

Tabling Statement

Mr. Speaker,

In accordance with Rule 57(10) I wish to table the following responses to petitions:

Petition 2-90(1)	Presented by Mr. Kilabuk
Petition 5-90(1)	Presented by Mr. Pudluk
Petitino 6-90(1)	Presented by Mr. Arlooktoo
Petition 7-90(1)	Presented by Mr. Patterson

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Petition tabled by: Mr. Kilabuk on Feb. 21, 1990.

Response by: The Honourable Gordon Wray
Minister of Economic Development
and Tourism.

To Establish a Co-op in Clyde River

In acknowledgement of the petition to establish a Co-operative in Clyde River, including the request for financial assistance in the amount of \$20,000.00 (twenty thousand dollars), I have notified our Regional Office in Iqaluit.

My regional staff will work with the Co-operative Board of Directors in developing a plan and in establishing contact with Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. to ensure that the petition receives full consideration.

Based on the development plan and the consultation process, we will be able to determine whether the level of support requested is sufficient and the time frame within which the community's request can be accommodated.

The request is in keeping with our strategy to support level three communities. To this end, we will do every thing we can to help the community achieve its goals while ensuring the long term viability of the project.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Petition tabled by Mr. Pudluk on March 21, 1990.

Response by the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi
Minister of Education

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In response to the petition tabled by Mr. Pudluk, Member for High Arctic, my officials have met with the Arctic College students in Fort Smith in December 1989 to discuss their concerns. There are certain concerns raised by the students that we have been able to take action on while other concerns will take longer to resolve.

The following is a summary of the concerns and issues raised in the petition and a response to each concern.

1. The administration of financial assistance should be decentralized to the regional campuses of Arctic College to avoid extensive delays in issuing funds to students from Yellowknife.

Response - the recommendation is not feasible because: (1) the resources are not available for the campuses to administer the program; (2) with many campuses involved, there is a risk that campuses may not administer the program consistently; and (3) less than 25% of the Program's students attend Arctic College, therefore, moving the administrative functions to the campuses would not help the majority of students.

- instead of decentralization, the Department is reviewing its administrative systems to see where improvements can make the process more efficient. New procedures are planned for the 1990-91 school year that would benefit all students. The Department is also exploring the possibility of having Advanced Education staff at each of the major campuses including Arctic College to assist students on registration day.

2. The petition calls for information on special allowances and appeal procedures to be included on the application form because the information is currently not advertised widely.

Response - information currently available on special allowances and appeals needs to be amended. We have amended the brochures that accompany the applications to make the availability of special allowances more self explanatory.

- starting in the 1990-91 school year, the availability of special allowances will be reinforced in correspondence with students, media advertisements will be undertaken and the current information on appeal procedures will be expanded.

3. The petition calls for the University College Entrance Preparation Program agreement (U.C.E.P.) between the Government of the N.W.T. and Indian Affairs to be signed before August each year so students can receive prompt confirmation of funding

Response - arrangements have recently been made with Indian Affairs to have the U.C.E.P. agreement signed by March 31, 1990. DIAND will transfer the initial portion of funds by May 31, 1990 which will allow for early confirmation of funding to eligible candidates.

4. A settlement allowance should be provided to help compensate for the cost of living for students off the highway system who do not get Arctic College subsidized meals.

Response - this is not necessary. The existing Student Financial Assistance program includes special allowances to help students living in high cost communities. Rather than providing flat rate settlement allowances, the existing program is sufficiently flexible to take into account the unique circumstance of each student.

5. Local students at the regional campuses should be provided with G.N.W.T. housing and subsidies.

Response - due to limited accommodation the College has a policy that reserves subsidized housing for out of town students. Local native students can be provided with an accommodation allowance to help meet the cost of renting through the private market.

6. The G.N.W.T. should provide student financial assistance to all native people to upgrade themselves to the Grade 12 level and influence the federal government to do this as well.

Response - the Student Financial Assistance Program only has resources to fund post-secondary education, therefore, there does not appear to be any immediate alternative to the U.C.E.P. program which is administered on behalf of the federal government. In accordance with the U.C.E.P. guidelines, only status Indian and Inuit students who are 20 years of age and who have completed Grade 11 are eligible for sponsorship.

- the Department will research the feasibility of providing U.C.E.P. type benefits to students who do not meet the U.C.E.P. eligibility criteria. In particular, the Department will investigate the possibility of Canada Assistance Plan cost sharing for Social Assistance recipients who wish to enrol in academic upgrading.

