



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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Speaker: The Honourable Donald M. Stewart, M.L.A.

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 1984

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Angottitauruq, Mr. Arlooktoo, Mr. Ballantyne, Hon. Tom Butters, Mr. Erkloo, Mr. Gargan, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. MacQuarrie, Mr. McCallum, Hon. Bruce McLaughlin, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Mr. Paniloo, Hon. Dennis Patterson, Mr. Pedersen, Hon. Nick Sibbeston, Hon. Don Stewart, Mrs. Sorensen, Mr. T'Seleie, Mr. Wah-Shee, Hon. Gordon Wray

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Don Stewart): Before I go into the orders of the day for Wednesday, June the 27th, the honourable Members will note that the Mace is a cripple. It had to be brought in in two sections. However we are quite legal as long as the Mace is present. It will be repaired in time for the next session.

I would take time also to express our appreciation to the staff and students of the J.H. Sissons School for allowing us the use of their facilities on such short notice.

---Applause

With Yellowknife's 50th year, we have some distinguished people returning for a visit and among the gallery we have Scotty Gall. Scotty was a former Member of this Council for Mackenzie North from 1958 to 1960. Mr. Gall, would you please stand to be recognized.

---Applause

I am not sure whether this has anything to do with the 50th Anniversary or not, however I understand that our Minister Mr. McLaughlin's parents are present, his stepfather Joe and his mother Dolly. Welcome to Yellowknife.

---Applause

Orders of the day for Wednesday, June the 27th. Item 2, Members' replies. There do not appear to be any replies today. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Mr. Butters.

ITEM 3: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement On Northern Oil And Gas Action Program

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I have a brief statement on behalf of my colleague, the Hon. Tagak Curley, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He has asked me to provide a statement which will give background to an important document which I will table at an appropriate time. The document provides an update and detailed description of the Northern Oil and Gas Action Program, or NOGAP, as it is known, and this government's role in that program. I apologize in advance that a translated copy is not available, but I am assured that translation of key portions of that will be made available to Members as soon as possible.

NOGAP is a federal program managed by DIAND to sponsor and fund planning and research activities by eight federal departments and the two territorial governments to provide the critical information and data required for effective and timely government decision making on oil and gas development in the Beaufort.

Over the next seven years, \$130 million will be available to federal agencies and northern governments to carry out approved projects. The GNWT has negotiated and lobbied long and hard and will receive approximately \$12.5 million to undertake some 37 major projects. During this first year of the program, four GNWT departments including the Departments of Local Government, Social Services, Renewable Resources and the Energy, Mines and Resources Secretariat, will get just over \$1.26 million dollars. This will allow them to carry out a range of projects including: development of a socio-economic monitoring system for the Beaufort; preparation of environmental planning guidelines; provisions of resources to aid Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik to plan for the impacts of development; and the preparation of a social services baseline for future planning.

Approval of NOGAP is a major milestone for it provides GNWT, for the first time, with critical resources needed to plan to ensure benefit from Beaufort development. I urge Members of the Assembly to set some time aside to read and become familiar with the short tabled document, for this government will be participating in NOGAP for the next seven years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any further Ministers' statements? Item 4, oral questions. Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 4: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 74-84(2): Water And Sewage System, Fort Providence School

MR. GARGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Public Works and it is with regard to a school portable that is going to be placed in Fort Providence. I believe that the water and sewage system that is going to be put into that building is inadequate. I wanted to ask the Minister what he intends to do about it.

MR. SPEAKER: That probably should be a written question. Mr. Wray, can you provide that information?

Return To Question 74-84(2): Water And Sewage System, Fort Providence School

HON. GORDON WRAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you. The building being constructed in Providence is a standard portable classroom. It has a 250 gallon water tank and a 375 gallon sewage tank. These sizes have been approved by the health officials, water storage is provided at 10 gallons per student, sewage capacity at 15 gallons per student and it should require water delivery and sewage pumping out only twice monthly. I stated this is a standardized design developed by Public Works and Education and has been in use for some years now with no previously reported problems as to tank capacity. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Gargan, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 74-84(2): Water And Sewage System, Fort Providence School

MR. GARGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The building that is being built in Fort Providence is designed to add additional buildings to it, and certainly as the building increases, the water and sewage system would be inadequate. Again, I would ask the Minister what does he intend to do about this -- is the building designed only for that one little portable that is going to be in place or considering the additional parts that are going to be built to it?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 74-84(2): Water And Sewage System, Fort Providence School

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Public Works has had no indication from the Department of Education that this unit is going to be added to. However, if in conjunction with Education, a decision is made to add to the building, then a centralized washroom area would be developed for the buildings in conjunction with the Department of Education. So, the present system we are saying is adequate for the present building. If the building is added to, then additional facilities will be put in there to accommodate the extra numbers.

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

Item 5, written questions.

Item 6, returns.

Item 7, petitions.

Item 8, reports of standing and special committees. Item 9, tabling of documents. Mr. McLaughlin.

ITEM 9: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. BRUCE McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would wish at this time to table the following document: Tabled Document 17-84(2), Annual Report, Council Retiring Allowances Ordinance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Tabling of documents. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Tabled Document 18-84(2), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, to the Commissioner of the NWT, 1983.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Tabling of documents. Mr. Butters.

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the document I referred to earlier: Tabled Document 19-84(2), Northern Oil and Gas Action Program, NOGAP, and also on behalf of the Hon. Tagak Curley, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I wish to table Tabled Document 20-84(2), Summary of the Economic and Technical Feasibility Study of Distributing Natural Gas and/or Liquid Fuels to NWT Communities and the Follow-up Assessment of Parsons Lake and Cameron Hills Natural Gas Feasibility, studies done by Stone and Webster Canada Ltd. for the Energy, Mines and Resources Secretariat, Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Government of Canada. Mr. Curley solicits Members' comments on these two summaries as he will be expecting discussion on them during the next session. Also, the Executive Committee Members will be having to make decisions on the findings of the studies in the near future.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Mr. Gargan.

ITEM 10: NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice Of Motion 9-84(2): Multipurpose Hall In The Hay River Reserve

MR. GARGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 29th, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that the Legislative Assembly recommend to the Executive Committee that it bring forward the planning for the proposed multipurpose hall in the Hay River Reserve, from the fiscal year 1989 to an earlier date. And further, that the planning and design be 1985-86 and the construction to follow as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Notices of motion. Mr. Nerysoo.

Notice Of Motion 10-84(2): Report Of The Chief Electoral Officer For November 21, 1983

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, June 29th, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the report of the chief electoral officer on the general election held on November 21st, 1983 be referred to the standing committee on legislation for review and to bring forward at a future session recommended changes to the Elections Ordinance, 1978. Mr. Speaker, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Notices of motion. Item 11, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. McLaughlin.

