Assembly several weeks ago, I think there was some information which suggested that approximately 53 per cent of those who committed suicide are Inuit. Inuit young men, not old men, not old women -- young men. Do you know why? Do you know why young men are committing suicide, who are Inuit; why that number is greater than the Indian, the Metis, the white? It is the Inuit that are high risk. Why? I do not know -- do not look at me because I am not knowledgeable -- but I will tell you something.

I think in order to do prevention you need to identify who is at risk, and then you need to engage in some activity which will keep them from ever engaging in suicidal behaviour. That is what prevention is.

Early Identification And Intervention

Thirdly, we need to do early identification and intervention. Early identification means this. We need to learn how to identify the person who is potentially suicidal. We need to learn what the signs and symptoms are of the person who is in trouble. We then need to know how to intervene, how to provide caring, how to stop the person from taking the next step of pulling the trigger or swallowing the pills, or cutting the hole in the ice and jumping in. We need to learn how to care.

Professional Treatment

Fourthly, we need to provide treatment. Treatment sometimes smacks of professionals, and I think sometimes we need professional treatment. We need treatment provided by the professionals, and I am thinking of the mental health workers, I am thinking of the nurses and the physicians, and I am thinking of the alcohol and drug abuse councillors, I am thinking about public health personnel, and so on. Sometimes treatment comes from the people in our communities who are the natural care-givers.

When I work in Indian communities in Alberta, one of the questions I always ask is, "Can you tell me who the people are in your community that you turn to when you need help? I do not mean those professional people. Who do you turn to?" There are always two or three people that they name. Those people also provide treatment; not in the professional sense, but in the cultural way, by telling stories, by providing assistance, by caring. Treatment is important.

Bereavement Counselling

Lastly, I think bereavement counselling is very important. There is no tragedy that I am aware of that is so devastating, so traumatic, as the loss of a son or a daughter, a husband or a wife, a mother, a father, from suicide. Not only do the people suffer from a sudden death, not only do they suffer a loss, the loss of someone that they have shared a life with, but they suffer the stigma associated with suicide, that other people think, "I wonder what is wrong with that family that their son committed suicide or daughter committed suicide." I think that for a suicide prevention program we need to do something for those who are survivors. We need to provide counselling. We need to provide support, caring for them. Some of the people who are at highest risk for suicide are those who survive a suicide. When a son or a daughter commits suicide, or a mother or father commits suicide, other members of the family are automatically at higher risk for suicide. And we as a community need to care for that family. We as a community need to care for the friends of that young person or that parent. We as a community need to engage in providing that kind of bereavement support to those who are survivors. If you think of those areas as the top of the table you need legs for the table. You need underlying support for those kinds of services if you will.

Areas Of Support

For me, there are four supports, four legs to that table which I would like to share with you. The first one is education. I am convinced that if we educate people about suicide and that we educate people about the warning signs of the person who is in trouble we will save lives. But that means we need to do community workshops, does it not? It means to go into our communities and to tell people about suicide; to tell people about what the signs and symptoms are of the person in trouble. We need to educate them. But you know we need to do something else and this is the second leg.

Not only do you need to educate people so that they can identify early the potential suicide but we need to provide training to the people who are the care givers. And when I talk about training, I am talking about a very specific suicide prevention training for the professional care givers and for those people in the communities who are natural care givers. I work with a lot of natural care givers and they often tell me, "You know, when somebody comes to me and tells me they are suicidal, I get really scared. I do not know what to do. Sure people come to me and tell me their problems and I think I help them but when they are suicidal, I get scared. I do not know. I do not want to say the wrong thing." That is where training comes in because I believe that we can train the professional people as well as the natural care givers so that they can intervene and save a life.

There is a third part, a third leg to that table and it is called information. Information about suicide. Well, we need to educate, true. We need to train people, but we also need to provide information. Information by way of brochures; information by word of mouth; information through our media, both the print media and the electronic media. I daresay, ladies and gentlemen, what you are doing and engaging in today is information. Not only are you obtaining some information but through the media we are giving information to people about suicide and about suicide prevention and that is important.

There is a fourth leg which keeps the table stable and that is research. Research is sometimes frowned upon by a variety of people, both in the South and in the North. We have been researched to death. But let me suggest something to you; that we do not know very much about suicide among the Inuit young men. I told you that before. I do not know. I have seen no research that has been done on that.

In a community in the North called Broughton Island there were a series of suicides several years ago. Do you know why? Do you know what was happening? Do you know what the families experienced? Do you know how we could have been better care givers in that community when all of that tragedy occurred? I do not.

There is an opportunity for us to learn about a community which might be applicable to other communities when we do research. I am not talking about experimental research. I am not talking about all of these things that sometimes scare us. I am talking about going in and talking to people and engaging in a conversation with people. Oh yes, it is important to collect some numbers every once in a while but we need to talk. I as a white person who does not know your language or languages, I cannot do that kind of research but there are people who do know your languages. There are people who can be trained to do that kind of research and I think that is important because that will help us to do suicide prevention. Well, does this ever work?

Example Of Community Suicide Prevention Program

What I would like to do is spend just a few moments describing to you what a community suicide prevention program might look like. This is not a program that will necessarily work exactly in the same way in your communities, no, but it is an example. It might give you some ideas.

First of all before I describe this program let me share a value with you. It is a value that I hold very dear to my heart. It is like this. Suicide is a community problem. It affects the whole community. In order to prevent suicide it is the community that has to do it. Okay? One person cannot do it. One person, the professional white person from somewhere else cannot come in and do suicide prevention and you will see it all disappear. Sorry, it does not work that way. The value that I place on the community is very high because it becomes a community program.

We have such programs in Alberta. They are called community interagency suicide prevention programs. If you want to think about it in a picture think about it as a wheel. Right in the center of that wheel is the hub. In that center is what I will call co-ordination. Probably the most fundamental step in doing suicide prevention in the community is that you have to be able to co-ordinate the caring. Out of that co-ordination comes several very important functions.

First of all, public education, educating the public. How do you do public education? You can do it through the media, you can do it by talking to people, you can do it in the schools through a health curriculum, you can do it by educating the teachers about suicide. Public education is big, and that is one part. Suicide prevention training -- I have already talked about these things -- is another part.

Befriending, a big word, what it means is caring for somebody. Setting up a group of people who can care when there is a problem. I will give you an example. I have been in a situation where a father finds out that his son has committed suicide. I told him. Then he said, and he was shocked, "I want to go and see my son's body." I said, "Okay, let us go." And he said, "Will you come with me?" And I did. The experience I had with a father viewing the body of his son is one that I will never forget because of the cries of anguish, the cries of pain, the cries that went something like, "Did you not know I loved you?", rang through the room. Do you know what was beautiful about that is that there were people around him who cared; this is called befriending. In our communities, when there is a suicide, we need to befriend, we need to care, so that the person can cry and the person can scream out in anguish and in anger, and in love. Because that is suicide prevention. It is called befriending.

We also have outreach, some kind of outreach program. Do you know what it is like to ride in an ambulance, whether it is an air ambulance or an ambulance on the road, when your son or your daughter is lying there? They have done something to their bodies to commit suicide, and you are scared, you do not know what is going to happen. Would it not be wonderful to have somebody with you that you could talk to? That is called outreach. Do you know what it is like for a young Inuit, Indian, Metis boy to suddenly be picked up by the police and be put in jail, how scary that is? One of the highest risk times for suicide is in the first 24 to 48 hours of incarceration. In a program down in the United States, because suicide was so high amongst the Indian and Metis people after being arrested and put in jail, the Indian people decided that they would put an elder into jail with the young person. The elder literally came and slept in the cell with that young person so that he had somebody to talk to -- that is called befriending -- it is called outreach. The last part of that community interagency program is bereavement,

bereavement support, caring, what have you. That is critical. I can talk about each of these in a whole lot more detail, but I do not want to prevent you from discussing this issue of suicide and perhaps asking questions that I might be able to shed some light on.

Symbols Of Suicide Prevention

But, in conclusion, for this part, I want to leave you with five native symbols which come from an Indian culture that have become very meaningful to me. In these symbols I see a lot of suicide prevention. Allow me to share these with you.

The first symbol I want to give you is the rock, because the rock symbolizes faith. Faith in myself. Faith in other people. Faith in the Creator. We need the faith, we need the rock, in order to give us support. We talked about outreach, we talked about bereavement; what do you think the rock symbolizes?

Allow me to share with you another symbol, the second, and that is water. Water has meanings for people and it symbolizes many different things. Water cleanses the earth. The rain falls and it cleanses us, the earth. Tears fall from the eyes and our tears cleanse our souls. To weep for our young people, to shed tears for those who commit suicide, cleanses our souls, cleanses our spirit, and moves us to greater caring, loving, sharing and smiling -- concepts that Mr. Ernerk used recently. I have thought about those in terms of the cleansing of the tears, of the water.

A third symbol is something that I do not believe grows in the North, but it grows in Alberta and other Prairie provinces, and it is called sweetgrass. Sweetgrass is a symbol for kindness. Kindness to my body, kindness to my mind, kindness to my spirit, kindness to others. A very important ceremony that is performed amongst the Indian people is called the sweetgrass ceremony. The sweetgrass is braided, it takes three strands for a braid, does it not? Those three strands symbolize the body, the mind and the spirit, and they are tied together. We cannot separate those. To do suicide prevention means for us to deal with the body, the mind and the spirit. You cannot deal with them separately, but in an integrated way. I believe through the integration of body, mind and spirit, the world can become a better place to live in. When the world becomes a better place to live in, suicides will be prevented.

The fourth symbol I want to leave with you is the leather pouch. Leather symbolizes or represents nourishment, food for the body, food for the mind and food for the spirit. Part of suicide prevention is providing food, providing nourishment. It is providing us with the ability to recognize someone who is potentially suicidal. It is providing us with the ability to intervene and to care. The pouch is like a basket that holds something. The pouch is the community that cares and supports one another -- very important in suicide prevention.

Lastly, I want to leave you with four ribbons. Four ribbons that are red, white, black and yellow. They symbolize the four corners of the earth, they symbolize the four colours of human kind. They are the colours of the people of this earth. You see, suicide is not one person's responsibility. It is not one white person's responsibility. It is the responsibility of the community and sometimes it is the small community. Sometimes it is the larger community working together. White and black, yellow and red. All the peoples of this earth must work together in order to prevent suicide.

When we go out into this world, I believe that it is best to hold hands and stick together. I believe that is our challenge. We need to think about mental health promotion, prevention, early identification and intervention, treatment, bereavement. We need to think about education and training and information and research. If we do all of that we will prevent suicide. We need to do it by sticking together and holding hands. Thank you very much.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you very much, Dr. Dyck. Before I call various Members to make their Members' statements, the Chair would like to recognize Chief Felix Lockhart of Snowdrift,

Chief Jerry Paulette of Fort Fitzgerald, Donat Milortok, president of TFN and Ollie Ittinuar of the Inuit Cultural Institute, and I believe there are 12 members of the board of management for drug and alcohol services also in the gallery. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Members' comments. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Mr. Arlooktoo's Comments On Suicide

MR. ARLOOKTOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy with Dr. Dyck's presentation. I am very happy also that some of my fellow Inuit are in the gallery especially the Inuit Cultural Institute staff and also the people from the Eastern Arctic sitting in the gallery.

I recognize some of the things that Dr. Dyck was talking to us about and we have been dealing with these in our communities. I know that we have learned more about what we should do in our communities from his presentation. When there is a suicide in your own community it is very hard on the people locally, especially in the smaller communities, especially for the parents. We feel for them. We have sympathy for them. Following our faith and our religion we help out the families. Some of the words that he said to me, I know I will take back to my community and tell my constituents about what you were saying to us earlier.