7. The G.N.W.T. and Federal Government should evaluate the administration of student financial assistance programs so students can receive their funding promptly. Further, the governments should conduct a study to determine the regional and community economic differences and funding levels should take those differences into consideration.

Response - the Department is reviewing the administrative procedures of the Student Financial Assistance Program and hopes to make changes for the 1990-91 school year that will facilitate the funding process.

- reviewing the regional and community economic differences to determine funding levels is not necessary. The existing Student Financial Assistance program includes special allowances to help students in high cost communities. The existing program has sufficient flexibility to take into account the unique financial needs of each student.

8. Single students should receive an increase in living allowance rates.

Response - the financial needs survey conducted by the Department showed that the average single student is receiving an adequate level of monthly support. The survey showed, on the other hand, that students with dependents require increased support, therefore, their allowance rates were increased.

- accommodation allowances are available for those single students whose monthly living allowance is inadequate to help meet their essential monthly living expenses.

9. The petition requests that non-native students on loans receive the same level of assistance as native students.

Response - the supplementary grant program is an affirmative action program designed to ameliorate the conditions of native people by providing extra allowances to native students.

- non-native students receive adequate assistance as a needs assessed loan is available to supplement the primary loan and secondary loan awards.

- in addition, the Department is reluctant to increase loans due to a concern over the debt load that students will face upon graduation. Throughout Canada, provincial and federal officials have raised concerns over the debt load of students and their inability to repay large debts.

10. The same policies and procedures should be utilized to process funds for loan students as grant students.

Response - it is not possible to use the same procedures to process funds for natives and non-natives because they receive different types of funding. Loan funds take longer to process because students must submit an original witnessed loan agreement before a loan cheque can be requested for the student. The loan agreement specifies the amount of the loan and includes the terms and conditions of the loan.

- grants, on the other hand, do not require an agreement to be signed, therefore, grants funds to natives and non-natives can be processed more quickly than loan funds.

11. The G.N.W.T. and Arctic College should determine the day care facility and allowance needs of students and Arctic College should administer day care allowances.

Response - the Department provides a childcare allowance to native students with dependants under twelve years of age. All students can also apply for assistance through the Interim Child Day Care Assistance Program which is administered by the Department of Social Services.

- in terms of facilities, Arctic College does not have the resources to operate childcare facilities, therefore, students must utilize childcare services available in the communities. The College will not compete with private day care facilities.

In closing, my officials are reviewing administrative systems and procedures to see how improvements can be made to facilitate the funding process for all students. My officials are also modifying the information brochures to provide details on all funding and appeal procedures in a more self-explanatory manner. The funding levels will be examined every two years to ensure that assistance levels are adequate to meet the needs of students. I am confident that our Student Financial Assistance Program is and will continue to be the best student aid program in the country.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Petition tabled by Mr. Arlooktoo on March 28, 1990

Response by the Honourable Jeannie Marie-Jewell
Minister of Social Services

DETOXIFICATION CENTRE FOR THE BAFFIN REGION

I share Mr. Arlooktoo's concerns about the problems with alcohol and drugs in the Baffin region.

The Department of Social Services has made a commitment to ensure that an alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation centre is constructed to serve the needs of the people in the Eastern Arctic. Funding has been identified, both from the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. Tuvvik, the local alcohol committee in Iqaluit, has been given responsibility for the project.

Once completed, the new alcohol treatment facility will provide counselling and rehabilitation for anyone with dependency or addiction problems.

The Department of Social Services is responsible to provide community-based counselling programs and residential treatment centres. Detoxification centres are not normally part of these services; these are hospital-based programs mandated to the Department of Health.

Petition tabled by Mr. Patterson on April 4, 1990.

Response by the Honourable Titus Allooloo
Minister of Culture and Communications

INUKTITUT AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

I am pleased to report that the Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Aboriginal Languages, of which I was the Chairman, presented its report to the Legislative Assembly on April 5, 1990. This report contained a number of recommendations including one that the Legislative Assembly consider amending the Official Languages Act to make Inuktitut, and also Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in and Slavey official languages of the Northwest Territories.

On April 6, 1990, the Legislative Assembly gave first, second and third reading to An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act. This act contained a number of important amendments. The most important of these recommendations made Inuktitut and also Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in and Slavey official languages of the Northwest Territories.