ITEM 11: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 10-84(2): Public Health Ordinance

HON. BRUCE McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, June 29th, 1984 I shall move that Bill 10-84(2), An Ordinance to Amend the Public Health Ordinance, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 12, motions. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 12: MOTIONS

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to deal with my motion that I gave notice of today.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent is being requested. Are there any nays? You have unanimous consent, Mr. Minister.

Motion 10-84(2): Report Of The Chief Electoral Officer For November 21, 1983, Carried

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the report of the chief electoral officer to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories on the general election held on November 21, 1983 has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the report contains a number of recommendations for possible changes to the Elections Ordinance, 1978 to be considered by the Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the report of the chief electoral officer on the general election held on November 21, 1983 be referred to the standing committee on legislation for review and to bring forward at a future session recommended changes to the Elections Ordinance, 1978.

MR. SPEAKER: Your motion is in order, you may proceed, Mr. Nerysoo. Does the seconder of the motion wish to speak? Question being called. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 13, first reading of bills.

ITEM 13: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Yes, just prior to recessing in Fort Smith, the small error occurred on Tuesday, May 15th when Bill 9-84(2) was proceeded with at first reading stage without the required 48 hour period elapsing. It was an omission, as unanimous consent should have been requested to proceed with first reading. To keep this House's records straight I assume I have unanimous consent that Bill 9-84(2) has been read for the first time on May 15th, 1984. Is there any objection to this position? Are there any nays, is there any denial of unanimous consent?

MR. WAH-SHEE: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a denial, Mr. Wah-Shee. Then this would put this bill back to first reading. Now the procedure here will be, Mr. Nerysoo, that you will have to give first reading today to Bill 9-84(2). We are on first reading of bills. So, first reading of bills. Mr. Nerysoo. The nay has already entered into the records. I will not accept a difference of opinion at this time. Will you proceed with first reading please.

First Reading Of Bill 9-84(2): Official Languages Ordinance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that Bill 9-84(2), An Ordinance to Recognize and Provide for the Use of the Aboriginal Languages and to Establish the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? The Bill 9-84(2) has had first reading.

---Carried

First reading of bills. Mr. Clerk. Second reading of bills. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 14: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 9-84(2).

MR. SPEAKER: When a bill is in a position in the House, of having had first reading, it requires two nays to stop the flow of the bill in the House.

MR. WAH-SHEE: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize one nay. Is there another nay in the House with regard to proceeding with this bill for second reading? You have a right to proceed with a second reading. Note in the record that there was one nay.

Second Reading Of Bill 9-84(2): Official Languages Ordinance

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Iqaluit, that Bill 9-84(2), An Ordinance to Recognize and Provide for the Use of the Aboriginal Languages and to Establish the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, be read for the second time. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to recognize and provide for the use of the aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories and to establish English and French as the official languages of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question being called. To the principle of the bill. All those in favour? Opposed?

---Carried

Second reading of Bill 9-84(2) has been approved. Now according to our rules with the second reading of this bill, it automatically goes into committee of the whole. Mr. Clerk, Bill 9-84(2) will be entered in today's business in committee of the whole, for Item 15, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. I understand it is the wish of this Assembly to recess.

---Agreed

The hour is now 1:30. The House will recess until 3:30 p.m. The House stands recessed until 3:30 p.m.

---SHORT RECESS

We will resolve into committee of the whole to consider Bill 9-84(2), with Mr. Erkloo in the chair.

ITEM 15: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER BILL 9-84(2), OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Committee will now come to order. We are on Bill 9-84(2). I would like to remind the committee we are on legislation on page nine. You can find the bill in your book binder. Would the Minister like to comment? Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As honourable Members will recall, the question of French being introduced as an official language in the NWT was suddenly sprung upon us last March. At that time, the federal government introduced Bill C-26 which contained elaborate provisions pertaining to the introduction of French as an official language in the NWT. The Executive Committee of the NWT considered the matter and took the position, subject to the direction of the Legislative Assembly, that while it was not against French per se being introduced in the NWT, it felt that any such initiative ought to come from the territorial Legislative Assembly.

Bill C-26 contained no substantive provisions for the use of the aboriginal languages. The territorial government took a strong position in respect of aboriginal languages and stated that it saw the development, enhancement and preservation of aboriginal languages as a primary aim. The government could not see those aboriginal languages suffer as a result of any initiatives in respect to French.

At the May session this year in Fort Smith, Mr. Chairman, I had the privilege of submitting a sessional paper for discussion by the honourable Members. The sessional paper dealt in some detail with the question of bilingualism in the NWT and the recognition of aboriginal languages as official languages of the Territories. It is in my view, fair, Mr. Chairman, to say that the sessional paper received guarded approval from a considerable majority of the membership of this House.

While most Members expressed concern for the lack of attention to aboriginal languages in Bill C-26, a cautious mandate was given to me to continue to proceed with the strategy adopted by the Executive Committee till that date. The strategy, Mr. Chairman, had several facets. The strategy was to seek as important and as "official" a status for aboriginal languages as possible. Members had expressed their strong feelings on acquiring substantial funding for the preservation, development and enhancement of aboriginal languages. It was generally recognized that without a substantial infusion of funding into the aboriginal languages program, those languages would gradually fall into further disuse with the result that English and French would become the primary languages of the Territories to the detriment of aboriginal languages. It is further recognized that a great deal of work in the form of research, linguistic training, translation, interpretation services and other related areas is to be done before some of the aboriginal languages of the Territories can be revived and be in daily use. As honourable Members no doubt know, our aboriginal languages are at different stages of development. In the East, Inuktitut is the most commonly used language for several government services and functions. In the West, however, there is so far no language which is put to such frequent use as Inuktitut. I am extremely hopeful that with additional funding we will be able to revive the aboriginal languages to a point where they will truly become the languages for official use.

When I began the negotiations with the Government of Canada, the position of the federal government was that it was going to proceed with Bill C-26 in its present form with no substantive reference to aboriginal languages. There was no commitment to bear the costs associated with the entrenchment of French as an official language in the Territories, nor was there commitment for funding for aboriginal languages.

The initial position of the territorial government was that aboriginal languages must be recognized as official languages in the Northwest Territories at par with English and French. The legislation establishing the languages must be territorial and that Bill C-26 should delete all reference to the Northwest Territories. There must be substantial funding for aboriginal languages and the Government of Canada must bear all expenses pertaining to the introduction of French as an official language in the Northwest Territories.