In the past 10 years, in between the 10 years during the Legislative Assembly there have been eight suicides to date and I know this is a very hard issue to deal with especially when there is a suicide among your relatives. I know that some of the people are listening to us out in the North through the radios. I would like to support them in being joyful in hearing this presentation.

Major Concerns In Communities

Some of the concerns from my constituents, I will bring up to you, the major concerns. They think these are the major problems among the young people, that arise in the North. When the young people are waiting to be tried in the courts they wait a long time before they appear and they get very anxious about waiting to appear in the courts. Secondly, the major problem also is the drugs. This has destroyed the lives of our young people. They destroy their lives with it. The elder people advise the younger people and help them out; this would prevent the suicide among the young people.

Perhaps if the parents could take the young men out on their hunts and take them out travelling in the inland. Also this is my biggest concern, I think our young people are doing anything they want to in the communities and we spoil them too much in giving to them; when they ask for money we give it to them. I think we do not discipline them enough. I would like to tell the other people that are here today, I would like to advise the parents, starting now let us start preventing suicide in the North, in our communities. Let us help our young people to have a closer family relationship, help them out in their lives and discipline them and advise them when they do things that do not please the parents. Let us try not to destroy the minds of the young people also. Advise them properly and be happy with our children.

One major concern or idea that I have and I wanted to bring it out is maybe the Legislative Assembly should produce or publish a book that could be an information item to the people about suicide in the North and how to prevent suicides in the northern communities. I am aware we have some of these booklets in our communities. We elders in the community produced a booklet. We have the Bible to follow to live a better life. This is our book, the golden rule we have. Today I know the young people are not reading the Bible regularly. For myself, I know, if I commit suicide, I do not know where I will go. Because the young people do not know the Ten Commandments, therefore they do not know anything about it. I would like the Legislative Assembly to form some kind of a book that would be pertaining to the young people to prevent suicides.

Perhaps we could get some kind of co-ordinator in our communities that would assist us in prevention of suicides, to work with the local people. Maybe an elder to work with the young people in the community. I think if we start doing that, things will improve in our communities.

As was mentioned, we have to start holding hands with our young people and help them out in their daily lives. I wanted to bring this out to you and I know other Members would like to speak out on suicide prevention. I have said in the past that I wanted to discuss this in the Assembly, and I was hesitant that this might not be discussed, but I am very happy we had the opportunity today to talk about it. I would like to see this improve in the near future, concerning suicides in the North. Thank you.

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

Mr. Ernerk's Comments On Suicide

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (Translation) When we are discussing this issue it touches all of us and it is very difficult to deal with. There has to be a solution to it when we are thinking about our future. (Translation ends) I would like to indicate to this House to begin with, that I was very much touched by Dr. Dyck's statements this afternoon. (Translation) If we are going to prevent suicide, it touches everyone, it is everyone's responsibility. I would like to talk about this first of all, Mr. Chairman. I think we will be discussing this further, so I will make it brief. (Translation ends)

Members of the Legislative Assembly and ladies and gentlemen. I thank you for the opportunity to further comment on this matter of suicide and the mental health of our northern people. We Inuit have gone through tremendous and technological change. Our personal and social strengths have been, and continue to be, taxed to the limit. Some of this limit is seen as our people opting out of the future and choosing suicide rather than survival. (Translation) Mr. Chairman, the youth of the NWT are our future. We will depend on them to take us to the next generation. We have to help our youth to get them ready to take on the challenge of leadership. They will know the technical things and they will be aware of them. We have to have strong leadership because they have to take us to the next generation. (Translation ends)

To carry out this responsibility, we must give the youth the tools necessary to do the job. The infrastructure must offer the right education to prepare young people for jobs. There must be jobs available for our young people and the support required to allow access to these jobs. We, as parents, must offer them models of discipline and courage to assist our young people to move through the education and employment fields. We have always done these things but now we must do more of them. We must also use our new resources in the mental health area to seek out solutions in each community, to find ways of solving our problems at home and with our people. We must find ways today, as we did yesterday, to have our elders work with the professionals and the young people to find solutions to this hopelessness experienced by some of our youth. For our part, Mr. Chairman, as politicians, we must begin to have more caring and less hatred. Our Inuit culture dictates sharing. We must begin to show this. As residents of the NWT what we need to reestablish in our set of principles is that we have to have more sharing, more caring, more love and communication, more shaking hands and a hug and more smiling.

(Translation) Mr. Chairman, we cannot go back to the past but the life that we had, our culture, our tradition, if we take more of that, our future would be better, as if it was shining. It would be better for the young people of our future. It is not impossible to get that established. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lewis's Comments On Suicide

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I lived in the Eastern Arctic many, many years ago and I know many of the young people that I knew when they were young are no longer with us. For that reason I want to say a few things today. I do not belong to any established church, but I believe that the life that we have is a gift from God. I do not believe in capital punishment. I do not believe in destroying human life. When a person commits suicide he throws the most valuable gift we can imagine, back into the face of God. Our young people are committing suicide at a very alarming rate and they are doing so for many reasons, some of which are very difficult for many of us older people to understand. Dr. Dyck has explained many of these reasons to us and there may be many more. To me, Mr. Chairman, the moment of suicide means that a person has looked at his or her life and has seen no hope in the immediate future. At that moment they see no brightness ahead of them, and the solution of suicide seems so easy and so simple but it is a very lonely act, Mr. Chairman. It is a lonely act committed by desperately unhappy people at that particular moment.

Three years ago, Mr. Chairman, I wrote a play about a great Dene leader called Matonabbee who is the first recorded aboriginal person in Canada to have taken his own life. That was in 1782, more than 200 years ago when the contact between native and non-native people was just beginning to develop. In my opinion, Matonabbee committed suicide because he could not see beyond his temporary loss of power and prestige. If he had hung on to his life for just two more years he would have been once more a great northern chief and controller of the entire fur trade out of Hudson Bay. At his moment of suicide he saw no future for himself. He had no one to talk to. For many of our young people it is not a matter of waiting two years, Mr. Chairman. It may be just a matter of a few hours or even just a few minutes. Suicide is the moment of crisis; the moment of desperation for isolated, unhappy people.

Communication As An Aid In Suicide Prevention

The key to suicide prevention, Mr. Chairman, in our future for the long run is a strong economy and a meaningful place for young people in it. I am not just talking about money now. I mean a meaningful life in a territory which has a sound economic base; an economic future that they can see, which they could almost touch. Meanwhile, life has to go on, Mr. Chairman, and the key in my opinion is communication. I believe Dr. Dyck has touched on that issue in his presentation to us.

Many of us have watched movies where we have seen people standing ready to throw themselves off tall buildings and nearly always in that movie there is someone there ready to talk to them; to talk them out of doing what they planned to do. I agree with Dr. Dyck, Mr. Chairman, that our communities need to stick together on this whole issue of suicide. We should be on the lookout for the signs of suicide and as caring individuals we should dedicate ourselves to talking them through their crisis, just like someone who is out there talking that young man or woman out of jumping from the top of a tall building.

We have all had our deep depressions, Mr. Chairman. We have survived them all and we continue to enjoy being part of God's creation. All of us here know how we have survived our own personal crises. As leaders, it is now our duty to help our young people overcome theirs. There are huge challenges facing our north land, Mr. Chairman. We need our young people desperately so that we can help solve many of these challenges that face us. So I urge all people in their moments of desperation to do just two things: Pray to your Creator who gave you life and seek out another human being to talk to, to share your burden with. In this way you go beyond yourself, out of your person and you are not lonely and isolated any more. You have talked to your Creator and you have talked to another human being. Once the moment of crisis is over, the future suddenly looks very different. You regain hope and you value your life once again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Members' statement. Member for Natilikmiot. Mr. Angottitauruq.

Mr. Angottitauruq's Comments On Suicide

MR. ANGOTTITAUURUQ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would like to say a few words while we are on suicide. It is not an easy thing to talk about and I believe that is the only way to solve it for the future, to talk about it. If we say it is not an easy thing to talk about, it will not go anywhere. We have to talk about it. That is part of the communication. The communication is a good thing and it usually ends with good results, when you communicate in any way, any shape or form.

I guess first of all I would like to say being an Inuk native I have seen some changes. I have lived only 37 years and I have seen a lot of changes in the NWT. I never went to school until I was eight years old. In between that time before I was eight years old, I was travelling from place to place living the old style; living in an igloo; living off the land; watching my father and mother do the living off the land. Then from eight years old when I went to school I did not know how to say yes or no, when I was brought into a residential school. The only contact I really had with the white people in between, from one year, or I guess from the day of birth until I could remember, until I was eight years old was one priest alone that I used to see as a different culture.

People at that time were much more actively gathering to churches. Being a Roman Catholic I used to have to go to church every morning at 7:00 o'clock to hear good teaching about a good life in the future, for the present and in the future. What I am saying is our young people are facing a dramatic change in such a hurry today without really being told what would happen in the future if you take on a new system. Well, many of us we watched caveman movies and a lot of times they do not know how to communicate even to each other; they just make signs.

Today, I guess many of us natives have two languages. The true meaning of the goal of the other language is, I believe, not really given solidly to some young people. When we talk about school and training -- I remember after going to school, when I started having my own family, I said to myself, "I have to continue going to school so I can provide for my children." I said to myself, "now with this new system of today and with all kinds of other problems such as prices of fur going down" -- I actually tried as a trapper and made out okay for one year. The next year when the prices went down it was impossible with a snowmobile. If I had had dogs it would have been easier because my dogs would not have consumed as much as the price of gas.

I went back to a wage job and I took a number of training courses to prepare myself for today so my family could survive, to put bread on the table. When I took training, I took training in Victoria and Chilliwack. Coming back to a small community, it was almost completely impossible to carry on my work, because there was no proper equipment in the community. What I had learned I could not really carry out.

Communication Needed For Solving Problems

We are just getting to a system of really civilizing the North as of now. It has been thought that it has been civilized for a long time, but in the small communities there are many things that are missing. We need to communicate with our elders, with our parents, with the young people. We need to talk together to solve these problems.

In some communities these days we do not really use a system of religion, as it used to be. There are many factors for people to commit suicide. Many would have many different excuses.

I will tell a little story again about myself when I had to get married, when I was 17 and I was not ready to get married. I was forced by my parents to get married to a girl who I did not want to marry. If I had followed my parents' goal, I do not think I would have been married today, but I got married to the one I wanted to, with great difficulty. Now I am happy -- I have been married for over 16 years -- and I am not prepared to get another wife. I guess the system today is that some people just live with anyone they want to and they say, "Let us not get married, let us not

have a ceremony in church." They agree that if they have problems they can just leave each other and find another better husband or wife.

What I am saying is that the church has to be involved, and they are one of the top ones that should talk to the young people. I understand. While going to school, when we took catechism after school, we were told to go to church to get lessons. That, in some small communities, is not being carried on. They look more toward government advice. When they say, "Ask for the government expert to advise you on your problems", it should have been elders who are not even involved with government, who are not paid by government to do government work -- they should be involved when there is a problem with someone in a small community, or in any community.

When a social worker or a mental health worker is advising a person who has some problems, they should at least have the parents, and even elders, present there to talk to these people. This problem of suicide requires everyone's effort, from young to old, to find the answers; to make these young people think that -- we are talking mainly about native people because they are the majority who commit suicide. If the community gets involved, and everybody talks about it, I believe that these young people, or anybody -- it does not really mean that only young people are committing suicide, there are all kinds of age groups.

