

**Report of the
Standing Committee
on
Government
Operations**

Report on the 1996/97 Mid-Year
Review

October 15, 1996



Northwest
Territories Legislative Assembly

Standing Committee on Government Operations

October 15, 1996

THE HONOURABLE SAM GARGAN, M.L.A.
SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker,

Your Standing Committee on Government Operations has the honour of presenting its Report on the 1996-97 Mid-Year Review to the NWT Legislative Assembly, and commends it to the House.

Roy Erasmus, M.L.A.
Chair



**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Roy Erasmus
M.L.A. Yellowknife North
Chair

Kevin O'Brien
M.L.A. Kivallivik
Deputy Chair

Tommy Enuaraq
M.L.A. Baffin Central

Seamus Henry
M.L.A. Yellowknife South

David Krutko
M.L.A. Mackenzie Delta

Michael Miltenberger
M.L.A. Thebacha

Edward Picco
M.L.A. Iqaluit

Alternate Members

Levi Barnabas
M.L.A. High Arctic

Jake Ootes
M.L.A. Yellowknife Centre

Floyd Roland
M.L.A. Inuvik

Staff Members

Doug Schauerte
Committee Clerk

Robert Slaven
Committee Researcher

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

REPORT ON THE 1996-97 MID-YEAR REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has the responsibility to oversee the budgets and expenditures of the Legislative Assembly, as well as agencies including the NWT Power Corporation, the Workers' Compensation Board, and the Public Utilities Board. For the purposes of this mid-year review, however, the Committee has chosen to examine only the Legislative Assembly.

The Standing Committee is also responsible for dealing with government-wide issues that do not fit within the mandate of the Standing Committees on Infrastructure, Social Programs, or Resource Management and Development. The review of the Affirmative Action policy that is underway is one such issue, and the Committee felt that it should also be addressed in this report.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The variance reports provided to the Committee included a projected shortfall of \$350,000 in the Legislative Assembly's budget for 1996-97. Much of the extra cost is related to committees meeting more often than was originally expected in the budget.

On the other hand, Committee Members noted that most of the reductions in contractual costs recommended during the business plan review process earlier this year are being achieved, and that cuts to Members' compensation and pensions were also achieved as planned. Final calculations of the actual savings from reductions to Members' pensions will be forthcoming from the administrators of the pension plan.

Committee Members also noted a concern regarding affirmative action levels among employees of the Legislative Assembly.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY REVIEW

In 1989, the Government implemented the Affirmative Action policy, which included a provision for the policy to be reviewed in 1994. A comprehensive review was undertaken in 1994/95. In June, the Chairman of the Financial Management Board presented a draft report on the review of the Affirmative Action Policy to the Standing Committee.

Committee Members had previously expressed concerns about the Policy. All noted that the Policy did not work; that is, it did not raise levels of employment within the GNWT for affected groups significantly. Members noted that the problem was especially serious for professional and management positions. The Standing Committee agreed that a broader approach is needed. Members suggested that a broad Northern Employment Policy be developed. Such a policy would recognize that hiring practices are only one part of achieving the goal of a public service representative of the population it serves. Education and career training are equally important issues that must be addressed in order to attain that goal, and a broader employment policy would include measures to deal with those issues.

The Committee also agreed that such a policy would be more effective if more of the implementation was handled at the regional or community level. Members suggested that one reason the policy has not been effective to date is its 'top-down' nature.

The Committee was disappointed that the draft report, rather than providing options and suggested courses of action, merely seemed to ask more questions. The Chairman of the FMB asked for direction from the Committee, and following the June meeting, the Standing Committee presented its concerns to the Chairman. Committee Members expect to see a new draft of the policy review this fall.

WITNESSES

Legislative Assembly

Hon. Samuel Gargan, Speaker

Mr. David Hamilton, Clerk

Mr. Myles Moreside, Director, Finance and Administration