Over the last several weeks, my officials and I have spent a considerable amount of time in Ottawa negotiating an agreement with the Government of Canada. Mr. Chairman, I believe that the agreement that I have negotiated is good for the Territories and in the circumstances is the best deal that we could have obtained. Under the terms of the agreement, the Government of Canada has agreed to bear all costs involved with the provision of services to the public in French and the costs involved in the implementation of French as an official language in the Northwest Territories as required by the territorial Official Languages Ordinance on an ongoing basis from year to year.

Federal Government Money Contributions Toward Aboriginal Languages

In addition, the Government of Canada has agreed to make the following contributions for the preservation, development and enhancement of aboriginal languages: Fiscal year 1984-85, one million dollars; fiscal year 1985-86, four million dollars; fiscal year 1986-87, four million dollars; fiscal year 1987-88, three and one-half million dollars; fiscal year 1988-89, three and one-half million dollars, making a total of \$16 million for approximately four and a half years. In addition, the parties have agreed that during fiscal year 1988-89, they will enter into negotiations to determine the extent of funding for aboriginal languages for a further period to be agreed upon by the parties. The federal government has also agreed that official languages will receive statutory recognition through the territorial ordinance as opposed to a federal act. The official languages bill, which will become the Official Languages Ordinance, should the bill pass, will be the statute in question.

As indicated to the honourable Members, Mr. Chairman, our initial position was to have aboriginal languages recognized as official languages at par with English and French. We were informed quite categorically that this was not acceptable to the Government of Canada. Indeed, at the initial stages the federal government did not even wish to have us "muddy the waters" by including aboriginal languages in the official languages bill. From that position the federal government moved to the position of accepting aboriginal languages in the same bill. There was then the further question of the federal government wanting to ensure that the provisions pertaining to English and French could not be amended unilaterally by the Legislative Assembly of the NWT. They were willing to extend that introduction only to French and English and not to aboriginal languages. It was after a great deal of persuasion that I succeeded in getting the federal government to entrench the Official Languages Ordinance in the federal act so that in future it will not be possible to amend or take away the rights guaranteed in the Official Languages Ordinance without the concurrence of parliament.

In addition to the entrenchment from unilateral repeal or amendment, Bill C-26 will also contain a clause to ensure that the power to grant additional rights and provide further services in aboriginal languages will still remain open. Mr. Chairman, this is an important provision, since through federal legislation it recognizes our right and authority to continue with the enhancement of rights and services in aboriginal languages. There is no impediment for such future initiatives.

Status Of Aboriginal Languages

As far as the status of aboriginal languages is concerned, the federal government was finally persuaded to give official status to aboriginal languages by agreeing that the Official Languages Ordinance could state that aboriginal languages were recognized as official aboriginal languages of the Territories. I would like to stress, Mr. Chairman, that this concession was not lightly obtained from the federal government. We made a valiant effort to seek official status for aboriginal languages at par with English and French, but were informed that this was not possible. Mr. Chairman, I share the disappointment of some of the Members of this House that this was not possible. However, I view the Official Languages Ordinance as an important step toward the final recognition of aboriginal languages as official languages in the Constitution of Canada. Mr. Chairman, I wish to stress that the Official Languages Ordinance is not and does not represent the end of the story. It is the beginning of the story and we have a long way to go before one day our hopes and aspirations are answered and our aboriginal languages are recognized in the Constitution of Canada as the official languages of the Territories.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: My colleagues in the Executive Committee and I view this as a very important goal and we hereby undertake to make every effort toward the attainment of that goal through the First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal Rights. Mr. Chairman, at this juncture however, I feel

that it is extremely important to have substantial funding in place to ensure that our languages are enhanced and developed so that when the day arrives for recognition of those languages in the Constitution of Canada, we do not have to face the criticism that our languages are not developed enough to be recognized as official languages.

With the availability of funding it is the intention of the Executive Committee to establish a three person languages commission immediately. The commission will be charged with the responsibility of travelling to communities and meeting with the public to study and develop the ways and means to enhance and preserve aboriginal languages and to make detailed recommendations to the Executive Committee on how best that funding can be used for aboriginal languages.

It is my intention to establish a working committee consisting of the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Information, the Minister for Aboriginal Rights, the Minister of Education, and myself, to oversee and steer this important priority of the government. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, it is my intention to seek the proclamation of Part I of the ordinance which pertains to aboriginal languages immediately after the bill has been assented to, and to promulgate regulations for the use of aboriginal languages in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. I see no reason, Mr. Chairman, why the progress in respect of aboriginal languages cannot begin right away. Our obligations in respect of French do not trigger in until 1987. There is no reason why we cannot begin the work on aboriginal languages today.

Eventual Goal To Entrench Aboriginal Languages In the Constitution

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to emphasize that this has not been an easy problem for all of us to deal with. We have spent many, many long hours deliberating on this issue. I know of no other issue on which the Executive Committee has spent as much time as on this issue. We are faced with a situation where if we reject the official languages bill, we will receive no funding for aboriginal languages and yet we will not be able to prevent the Government of Canada from imposing French as an official language of the Territories. After these long deliberations and taking a very serious note of the direction of the Legislative Assembly in this matter as given to me at Fort Smith, I feel the Official Languages Ordinance in the form that it is presented, is going to be beneficial to the people of the Northwest Territories and will be the means through which we can achieve the eventual goal of one day entrenching aboriginal languages in the constitution. This aim of the government is clearly expressed in the preamble of the bill so that notice is given to the world that this government will continue to strive with all vigour toward the entrenchment of aboriginal languages as official languages in the Constitution of Canada.

Further, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express to the Executive Committee, to all the staff of the government who have put such time and effort in trying to resolve this particular issue and to those people who have played such a significant role in the federal government and, of course, to the French Cultural Association of the Northwest Territories for their support in supporting us in the position that we took initially, I would like to express my appreciation as Government Leader to all those people and to the Executive Committee and I would like to say now, thank you and I hope that we can proceed with approving and passing this particular bill.

Just further, prior to concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to table in the House a document of the French translation of the bill, Bill 9-84(2) as amended and a letter from M. Leon Lamothe from legal counsel verifying that in his opinion that French text conveys the same meaning as the English text. I would like to table that here too. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Nerysoo, apparently you cannot table the document now, but you can table it tomorrow. You can circulate it to the Members right now if you wish. Thank you. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Chairman, I will seek unanimous consent to table it later on today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you. Mr. MacQuarrie, as chairman of the standing committee on legislation, do you wish to make some comments? Mr. MacQuarrie.