Message To Be Given

I believe the message we should try to give these people is that if you are going through rough water, and sometimes you lose hope. "How can I pass through this rough water because the land is so far?" But you continue on, seeking smoother water. When you get to the smooth water, or get close to the land, you are safe. It is the same when you are travelling on rough terrain, with rocks on it. If you want to take a shortcut and you are running out of gas in your snowmobile, but you have to make it to one point from another point, and you have an obstacle in between, you get worried for a moment; but then again you look for a better path to go along. When you look for a better path you may be satisfied that you did not break your snowmobile or whatever you are travelling with, because you went around, and you seek a way to go around it; and you happened to have enough gas left over to get to where you are going. It is the same with rough ice.

The message we should give people who want to commit suicide is that we could try to say to them, "If there is a will, there is a way; without a will you cannot find a way to do things." The question would be, how can we do it? If we want to do it, how to deal with it, to find out problems about it -- it is the community concerned. The community has to be involved. It has to be open to everybody, not just try to solve it in a back room. Be open about it. That is my thinking to solve some major problems is to be open about your problems and their problems. Another person can advise you, if you have a problem, maybe if you do it his way. I think that is the good route, to be open.

Mr. Chairman, at this moment I do not have any other comments. I am sure we are going to still listen to other Members talking about this so I will leave it at this for now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Member for High Arctic. Mr. Pudluk.

Mr. Pudluk's Comments On Suicide

MR. PUDLUK: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the doctor for his presentation to the Members and for highlighting some of the problems and topics on suicide he discussed. We can talk about a lot of things, discussing suicide among young people. We have been thinking about this for a long time and trying to determine why young people commit suicide. I am very happy to be able to discuss it today. I do not think we are going to solve any problems today on suicide but I am sorry for those people who have committed suicide in the past, especially those young men, who are the majority in our region who have committed suicide. I sympathize with those family members that were left behind. We know for sure we are going

to be expecting more suicides in the future. I think we have to come out in the open and talk about and discuss it; how to resolve it, on suicide prevention.

I, myself, tried to revive a person who committed suicide, who had hanged himself. It was very hard for me to try and revive the person. I was not really thinking about the person who committed suicide, it was the parents that I was really thinking about. It was really hard for me to think about the family members. I really wanted to revive the person for the sake of the family who would be bereaved. It was impossible. The person died very quickly.

You start really caring for the family members when something like this happens. We should not be the only ones discussing this; not only in this House. There are other organizations, other leaders who should be supporting us in this. We know that we are not the only ones that will be listened to. There are other organizations and groups that will be able to support us. We do not know for sure who is going to be committing suicide. We cannot pinpoint a person just like that. I have been a Member since 1975 and this is one area that I have been stressing, is to have a community centre, a gymnasium, recreation for young people so that they can have some place to go to for recreation and to have a good time.

Open Discussion Needed

Looking at these from 1978 to 1988, it has been about 10 years there have been quite a lot of suicides, looking at the numbers. There are still some suicides and we know the number is not going down. This has really not been discussed in the open, the topic of suicide, in sessions or meetings. This is one of the first. I think we are really going to have to deal with this and discuss this out in the open in the near future.

For example, where those young people usually go, such as in the schools, as young people usually go to school, I think it should be taught. They should educate the children on how bad suicide is. I think the church people, laymen or ministers should be able to discuss this more. For example, Joe Arlooktoo was mentioning earlier that the Testament is not read too often nowadays by young people. I think that we should let them know and advise them what the situation would be after committing suicide. I think we are going to have to come up with committees that would be visiting the communities, who will be trying to help and resolve this problem. Also, the parents or the leaders of education, social services, health and welfare should join together and discuss this amongst each other to try and come up with some ways to resolve the problems that we have with suicide. There are quite a number who have committed suicide.

I would like to say something that I have thought about for a long time. There were some discussions already in areas of why people commit suicide. A while ago I was poor when I was growing up. I was thinking we were very poor and we hardly had anything to eat, so it was really hard for us. I used to wonder if we were going to have something tomorrow. For example, if I do not have the food today, will I make it tomorrow? That was really hard for us.

Different Lifestyle Has Created Problems

It is not the same today. It is a different lifestyle now, and even though it is a lot easier, there are more problems. There is various legislation in place. We do not really understand it all. We think that if we do something, maybe we will break the law. This is one thing that we think about. Having to go to court -- waiting to go to court can really harm a person's way of thinking -- and it will change that person.

Social Services has legislation in place that the child can be taken away from the parents, when they are at a very young age. What happens to that person who is taken away from their parents? Who does that child think are his parents? Even when they are older, does that make them feel any better, when they are taken away from their parents?

There is a shelter for battered women in Iqaluit, when there is spousal assault going on in the family. This has no bearing on Inuit life at all. It is not like the old culture. It is breaking down

the Inuit culture. Maybe it would be better that they should not have the women sent to the shelter from the communities. Maybe they should be dealt with in the community; perhaps have some elders to help them out. If that is impossible, then maybe they can have them sent to the shelter. I have spoken a few times to people who have had their wives sent to another community. They are very hurt. Also, their children are very hurt. There seems to be a lot of things that cause problems, and we cannot see all of them.

Looking back at young men that have committed suicide, I think they have been very lonely, even though today life has been easier for them. Kabloona have come here to our land from down south. They get married to Inuit women and there is a small number of women left for the Inuit men, especially in the smaller communities. In the bigger communities, it is not so visible, but in the smaller communities you can really notice it. They are very lonely. There are lot of problems, but I have thought to myself for quite a while, "Why do they commit suicide?" I think we will have a chance to speak later on. I will finish for now, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Are there any further Members' statements? Mr. Whitford.

Mr. Whitford's Comments On Suicide

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Dyck for his very soul-searching look at a very serious problem. A problem which inevitably affects each and every one of us in our lifetime, and for those who have not yet been affected, it is almost a certainty that in the very near future they will, in some way or other.

Having been a coroner for a short time, I have had the unpleasant duty to officiate and investigate at least three deaths of young men in this city, and of a 12 year old boy who took his own life. Even as far back as my pre-teens, Mr. Chairman, I had contact with persons who have had the occasion to take their life. I did not know why then, and I still do not know why to this day.

Maybe our modern way of life and our social mores make death, to our young people, a solution to world problems; an immediate but final solution. Perhaps we glamorize death too much and we downplay it in our modern songs, television videos, movies. In television programs now, the bloodiest scenes imaginable can be done in the most glamorous ways. We have taken reality out of death. We have made it something that is a trivial thing. Just ask any coroner what death from a suicide looks like. I think young people should be made, somehow or other, aware of the reality and the finality of death.

These are my opinions, of course, but I sometimes see young people using suicide too lightly. They do this to attract attention, sometimes, to trivial things. The young lad that I spoke of, who threatened his parents because they would not let him play out late in the evening. He said, "I am going to go and hang myself." He went outside, put a rope around his neck, misjudged the distance, and he did kill himself. He did not intend to, but that is what happened. He was using this as a way of getting at somebody. This is only one case.

Sometimes people do intend to do exactly what they attempt to do. Some years ago, while attending university, I worked with a young native girl. She was suicidal, and she had tried a number of times to end her life and was stopped at the last minute. My practicum instructor and I worked with this person, trying to understand her problems and trying to assist her with solutions to these problems. She had no place to live; she had nobody to turn to; she had no job; no money; no place to stay. We found, through social programs, the basic necessities of life for her. We thought these were the solutions. We did what we were supposed to do, we thought. But we had missed a real problem and only now, years after, I see that she was alone; she was a native person and she was alone in a city full of people and she turned to the helping professions but somehow they missed that. That is one of the tragedies of my life.

Three weeks after we had found her this place to stay, and we thought things were on the road, she had succeeded in ending her life by jumping from the window of the very place that we had obtained for her. That troubled me for a long time. Had I done something wrong? Had we

missed something? Could we have done anything else? But in a way I kind of suspect that she had made the decision at some point in time that she was not going to continue living, in spite of what we did. Maybe there was a clue there. A certain peace had come over her after a period of time, that she decided that she was going to do what she was going to do, in spite of what we were attempting to do, and she succeeded.

No Set Patterns

I do not think that it is entirely an individual's problem. I have learned that there are no set patterns. I have looked for signs; I have tried to assist and in some cases they have been caught in time and people could help. We as parents and concerned citizens must do our part as individuals, but we must also support those groups who are working with people who seek help; groups like concerned doctors, social workers, school teachers, who may be the first to observe danger signs. But also we must work with groups like Help Line, Canadian Mental Health Association, other professional agencies who work to educate the groups in our community to work with people who have mental dilemmas, social dilemmas that they may not themselves be able to overcome. We have got to work with those groups to ensure that our community people are able to recognize how to identify people who are suicidal. In my opinion as well, we have to work with those groups because they do have the resources.

As individuals we can help by extending the hand of help but we as individuals cannot always continue to help. We have our lives to lead; we cannot be there continuously and therefore we have to at some point turn over that helping hand to those professionals who have the resources and have the experience.

In saying that, I would like to thank Dr. Dyck for extending his helping hand from the South to us, in attempting to find a solution here in the North. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. At this time the committee will recess for coffee.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): The committee will come back to order. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu. Mr. Kakfwi.

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi's Comments On Suicide

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to thank the doctor for his comments and his suggestions and insights into the whole social phenomenon of suicide amongst our young people. I particularly liked some of the comments he made, one of which is that traditional knowledge and values must be taught in the schools so that our elders and our community and our culture is seen by our own young people to be important and relevant by those people that run the schools.

Right now, while there are changes being made to curriculum, to the way that schools are run and managed, there is still a long way to go before that would be truly reflected to our young people in the schools. That the schools are still run by the government, run by people from outside, does not reflect much value and importance to the languages of our people. It does reflect the statements that we make that our history and our values and our culture are important to us.

It would seem to me that many of our young people have, by implication, probably a very strongly growing feeling that the language and the history and the culture, the elders, are not important. I strongly believe that parents must become more involved with young people, with the students in school. We also have to help parents learn how to be involved with their children and the Department of Education is now doing some work to come up with ways in which we can focus some of our energy on a parenting program; where the young parents, the native parents, the parents in our communities will have an opportunity and a way in which they can critique the ways in which they have been taught or not taught to be parents and to learn ways in which they can become better parents in a sense of knowing specific ways and means in which they can be supportive of their children in school; how they can help each other as group parents in supporting their children; how as parents they can become more involved with the school and how they can become involved and relate positively with their teachers and with the education authorities.

Native People Struggling Desperately

As a general comment, it is my view that all our native peoples today in the North are struggling in a very desperate way, in a very real way with massive change that has been coming at us at a rapid pace. We must ask the question if in fact our families are getting stronger, if there are more families getting drunk more often or if there are more families in the last, say, five years, that are getting sober and if there are real ways in which we are trying to do things like retain or learn our languages.

So someone sometime has to take a cultural social measuring stick and give a report card to the Dene and to the Metis and the Inuit and I think in very stark terms tell us whether we are socially disintegrating, culturally, as a people. We have, as some people say, come from a very traditional lifestyle into a full-blown, modern, industrial, urban lifestyle. How are we coping with it?

You can ask specialists or you can just look at it yourself. It would seem to me that many of our families are not doing so well, that it is all right for those of us that are involved in government and in education to find ways in which the education system can help to address some of the problems that we are having. In the schools themselves, for instance, there is a health program that was developed in the last couple of years which is taught from kindergarten to grade nine. It is a health program that is unique in this country. It has a major component in it that deals with things like alcoholism and substance abuse, stress, suicide and how children can begin trying to cope with the kinds of changes and the environment in which they live.

