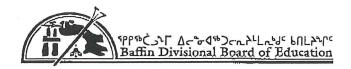
TABLED DOCUMENT NO.

27-13(5) TABLED ON JAN 29 1998





January 29, 1998

JAN-29-98 THU 15:36

Ed Picco, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Government of the N.T., Yellowknife



Housing Issues-Baffin Divisional Education Council

Thank you for your request regarding whether housing continues to be an issue for our educational staff and operation in the Baffin. The simple answer is that it is a major factor what we consider to be a trend contributing to increased difficulties in the provision of a quality educational system required for Nunavut residents. By this I mean that housing cannot be looked at in isolation of reduced wages and benefits. as they are linked, but the specific issues of quality, quantity and cost are problematic.

I am very interested in discussing this issue in greater detail, as many instances regarding housing would require case by case studies to fully explain their complexity and the strain these issues place on staff, our organization, and ultimately the students we educate. Having recently visited Igloolik and had meetings with staffs in Igaluit, I can assure you that staff are very stressed, and housing is one factor contributing to this tension.

Current limiting factors regarding housing our staff must deal with include:

- •Quality of housing related to both costs and availability
- Maintenance options and availability
- •Limited choice of units, including size and number of bedrooms
- -Rent costs in relation to salary and discretionary income
- Escalating utility and rental costs

Pond Inlet continues to be a community where it could be assessed that our staff have been 'put to ransom' over the initiative of the Co-Op buying many of the G.N.W.T.'s houses and then stating that rents must be dramatically raised due to unforeseen costs associated with being a landlord. While the G.N.W.T. has attempted to intervene and assist in this situation, it is confusing to our Board/Council why the G.N.W.T. is attempting to remove itself from the provision of housing, and the Government of Nunavut will likely assume this role again, as per the recommendations in Footprints II.

It is also difficult for some of our staff to consider being home owners, given current salaries, debts associated with student loans, community 'health', and a variety of other factors that contribute to the debate of whether home ownership equals commitment to community. Our Board/Council would argue that these are not necessarily linked.

Our staff is also very concerned about the impact housing changes have had on our ability to retain and when necessary rehire or hire additional staff for various Baffin communities. This is one of the issues we see as critical in the current cost-cutting environment, and while we appreciate that the G.N.W.T. must be efficient managers and make tough decisions given the 'bigger picture', we are concerned that current housing policy may make staffing a virtual impossibility in some situations.

I realize this is rather general, but would be pleased to provide additional detail, if required.

Dine Office Lome Levy

Assistant Dir

B.D.E.C.