Comments From The Standing Committee On Legislation

MR. MacQUARRIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I would like to indicate that the standing committee did not do a separate and formal review of this bill, a procedure that has occasionally been followed with other bills that have a very broad impact and that have important implications for all Members. In those cases, the bill is reviewed by all Members together. That was the case here and, of course, the bill that is before the House, the essence of it, was included in a sessional paper that was thoroughly discussed by all Members in Fort Smith. Then, of course, there was the first reading of Bill 9-84(2) in Fort Smith and that bill has been available to all Members since that time. While there are some significant amendments that are being proposed by the government to that bill, the government took the trouble to go through those proposed changes with all interested Members this morning and therefore all Members are aware of what changes are proposed and why they are proposed and it is for those reasons that the standing committee has not done a separate review of the bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you, Mr. MacQuarrie. General comments from the Members. Mr. Sibbeston.

HON. NICK SIBBESTON: (Translation) Thank you very much. I will say this in Slavey. These papers that they have placed in front of us, the ordinance on native languages. I think it is good. They did not do it the way the people really wanted it but they did the best they could. The Inuit people that are in here -- if they would have made it stronger, it would have been better but the federal government, they are also the boss. Mr. Nerysoo tried his best, he really worked hard but the way we really wanted it done, it was not done that way and so this paper that is in front of us is done the best way they could do it. (Translation ends)

I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that many of us here today, as many of the people can see are rather quiet, we are not jumping up and down and doing a dance over the fact that the ordinance is here before us today. Many of us feel sombre, a little bit sad and feeling that it's something that we have to go through, it's something that has been forced upon us a bit and it's an agreement, the provisions of the ordinance and the money are something that has been negotiated and really something that is the best that we are able to obtain. I know that many people wish that the aboriginal languages could be placed on the same basis as French and English. It is not so. So in that regard, I guess I know that there is a bit of sadness but I still like to be optimistic and positive about that and I see it as a start for native languages in the North. I see it as an opportunity initially to acquire a bunch of money that can go toward native languages and over the course of years, the money, if used properly, can do a great deal for native languages in the North and this is the way that I see it.

I am aware that over the course of the past few years we have got very limited moneys. The moneys for languages are part of the education program. I think now the fund is in the order of about one million dollars, but through its wise use it has done a great deal for native languages in the North. So four million a year should do four times as much so through the course of a number of years, the native languages will be helped quite a bit. This is my hope. I really do not see this ordinance that we are dealing with here, as a final everything that native people are going to get in the North. I see it as a start. I think it's a big step for the federal government to recognize aboriginal languages in law for the NWT and it is something. Up to now, we have not had anything in our law books regarding native languages and now we will have an ordinance that recognizes native languages as official aboriginal languages.

Viewed As Simply A Start Toward Development Of Native Languages

So, it is something, it is a start. I am very glad that the government if this ordinance passes this Assembly will proclaim those provisions of the aboriginal languages in effect immediately. It will give some basis, some standing to native languages. I was very pleased to hear too, Mr. Nerysoo saying that one of the first acts of the government will be to pass a regulation making it a right, making it possible for native people here to use their native languages in the Assembly. That is a very positive sort of thing. I was very pleased to hear too that the government will be setting up a languages commission and my hope is that the native organizations, Dene Nation and Inuit Tapirisat, will be involved in that, so not just the government but native organizations too will be involved in the planning and eventually the implementation of native languages.

I am very pleased too that it was stated that I, as Minister responsible for Culture will be involved in that, so you know that I will be dealing with a task of promoting and enhancing and developing the native languages very feverishly, very hard and I can tell you that I will be there mainly to make sure that no civil servants stand in the way of all of this happening, that native people will get good services, good programs in the native language, so that at the end of three or four years we will really see the benefit of the money that has been given to us for that.

The other thing I am pleased about is that the provisions which have been negotiated with the federal government provide for this Assembly expanding on the rights that native people will have as far as their languages are concerned. So, it is not a dead end, it is not closed -- it is not the best that native people are able to obtain forever, it is just simply a start. There will be provisions so that in a couple of years we can expand on the rights that we have. The sort of thing that I have in mind is initially the action of the government will be through regulations. But, in the course of a couple of years we can transfer and elevate these regulations to provisions of the ordinance. So, then the native language rights will be even stronger than what we have now.

My very ardent and sincere hope is that in the next three or four years we will eventually get the native languages up to the status of French and English. Do not let anybody be fooled or think that native people will be happy with the provisions here today. It is just a start and we will be pressing for lots of good work to be done with native languages in the next few years and by the end of the life of this Assembly, we will be pressing to have the native languages known and recognized as big "0", similar to the way French and English are now.

I just wanted to say these few things. As native languages get stronger, it will mean that their use will be made possible in other aspects of life. I look forward to the day when we can go into court as native people and speak our languages and have lawyers that use the languages to press the case for their clients in court. I look forward to the day where we will have a judge who understands native languages and can confer and talk back, have trials conducted in the native languages. I look forward to the day too, where the services provided to native people in this Assembly are more than just an interpretation. I appreciate that it is very difficult at the moment to write all the native languages and have transcripts just like the way English is now. But, I look forward to the day when you speak in Slavey language that there will be records of that, written and verbal, so that we eventually obtain the same service as English and French.

So, I would like to look at the ordinance here in a positive light. I appreciate that it is probably a little short of what many of us had expected, but it is the best that the federal government will permit us at this stage. I hope that after consideration, all the Members here will support the ordinance. Mahsi cho.

(Translation) Sometimes when we speak in our native language it is difficult and the equipment does not seem to work properly. Maybe if we used our native language more things would work out better. When people speak in our native languages and also in Inuktituk -- for me it is very important. They used to have equipment only for the Inuit and for our native languages there was nothing. Myself, I spoke at the Legislative Assembly in my native language and I had no translator. The government officials did not like it but I still spoke in my native tongue. It was only after that that they provided interpreters and equipment for translation, and since then things have improved. Since then there are several interpreters that have been trained for the government, and when there are meetings for the Dene Nation and other meetings there are interpreters that are available. It is not much at this time, but for the native languages things have improved and for that I am thankful.

This bill that we are speaking about looks good for the future. It is not just for this place here but it is for all the meetings concerning the judge and things like that, and you can talk to him in your language. Now if a person does not understand English and walked into the Laing Building to see a government official, if he spoke in the Dene language there is not one white person that can help him. So, for the future, who works for the government they can speak to him in his native language and it is for that reason that we want money and to have funding available. And for that, the way we really wanted it they did not make it that strong, but for a start it is okay. Now it has started and if we make a bill like that, in the future we can work on it to make it stronger. Maybe two or three years down the road the native languages can be just as good as the English and French languages. We can make it that way.