In high school grades we also have mandatory courses in career and life management programs which also are focussed on helping children learn how to relate to each other, relate to the

environment around them, the school authorities, their parents, their friends, and how to deal in a practical way with the stress of growing up as young people, sometimes in a community, in a family, in a time when nobody really seems to care.

We hope that there will be some training available to people that are working with students, like staff that run hostels and student residences, and that hopefully teachers will also have an opportunity to learn how to deal with alcoholism and the problems that will come from dysfunctional homes; children who are suffering from learning disabilities because of alcohol.

We want to find a way to help teachers cope with the real stress of being in an occupation that in many of our communities is highly demanding and absolutely having no positive feedback and very poor results. Somehow we have to help our teachers to deal with the stress of having to deal with students, amongst other things, and parents and, in fact, whole communities that are in large part suffering from major problems with alcohol.

Depressing To See Parents Drunk

From a young person's point of view I would suggest that it is probably depressing to see your parents drunk, your grandparents drunk and depressed and perhaps very difficult to cope with the fact that you never know what to expect from one day to the next. Sometimes you wake up and the world is okay. Sometimes you wake up and the whole place is upside down. Some days everybody is happy. Other days everybody is fighting. Other days people are talking. Other days nobody is talking to each other. I think it is depressing to see, it was for me, to see my friends neglected when we were growing up; to see my brothers and sisters neglected and cold and hungry sometimes; no fire in the house; no food. I think it is depressing for young people to see drunk people. It is upsetting to see drunk people all the time. Fighting, crying, being hurt, cut. I think it is depressing for the children.

It is also depressing for the parents. It is depressing for the friends and relatives. I think it is depressing to see the leaders in communities, and not only the elected ones, but the ones we all look up to, as you say, the caretakers and the people who could be caretakers, the people who could really be leaders in our communities falling down drunk on the weekends.

I think it is a real killer for children and young people not to be able to talk about it. When you go into a small community, even here in a place like this, it is very difficult to talk about the problems that we see with each other, particularly something like alcoholism. Because nobody wants to talk about it. The people that are suffering from it do not want to hear about it. The children pretend it is not happening. If you are a good friend of a person that drinks, you never bring it up.

That, I think, has to be addressed somehow because if the family is our strongest unit, if we are going to survive, our families have to get stronger. If our children are not talking and are afraid to talk to us, they are afraid to talk to each other and parents are not letting them talk and letting them talk about those things that they see wrong, then the family is disintegrating. More and more you get young people that are not able to talk, that are not willing to talk.

Good Things Happening

I think there are a lot of good things that could be said, as well, that in my view in many of the communities it is really enlightening and it is good, it makes me feel very good, to see the leaders that are sobering up, that are getting their lives back together, that are getting their families back together. You are seeing more and more people in the communities seeking treatment for alcoholism, for family violence. In a community like Fort Good Hope, for instance, where I think as early as 1975 or so, 1976, there were only two people that I know had gone for treatment for alcoholism. Today it has grown to about 50 or 60 people and these people are showing the rest

of the community that it is a good way to live and that is the normal way to live; that there are ways in which you can live without drinking and be incredibly happy. This is very difficult for some people to see but I think the role models that we need are materializing more and more.

There is a trend toward more and more of the communities and regions taking the responsibility for running the education, running the schools. There is a growing movement toward trying to provide more activities for our young people through recreational facilities and regional recreational programs. There are a lot more activities that are organized in the communities than there were in previous years. The little things like what Mr. Ernerk was talking about earlier, that in the Inuit culture and the Dene as well, learning to be close to each other.

To hug may have been something that my grandfather and my grandmother knew something about because the way I grew up, hugging and being physically close like that was something that I thought only grandmothers and drunk people did. It is not something that I grew up with and I must say that personally, it is just in the last few years, for instance, that I have learned, and I am trying to learn to be consistent about it, every time I go home, to hug my mother. I had never done it in my life. Only after I got married did I know about these things that you are supposed to feel. You are supposed to love your mother and be able to show it without being embarrassed about it.

Having kids is a real learning experience because once you start hugging them it is every day, every 15 minutes, every half hour and it is a good learning experience for someone like me because I never learned to do that. At the age of 39 I am still very inconsistent. Sometimes when I go home, sometimes I give my mother a hug, sometimes I do not. I know she gets very nervous when I come home because she never knows what I am going to do.

Alcoholism Breaking Up Families

I talked mostly here about alcoholism I guess because I think that is something that I see as a major social disruption in our families. More than anything else, the disease of alcoholism is breaking up our families. We are not getting stronger as families; more and more I am starting to realize that there is a real tragedy, for instance, when the father in the family of, say, five children is an alcoholic and does not want to get treatment; his wife is affected by his disease and so are all the children. You develop a family that has a severe handicap, and everybody props up the problem. By and large the children grow up ashamed of their families, ashamed of their father, ashamed of the things that go on. They are made to feel that they are not important, that they are only there to be raised -- to be fed and clothed -- and to stay out of the way. To ask for a little bit of time on the weekend, a little bit of attention from their family, is asking too much. It begins to get normal for children to take care of their father, or mother and father sometimes, for a whole weekend because that is when they get their days off.

I do not know that there is much more to be said, but I know that for myself, as a parent, I have to learn to spend more time with my children. I had to learn to give up drinking because I spent whole weekends away from them. My friends that I drank with became more important to me than my children. Friday night, Saturday night were for other people; they were not for my children; they were not for my family. They were to spend with other people, to get away from my children, to forget about them. As a parent, this is what I had to learn; if my children are important then they are the ones I spend my time with. It is not a great deal of time.

For instance, in a day, right from when I leave here until about 8:00 or 8:30 p.m., that is when I try to spend time with them. It is two and a half hours; it is not a great deal of time; but I do try to ask them every day what they have done with the day. With my older daughter, I ask her what she is doing the next day. When it comes time to think about little things -- it takes you half an hour to do dishes. I will say, "Leave them until later." Your kids are not going to thank you for doing dishes when they grow up, but they will thank you for leaving the dishes in order to spend time with them. That they will remember.

Talking With Children An Art

I think it is a real art, as well, to learn how to talk to children. I know if you have never talked to a child, then out of the blue you sit down and try to strike up a conversation, they freak out. They think you are really up to something. It is something you have to do every day. They also get very good at talking to you, telling you how they feel about different things. You have to do it with them every day.

I know there are a lot of things that as a parent I am still learning: how to read with them, to remember everything I say because they do not forget. The memory of children is just incredible.

A lot of us, myself included, have been raised in a community, in a family, that has been heavily affected by alcohol. One of the big things I know about myself, about the people I grew up with, the friends I grew up with, is this incredible inability to be consistent and to stick to commitments that we make. I think as children, it does not matter what you say, because your parents said a lot of things to you, and they do not even remember it. When they do, they are usually too sick to do the things they said they were going to do anyway. So they are always saying, "We will do it some other time." A lot of us, I think, and a lot of the children we have now, grew up with this handicap; they think commitments are not really commitments.

For me, it has been particularly difficult to deal with that. There is always the excuse that I am too tired, too busy, or something else came up. After a while, they do not listen any more. In my view, the amount of success we have with our children, the mental well-being of our children, it all rests with -- as the gentleman said -- promoting mental well-being, and it starts with the family. I think there is a tremendous amount of work to be done right there. It starts at home. The parents have to accept the fact that the problem is at home.

As a government and as leaders, I think we can accept responsibility for trying to take a society that is, in large part, crippled -- not really able by itself internally to fix itself. We have to provide some programs like workshops, treatment centres, training programs for alcohol and drug rehabilitation workers. We have to provide teachers with the knowledge and the information and the ability to deal with alcoholics, and children of alcoholics. We need to get people familiar with suicide and how to deal with it.

Generally, until we tackle the problem of fixing the families, and helping the parents learn to be stronger parents, parents that can function more and more independently, in my view we are going to have major difficulties with every aspect of our life -- with suicides, with health problems, with unemployment, with welfare, with just the total cultural disintegration of people. That is where we fix it.

More Of Us Must Tell It Like It Is

We do a lot of work on trying to create jobs, improving the transportation system, all these other things, but I think those are because a lot of us are optimists. We think people are going to somehow get stronger. I believe that people will get stronger, but I think they need a little bit of encouragement and somebody has to provide a clear picture of what is happening, and somebody has to stand up -- more of us have to stand up -- and tell it like it is. It is a difficult thing to do, but until somebody says, "There is a problem" and suggests some ways in which we can address it, we are not going to do anything about it.

I had a suicide in my own family as well a few years ago. I think it just happened that everybody in the family was just too busy, just struggling too much all by ourselves. We are spread out all over the country trying to cope, individually, with our own problems. One member of our family was left alone feeling forgotten and in a moment of anger and rage took a gun and shot himself. So it is always something that I feel strongly about but I do not spend a great deal of time talking about it. I do know my preoccupation is with trying to do something for the children that are a ways yet from becoming so depressed and so angry that they would contemplate suicide. I think

we have got to start well ahead of it. That is by addressing the little problems that a lot of our children have, which are the problems of the way that, as parents, we treat them, the way that we behave ourselves. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho, Mr. Kakfwi. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Nerysoo.

Mr. Nerysoo's Comments On Suicide

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that one of the things that is clear, Mr. Chairman, is that this issue that we are talking about today is not a matter that knows or understands colour or any human race in terms of its individual identity. It is simply a fact that it occurs all throughout the NWT and for that matter in every part of Canada. I think that sometimes maybe we have a tendency to try to find out what all the factors are that might lead people to wanting to commit suicide instead of recognizing the simple fact that we often forget to impress upon people the value of their life to their community, their family and just generally how important it is for them to play a significant role in maintaining and retaining families.

We always also forget that a lot of the kinds of questions and behaviours that sometimes result in suicides stem from things other than just only alcoholism and some of the poor social situations that people live in. They come from very simple things. Simple things like criticism, criticizing people for what they are not, as opposed to recognizing people for what they are and valuing their lives for that. We often do things like decide that anger is more important than compassion and understanding. We often forget that we have to provide support to people.

I think that in our situation right now probably we have forgotten about ourselves when we were young and about the need for the support of our families and the elders. We have forgotten the situations we have been put in. I think that in some ways it is a bad reflection upon us because we have become somewhat insensitive to the needs of young people because we have grown a bit older. What we talk about here are thoughts and are words that are really ours alone. In many respects the solutions that we are suggesting or ideas that we have are only ours and it is really important that we go and we ask young people for their ideas and their thoughts, that we go to the communities and ask their ideas and their thoughts about solutions, about how we can develop a stronger family unit and a stronger community, not only individual communities but the territorial community. Because we are so quick at trying to find ways of creating divisions; I say that in the context of saying I am an aboriginal person, you are not an aboriginal person. I have certain rights, you do not have certain rights.

Solutions That We Only Think Are Right

I think the important thing is to try to recognize as a Legislature and probably as individuals in this Legislature, we only have solutions that we think are right. That is the point I think that I want to make, that we think are right. They are not necessarily right but we think they are.

One of the important aspects, as well, is that probably we did not want to talk about this issue and probably, more important, we thought that it is an item that we really do not want to glamorize. But I think in reflection we all realize that what is important is to tell young people who contemplate suicide, or for that matter elderly people who contemplate suicide, that the important thing is that their life is valuable and that they may be in situations where they do not feel that.

I think Mr. Lewis, in suggesting and making the comments that maybe a prayer or a thought, as well as speaking to someone, someone that you may not have thought would be helpful to you, is an important factor.

I just think that sometimes we create many of the situations ourselves here -- how we react to one another, even in this Assembly, as leaders, and the comments we make in our communities or outside of this situation. How much of a working relationship do we expose? What kind of impression do people get of our working relationship here? We talk a lot, we have wonderful

words of wisdom, but the thing is, do we practice those words? I think sometimes we do not. In many cases we do not. I just hope that when we leave this issue that it is with a position that we want to improve the northern society and we want to give the impression and show to the people of the NWT that we are prepared to create an environment where people are happy about who they are and where they live and for what they are. I think that that is important.

In conclusion, let me thank Dr. Dyck for coming. I think it was important that we have this particular discussion. I do not think there is any Member in this Assembly that has not had some situation in which they have encountered either a suicide victim or someone that has considered attempting suicide. But the valuable thing is that we talk about it and recognize that we have to again impress upon people their value to our society, and not always be critical and not understanding of the concerns they might have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Patterson.

Hon. Dennis Patterson's Comments On Suicide

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very glad that we are having the courage to have this discussion of such a difficult, sensitive and personal subject. I am very encouraged that people like Mr. Lewis, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Nerysoo and Mr. Arlooktoo and really everyone who spoke, are optimistic and positive and encouraging that there is hope that together we can tackle this terrible problem.

When I think of suicide I think of the wasted potential of all these young people, and they are usually young Inuit men in our region, but I think another real tragedy is for the people who are left behind, the families. We think of our colleague in the Legislative Assembly and his family, in that connection.

Mr. Chairman, before this session began I talked to some elders in my community recently about this and other related problems that are afflicting our young people. They asked me, "Can we not find some ways to better recognize the people that we have in every community who are respected, the people who we go to for help?" We know who these people are in every one of our communities. I think that we tend, in this increasingly complicated society of ours which is leaving behind the old ways, to give recognition to people who are elected in elections for offices like town councillor and Member of the Legislative Assembly. But I think that all of us as elected leaders, and certainly I am speaking for myself, I think we have to acknowledge that the elders, the spiritual leaders, are not always the people who are elected for public office. These people are ready to offer enormous help, they are ready when we need them and we know who they are. I think we have to give these people more recognition. We have to somehow involve these people more in the solutions that we are seeking today.

I believe that the communities where these problems are particularly significant, even Iqaluit, which is a very large community compared to most communities in the Eastern Arctic, these communities are still small enough and people still know each other well enough that we should be able to reach out to the young people who need help. I would certainly like to endorse very much the advice given by a number of Members about the importance of family and the importance of positive, caring approaches to one another as opposed to the violence and hate that sometimes seems to characterize the world as we view it through a television screen or a rock video tape.

Support And Training For Community Care Givers

I think that as a government there are only so many things we can do but I think there are some things that we should address -- some of the ideas that have been suggested by Dr. Dyck with his excellent experience in this area. I think we can help to train people in every community to be able to look for the signs and learn ways to prevent suicide. This is training that not every social worker or teacher or policeman or nurse has, but it is training that they need, along with community leaders. I think we can also encourage people who care, to work on these issues to

work together. I think this is happening or the nucleus of it is happening in many of our communities where these problems have occurred. These people need support and they need recognition and they need some training because we do have the strong human resources in our smaller communities. I think that is in many ways our greatest strength.

We have these resources compared to the cities where people do not know one another in the sense of neighbourhood and community, and responsibility is lost. We have this advantage in the NWT and we should capitalize on it. I think it is time once again that we paid attention to our young people.

We had a conference here a few years ago in the Legislature where we intensely examined the problems and challenges of youth and listened to them. I have a feeling that we have let that focus slip since that time. I think we should be looking at ways in which as a government and as a Legislature our decisions are impacting on young people. We should scrutinize every decision as to how it impacts on young people.

Someone mentioned recreational facilities. I would like to say again that I think those are projects that as a government we can, and should continue to make a priority. I believe that with the support of the Legislature and the current Minister of MACA we have made recreation facilities a priority. We are beginning to develop recreation facilities in every community. This probably has had already an enormous impact in reducing the problem that we are talking about today and it should continue to be a priority in our capital planning.

I would also like to observe, Mr. Chairman, that there are many, many related problems that I think we are tackling and addressing when we look at suicide. I think that if we can find ways of tackling this problem, we will find that we are also addressing the root causes of alcohol and drug abuse, the root causes of family violence, of child sex abuse, of spousal assault and other problems that we talk about with concern.

Mr. Chairman, I know there was some concern on the part of Members in discussing such a sensitive subject publicly that we realize that we influence, through these discussions, the attitudes of young people, especially those who need help, and that these subjects have to be handled with care and sensitivity and in a positive context. I think we have done that today. I have been very impressed with the eloquence of honourable Members who have spoken on this subject and I think it should hopefully send a message out to the people that we represent that there are things that can be done, that there is hope and that we are concerned. That is a first step toward tackling this very difficult problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Members' statements. Are there any further Members' statements? If not, then I will open the floor for any questions. Mr. Wray.

Hon. Gordon Wray's Comments On Suicide

HON. GORDON WRAY: I guess I am too far down the table. Mr. Chairman, a lot has been said around this room today and I think Mr. Nerysoo probably hit home when he said that nobody around this Legislature has not been affected by suicide, because we all have, as recently with one of our colleagues if nothing else. But whether it was a friend of ours or a relative of ours or somebody in our communities we have all had to run into it. In the North, it is perhaps a little more difficult than in a large southern area because we are such a small society even though we comprise one third of Canada, there are only 55,000 people up here and we do know other people in other communities.

When suicide does impact it impacts us all. We know generally speaking what causes it; we know that fear of court, we know that rejection by a girlfriend or boyfriend, we know that in some cases, the clash of cultures with respect to arranged marriages, we know that failure at school, we know that just depression, or what appears not to be a particularly bright future, are possible causes. We could probably put together most of the reasons why suicide takes place in our communities but I guess the common element to most of them, because I think there are two things that we

have to remember, is that no matter what we do or say, there are still going to be people who commit suicide and we are not going to ever eradicate suicide from society. All we can do is hope to cut it down as much as possible and prevent it as much as possible but there still will be suicides. We know that even if we are starting tomorrow to take steps that it is going to be several years before what we do impacts.

I think it was mentioned in our briefing that when you start to tackle a problem like suicide it takes almost an entire generation before you see any kind of major impact. If you take a generation to be about 20 years then we may be looking at that long. I hope that because we are a smaller society and because we can react faster and because we can deal with our problems quicker than perhaps large areas, that we will be able to cut that time frame down considerably. But it will take time.

Need To Relieve Stress Of Hopelessness

I think that one of the things that has concerned me over the last few years as I have watched not just the suicide but the gradual alcohol, drugs, substance abuse grow among our young people, is the feeling of hopelessness that many of the young people have. This is not a mythical feeling because when they look at the economic circumstances around them, they can be forgiven for feeling hopeless because for a lot of them, when they take everything into account, it may be a hopeless situation. I think what we have to do is to start looking at ways in which we can relieve the pressure and the stress and the tension that our young people are under.

I remember, there is a quote and I cannot remember for the life of me who made it or in what form it was made, or where I even read it, but I know it was made by a young person from either the Baffin or the Keewatin. When he was asked what he thought about living in a community, he said, "Living in a community is like living in a prison without bars." I know several years ago, when Jack Anawak and Martha Aupaluktuq did a Keewatin youth study in which they interviewed close to 700 young people, they coined the phrase "the walkabouts". These were the young people in the communities who do nothing but continually walk around the community every day, every night, almost like prisoners in an exercise yard, because they have nothing to do and they have nowhere to go.

I think that, more than anything, is what drove me to start pushing for and putting in place as fast as I humanly could with the money available, recreation and sport facilities, because having grown up in a small community I can remember back when I was 18 or 19 -- and it was not that long ago -- the almost desperate feeling at times about having nothing to do. You cannot get in your truck and drive down the highway in most of the Eastern Arctic communities, you cannot go on a plane and go anywhere. You are trapped. It is at times a very difficult and a very uncomfortable feeling when you are young, about not being able to go anywhere or do anything.

What worries me even more is that when we start to talk about suicide, there is almost an instinctive way of wanting to blame somebody, trying to find the blame and attach blame. I think what we have to understand is there is nobody that you can blame, and there is nothing you can blame; these things happened and it was not done deliberately. Nobody tried to create the conditions that exist to cause the problem, they happened.

Government Alone Can Not Solve Problems

What worries me even more is that when people start to talk about problems like this, and what is becoming much more prevalent in our northern society -- and it is the attitude that is being passed along to the young people -- when there is a problem, the government has to do something about it. We have heard it in this House and it comes from people around this House, including myself many times. Whether we are talking about suicide, whether we are talking about language, whether we are talking about culture, whether we are talking about gun prevention, whether we are talking about AIDS, whether we are talking about child abuse, it is always that the government has to do something about it. If you talk to the young people, they now have the attitude that their problems have to be solved by somebody other than themselves. Either the

government has to solve their problems for them, or their parents have to solve their problems for them, somebody other than themselves has to solve the problems for them. What this has meant is that a lot of our young people lack the independence, they lack the self-esteem, they lack the knowledge and the feeling of goodness about themselves to be able to deal with their own problems. They are looking for somebody else to solve their problems.

If anything, as leaders we have to start saying to our communities, and saying to our constituents, and saying to those parents, "No, the government cannot solve your problems for you. The government can assist you, the government can put in place these programs to help you, but when it comes right down to it, you the parent, and you the child, are going to have to learn to solve your own problems."

There is too much in northern society nowadays of dependence on somebody else to solve your problems for you. I know when I met with the young people in Baker Lake two or three years ago after we had a youth council, in talking to them about what their aspirations were and what they wanted to do, some of them started to question me about what I had done because I went to Baker Lake when I was just turned 18. I told them about leaving home and coming to Canada and coming to the North and finding a job, and some of them were amazed that I could do something like this when I was only 18. They kept asking me, "How could you do it, how could you travel 5000 miles?" They were amazed that I had the capacity to do that.

I had to explain to them that in the society I came from, from a very young age there were two things that we were taught. We were taught that no matter what we wanted to do, no matter where we wanted to go, and no matter what we wanted to be, we had to have an education. It was drummed into us from a very early age that we had to educate ourselves somehow. If you were from the fishing communities in the northeast, you had to educate yourself as a fisherman. If you were from the agricultural counties of the west, you had to educate yourself in the ways of working on the farm. If you were from the industrial belt, you had to educate yourself to take jobs in the car plant, or the whisky factories. If you were from the north, you had to educate yourself to take advantage of the tourism. Wherever we came from, we were always taught that education was the number one priority.

We were also taught that we had to stand on our own two feet, and we had to think for ourselves, and we had to be independent. For most of us, we had to leave home. We did not have the luxury of staying at home. We had no choice, if we wanted to work we had to leave home, so from a very early age in our society independence was taught to us.

Need To Emphasize Role Of Parents

What I see in the North is the reverse of that. What we are saying to Northerners, and people in the communities, is, "Do not worry, we the government are going to do everything for you. You do not have to worry." When that does not work, we turn around and we blame the parents because the parents will not talk to their children or spend time with their children, or do things with their children; but in many respects we are the ones that have created that because we have said to those parents, "Do not worry, we are going to do it for you. We are going to teach your children how to speak their language, we are going to teach the children the value of your culture, we are going to teach your children the skills of hunting and trapping and how to build komatiks, we are going to teach your children how to look after guns, we are going to teach your children their sexual morals, we are going to teach your children this, we are going to teach your children that." We have taken the parents' role away from them. What role is there for a parent when the government is going to do it all?

How can you expect parents to have communication with their children when as a government and as a society we are saying, "You do not have to because we are going to do it for you." We cannot blame the breakdown of families exclusively on the parents, or on the tradition, on the change in culture of coming off the land into the communities. We have contributed to that problem, and we continue to contribute to it in this House every time we stand up and say that the government has to do this.

We have to go back to the basics and say, "No, there is a role for parents in this society." There have to be clear lines drawn as to what is the parents' role and what is the government's role. The parents' role must be, in many respects, and what you have heard around this House, to reinforce many of the traditional and the cultural values that parents normally do with their children.

It scares me because that is a major political statement for politicians to make, because our constituents come to us and our constituents say, "We want you to do this. We want you, the government, to do this." Because we are politicians, we do it, and we say, "Yes, we have to do this in our school system. We have to do that in our school system." What we should be doing as leaders is saying, "No, parent, that is your responsibility now. I will help you, but it is your responsibility now, not mine, not the government's." I think in general we have to really look at how we deal with our constituents and with our people because, again, it is too easy for us as politicians, rather than accept some of the blame ourselves as either parents or members of society, or members of a community, when there is a problem to blame the government. There was an accident, it has to be the government's fault. There is child abuse, it has to be the government's fault. Again, it is somebody else's fault. It is never our own, it is never as parents; it is always somebody else's mistake, and it is always somebody else that has to fix the problem. We cannot continue to do that, because when you really look at it, you are a parent in today's society. What role is there for you, as a parent, toward your child?

In almost all of those cases of suicide, there is one common theme that runs through most of them, and that is that most of those children committed suicide because either there was nobody, or there was nobody that they felt they could turn to and say, "I have a problem, can you help me?" That is the common theme in almost all of those suicides.

We have to recognize that, that this government and this Legislature does not have the magic wand that it is going to wave and chase suicide away, because that is not going to happen. We are going to have to take it back to the community level, we are going to have to take it back to the family level, and reinforce the family values, and reinforce the traditional values.

Influence Of Churches

Just one more comment I will make. Again, watching the development of the various churches in the North -- many years ago the churches were powerful instruments of social change up here. To a certain extent, they were the cutting edge of social and cultural change. There are many of those who say that the churches, more than government or anybody, were responsible for the major cultural changes that occurred in the North. To a certain extent that is true. For good or for bad, it happened, and we have to deal with it. I think, what I have noticed in the last few years, is that the church in the North has become very much like the church in the South. Its importance in our community and our community values has greatly lessened. Church attendances are going down. More and more of the young people do not go to church any more. They do not believe in it, or they just do not see it as being a valuable part of their life. The church, to a certain extent, has lost a lot of the high ground when it comes to moral leadership in our communities. It is struggling valiantly against the changing tide of public opinion, as it is everywhere else, but I think that the church must play a major part in any reawakening of tradition or social values at the community level.

I just wanted to add those comments, Mr. Chairman, because I do remain fearful that we are going to have this discussion and we are all going to say these fine things, and these compassionate things, and then Mr. Dyck is going to go back to Edmonton and we are going to go back to our business tomorrow, and nothing is going to happen. We cannot allow that to happen. We have to make sure that we do things. We have got to make sure that we do not talk platitudes and do not just raise the issue and then walk away from it, because we do that as politicians a lot of times. We raise the issue. We think well, now that we have our name in the newspapers, there is our quote for the radio and then we walk away from the issue. Tomorrow is another day and we will deal with another issue. We cannot do it because the bottom line is our young people are

destroying themselves. They are killing themselves and so we have to do something. We have to make sure that what we do will work. I think we have to make sure that what is done is done at the community level and done at the family level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. I realize there are more Members that would like to make Members' statements but Dr. Dyck I believe has prior commitments and is scheduled to leave at 5:15. So with the committee's permission, if you allow the Chair, and if Dr. Dyck has any closing remarks, then we will continue that. Then after we dismiss Dr. Dyck maybe we could return back to Members' statements and then continue on with motions and so forth. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. Dr. Dyck, any closing remarks.

Dr. Dyck's Closing Remarks

DR. DYCK: I am absolutely amazed and impressed with the discussion around this table. It is also exciting for me to be a part of a group of people who demonstrate real concern over an issue that is troubling many of us, not only in the North but also in the southern part of Canada, from east to west. I am also impressed with the enthusiasm with which all of you are speaking.

While we have all experienced suicide at some level, we are also speaking in terms of a future. We are speaking in terms of an opportunity to really do something about a social problem that we are facing. Having said that, let me throw out a number of cautions for you to consider, and the honourable Member who spoke last almost took away my thunder because I am going to repeat, maybe, some of the things he said.

Cautions To Members

The first caution that I would like to place before you is that while action might be contemplated at some point over the next while with regard to suicide, we cannot expect immediate change. If you expect to see the suicide rate drop immediately to zero you are fooling yourself and I would be doing you a disservice. It does not happen that quickly. In Alberta, we have been working at suicide prevention for a number of years and I think we are beginning to see the benefits now of some of the work that was done over the last five or six years. So do not expect immediate change with regard to suicide rates. What you should expect to see, if you engage in education and training, is that people will become better care givers, that people will begin to intervene and identify earlier those who are potentially in trouble. I really believe that. So that is the first caution.

The second caution is do not jump at doing a bunch of things without thinking about it. In other words, I guess what I am saying is I would hate for you to do things in an unsystematic way. We need to be systematic in our approach to suicide prevention. We need to establish the foundation. I talked about the table top and the legs. We have to have the legs before you can have the table. You have to have the foundation before you have got the building. And the foundation, as I indicated to you, was education, training, research and those were important. We need to implement these things in a systematic way.

Thirdly, it was really interesting to hear one of the Members make a statement and I will quote directly -- this is not quite the quote yet. We are going to try -- or maybe, do not think that we can implement solutions because the solutions that we think we want to do are the right ones. We do not know at this point in time whether they are right. We think that they are right. They make sense to us intellectually. We have gained experience from other parts of Canada and the US and

Europe to suggest that these ways that I have talked about are the right way but we do not know for sure. And so it becomes a test. We do our best. We do our thinking and then we test. Again, let us not expect that our way is the right way immediately. We need to evaluate and assess.

Fourth, I think it is really important and again, I have been impressed with the way in which all of us have talked in the Assembly this afternoon, we need to talk about suicide not in a glamorous way. Not in a sensationalized way. Not to make suicide look like the macho thing to do. I think that sometimes our young people do in fact think that; "Boy it took guts to pull the trigger." I have heard young people, after their friend has killed himself with a gun, to say, "Boy, I do not think I would have the guts to do that." Let me tell you what my response usually is to those young people, "It takes more guts to face your problems than to pull a trigger. It is the chicken's way out to pull the trigger. It does not take guts to do it." And so we need to be careful in how we talk about it.

I think that we need to talk about suicide a lot. I think we need to do it in a suicide prevention perspective. What I mean by that is that when we talk about suicide we not only identify how to recognize someone that is potentially suicidal but that we also tell people what to do, how to deal with that. We need to tell people that we need to listen to the person that is in trouble. We need to talk to the person that is in trouble and we need to get help for the person that is in trouble.

Our newspapers, our radio stations and our television stations need to make that a priority item too, not to just report on suicides but to do it from the perspective of suicide prevention, so that they also report and that we also report where we can go for help. How we help. In that way, we will in fact do our jobs in preventing the further tragedies.

What We Really Need To Know We Should Learn In Kindergarten

Let me finish. I was going to tell you a story and I might still do that but let me finish by reading to you a statement that I believe is at the heart of really preventing suicides in the future. It is an article out of a newspaper which is entitled "What We Really Need to Know We Should Learn in Kindergarten". So let me read bits and pieces of it for you and then I might tell you a story.

"Most of what we really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be, we should learn in kindergarten. Wisdom, you see, is not at the top of the educational ladder, but there in the sand box, in the playground. These are the things we should learn: share everything; play fair; don't hit people; put things back where you found them; clean up your own mess; do not take things that are not yours; say you are sorry when you hurt somebody; wash your hands before you eat; warm cookies and cold milk are good for you; live a balanced life; learn some and think some, and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some; take a nap every afternoon." I guess we are past the nap time here. "When you go out into the world watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together; be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup -- the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody knows how or why. But we are all like that, you know. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup -- they all die. So do we. Everything we need to know is there somewhere. The golden rule, love, sanitation, politics, sane living. Think of what a better world it would be if we all, the whole world, had cookies and milk about 3:00 o'clock every afternoon, and then laid down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up after our own mess. And it is still true, no matter how old we are. When we go out into the world it is best to hold hands and stick together." To me, that is, suicide prevention.

On that note let me tell you one very quick story. A story told to me by an Indian lady from northern Alberta. It is her story, you see, and it fits right in with this article that I have just read. This woman who is now in her 60s was about 10 years old living on an Indian reserve. She was the worst little girl you ever heard about. She was so bad that nobody wanted to discipline her. The parents tried, but nobody could do anything with her. Finally the parents, with desperation, went to the elder in their community and asked the elder if he could do something for her. The elder said, "Leave her with me."

So this young girl stayed with the elder for the day. At first he sat in his chair and just watched and listened to her babble, watched her destroy things and did not do anything, just watched. After a while he said, "Let us go for a walk." It was springtime. He took her by the hand and they walked out into the forest, through the trees. The leaves had just come out and the Alberta rose was just beginning to bloom. He said to this little girl as they were walking down the trail, "I want you to go into the forest and I want you to find the most beautiful rose there is." So she went off into the forest. The elder sat down on a tree trunk and waited and waited and waited and waited some more, until finally this little girl came out of the forest and she had that rose in her hand. She said, "This is the most beautiful one I could find." The elder said, "Good", took her hand and continued to walk.

As they continued to walk along the trail they came across a small lake and without stopping the elder and that little girl walked straight into the water until she was about chest high in the water. The elder said, "I want you to find the most beautiful petal on that rose and I want you to pick that petal and I want you to throw it into the sky, watch it carefully and tell me what you see." This little girl played her little game of trying to find the most beautiful petal and finally found it and pulled the petal off the rose and threw it into the sky, watched it carefully and then described to the elder this: "That petal floated from the heavens like a soft feather and it floated right by me and when it touched the water there was a ripple. Oh, it was a tiny ripple, but that ripple sort of went further and further away from where that petal landed. You know, that ripple came right past us and look, it never broke. The ripple just continued all the way to the shore." The elder said, "Good", and they walked out of the water and she was never a behaviour problem in that community again, for she understood the story.

Good Decisions By Sticking Together

You see suicide prevention is like that ripple. There is a splash, it has an effect on everyone but the ripple does not break, does it? It is joined together. Hold hands and stick together and therein lies suicide prevention. I encourage you, as you deliberate further on this important topic, to hold hands and stick together. Because out of that, you truly will make good decisions.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to address this body and I wish you all the best in your thinking about a topic that I know we are all concerned about.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. On behalf of the committee, Dr. Dyck, I would like to thank you for appearing here today. If you wish, Dr. Dyck, you could just dismiss yourself and we will continue on with our discussions.

At this time the Chair will recess for a few minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Angottitauruq): The committee will now come back to order. We are on Members' comments on suicide. Mr. Ernerk.

Mr. Ernerk's Comments On Suicide

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to react to some of the comments made by the honourable Minister of Economic Development. I see it this way, Mr. Chairman, that while we are on the subject of this issue and many other issues that we have dealt with in the past month and of course, last year, wanting the government to do things for the communities, I understand to some extent what he is saying and I disagree with some of the things that he said.

In the communities what we are saying at the community level is that the government is not doing enough. The government can do more to improve the system all around, improve the education

system, social services, the economic development, the justice system. I refer to this particular paper that was done by the Kivalliq Consulting Management and Training Services in Rankin in 1986 for the Keewatin Regional Council. This report contains some really good recommendations with regard to preventative measures. Anything from the traditional system of dealing with suicide to the present system of dealing with suicide in the NWT.

I guess what I am trying to say as a resident and someone who was born in the community, I have had to look inward all the time. All my life I have had to look inward from the outside, looking at the government system in place. I have never really been a part of it and yet to this day, to this point I have adapted to the system very well. In terms of opportunities and in terms of jobs, we have watched in our communities where all the good jobs seems to belong to southern Canadians. All the good jobs are taken by southern people coming into the communities. That is why, Mr. Chairman, I moved the motion the other day to take a look at this term position for southern hires so that we begin to see our own people, our own Inuit in the communities, being trained to take on professional positions.

They are not going to fill all the positions required to meet all the employment needs in Nunavut but it is a start. Am I going to have to say to my children and to my neighbours' children that these jobs only belong to southern Canadians? If that is the case, how can I expect my children to grow up with any sense of pride in being part of this society? Part of the debate is to provide more economic and job opportunities for the people. One of the things that I fought for quite hard in the last little while is the recognition of the Inuktitut language as the official language of the NWT to replace that particular pride that we once had, and give pride and confidence again to the Inuit, pride and confidence in the present system, pride and confidence in their future.

The other thing that I want to comment upon Mr. Chairman, is the role of churches. I notice Rosie Oolooyuk who is sitting among the audience and Mrs. Maksagak, they both played a very major role in the development of churches in communities such as Rankin Inlet. I think you should be congratulated for all the work that you have done to uplift the pride and confidence among the young people that we are talking about. And speaking of other churches, I think that they contributed a lot to the well-being of all the people of the NWT ever since the missionaries came to this country. I applaud their contributions to society today.

Motion To Recommend The Development Of A Suicide Prevention Policy, Carried

Mr. Chairman, having said that I would now like to make a motion. I move that this committee recommends to and urges the Executive Council to develop a suicide prevention policy and outline a strategy for implementation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Your motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ernerk.

MR. ERNERK: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know for sure that they can work together in regard to this issue we are discussing. I think the government and people of the NWT can come up with a solution and work together. We can also get some support and help from different organizations in preventing suicides. We will have to make some changes in legislation or develop a suicide prevention policy. I think we will have to consider this and consider the different organizations in the smaller communities. We can work together with community organizations like LEAs or HTAs or social services committees or youth committees, elders and church officials and native organizations in the NWT. If they work with us we can develop a strategy for implementation of this policy. The first thing they will have to work on is suicide prevention or to develop a suicide prevention policy, and education and training. If they start with that I think it would be appropriate. I think it will be for all the people of the NWT as well as for the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): To the motion. Is the committee ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

---Carried

General comments. Mr. Morin.

Mr. Morin's Comments On Suicide

MR. MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On suicide I think one of the major things we do have to do is work on suicide prevention programs. We have to develop programs that work in all our communities, in the Eastern Arctic as well as in the Western Arctic, in Yellowknife as well as in the small communities like Snowdrift. We have to develop these programs with people's input to make sure that we have the input of the youth when the program is being developed, because that is who it will be aimed toward.

Right now, in the North, we have an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program that people of my age can go to for help. What we do not answer is, what are the young people going to do from the age of, for example, 10 to 16 years old? People like that would not be accepted at an institution like Poundmakers. Recently, South of the lake, a study was done by Eric Shirt and we found out, through that study, that approximately 32 per cent of kids in grade six are alcoholics, and 52 per cent of kids in grade nine are alcoholics. Yet there is no prevention program established to meet their needs, so the only time they would ever get any help at all is by going through the justice system, by committing a crime and being turned over as wards of the court or sent to an institution.

Motion To Recommend Establishment Of Training Program For Suicide Prevention, Carried

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion. I move that this committee recommends to the Executive Council that a training program for suicide prevention be developed, that is culturally appropriate, and delivered to care givers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Question is being called. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

General comments. Mr. Pudluk.

MR. PUDLUK: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that we can make general comments. Also, I am happy to hear the comments that were made earlier. We are going to have to make some improvements in the different regions. It will be quite impossible to try and deal with all the regions together. We are going to have to get regional co-ordinators, and I would like to make a motion.

Motion To Recommend Establishment Of Professional Services, Carried

I move that this committee recommend to the Executive Council the establishment of professional services to include suicide specialists and regional co-ordinators. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Question is being called. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

General comments. Mr. Arlooktoo.

MR. ARLOOKTOO: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am also happy that we are able to make general comments on this. I know that we are not going to resolve it right away. We have accomplished quite a bit today, and we can have some considerations from what we heard today. Everything costs money and if there is no financial support, you cannot provide anything. I would like to make a motion.

Motion To Recommend Conducting Regional Workshops On Suicide Prevention, Carried

I move that this committee recommends to the Executive Council that it provide financial support to conduct regional workshops on suicide prevention. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

---Carried

General comments. Mr. Nerysoo.

Motion To Recommend Increased Financial Assistance To Youth Support Groups, Carried

MR. NERYSOO: I just wanted to move a motion. I move that this committee recommends to the Executive Council that it provide increased financial assistance to youth support groups in the regions and communities which will affirm and recognize the role of the youth in resolving social problems they encounter.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

---Carried

General comments. Mrs. Marie-Jewell.

HON. JEANNIE MARIE-JEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I was going to make comments but I recognize that Dr. Dyck's time frame is fairly limited, so I decided to withhold the comments I wanted to make. However, as the Minister responsible for this particular social concern that we all have, I would certainly like to thank the Members for being able to address this concern in such an eloquent and diplomatic manner as they have done today. It certainly indicates to the North once again that we can work co-operatively and work together to try to address the issues before us. I certainly will make every effort to address this concern with the department and I certainly hope in the future with your support that we will be able to make some progress. I feel confident with the Members and the way of expressing themselves that we certainly will make progress. I would like to take time to thank the Members for allowing Dr. Dyck to come in to make the presentation to the public and I thank you and look forward to your continuing support to address such an important issue. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Mahsi cho. Are there any further comments on the issue of suicide? If not, does the committee agree that the matter of suicide is concluded and also Tabled Documents 23-89(1), 24-89(1), 25-89(1) and 26-89(1) are concluded? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

--Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): Thank you. What is the committee's wish at this time? Mr. Allooloo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Chairman, the government would like to proceed with the business of the House dealing with the Department of Renewable Resources.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): What is the committee's wish? Does the committee agree we go back to Bill 1-89(1), Department of Renewable Resources. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

--Agreed

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

MR. MORIN: I would like to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Zoe): I have a motion on the floor to report progress. Not debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Bill 1-89(1): Appropriation Act, 1989-90

Department Of Renewable Resources

We are dealing with Bill 1-89(1): Appropriation Act, 1989-90. Mr. Minister, are you prepared to make your opening remarks?

Minister's Opening Remarks

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Yes, I am prepared to make my opening remarks. Mr. Chairman, fellow Members, it is my pleasure to address you today as the Minister of Renewable Resources and to present our budget for 1989-90.

As you know, the Department of Renewable Resources plays an important role in the lives of all northern residents. Our mandate is to protect and manage our wildlife, forests, and environment for our use and enjoyment today as well as for our children in the future. The department also represents the interests of northern people and the Government of the NWT in all other renewable resource sectors.

I would like to mention several important initiatives that will increase the department's responsibilities and strengthen its ability to fulfil its mandate. These initiatives reflect the goals identified in cabinet's "Direction for the 1990s" document and my department's new three year strategic plan.

As our government prepares for the 1990s and beyond, two paramount goals are emerging: first, to bolster our economy by developing our rich natural resources base; and second, to conserve the unmatched quality of our northern environment to which our society and culture are deeply rooted. To help harmonize these two goals, the Department of Renewable Resources, working closely with Economic Development and Tourism, and Energy, Mines and Resources, is drafting a sustainable development policy. This policy is based on the recommendations of the United Nations Brundtland report and the national task force on environment and economy. The policy

will address a broad range of issues such as ensuring long-term benefits from resource development, establishing an efficient review process for resource development projects, and controlling transboundary environmental pollution.

The protection of the environment is a priority of this government. We will be strengthening our ability to protect the environment by drafting policy and legislation on environmental protection. The legislation will cover pollution concerns for air, water and land. The policy will provide guidance for our pollution control measures. A good example of our work in the pollution control area is our efforts to negotiate transboundary water management agreements with the western provinces and Yukon Territory. These agreements are aimed at ensuring long-term protection for the quality and quantity of water flowing in the NWT. We will also continue our work in monitoring the levels of pollutants in the NWT such as acid rain, radio-active fall-out and contaminants in country foods. We will continue to urge federal officials to deal with these major problems.

Forest Management

In the forest management and fire operations programs, we will continue to increase benefits to Northerners and to encourage sustainable development of our forests. Last year for example, two long-term contracts were signed with community groups in Fort Rae and Hay River/Fort Providence to provide personnel for fire crews and lookout persons. Each of these contracts was worth at least \$400,000 per year. We also trained and certified 148 local people for fire tasks. To improve the management of our forests we are developing forest management plans for each timber licence issued, including requirements for reforestation and minimizing wastage.

Every year a large percentage of our total budget is allocated to forest fire protection. However this might not be adequate during a severe fire season which could cause a year-end strain on the government's budget and financial flexibility. To provide some financial protection in this area, we have been directed by cabinet to prepare a forest fire suppression reserve fund act. This act will allow us to carry over funds during a low fire season to offset costs during a high fire season.

Community involvement in the programs of our department is an ongoing priority. We have produced a pamphlet that describes how we have used local and traditional knowledge in management programs. We continue to support and develop resource management agencies jointly formed by ourselves and aboriginal groups. For example, the International Porcupine Caribou Management Board will begin work this year. The Denendeh Conservation Board and the Porcupine and Beverly/Kaminuriak Caribou Management Boards continue to provide recommendations on wildlife and resource management. Public review of draft wildlife management plans and regional land use plans are other ways to allow for community participation in resource management decisions. To help people learn about the plans, videos and native language summaries are produced. Public meetings and community workshops are then used to discuss these draft plans. As an example, in 1989-90 we hope to have public reviews on management plans for polar bears and the Bathurst caribou.

The first land use plan in the NWT has been completed for the Lancaster Sound region. This plan has allowed communities to recommend priorities and develop principles for the use of land and resources in their region.

Our wildlife management programs will continue to provide information required to produce wildlife management plans, to assess quota requests, and to identify opportunities for economic initiatives. We have begun fur-bearer studies to provide information on the status of fur-bearer populations. This is part of the strategy that was agreed to by all wildlife Ministers last September to counter the threat to the fur industry. We will continue to support the Fur Institute of Canada and its strong leadership role on the international stage. This includes the acceptance of standards developed to foster the fur industry. We will be seeking your approval for a three year trapper training and trap exchange program with an annual budget of \$650,000. This program is

part of the overall government strategy to protect and promote the fur industry within the NWT. It is critical that trappers and the general public be informed of humane trapping practices and the proposed legislation for trapping standards approved by the Fur Institute of Canada.

Hunters and trappers are important to our economy and society. Our government is committed to keeping hunting and trapping as a viable career option. We are working with other departments to consider the development of a hunter income support program. A workshop to discuss the type of hunter income support programs which would benefit us in the NWT has just been completed. Representatives from TFN, the Dene/Metis and the Inuvialuit attended.

Two programs are aimed at increasing public safety and accountability. The department's firearms safety awareness program is being greatly expanded. Emphasis will be placed this year on presenting information to younger-aged classes on safe handling and storage of firearms in the home. To combat the growing garbage problem, litter control education programs will be enhanced for use in schools and communities. The department will also make recommendations on how communities can recycle different types of waste.

Profile And Credibility Increased

Lastly, the department has worked hard to increase the national and international profile and credibility of our government. Our wildlife management programs have received worldwide recognition. Our fire suppression program is recognized as one of the best in North America. We have received national and international recognition for the firefighting support we provided to provinces and American states last year. Under the direction of cabinet, we will continue to participate in exchange programs with other countries and maintain our profile at the federal/provincial level.

The proposed 1989-90 budget of \$38.8 million is slightly larger than last year's. The difference represents the additional funds we are requesting for the trapper education and trap exchange program, the hunter income support study, the renewable resource demonstration projects program, and price factor increases for fire operations.

I am proud of the past achievements of my department. Our plans for 1989-90 are ambitious, but I am confident that we will continue to make significant progress. The protection of our environment and our resources will remain the overall goal of this department. We feel that the economic and social welfare of all our citizens will depend on achieving this goal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Angottitauruq): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your opening remarks. Chairman of the standing committee on finance, Mr. Pollard.

Comments From The Standing Committee On Finance

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The big bird is away right now. Renewable Resources, Mr. Chairman. The topic of the introduction of domestic species to the Northwest Territories was discussed and Members expressed a concern with the influx of domestic animals in various regions of the NWT. The diseases carried by these animals are foreign to the NWT wildlife and are potentially dangerous to northern species. In response to this potential problem, the government is developing an agricultural policy to deal with all aspects of agriculture in the North. An integrated government-wide approach to this situation should be prepared within a year and a half. The committee awaits the presentation by the Minister of Renewable Resources on the agricultural policy to the Legislative Assembly.

Talking about pollution, Mr. Chairman, the Northwest Territories is only a small part of the global village. Pollution from outside the NWT boundaries may have an effect on the local environment. Members are particularly concerned with the possible effects of a pulp mill in northern Alberta on NWT waters. That would bring me to recommendation 19, Mr. Chairman -- and I will move this as a motion at the appropriate time -- The standing committee on finance recommends that the

Department of Renewable Resources adopt an aggressive approach to the monitoring of pollution, both from internal and external sources, and encourages the department to take appropriate follow-up action where required.

Mr. Chairman, there were a number of concerns raised during the past year regarding insufficient enforcement of hunting regulations. Members of the committee questioned how the department will ensure enforcement is carried out in the future. While hiring additional field staff was suggested by Members as a method of approaching the problem, the Minister indicated that the department was confident that the problem could be dealt with using the existing staff and resources. The Minister assured the committee that field staff have been instructed to place more emphasis on the enforcement role.

The Minister described to the committee, programs which will assist hunters and trappers in maintaining their method of work in ways which are acceptable to the international market. These include funds for the development of humane trapping methods and assistance for community hunts. The committee supports efforts to assist hunters and trappers in maintaining their traditional lifestyle. The standing committee on finance congratulates Renewable Resources for its success in promoting issues of concern to Northerners at the international level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Angottitauruq): Mr. Nerysoo.

MR. NERYSOO: I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Angottitauruq): The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come to order. Mr. Angottitauruq.

ITEM 18: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF CONSIDERATION OF THE MATTER OF SUICIDE; TABLED DOCUMENT 23-89(1), NWT SUICIDE STATISTICS 1978-88; TABLED DOCUMENT 24-89(1), SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STUDY; TABLED DOCUMENT 25-89(1), REVIEW OF MORTALITY DUE TO SUICIDE IN THE NWT 1975-1986; TABLED DOCUMENT 26-89(1), REPORT ON SUICIDE PROBLEMS IN THE BAFFIN REGION; COMMITTEE REPORT 1-89(1), REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 1989-90 MAIN ESTIMATES; BILL 1-89(1), APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989-90

MR. ANGOTTITAUURUQ: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering the matter of suicide and Tabled Document 23-89(1), Tabled Document 24-89(1), Tabled Document 25-89(1), Tabled Document 26-89(1), CR 1-89(1), and Bill 1-89(1), and the tabled documents and the matter of suicide are concluded.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Angottitauruq. 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 19, third reading of bills. Ms Cournoyea.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, may I go back to Ministers' statements please?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has asked unanimous consent to go back to Item 2, Ministers' statements. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: There are no nays. Ms Cournoyea.

REVERT TO ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Ministers' Statement 22-89(1): Neptune Resources

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: Mr. Speaker, I realize that the ongoing reporting on Neptune Resources is of great importance to this House.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Neptune and Northgate Exploration have come to an agreement to finance and manage the Colomac project. Northgate has taken charge of the project. Mr. Speaker, I am very encouraged that the Colomac project is back on track, as I am sure we all are. I am informed that construction will be commencing immediately. In the interim, the project will be managed by an executive committee headed by a Mr. Ken Hill, who is the vice-president of operations for Northgate, while Peggy Witte will remain on as a director and advisory consultant to the project.

Of principal concern to Northgate is finalizing their financing and supply arrangements on the project. Officials of the department have had an initial meeting with Northgate in Toronto, with more scheduled in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, negotiations for the socio-economic agreements, which are the benefit and employment agreements, will be commenced as soon as the company has its financing and supply packages in place for the project. This is anticipated to be in four to six weeks.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I have another announcement, because most of us are very concerned about the economic benefits that are available in the Northwest Territories.

Minister's Statement 23-89(1): Snare Lake Power Line

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation announced today that a contract for the new transmission line from the Snare hydro system to Yellowknife has been awarded to a joint venture between Hunseth Construction Limited and Norpo Power Line Construction and Maintenance. Hunseth Construction Limited is based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, while Norpo Power Line Construction and Maintenance is from Yellowknife, NWT.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the contract is for an amount in excess of four million dollars. This represents a significant portion of the corporation's 1989-90 capital program.

HON. GORDON WRAY: Yellowknife is getting all the money again.

HON. NELLIE COURNOYEA: The new transmission line will replace the existing wood pole line constructed in 1948. Construction will commence immediately, and the project completion date is anticipated to be the end of December, 1989. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Cournoyea. The record will show that these were two emergency statements. Mr. Alloo, do you have a point of order or something?

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I would like seek unanimous consent to return to first reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is requesting unanimous consent to go back to Item 15, first reading of bills. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Allooloo, proceed.

ITEM 15: FIRST READING OF BILLS

First Reading Of Bill 3-89(1): Income Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that Bill 3-89(1), An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3-89(1) has had first reading. Mr. Allooloo.

First Reading Of Bill 7-89(1): Petroleum Products Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 7-89(1), An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 7-89(1) has had first reading. Mr. Allooloo.

First Reading Of Bill 10-89(1): Tobacco Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kivallivik, that Bill 10-89(1), An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 10-89(1) has had first reading. Mr. Allooloo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: I would like unanimous consent to go back to second reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has requested unanimous consent to go to Item 16, second reading of bills. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Minister.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that Bill 10-89(1), An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act, be read for the second time. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to clarify the definitions within the act; to amend the tax rate of cigarettes, cigars and tobacco; to determine the taxable price per gram of tobacco; to appoint collectors; to provide for deputy collectors; to provide in the act for agreements with collectors; to provide for the refusal or the cancellation or suspension of a permit of a dealer; to provide for an appeal from a cancellation or suspension; to provide for a bulk sale of tobacco; to provide for the furnishing of security by a collector; to empower officers to make inspections and searches; and to provide for refunds.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will take the bill as being read. Mr. Minister, you must, however, obtain unanimous consent. You have unanimous consent to go back to second reading of bills. You must have unanimous consent to give second reading to bills as well. Would you please seek unanimous consent to give second reading to bills?

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get unanimous consent to give second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Unanimous consent is sought by the Minister to give second reading to bills. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Minister.

ITEM 16: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, for the second time.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is called training on the job.

Second Reading Of Bill 10-89(1): Tobacco Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Right, training on the job. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that Bill 10-89(1), An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act, be read for the second time. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to clarify the definitions within the act; to amend the tax rate on cigarettes, cigars and tobacco; to determine the taxable price per gram of tobacco; to appoint collectors; to provide for deputy collectors; to provide in the act for agreements with collectors; to provide for the refusal or the cancellation or suspension of a permit of a dealer; to provide for an appeal from a cancellation or suspension; to provide for a bulk sale of tobacco; to provide for the furnishing of security by a collector; to empower officers to make inspections and searches; and to provide for refunds.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 10-89(1) has had second reading. Mr. Allooloo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to do second reading of Bill 7-89(1), An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Unanimous consent being sought to give second reading to Bill 7-89(1). Are there any nays? There are no nays? Mr. Minister, proceed.

Second Reading Of Bill 7-89(1): Petroleum Products Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 7-89(1), An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the second time. The purpose of this bill is to change the basis of the taxable price per litre of gasoline from regular gasoline to regular unleaded gasoline; to delete subsection 3.1(1) that is expired and to correct the references in section 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 7-89(1) has had second reading. Mr. Allooloo.

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to give second reading to Bill 3-89(1), An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Minister is seeking unanimous consent to give second reading to Bill 3-89(1). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Minister.

Second Reading Of Bill 3-89(1): Income Tax Act

HON. TITUS ALLOOLOO: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kivallivik, that Bill 3-89(1), An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to amend the Income Tax Act to bring the act into line with changes to the federal Income Tax Act; and to make certain provisions of the federal Income Tax Act apply for the purpose of the Income Tax Act, such as annual returns of income, payment of tax by corporations, liability for tax, refunds of tax, objections to assessments, appeals, general administration of the act, enforcement of the payment of tax, inspections and penalties.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3-89(1) has had second reading. Mr. Clerk, Bills 3-89(1), 7-89(1) and 10-89(1) have had second reading and are ordered into committee of the whole. Mr. Ernerk.

MR. ERNERK: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 3.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Aivilik is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 3, Members' statements. There are no nays, Mr. Ernerk. Proceed.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On International Women's Day

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just could not let this March 8, 1988, day complete its length without saying something about International Women's Day.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh!

AN. HON. MEMBER: Ooooh!

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. ERNERK: Thank you, Jeannie. Thank you, Nellie. I have always been supportive of women's...

---Laughter

...issues. The fact is that I am very pleased about the past events with regard to women in politics and women in business and I would just like to say today, because this is International Women's Day, to encourage our women to continue this course and that is to continue to be involved in politics and business. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have said that today. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ernerk. We are on Item 19, third reading of bills. Item 20, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Announcements, Mr. Speaker. There will be a meeting of ajuqtit at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning and a meeting of the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.

ITEM 20: ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the day for Thursday, March 9th.

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. Petitions
10. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motion
13. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
14. Motions
15. First Reading of Bills
16. Second Reading of Bills

17. **Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: Appearance of Airline Witnesses; CR 1-89(1); Bills 1-89(1), 3-89(1), 7-89(1), 10-89(1); Ministers' Statement 15-89(1); Tabled Document 58-89(1), Tabled Document 59-89(1)**
18. **Report of Committee of the Whole**
19. **Third Reading of Bills**
20. **Assent to Bills**
21. **Orders of the Day**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 9th, at 1:00 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

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