Also the funding, \$16 million, is a lot of money and we could put it to good use. People can really make good use of this money, so for that reason I am happy. This bill that is in front of us, the bill that they have given us, it is not the end of it. In the future we can change it, we can make it better for the people, how it is now we can make it even stronger in the future and it can be written as such. The federal government are very strong people, they are a lot stronger than we are, and they are also the people in charge. So what they think -- they told us that if we do not make the paper the way they want it they would not provide funding, and they told us how we are to make the laws. So what should we do? So we have to pretty well follow what they told us. If we did not follow them, they would in turn make the bill for us, the way they wanted it. And the money, if we do not listen to them they would not provide funding, so for that, this was all looked into and it was only after that that the bill was worked on the way it is. I thought that was the best way to do it and that is also what Mr. Nerysoo thinks and whoever sits on the Executive Committee, we all thought that way and that is why the paper was done the way it was. Thank you very much. I have spoken for quite awhile now so this all I am going to say now. So for the future we want things to be better for the native people as far as the native languages are concerned. That is what we think and that is why this bill was made. Maybe it is not the way you had expected it to be but in the future we can make it much better and much stronger for the people. It can be arranged that way, so thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you, Mr. Sibbeston. Mrs. Lawrence.

MRS. LAWRENCE: (Translation) Thank you. This bill that is in front of us is to tell us that we will make French and English the official languages. I do not agree with what the other person said. I am not happy with it. Our people from here have their own language and we should be allowed to use this language first before we use the French and English. The government is always doing what they want and do not always do what we want. If we do not do what they want, then they do not give us the money.

Just within the last two or three years they introduced the native language in the schools and even that is done improperly due to lack of funds. Every time there is a meeting, if a person speaks a native language the interpretations are not done properly. Now they are saying that they can improve the native language translations, but if they give us the money we can improve on this. I am not happy with this paper in front of us. (Translation ends)

We all have a responsibility whether we speak our aboriginal language or not. Every constituency has people that speak a native language. Some constituencies have a majority speaking an aboriginal language. With all due respect to our Leader, Mr. Nerysoo, and the Executive for their effort, I am having problems supporting this document that is in front of us. I will speak to it again after a while. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you. We will have a coffee break for 15 minutes and then come back for general comments.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 9-84(2). Are there any further comments? Mr. Gargan.

MR. GARGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I keep debating whether or not I should be supporting this piece of legislation. I have some questions that I would like to ask. As far as the Inuit language goes I guess they are far more advanced than the Dene language. I guess the Dene language is not far advanced. In fact, we do not have that many Dene programs right now anyway. So, whether we accept the moneys or not, what do we have to gain or what do we have to lose? I keep debating that. If we accept the moneys now and hope that aboriginal languages would be eventually recognized in the Canadian Constitution, then I would probably support this piece of legislation. On the other hand, if we do not accept this piece of legislation, then we lose the money, and also we would not have the money in place to develop the Dene language if and when eventually aboriginal language is recognized as an official language of Canada. So I am in a really confused situation.

No Consultation With Communities

On the other hand, I am very angry and I am very hurt on the fact that the federal government is going to be shoving this down our throats whether we accept it or not. So we are not in a winning situation, we are in a losing situation either way you look at it. The other point I want to make

is that I am also disappointed a bit that, on the part of this government, no consultation was done with the native organizations or with the communities with regard to this piece of legislation. As long as this government takes the attitude that every time we present a piece of legislation, it is going to be supported by Members without actually consulting the communities and letting them know the positions that this government is taking, you are always going to get a negative response from the native organizations.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am still debating whether I should be supporting this piece of legislation or not. As far as my own principle goes, aboriginal right is a right of the native people and part of that right is the language. Now whether we have the money there or not, as long as it is recognized in the Canadian Constitution that it is a right of the native people to have their own language, then that is all we will probably be content with. It does not matter how much money you put into a language program to develop it, the end result is that it is you who own it and no amount of money in the world is going to buy that language off you. So, that is all I have to say, Mr. Chairman. I am still a bit confused. I do not know whether I should support it or not.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you, Mr. Gargan. Any more general comments? Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recognize that we have not had as much time as we would have liked to consult our constituents, consult the general public, talk to native organizations, but I do not really think it is fair to blame this government. It was not our idea to impose official bilingualism on the NWT. We were caught up, I believe, in the swirl of a national issue which followed from the crisis in Manitoba, a desire on the part of the federal government to put pressure on provinces like Ontario to do what New Brunswick did and to do what we are doing. We were also caught up in the last parliamentary session of a government which is soon going to have to go back to the people and in the changeover of leaders of the governing party. But as far as public consultation goes, I think the native organizations themselves have some responsibility to follow the public proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and we tabled a detailed discussion paper and a draft bill some seven weeks ago. Now, maybe we didn't deliver it to everyone's door but it was certainly discussed in the press and publicly available and I am frankly a little bit disappointed that some of the criticisms that have been levelled at us have only come in in recent days rather than after we made our position clear to the public. I also think that Members of the Legislative Assembly have some responsibility to consult with their constituents. I think, in my case, I have done my best to inform organizations in my constituency of what this might mean and I think if people feel a little bit left behind, it may be because MLAs have not been doing as much as they could to explain what is going on.

Priorities For Use Of Aboriginal Languages

I would just like to deal with a few of the concerns that have been expressed. I recognize that many people feel that native languages should be official languages, with the same status as English and French. But, when I talked to my constituents and when I attend public meetings and other meetings on education in the NWT, I ask myself what is it that the people of the NWT in our communities really want? Now, they may think they want aboriginal languages as official languages and it is a phrase that sounds awfully good, but what does it really mean?

"Official languages" is a legal term from the Canadian Constitution which means that the proceedings and debates and publications and official institutions of the government must be bilingual, that we have to translate our regulations, our laws and court and quasi judicial proceedings. But do people really want to get the Northwest Territories Gazette published in an aboriginal language? Is that the most important priority in your communities? Do people really want to read most of our ordinances in their own native languages? Now, some of them of course are very important, the Wildlife Ordinance, Education Ordinance, but I am really wondering since we have so much work to do in native languages if there are not other priorities that we might identify. I can tell you what I hear in my visits to communities: translation services for people who are going to hospitals and nursing stations, language instructors in the schools, curriculum materials, dictionaries, writing systems, field-based teacher education programs, trained translators and interpreters, literacy workshops. These are the things that mean a great deal to the people in our communities, I believe. Those services go far beyond what we will get if we made aboriginal languages official languages the same as French.

I think that although there has been much criticism made of the fact that this ordinance provides for extension of the official use of aboriginal languages by regulations, the regulations allow us to have the flexibility to go much farther and be far more creative than we are ever going to be

with French in the Northwest Territories. French is in black and white in Part II of the ordinance and we may want to do some of those things and, as Mr. Sibbeston said, we may want to eventually work to the day when we can have legal proceedings in aboriginal languages and translate our laws and even our regulations -- although the Northwest Territories Gazette is not my idea of choice bedtime reading -- we may want to get there some day but I think there are other priorities that people will identify and hopefully we will have the native organizations assisting us in this identification.

Definition Of Languages As Constitutional Right

We are also told, Mr. Chairman, that we may be setting a bad precedent for constitutional amendment if we acknowledge a different status -- I am not willing to admit it is a lesser status but a different status for aboriginal languages -- and therefore we should not do anything, we should wait for the constitutional process to define aboriginal languages as a constitutional right, which is a position that this government has taken from the beginning at the First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal Rights, that native language rights are prima facie included in aboriginal rights. But we have to deal with a national forum with provinces and with other native organizations, and aboriginal language rights have not been at the top of the agenda. We have been preoccupied with self-government and sovereignty and treaty rights and land rights for Metis and other issues that are very important, but aboriginal language rights have been put down on the agenda.

I am pleased to underscore the commitment our Leader made to press to have them resurrected and moved forward in the agenda in the First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Rights, but I say when we go to those meetings over the next three years and when we go to the last scheduled meeting before April of 1987, is it not going to be a lot better for the Dene languages if we have had three or four years of work at the community level to develop those languages further, to prevent them from eroding? Will we not have a much stronger case for arguing that aboriginal rights means aboriginal languages, if we have been able to triple or quadruple our efforts to develop those languages, especially the ones that are suffering from years of neglect and are not capable of being reduced to writing?

Funds Needed To Develop Languages

I guess I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, that if we wait and if we delay, if we wait for the issue to be dealt with at land claims talks, if we wait for the land claims -- I don't know if people would allow that to happen, but it does cost money, and I can tell you it costs a lot of money because I am continually having to tell people that we do not have the funds to do what they want to do at the community level. We have been able to identify some, but it is an expensive process and I can assure you that we will make every effort to make the best use of these funds. I think one of the reasons the Inuktitut language is further ahead, as many people seem to feel it is, is because some years ago the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Secretary of State were contributing significant funds to developing the Inuktitut language, even in the Northwest Territories. Now those funds dried up and they were never offered for the Dene languages. But Inuktitut got a head start partly because there was federal money available, I believe, to promote curriculum development, particularly in the field of education.

So, Mr. Chairman, although I realize that this bill certainly could go much further than it has gone, I would like to lend my support to the bill and say that personally I am very pleased that we have finally found some federal funds for aboriginal languages. I have been working with the Secretary of State, really bugging him for almost three years now, trying to get something going, without any success at all, except maybe softening him up a bit. But it took official bilingualism a la French and a better negotiator than I obviously am, Mr. Nerysoo, to get the funds flowing. I am personally very pleased with that and say if the bill does not go far enough, let us not despair because the amendments to Bill C-26 and our own legislation permit us to enhance what we are already planning to do and what we have already got in place. We cannot enhance the status of the aboriginal languages if we do not develop them, and it costs money.

I do not think money is the only issue here, but I would be hesitant just to lightly reject these significant funds on the basis of a principle. I think the principle should not be forgotten; it should be pursued. It can be pursued through improvements to this legislation by this Assembly over the next period of time; it can be pursued in aboriginal rights negotiations with the federal government if native organizations wish to do so. Most important, as we say in the preamble to this bill, it can be pursued through amendments to the Constitution of Canada, which is the only secure way of guaranteeing permanent commitment of funds and political support to aboriginal languages. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. GARGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I am going back to the money question again. I am still confused with the issue at hand. On one hand we are going to have legislation being produced in French and English, eventually. I believe this -- in the crowd here, two per cent of them are French, then maybe we should be producing something like 98 per cent of the documents that are no use to anybody. Now, as far as the aboriginal language goes, as long as it is translated and I understand it, I do not need to have it in writing first of all. The other question I have is that if we do support this kind of legislation and it is in the hands of the territorial government and the money is in place, how is that money going to be spent?

Another question that I have concern over is another bureaucracy that is so institutionalized that it forgets where the services belong to. We are supporting a document now that commits \$16 million for aboriginal languages but at this time we do not know how that money is going to be spent. I am certainly worried if it is going to be put in the hands of this government before we actually know how we are going to be spending it. I would be concerned about it -- putting the cart before the horse, again. These are the kinds of concerns I am expressing right now and so far I have not really seen any kind of response that would make me support or not support this piece of legislation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you. Mr. Wah-Shee.

Aboriginal Languages Should Have Precedence

MR. WAH-SHEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you turn to channel three, you'll hear some Dogrib. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all we are elected by our people and we are talking for them, whatever the problem. I was voted by the Dogrib people, so I am here to talk for them. If we are voted by the people, after that whatever they want me to do for them -- I try to do my best. We are here to help our people, whatever important things need to be done. So here I am talking in my language, in Dogrib and now we are talking about our own language and in the future time when people are learning in our language, Dogrib and the Eskimo people, this is our country. We have been living here longer than the white people or the French people and as long as we are living in this our country we will keep our native tongue. (Translation ends)

I will comment on this issue of aboriginal languages. First of all, I share the sentiments of some of the MLAs in regard to this particular bill. I commend the Leader of the Government for trying to negotiate on our behalf with the federal government to have the aboriginal languages recognized the way they ought to be. We are the aboriginal people in Canada, we are not immigrants, we did not come from Europe, we have been here and we are going to damn well stay here for a long time. As far as I am concerned, if we are going to recognize English and French on our home turf, in our homeland, then I feel that the aboriginal languages should have been given precedence and I am very concerned, extremely concerned, that with this particular bill we are selling out and the aboriginal language is not for sale. There is no price, \$750,000 or \$16 million or even \$50 million. You cannot purchase the aboriginal languages. It is our culture, that which makes us different from the Europeans because of our language, our beliefs, the way we view ourselves, the way we view society. As far as I am concerned I am representing the Dogrib people, I am also representing the interests of Dene chiefs. I am not one person who is going to go contrary to the positions of the elected leaders up and down the Mackenzie Valley. I have worked for that organization for many years and I have a high respect for the position that they have taken. It is a compromise to go ahead and support this bill. It is a very easy thing but on the other hand if you want something then you are going to have to struggle for it and I feel that we still have the opportunity to have the aboriginal languages recognized.

I also feel that the Government of the Northwest Territories has had opportunities since 1967 to do something about the Dene languages. We cannot say today that if the federal government had poured in money previously, then the situation would have changed. Well, my question is that the Government of the Northwest Territories relocated from Ottawa to Yellowknife in 1967. There have been a few years in between, and they have had resources to relocate and as far as I am concerned everyone in the Northwest Territories should be learning the aboriginal languages. It is not just the sole responsibility of the aboriginal people to speak our language. We speak yours, we speak English. Now, I think that the situation is going to have to be changed, that people are going to have to start learning the aboriginal languages. I would want to see the public service of the Northwest Territories start learning the aboriginal languages. I think that if we are going to be serious about this then I think that people are going to have to be serious about learning our language.

As for recognizing two official languages, my feeling is that we have countries within a Commonwealth who recognize many languages other than three. They also have many different types of people and they recognize more than one, two and three. I think that if we are so open-minded then we should be able to recognize the aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories. I am not concerned about having the aboriginal languages or Dogrib being officially recognized in the province of Alberta. That is not my interest. My interest is to have the Dene languages and the Inuktitut languages being recognized in the Northwest Territories.

Present Services Unsatisfactory

The present services being provided in native languages are also unsatisfactory. I will give you an example. There was an old lady from Rae Lakes who is over 70. She came to Yellowknife to see a doctor and there were no interpreters. She could not speak to the doctor. She was here for five days and then she went back and she still does not know what happened. I think that there is a responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I cannot see how the Government of the Northwest Territories can put the blame on the federal government. You also have resources and you can relocate your resources as well. Having the aboriginal languages recognized as an official language -- if that was to be the case then the resources would be associated with that, because in order to implement official languages you need money. As far as I am concerned, we can get resources. We do not have to always bow to the wishes of Ottawa. I think that we are elected people to stand up for our people. In terms of publication, if you are going to have publications in the English and French languages then there is nothing wrong with having publications in the aboriginal languages. I totally disagree with the honourable Member from Frobisher Bay that publications should not be in the aboriginal languages. I think that that is something that the aboriginal people want.

In regard to this issue here, it was my view that when we were sitting in Fort Smith we gave support in principle to allow the Leader of the Government to negotiate on our behalf. It was not to support the bill as it was tabled. That is the reason why, after considering the situation, I find it extremely difficult to support the bill. It does not go far enough. I understand the practical circumstances that we are faced with. However, it is a matter of principle with me that we have to get the aboriginal languages recognized; it is imperative. As far as I am concerned, if you recognize the other two languages, in terms of French, it is not practical. It will not be to the advantage of the aboriginal people. I do not see where you can have the municipal by-laws in regard to control of dogs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): I am sorry, Mr. Wah-Shee, your time is up. Does the committee wish him to continue?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Go ahead, Mr. Wah-Shee.

MR. WAH-SHEE: As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, it does not make any sense to me to have by-laws translated in French in a place called Rae Lakes for instance -- I think that the honourable Member was given an opportunity to speak. We were all courteous, we listened to you, and now, I think that you should return the same privilege to everyone here. Also, I think you should learn the Dogrib language as well.

---Laughter

Also, we have been given some lesson in law which I am sure we all appreciate. Official language to the aboriginal people is very important because for the first time our language would be recognized. I think it is about time we took a position on that. I appreciate the situation that we cannot go as far as we would have liked but I still feel that it is a matter of principle in representing my people, that I cannot support this. I feel that there are other ways of dealing with this. I do have a question in regard to why we did not wait to negotiate with the new Prime Minister who will be replacing Trudeau. That is a matter of another week and perhaps the position taken by the present Ministers may change. We don't know -- it is difficult to say but that is another opportunity which has not been explored. So, Mr. Chairman, I am not directly criticizing the Leader of the Government. I think that he is to be commended for his efforts. However, I feel that as an individual I cannot support this bill and I will vote against it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you, Mr. Wah-Shee. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: I want to clarify a couple of things. Firstly, had we not taken the position that we would be open for negotiation, the Bill C-26 as it was written initially, would have been law already. The idea that we did not see fit to wait for the new Prime Minister, I believe is not what the reality was. We would have had Bill C-26 and, in fact if you read Bill C-26 -- and I am not sure if the honourable Member has read Bill C-26 -- we would have been obligated as a government to hire and recruit people for their knowledge of French. Now that section is not even in the bill, it has been withdrawn because of negotiations. There was no mention, as I indicated previously, no mention at all of the recognition of aboriginal languages. None whatsoever. Regarding the bill that is before you and that I moved into second reading, there are some significant amendments to that bill that are coming forward that I would like to move a motion to, but until we get there, I cannot move amendments.

Responsive To Dene Concerns

Further, regarding the idea that people almost were not considerate of the concerns of the Dene, I read a motion from the Fort Good Hope leadership meeting and all the issues that were outlined in that particular motion were dealt with and are now in the bill. They have been responded to. So, we have gone to the extent of seeing and trying to rectify the bill according to what has been directed to us and all the issues that were outlined in that particular motion, we dealt with. They are now in the bill. Understandably, we did not have the opportunity to sit down and dialogue every day with the Dene Nation or the Inuit Tapirisat or the Metis Association, but we did everything we could to try to ensure that whatever was required to improve the aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories was dealt with seriously. I went as far as to indicate to the Minister as recently as yesterday that if there was any way that we could amend the bill to recognize the aboriginal languages as official languages that I would be prepared to introduce an amendment today recognizing that fact. But it was apparent and clearly indicated to me by the Secretary of State that we could not proceed to go further than recognizing aboriginal languages as official aboriginal languages. So, I have gone as far as I can under the circumstances. I believe, as I indicated earlier and Mr. Sibbeston and other Members have, that we have an opportunity at the moment to create a situation where the governments of this country cannot go below whatever we are getting.

Argument Of Numbers Not Relevant

Also, I want to indicate to the people here, Members of this Assembly, that the argument of numbers is not relevant because, as an individual who represents the Loucheux group who are less than or approximately 3000 people, the argument that people give to me of counting numbers does not mean anything to me, as long as we can provide the services to my people which are less than the numbers that are in Dogrib, which are less than the numbers in Slavey, which are less than the numbers in Chipewyan and even talking about the Cree who are less than 2000.

So, I suggest to people here, to Members of this House and people in the general public, that we should not use the argument of numbers because it is a bad precedent to be using and I think that the arguments and the very nature of the confusion, the controversy that has arisen in other jurisdictions have arisen around numbers, have arisen around the fact that people are saying, "You are shoving things down my throat". Those are the emotional issues that arise. I say to you those types of things I tried to avoid during my discussions with the federal government; I tried to avoid during my negotiations with the federal government. The French Cultural Association of the NWT supported us in that endeavour, supported the fact that we should go forward and get as much recognition for the aboriginal languages.

I believe that what we have done at the moment is the best we can achieve at the moment, but I can guarantee you as I said in the opening statement that there will be no doubt that there is a long fight before us. There is a long struggle before us. The very thing that people have raised here, the idea of having no interpreters for a lady from one of the communities, those are the things we have to address. Those are the types of services this government has to offer to people. We talk about education, yet we have not completed the curriculum materials in aboriginal languages to use in the communities, so that we can hire the teachers to teach the programs. There is also, I believe, a very important precedent being set. The very reason I negotiated the section on French as not being required by our public service was to ensure that whenever we were hiring people in the future that we could use that as a criteria to hire people. My opinion is that that is important. We could ask our public service to learn the aboriginal languages but we also need the training programs to ensure that that takes place.

Opportunity To Learn Must Be Given

So, with all the ideas that are before us, I believe that those types of things are important, they are important to us, they are important to the revival, the improvement of languages. No doubt that, as an individual who does not speak his language very well, if I do not have the opportunity at some time to learn a language or to have the opportunity to see or to have the materials and expertise to teach me that language again, all that expertise will be gone because the real expertise that exists right now in our society in the NWT are the elders. And the elders are not going to be here with us forever. So, we have to teach and train people, our young people, many of you here, that speak the Dene languages. Many of you that speak Inuktitut, you teach your children when they are very young but there are many of us that have not had that opportunity. We did not have it and you are very fortunate that way. And I believe that you have got to give those people that did not have that opportunity the opportunity to have that available to them.

I think it is very important that while I can agree with the principle that we should do more, I do not think that we should give something up that improves that situation for us all. It improves the situation for the natives, the non-natives, the youth, the children, the elders, the opportunity to share that situation. I do not believe that we should throw everything away. I think that principle is an important thing but when you throw away that particular opportunity to begin now, to begin doing things that I believe are very important, crucial to some languages -- I think we cannot throw those things away. I have worked very hard at this situation and there is no doubt that I can say that I worked with the aboriginal organizations as well, but that is irrelevant to the situation right now. The situation is, do we develop the languages further than we have done? Do we make them available to all those people around us, to the public service, to the educational institutions, to be part of the history of the NWT? Or do you just say "Oh, we'll speak it" and as we speak it, it dies off on us? Because there is nothing more than the idea of speaking the language and it has to go further than that.

So, I just want to indicate that when my discussions with the federal government were going on, all the items that you raised were in the forefront. They were the basis on which I went forward and negotiated the agreement and I do not think that anyone should suggest that those issues were not a part of my discussion. I wanted to remind people here and maybe the general public of the fact that this deal that is before us now was in jeopardy. But we almost did not come to this agreement because I was insistent on the idea of recognizing aboriginal languages on the same level as French and English but at the same time the federal government was insistent on no recognition at all. So, from those two positions, this is the position we have come up with and I believe that, had I been able ever to ensure that the aboriginal languages were stated in the bill before the House of Commons, stated in the bill before this House right now and could have been recognized on the same level as French and English in the constitution, we could have had an amendment to the constitution being prepared. By all means it would have been here but it is clear from my discussions, it is clear from the Secretary of State, and I must say that the Prime Minister was involved, that they are not prepared to proceed any further than what we have. I believe that what we have got really is indicative of the future of aboriginal peoples particularly in the North and, like Mr. Wah-Shee has stated, I am not really worried about what the national situation is, I am worried about the people of the North and I am worried about the situation that exists in the North. In all my discussions that was of primary concern. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gargan): Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Erkloo.

MR. ERKLOO: (No translation)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gargan): Thank you, Mr. Erkloo. General comments. Does the committee wish to report progress? Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman, could I just have a moment to say a few things before we report progress?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gargan): Is it agreed by the Members?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gargan): Okay, go ahead, Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to clarify a few things. First of all, there was the impression given today that the passage of this bill will require local governments to enact by-laws in French. I believe the example given was the dog by-law and I think it should be pointed out to the public and the Members of this House that the ordinance will not apply to the laws of local governments. Although I do believe that we have the flexibility if we wished in Part I, which deals with aboriginal languages, to require local governments to enact, to have their proceedings and their publications in aboriginal languages but it is not a requirement of the French section of the official language legislation.

The other thing I would just like to mention is that there was a concern expressed that this money would be swallowed up in administration costs and I would like to say I do agree with this concern but I would like to point out that I think so far we have been able to make pretty good use of the indigenous language fund to support community based projects and enhancement. It was a million dollars that was spent. There was no erosion of those funds due to administration costs. The administration was provided by existing resources within the government. Apart from the costs of bringing a review committee together of fluent linguists to advise on how we should best spend the money, the vast bulk of those funds went into actual programs and I would certainly hope we would spend the additional moneys in the same manner.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify, if I gave the wrong impression, that I did not say that I do not believe that we should publish in aboriginal languages. I said that I believed that we may want to have more flexibility than official languages, a la French, would give us. Rather than having armies of native people working in windowless rooms to translate regulations and the Northwest Territories Gazette, that we may want to use the flexibility in this ordinance to put the money first into developing a language at the community level, developing an orthography for languages that are not yet capable of being produced in writing at all. Then in the long run we may wish to publish as we will be required to do in French by this legislation. I think it is a matter of priority in my view, Mr. Chairman. I believe the communities would put their priorities differently than written materials and translation of laws and regulations at this point in time. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Erkloo): Thank you. Does the committee wish to report progress?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

ITEM 16: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Erkloo.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILL 9-84(2), OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE

MR. ERKLOO: (Translation) Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 9-84(2) and wishes to report progress.

Motion To Accept Report Of Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Members have heard the report of the chairman of the committee of the whole. Are you agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any announcements from the floor? Mr. Clerk, announcements and orders of the day.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): There will be a meeting of the standing committee on legislation tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. in the board room on the fourth floor of the Laing Building.

ITEM 19: ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the day for Thursday, June 28th at 1:00 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Members' Replies
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Oral Questions
5. Written Questions
6. Returns
7. Petitions
8. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
9. Tabling of Documents
10. Notices of Motion
11. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
12. Motions
13. First Reading of Bills
14. Second Reading of Bills
15. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: Bill 9-84(2)
16. Report of Committee of the Whole
17. Third Reading of Bills
18. Assent to Bills
19. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, June 28th at 1:00 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT