

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Paul Quassa
(Aggu)

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(Quttiktuq)
*Deputy Premier; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation*

Joelie Kaernek
(Amittuq)

David Qamaniq
(Tununiq)

Mila Kamingoak
(Kugluktuk)

Emiliano Qirngnuq
(Netsilik)

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(Gjoa Haven)
Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Pauloosie Keyootak
(Uqqummiut)

Allan Rumbolt
(Hudson Bay)
*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the
Committee of the Whole*

Pat Angnakak
(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu)
Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)
*Minister of Community and
Government Services; Minister of
Human Resources*

Hon. Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)
*Premier; Minister of Executive and
Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of
Energy; Minister of Environment; Minister
responsible for Aboriginal Affairs;
Minister responsible for the Utility Rates
Review Council*

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak
(Cambridge Bay)
*Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for
Labour; Minister responsible for the Qulliq
Energy Corporation*

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Hon. George Hickes
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)
*Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial
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Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister
responsible for Suicide Prevention; Minister
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(Pangnirtung)

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)
*Government House Leader; Minister of
Family Services; Minister responsible for
Homelessness; Minister responsible for
Immigration; Minister responsible for the
Status of Women*

Hon. David Joanasié
(South Baffin)
*Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister
of Education; Minister of Languages*

Hon. Patterk Netser
(Aivilik)

*Minister responsible for Nunavut
Arctic College; Minister responsible for
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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, February 28, 2020**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasié, Ms. Mila Kamingoak, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk, Hon. Patterk Netser, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 9:00*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Before we proceed, I ask Member Keyootak to say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, I wish to make a brief statement. We have all had mothers. Mothers raise their children. Let's express our appreciation in our mothers, as we have all had mothers, and we were well taken care of when we were children. The same thing goes for mothers who raise their children today. Let us remember them today.

>>*Applause*

I now recognize Member Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. Mr. Speaker, I request consent of this Assembly to go to Item 5 in the *Orders of the Day*. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed to Item 5. Do you agree? Are there any nays? Please proceed, Member Joanasié.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I spoke about music and as the Qilaut contest winners are in the gallery, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize them, starting with Jo Ellen Etuangat, who is originally from Arviat. Welcome.

>>*Applause*

The other one is Becky Han and her children are also here. Welcome.

>> *Applause*

Daniel Taukie, who is from my community of Kinngait.

>> *Applause*

Angela Amarualik.

>> *Applause*

Jalen Kunuk.

>> *Applause*

Also staff from the Department of Culture and Heritage, Tocasie Burke and Saa Pitsiulak. Welcome to the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the gallery. We are proud of you for using Inuit culture and songs.

(interpretation ends) Orders of the day. (interpretation) Member Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There will be a concert tonight and I would like to welcome them to Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, I again request consent of this Assembly to go directly to Item 19 in the *Orders of the Day*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 in the *Orders of the Day*. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Let's proceed to Item 19. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 39 (interpretation) and 40 with Mr. Akoak in the Chair.

I ask members to remain in their seats as we will proceed directly to Committee of the Whole.

(interpretation ends) Sergeant-at-Arms.

Item 19: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Good morning, colleagues, Inuit, and Nunavummiut. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the

following items to deal with: Bills 39 and 40. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of Bill 39 and the 2020-21 Main Estimates for the Department of Community and Government Services, followed by the Department of Education. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 39?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 39 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2020-2021 – Community and Government Services – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would now like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister and his officials go to the witness table?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

For the record, Minister Kusugak, please introduce your officials. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is my Deputy of Community and Government Services, Ms. Constance Hourie, and to my left, Mr. Chairman, no he is not a Zamboni driver, but it is Eiryn Devereaux, Assistant Deputy Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Laughter*

Chairman: Thank you. It must be a Friday morning.

Thank you. We are now on page J-7. Infrastructure. First name on my list, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I didn't have any more questions. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Rumbolt. Next name, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Good morning, minister and your officials, Ms. Hourie and Mr. Devereaux.

First, I would like to thank the minister for his comments yesterday in making a commitment to reduce the reliance on contract employees. I can't express how pleased I am to hear that and I look forward to seeing progress in that area.

Before I go into my questions, I would also to thank Mr. Devereaux for being such an upstanding citizen. On a number of occasions I have come across Mr. Devereaux volunteering, not just with himself but with his family. I think that's an excellent standard to set for our youth and I appreciate that, and I will do my best to do the same with my young family.

I would like to continue on the theme of contract employees. Yesterday the minister had indicated that there was a number within the Information Management and Information Technology Branch. My first question is: are there currently any contract employees within the Infrastructure Branch? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that there might be a couple, two or three, which is not uncommon, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know where to go from there. Are these contract employees project managers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Yes, they are, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that project managers are crucial in achieving our capital projects. Are there any full-time indeterminate project managers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course there are, Mr. Chairman. We have a lot of non-contract workers, but it's inevitable that our department along with many other departments are going to have contract workers. There are no two ways around it. In the north we have a lot of work to do; our department is tasked with many projects we have on the go. We have to have project managers if we want these projects to go through. Unfortunately at this time some of them, two or three of them, have to be

filled through contracts, but yes, we have non-contract project managers, of course, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is on the service contract budget of \$45 million. I'm going to assume that it's for leasing of government assets. Would the minister be able to provide us with a breakdown of what exactly that \$45 million is for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all encompassing, including some of the items that my colleague mentioned, but there are also as-and-when contracts included in there. There are a number of things that are included in that number, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As-and-when seems a bit of a vague term. Is that, for example, when a standing offer agreement would be used for contract employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, when you break it down, it makes sense. You don't need snow removal all the time, but as and when you need it, you need to hire somebody to come in and remove your snow. You might need to get some extra janitors if there's flooding or something like that, and with heating and plumbing. There are instances where we may not need a person all the time, but as and when we need them, in cases of emergencies or situations where we do need them, we would work with them on that. It's the best way we can do it without getting into long-term contracts and not necessarily needing people full time to remove snow. You would use it in winter after blizzards, but you definitely don't need it in the summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the \$45 million budget for the service contracts, I know the minister would not have on hand a detailed listing of everything that budget is for, but would the minister be able to provide us with a breakdown at a later date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be glad to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, are you done? Okay. The next name on my list, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a comment while we are on infrastructure. I got a call from the mayor of Rankin Inlet. The hamlet council had a meeting on the budget for the Government of Nunavut. They have concerns, and as the former mayor, I understand that the minister will have full knowledge.

Rankin Inlet is going through a forced growth and the large municipalities, Arviat, Rankin Inlet, Baker Lake, and others across the territory, are being funded the same as smaller communities. For example, Rankin Inlet is constantly fundraising in recreation. This year alone Rankin Inlet volunteers raised \$500,000 and that is used to keep the arena open and recreation open for youth, but it does take a toll on the recreation staff and other volunteers.

With the forced growth like the mine, there are more trucks and the roads are not well maintained sometimes because of the cost of the roads. The fire department is constantly fundraising to train. I understand, as the former mayor, the minister is well aware of the issues and I'm positive he will look into it. There could be a model or a structure where these large municipalities can have adequate funding. That's my comment and thank you for allowing me to speak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments from my colleague. I understand the municipality; I am one of the other MLAs for Rankin Inlet South and I see the forced growth that is happening there. I saw it when it was happening in Baker Lake.

This is something that is very hard for municipalities to endure because it does get heavy on the municipalities. Roads need to be maintained, water needs to be delivered, and snow needs to be removed, and so on. The pressures increase very rapidly when you look at it through the schools and the health centres and everything else in the community. The pressures that get put on that by no fault of the municipality is one of the things that our department has been working with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities and the association of administrators, along with our staff.

We are looking at the current funding formula that we do have. We do know it needs to be changed. We do know we need to make some improvements and we are going through that process right now and trying to see what is the fair balance for everybody. We would like to fund everybody per capita, but in listening to the mayors and SAOs and the public, that is not how it is working. As I had mentioned earlier in the week while I was sitting here, that is something we are looking at and I hope at the end of the day that we will be able to come up with something that benefits all municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and your officials.

(interpretation ends) On page 220, one of your priorities for the upcoming year is to “Pursue the on-time and on-budget project delivery for Nunavut Fibre Infrastructure Projects.” My first question, it says “projects,” so there is more than one. What are the Nunavut fibre infrastructure projects? I know that the Nuuk fibre is one. I’m wondering what the other ones are. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I believe it is “project” like you do. I believe that it is a typo. We are working on that project, but we are taking a look at other ways of delivering the fibre project. There was an announcement during the show in Ottawa that the Kivalliq Inuit Association was looking at this fibre-hydro or power project going up along the Hudson Bay coast. That is one of the things we are also looking at to see if that may be another alternative that we would pursue, but right now it is just one project, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks for clarifying that.

I’m going to refer to a letter recently provided to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts which details information about this fibre project and how it came about. On page 5 of the letter it mentions that “During fall 2018, the GN was aware that the federal funding support, 75 percent, would be potentially impacted in relation to the upcoming federal election and despite only being partially advanced through the planning phase, CGS presented the project application for federal funding consideration at this point in time to mitigate against the risk of not having federal funding approval in place prior to federal election.”

That statement really interests me because my understanding is that there was a signed bilateral agreement over 10 years, signed by the Liberal government in March 2018, for \$566 million. If there was a different government elected, how does that work? Does this money evaporate if there was a Conservative government or if there was an NDP government put in place? Does this money go away? Does the new federal government simply rip up existing bilateral agreements with provinces and territories? This is the capital planning process, so I would like to understand it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are just no guarantees when things like that happen. They may make changes to it with the new government, not to say it has, but there's that possibility. In terms of this agreement, it is what is called an umbrella agreement, so there could be changes made to it or if something would have happened and there was a new government, it might have made working on this a little different or a little harder and more abrasive and maybe not come forward. That was the work behind that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Later on in the same page it says, "Given the planning phase was not 100 percent completed (still awaiting the marine engineer's survey report, etcetera) the scope, definition, and cost modelling in fall 2018 was not at a more robust stage as we typically would experience with a traditional GN Vote 2 capital project like a health centre or a school." Reading this all together, I believe that, for political considerations and that the election was coming up and that there was some need for security, decisions were made to shortcut the capital planning process.

On the one hand, if you want to build a new school in Kugluktuk or Arviat, the capital planning process is very strict. You have to go through the planning process, you can't skip ahead a year, but here we have a project that equalled the equivalent of four or five schools together in terms of the magnitude. For political reasons or political considerations, it was permitted to jump ahead and go ahead without the planning process being completed.

In terms of the capital planning process within the government, is this something that is regularly done? Is there a way for an MLA such as myself to say, "Well, I'm worried that my school is not going to be approved in the next Nunavut government and we have an election coming up in 2021. Can we skip the planning phase for my school because I'm worried that the next group of MLAs who are elected may not approve it?" I'm trying to understand this as it pertains to the capital planning process, which is under this division. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: No, Mr. Chairman. No, it wouldn't be that way. Mr. Chairman, maybe I can get Mr. Devereaux to get into it in a little more detail through you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. To the man who is not a Zamboni driver, Mr. Devereaux.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. There are a few questions in there, one around the planning process for major capital projects,

whether it's a new school, a new health centre, or in this case something very unique to Nunavut in a large fibre infrastructure project. I don't think on our side at CGS we never ascertained that we would not complete 100 percent of the planning associated with this project before we move into a design phase.

I think it has been discussed, and there's information around what occurred in 2018 with the federal election and certainly the government at the time had a very strong mandate around capital investment in rural and remote communities for broadband connectivity. Certainly the federal government had an interest in seeing fibre come to Nunavut, the last jurisdiction in Canada that does not have the fibre connection. Strategically there was motivation if the federal government was appeased to provide that funding approval to try to take advantage of that funding. I think it was more of pursuing a funding opportunity that may not exist six months later.

At that point in time, as we provided information in the letter, that was referenced, we were not 100 percent through the planning phase. We were probably two-thirds or so through the planning phase and recognized there was still some scope and costing that would have to evolve and always our intention to complete that and always are understanding that we had to come back to the Assembly before this group to seek the additional capital funds before this project would grow legs and go anywhere. There was always the known opportunity that the Assembly may or may not approve the remainder of funding and hence the project would not go through.

After the federal announcement, we continued, as was mentioned, to undertake scope definition and we continued to work on all of the aspects that we would for any capital project to better define scoping cost and that led us to where we were when we came into the Assembly last fall for the capital estimates to further define this project. We're really still in the planning phase for this project. We're anticipating this fall going to the market to move into the design phase. Until a contract is executed for design and/or construction, we're still in that planning phase to see if this is the right project.

The good news is that the funding is in place now, so we have the opportunity to potentially deliver a very strategic and a very important major capital project to bring high-speed fibre to Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that explanation. Further on, so you continue the planning phase and it's detailed in this letter. It was at a later date, in May 2019, that your cost estimates were updated from \$120 million to \$210 million. I'll note that by this time funding had already been committed and there were already decisions made that this was the model to take. The minister just mentioned that a possible private sector investment similar to the Kivalliq is on the table, but my understanding of this project as it's explained is that it's 100 percent government-own. There is no private sector ownership.

When you look at that increase, \$120 million to \$210 million, it's all on the backs of the Nunavut government. Yes, there's funding from the federal government, but that's our money anyway, as I see it, under the bilateral agreement where it's up to the Nunavut government to determine how to spend it.

On the next page, answer to page 3 in terms of whether this was compliant with the *Financial Administration Manual* in terms of the change to the scope and cost, not only did the project increase to \$210 million; two communities suddenly dropped off the project list, being Cape Dorset and Sanikiluaq.

In terms of *Financial Administration Manual* Directive 302, your letter says, "CGS understands that the department is in compliance with FAM 302 as the department presented and sought approval of the proposed changes in scope and cost to both the Financial Management Board fall 2019 and all Legislative Assembly Members' fall session 2019."

I don't recall being given a chance to approve the changes to scope and budget in fall session 2019 because the department did not come forward for any additional funding under this project. I wonder if they could clarify this particular part that all Legislative Assembly members, during the fall session, were given a chance to approve the changes to scope and budget in compliance with the *Financial Administration Manual*.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Devereaux respond to that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. In the fall of 2019 the department provided information to the Assembly around the fibre project and the change in the scope on the increase to the cost estimate and that was reflected in the documents that would have been shared.

I'm thinking that the question ties to the fact that in the fall 2019 appropriations, there wasn't a request for any additional new money in that upcoming capital year because the increase and the ask for GN Vote 2 would have been in out years, in years 2, 3 and 4, and in the previously approved five-year capital plan.

The information in terms of the change of scope and the reduction of a few of the communities, Sanikiluaq and Cape Dorset, would have been informed through the correspondence to the Assembly, but I do agree that the vote that occurred that had shown a five-year capital plan and the increase to the GN Vote 2 portion was in subsequent years out. This Assembly will have the opportunity to decide to vote those funds in the future years.

I guess that there was previously approved money in the fall of 2018 based upon the \$120 million capital project. We came before the Assembly in the fall of 2019. That money too would have to be appropriated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I guess this is an area where I'll plan to seek further clarification in terms of whether the *Financial Administration Manual* was complied with because I don't believe it was. I believe it has been clear since the beginning that this project was being pushed. The capital planning process being what it is and for whatever reasons, decisions had been made that it should go ahead.

Who is the client department for this project? I'm looking at the substantiation sheet and it mentions a lot about health care and the benefits from fibre to health care. Is the client department CGS or is it Health or is it Education? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The client department is CGS, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You go on later in this letter under item No. 10 regarding the ownership of the asset. It says here, "GN will retain full ownership of the infrastructure. This ownership of capital will allow the GN to ensure pricing models for residential, commercial and institutional broadband customers are affordable and do not include a capital debt repayment pricing component relative to the initial capital investment." Reading this statement, private ownership of telecoms infrastructure does not lead to affordable outcomes for broadband customers. How do we square this with what is happening in the Kivalliq right now, where the Kivalliq Inuit Association is pursuing broadband asset development from a private sector perspective? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's something we're working on right now and I'll be more than happy to share with my colleague when we get more details on that issue, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think it would be interesting to see what the minister can provide because the way I read this, if it

doesn't make sense for the private sector to invest in telecoms, then maybe we have to re-evaluate that we're approaching things here in Nunavut because they are privately owned assets.

I guess my final question is it presents three options that are being looked at, this is for the management and governance of the asset: GN ownership, a Crown corporation, and private ownership. Would the minister be able to look into partial private ownership of the asset? It could end up with the best of both worlds if you're able to sell off a 50 percent, for example, stake or 49 percent stake in the asset. It would reduce our capital burn and maybe give us some more. It may be a model to consider. That's my final question on this one. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the questioning on this. It's very important for us to know the kind of interest out there. Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of interest out there on this topic. We get approached a lot from the private sector and the public enquiring about this fibre and where we are with it and where we want to go with it.

We have an opportunity here over the next 12 to 18 months to converse with the public sector and the private sector to see what's the best possible way to do this where maybe we can deliver part of it or all of it or most of it or some of it or none of it and the private sector could be involved. We're going to take the next 12 to 18 months to do that. We will communicate with interested with interested people out there, interested private sector out there to see how we can best deliver this so that the public is best impacted by this, Mr. Chairman.

It's something we will look at and as I assured my member that we will keep him abreast on where we are on this matter and with all the other stuff we will be bringing, I'll make sure that when there are updates to give on this sector, I'll be more than happy to provide it with my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I say "good morning" to the minister and his officials.

With the amendment to page G-7, deputy minister's office, can the minister clarify what this is referring to, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): The office of the deputy minister is located here in Iqaluit, and if you want to know where it is located, it is in the Brown building and the office consists of IT staff and our staff with various divisions. The office houses my

deputy minister along with two assistant deputy ministers as a CGS office, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How will this be set up? I don't see night shifts and I would like to request information, hence my question. Is there going to be an addition or renovations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I apologize since I don't quite understand why he thinks an addition is needed. In reading G-7, I don't quite understand his question. Perhaps he can point it out as to which one it is, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wording is what I am looking at. As the minister doesn't understand, I am trying to clearly ask about it. Is it listed in the business plan? As buildings usually need maintenance and sometimes need improvements, is this in the business plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for the clarification. Our office has regional offices that also need improvements and our regional offices also have divisions that have to work together. We try to keep them together by purchasing new desks, by new carpets, as these are part of the work required for the upkeep. Further, the assets of the office that have to be used for operations, they all need planning. The funds are allocated towards our regional offices and the improvements that are required and for other offices and employees are sometimes transferred to other offices. That is what the funds are allotted for, that he mentioned, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak. Oh, sorry. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for giving me a new name.

My second question relates to capital funds that our colleague for Arviat and Whale Cove asked about. Based on my understanding, it is for the fibre optic project based on the funds listed in the capital projects. My other question is: with this being listed in the capital plans for the fibre optic linkage, is there any other capital project envisioned here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We usually deal with government infrastructure and we also work with different departments like Education, Health, and so on. We work with them when they are proceeding with capital projects within Nunavut like marine infrastructure, correctional facilities, and so on. Our office manages the projects and we monitor the work for the duration of the project, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to fibre optic linkage, when the project is completed, is there any other capital project under consideration for improvements? I would like to understand this, hence my question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood your question, we have ongoing capital projects in Nunavut and there's a variety. We also deal with emergency repairs as they crop up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to another subject. Again, in the same sentence, I would like further information. I'll read this in English, as I have been taught to speak English, so that it comes across clear, (interpretation ends) "Comprehensive infrastructure services to all client departments and agencies, with the exception of Nunavut Housing and the Qulliq Energy Corporation." (interpretation) What exactly does that mean? Mr. Chairman, that's my question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Nunavut Housing Corporation usually have their own staff who deal with and review anything that is required. For anything else, the other departments, for example, with the design of the building to the completion of a project, surveying the land, the foundation, setting up contracts so that they can build the infrastructure right from the beginning to the end and to occupation, there's an ongoing review of those projects and that's under our department. The Nunavut Housing Corporation and Qulliq Energy have their own staff that deal with their projects, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure that there's quite a lot of work that's put in when there's a requirement to construct buildings and so on. That's just a comment.

In your business plan on page 218 the Office of the Fire Marshal requested funding in 2019-2020 and if I can do the math, I think it's \$1,362,000. There are no figures for the following three fiscal years. Why is it like that? Are they not expecting further expenditures or will there be an amount identified closer to those fiscal years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I can refer it to my deputy minister to my left, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. When the department came forward with the new chief building officials' office at that time in terms of the main estimates, how we used to report and request appropriations, we had multiple lines for the various disciplines within safety services. This past year we're simply just trying to consolidation. When you look at the prior three years for all of those business line items that fall under safety services, you will see that the prior year's was based upon a different reporting model. We're simply just trying to consolidate them all instead of having to report four and five different line items under the Safety Services Division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The second item is the Fire Protection Strategy. It also includes a written section, although the figures are not the same. This other matter relates to identifying issues for firefighting, as it too has an overall amount, although the figures don't match. Is this in the same boat as what I asked about previously about fire marshal's office? Are the figures the same as what is listed in the figures? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the figures are the same, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak to safety services listed on page 219. There are no figures for 2019-2020. In thinking about this, I imagine safety issues will arise, and it seems only in the new fiscal year that there will be funding of \$6,205,000, which I believe will be used for the upcoming year. Can you provide an explanation so I can understand the reasoning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These numbers used to be separate line items to be used for the fire marshal's office and inspectors, which were funded separately, but at this time we have consolidated them into one fund under the Safety Services Division. The funds are listed in the second paragraph and on the bottom there are three items that have been consolidated into one fund. We don't expect to stop funding them, but they have been consolidated under the Safety Services Division, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With that being the case, are they only going to have offices in this capital city or will they have offices in the Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions? I imagine there will be three sets of figures for the regions then, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The regional offices will not see any changes. It won't change for the regions, but the only change has been to consolidate the funding. The employees in the communities will not see any changes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This isn't a question, rather just a comment. If this is set up properly, I don't anticipate any further challenges in the Safety Services Division due to emergency situations occurring, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. It's just a comment. Before I go to the next person, I want to advise members that Ms. Angnakak will not be here due to illness. Thank you.

The last name on the list on this page, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask about what my colleague for Arviat North-Whale Cove was asking regarding fibre optics. I'll be speaking English. (interpretation ends) The Kativik Regional Government completed a desktop site visit report regarding the impact on Nunavik communities on the Eastern Arctic Undersea Fibre Optic Network and provided a copy of the report to the Department of Community and Government Services in October 2016. Was there only one site visit or site visits in Nunavik and Nunavut communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were site visits in Nunavut communities but not in Nunavik communities, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am assuming that the site visits were to Cape Dorset, Kimmirut, and Iqaluit. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's correct, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It says here that the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency approved \$250,000 to CGS for a desktop study on potential fibre landing routes involving Sanikiluaq, Cape Dorset, Kimmirut, Iqaluit, and a marine connection to Nuuk in March 2017. Mr. Main had indicated that Sanikiluaq and Kinngait have been eliminated and there are only Kimmirut, Iqaluit, and Nuuk, I suppose. Dropping the two communities, do you think this project should go ahead? It only involves two communities. Is it worth pursuing this project? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department believes it is worth pursuing this project, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bear with me. I had another question, but I'm not sure which page it was.

It says here in the letter that you wrote to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations on January 31, 2020, "...create a Crown corporation to own and operate this specific telecommunications infrastructure system. Under this module, the Crown corporation may also wish to be a wholesaler of excess fibre capacity and telecommunication companies through a public procurement process, allowing these telecoms to provide residential and commercial Internet services to customers." Does this mean that this Crown corporation would be competing with NorthwTel and Qiniq? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we were talking about this, I stated earlier that we are looking at different options and we will be able to have discussions with the private business owners and people who are interested in starting up Internet businesses. Our staff will talk to them see what the best way is to spread amongst the people of Nunavut and how it will benefit the most people in

Nunavut is going to be part of the study that we will be doing on it. We're trying to make it so that it has the biggest impact and costs the least amount of money. That is our goal and that is part of the review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Second line of questioning for Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me again. (interpretation ends) I just had a couple of more questions on the fibre and then a couple of more to follow up on Mr. Rumbolt's questions from yesterday.

Just for clarity where it says "on time and on budget" project delivery for fibre projects, the total budget is now estimated at \$210 million. The GN's portion of that has not yet been fully appropriated. Correct? I just wanted a correction or clarification. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been identified in the five-year plan, but each year it has to be appropriated. My colleague is correct, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just for clarity, I believe it's around \$50 million from the Government of Nunavut that would be required. How much of that has been approved to date and how much yet has to be approved in upcoming fiscal years? I'll try not to go into capital, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize if I'm getting a bit too capital-heavy. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately we don't have that level of detail on the capital in front of us and I won't be able to answer that question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The substantiation sheet in front of me, my records indicate that \$7 million has been approved to date and that further roughly \$47 million would be required to be approved under capital funding. That's just where I was trying to get clarification in terms of coming back to the business plan where it refers to an on-budget project delivery.

It comes back to application of the *Financial Administration Manual* where regular members of the Assembly are given a chance to approve major changes in the scope and

budget. To my knowledge, that has not yet happened where the regular members provided a chance to approve the changes in the budget from \$120 million to \$210 million, but I'll leave that there.

In terms of this building permitting office, Mr. Rumbolt was asking questions yesterday. Could the minister commit to giving a written status update on the number of applications into that office and the number of permits issued? I believe there are also inspections that are done. (interpretation) I would appreciate it if the minister could provide a written update. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we did provide that information as Mr. Rumbolt was calling them out yesterday, but if there is an updated version, I would be more than happy to provide that to my colleagues, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I may be incorrect, so I apologize to the minister for requesting information that has already been provided.

I do see a list of building permit fees and application process. I don't see any numbers provided in terms of how many permits have been applied for. I believe Mr. Rumbolt was quoting numbers that were provided orally in committee. I was just taking the opportunity to request a written summary of the building permits situation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, I'll be more than happy to provide that in detail. Mr. Chairman, that shouldn't be an issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Again, this is a page-less letter, no date and no page. In terms of the fees that are charged under this building permit application process, you provide some examples. A large construction project of \$20 million was given as an example and the fees would be \$20,000 for a project of that size. Where do those fees go? Do they just go into general revenues or is there a specific fund that is set up and then that money is put back towards, I don't know, a specific purpose? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would just go to general revenues, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Later on in the letter, the next page, this is very concerning for me; it says that “The need for a homeowner to hire engineers and/or architects in the design of new homes and renovations to existing homes is based upon how complex the design is. As an example, foundations will always require a professional design and any other aspects of the intended design could also impact the need for professional design.”

When I read that “foundations will always require professional design,” it is very difficult for Nunavummiut homeowners, for example, or small businesses to access the services of an architect or an engineer. Is this a service that the building official’s office is able to help homeowners obtain? Do you have a directory of architects or engineers who could step in to help homeowners in particular? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of when they are doing the piles, the people who provide the piles service would be able to do the engineering on that by driving the pile in and setting it in place. In terms of putting in cribbing, the above ground cribbing, the contractors are usually helpful in doing that.

In terms of helping a private homeowner who is looking to add onto their existing house, if they require assistance in finding somebody who makes blueprints and that, our department has been helpful and would continue to point people in different directions. There are different architects out there that do that. Often they will go to the housing corporation to seek assistance in that. There are avenues out there. People who are building homes have to start with a blueprint and so those blueprints will detail the kind of footprints the house should have and how to build it. There are things in place like that. If you’re looking to extend your house, your blueprint maker will build from the cribbing to the chimney tops. There are those in place.

The short answer for my colleague in terms of a homeowner who is not aware of where to get that stuff, if they contact us, we would be more than happy to help point them in the right direction, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It mentions further on in the letter the exemption level of \$40,000, the \$40,000 threshold for requiring a building permit, and that’s in the regulations. Is it the department open to input from the private sector or homeowners regarding changes to the regulations, or are

these all driven by the Nunavut *Building Code Act* and are they written in stone and it's really hard to change them? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question, especially in line with this \$40,000 issue, because I have been asked and approached about people building shacks and sheds and assuming or thinking they need to get a building permit to build a 10-by-10 shack or cabin, so it's good to clarify that.

We are open to suggestions and ideas. We will be reviewing this. We are keeping an ear to the ground on this and taking notes of where we could, if we could, make improvements and where we could, we will be doing that. We're looking at maybe a four to five-year window to take a look at it and then maybe redraft or make improvements after four or five years of going through this, Mr. Chairman. We're more than happy to hear input on suggestion on this Act, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's good to hear that the minister or the department is open to input. Will you be consulting with the private sector on this particular Act or the regulations? It is of concern from some builders, property type businesses, that this is making a bureaucratic territory even more bureaucratic and harder to build stuff. Will the department be going out specifically and speaking to the private sector and looking for input on whether these *Building Code Act* regulations and the office of the chief building official are business-friendly and as much as possible? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The idea behind this or the work behind this is to have people safe in a building that is structurally safe and sound. That is the idea behind this. The idea behind this is not to make it difficult for the contractors and construction companies. We need to have safe buildings and safe homes across Nunavut, more so than anywhere else probably because of the harsh and unforgiving climate that we have. This whole building code issue is to ensure that our buildings and homes are structurally sound and safe for those people who will be in them.

Having said that, yes, we will be and we are in communication with the private sector. I think it is important to be in close contact and to get ideas and input from the small private sector that would spend a lot of energy on painting and doing minor repairs to houses to those that are building condominiums. We will be in touch and communicating with all sectors and all of those of contractors, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) It's good to hear that the department is open and will be in contact with the private sector. Will this be a formal consultation type of process where there will be a public announcement or public advertisements made that we're looking for input on this chief building official office, the permitting process, the regulations, or is it an informal thing? In either case, yes or no, where can committee members access a summary or information regarding what the private sector is telling this department about the *Building Code Act* application? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are in communication with the private sector, more right now informally. I believe next week we will be in the Kivalliq, we will be in Rankin Inlet and probably a couple of other communities to communicate with the private sector on this and other matters, and we will be going throughout the territory to discuss this in a more informal manner.

As we get closer to the five years, we will be doing more formal engagements to get more detailed information from them as it will have drawn out over the next few years more issues that may be or may not be, and at that time everybody will have a better understanding of this Act. Towards the end of the four to five years we will have more formal discussions on this matter.

As for the input from the private sector, this is early on at this stage. In the next while as we're gathering more information and more input from the private sector, I will be more than happy to share that kind of information with my colleagues as we get into it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I think we spent enough time on this page. Infrastructure. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$117,657,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Before we go to the last page, we will be taking a 10-minute break. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 10:23 and resumed at 10:37*

Chairman: I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. Welcome back. Page 2 is an information item only, but I'll open the floor for questions on the Petroleum Products Division. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to thank the minister for tabling the Petroleum Products Division's 2016-17 Annual Report. My first question is: when will the minister be tabling subsequent annual reports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The 2017-18 is complete and ready for translations. The 2018-19 is expected to be completed by the end of March, so we will table those in the spring session, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, we're also going forward from this. Our annual reports will be developed alongside our annual financial audit and will be available for tabling in the fall of each year. For example, the 2019-2020 annual report should be available for tabling in the fall of 2020. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that update. As the PPD was initially created in 1972, my next question is: how is it that the 2016-17 was the first ever annual report ever produced by the PPD? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't a minister then, I wasn't an MLA then. I wouldn't know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the minister wasn't around in the '70s, wasn't a minister back in the '70s, but he was the Minister of CGS prior to this Fifth Assembly, which is why I was asking why it was never previously tabled or in fact it was never actually produced, as page 5 indicates that this is the first ever annual report. How is it possible that the \$200 million Petroleum Products Division, there had never been an annual report produced prior to '16-17? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Just a reminder that we're on the 2020-21 budget line. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said, I don't know. You can ask me again how come it wasn't done. I do not know. I would only assume, and we shouldn't make assumptions, but maybe the previous governments didn't ask for it. Maybe the previous MLAs didn't ask for it. That's just a guess, Mr. Chairman. I honestly do not know the answer to that question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on. Page 11 of the annual report indicates that historically retail prices in Nunavut were adjusted annually and over time the specific community cost did not meet the actual cost of delivering the services and resulted in inequitable pricing structure whereby the PPD did not recover its direct costs.

It further states that in addition, the retail pricing structure included different customer classes such as the Government of Nunavut, which was in fact the lowest priced customer class, which means that the public was subsidizing the GN as the GN was paying essentially less for the price of fuel than common customers.

Nowhere else in the annual report does it provide any further information about customer classes. My first question is: has this been corrected? Is the GN customer class still paying less for fuel than average consumers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to expand on that question, what is the GN paying for the price of fuel? Is it the same as the retail price that has been publicized? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, I believe it is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on. Page 12 of the annual report makes further reference to inequitable pricing, which caused the Petroleum Products Division to have considerable surpluses, which would then be transferred to the GN's Consolidated Revenue Fund. If I look further into the annual report, it shows that in '16-17 the Petroleum Products Division had a surplus of \$15 million, which was then transferred over to the GN. When I read that, I see that the Petroleum Products Division has been overcharging Nunavummiut for fuel and then transferring that excess over to the Government of Nunavut. My question is: is that still occurring today? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it's not occurring today, Mr. Chairman. We work on a revolving fund. The *Revolving Funds Act* requires that the PPD operate on a break-even basis. Therefore, unlike most government operations, the PPD's expenses are offset by its revenues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the PPD Act states that it must operate at a break-even profit margin, but since '16-17, since the PPD transferred over a surplus of \$15 million, how much of the surplus has been transferred over to the GN in subsequent years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Bless you.

An Hon. Member: Thank you.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have documents going back as far as my colleague is asking questions on, but I'm not aware of any, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will leave that and come back to it at another date.

Further in the annual report on page 18 it indicates that naphtha is highly subsidized by other products, and I would like to enquire if that is still the case today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know at this point if and how much the naphtha is subsidized, but I believe it is not. I stand to be corrected, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the minister be able to confirm that at a later date through written correspondence to the committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that commitment. The reason why I bring up the fact that naphtha was subsidized by other products, when I look at the breakdown of the retail pricing on pages 12 and 13 by the different fuel products, nowhere in there in that breakdown of the pricing structure is there any mention

of the subsidy being built in to help offset the cost of naphtha. When the minister provides us a written response at a later date, would he also provide us details on how that naphtha subsidy is being built in to the other fuel products? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague is working on 2016 documents and I believe that I said I would be providing the latest versions as early as this spring's sitting. That may have the details and changes to the issues my colleague is talking about.

I would prefer it if my colleague would have a bit of patience in us so we can work out the recent documents and not refer back to the 2016. Those things may have changed. Getting back to why it wasn't tabled before, there was no requirement to table the PPD document before. We have evolved; we have changed.

I hate to be looking for documents and information that may already be available and that may be available when we table the document at the time we do, Mr. Chairman. If he could have a bit of patience, I would be more than happy to talk about it when we are working on the more current documents, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that all we have to work with is 2016-17, but that is because that is all that we have been provided. No other committee has ever had an opportunity to review this document. I think it is crucial that now would be an opportune time, but regardless, the minister stated that this information may be provided in the subsequent annual reports that will be tabled and we might be able to receive that information at a later date. I would like to ask the minister if he would be willing to commit to ensuring that that information will be provided to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, if it is not in the upcoming report that I will table, I will ensure my colleagues that there will be a side note with that information, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'll move on. On page 19 it provides the breakdown of the retail price list. In the annual report there is no information on it on Iqaluit's retail price list, and since '16-17 CGS has annually come out with a retail price list and none have provided information regarding the cost of diesel

for vehicles, diesel for aviation, and gasoline prices. My first question is: why is that information not provided? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have included it in our 2017-18 report, Mr. Chairman. Just for the information of my colleague, we were not and we are still not mandated to table these documents. We are doing it by courtesy and because of requests, just so that you know, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm going to refer to the news release from January 10 on GN retail fuel price reductions and I'm looking at the backgrounder which provides a list of all the fuel prices. Everyone across Nunavut pays the same for diesel heating fuel, except for Iqaluit, which is roughly 10 cents cheaper than the rest of the territory.

In terms of the pricing structure, I know that there has been a long-term move towards a uniform pricing structure across the territory for different products. Can the minister confirm if this is the goal to eventually bring diesel heating fuel in line across the entire territory where you would be having one price for diesel heating fuel for all communities? I just wanted to confirm if that's the goal or not. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is the goal of our department to do that, to make prices across Nunavut the same as much as we can, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I also noted the discrepancy in the prices of jet fuel, again, across the whole territory. For every community that jet fuel is available, it's the same price except for Iqaluit, where it is cheaper by approximately 5.5 cents per litre. Can the minister confirm whether it is also the goal for jet fuel is to bring uniform pricing for the whole territory? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the goal of our department, Mr. Chairman. Iqaluit operates on a break-even model. Its prices are a bit lower for diesel, heating, and jet A-1 due to economies of scale, but our goal is to, when possible,

make it as even as possible across the board, Mr. Chairman. That is our goal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. I do recognize that larger communities are indirectly subsidizing the smaller communities through passing on their economies of scale. I'll use Arviat for example. Arviat is one of the larger communities and I'll note that Arviat does not enjoy the benefits of any of those economies of scale under the uniform pricing structure. There seems to be one rationale for this particular community that we're currently in and in the example of Arviat, no, that rationale does not apply and it's a uniform pricing structure with every other community in the Kivalliq.

I think this is something that is inequitable and including communities such as Rankin Inlet, for example. It should be either a uniform pricing structure across the territory or it's a differentiated pricing structure where the larger the community the cheaper the fuel is. It can't be both. I just wanted to point out what I feel is an inequity. I would like the minister to, as much as he can, commit to looking into this and rectifying it in the upcoming fiscal year under the business plan for the PPD. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleague delving into this a bit. It's the discussion that we are having within our department and point taken, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I wanted to enquire about the provision of jet fuel. There are a number of Kivalliq communities, including Arviat and Whale Cove, where jet fuel is not available. My understanding is that there are simply no tanks for jet fuel in those communities, as well as Chesterfield Inlet, Baker Lake, and Naujaat.

Without going into capital, under the PPD's operations, has there been any interest or enquiries from the private sector, aviation sector, any enquiries whether that jet fuel will be made available in these communities? Have they had any input along the lines of "This would help our operations if you can make jet fuel available in more communities in the Kivalliq"? I'm talking about Calm Air because they're basically the one airline in the Kivalliq. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In discussions that we've had with the private sector or in this case Calm Air, there have not been any enquiries into having petroleum products for the aircraft available in those communities that they currently are not available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Is the department open to enquiries or input from the aviation sector in terms of where they provide jet fuel? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, anytime we're doing work on our tank farms or taking a look at upgrading or making changes to our Petroleum Products Division or departments within communities, that's one thing we take a look at. In fact we are currently looking at the expansion of the tank farm in Arviat to see if it would be viable to put jet fuel availability in that community. We're going through that exercise at the moment and it's an exercise we do go through when we're taking a look at tank farm upgrades and so on, Mr. Chairman. We are currently doing that for the community of Arviat at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I look forward to seeing the results of your work in that area.

On the business plan page 222, which is an excellent calibre by the way when I used to be able to go hunting at one point, it mentions "Plan and implement corporate and organizational model for the division." It's my understanding that the department is looking at options for the Petroleum Products Division. It's my understanding that your review or looking into these options will be complete roughly on November 2020.

In terms of moving away from the status quo, what are the arguments for moving away from the status quo in terms of how you run petroleum products? What are the issues with the status quo on having this as a division under this department? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a few examples of threats or weaknesses, I guess we can say, under the current PPD regime. It includes some things like hidden fuel subsidies, maybe environmental health and safety standards and capital infrastructure. There are a few issues that brought us to take a look at it, but right now as the review goes through, we are trying to weigh if those are enough to create a separate

entity or if we work with those to make changes and stay within the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just have a couple of more questions; I'm almost done here.

The prices that you charge for diesel heating fuel are cheaper than the prices you charge for diesel vehicles. It is my understanding that these are the same product, diesel heating and diesel vehicle. When you look at the contracts for fuel delivery and whatnot across the territory, how does the department verify that the subsidy provided under diesel heating isn't being abused?

Maybe I will ask the question this way: is the division aware of any cases where diesel heating fuel is being used and put into vehicles? Diesel heating fuel which is cheaper than the vehicle rate, is the department aware of any cases where this may have happened across Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a slight different in diesel heating fuel and automotive fuel because of the higher taxes. It is more of a tax issue, but we are not aware of anybody abusing it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'll just put that out there as an issue maybe to keep on your radar because there may be some cases where the subsidy or cheaper prices are being taken advantage of.

My final question is regarding Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok. This is your drum removal initiative. It is on your priorities for this upcoming fiscal year. Does this priority item include any work on the tank farm? I believe there is a tank farm at one of those communities. I can't remember which one it was. Does this priority mean that the department is also going to be doing work on that abandoned or legacy tank farm? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now our concentration is on oil drums. It is amazing; we have removed over 3,700 oil drums to date. That is an awful lot of drums and that is where our concentration is at this time. I am not aware if we are looking at removing the old tank farm, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. This page is just an information item only, so I am just going to allow one more member to ask questions on it so we can move on. Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me. The federal government had initiated the carbon tax not too long ago and at one point the Government of Nunavut, one time a few years back, gave out fuel rebates of \$500 to homeowners once a year. It wasn't much, but it helped tremendously for the homeowners in Nunavut. I wonder why the government hasn't visited this issue because of a carbon tax that was initiated by the federal government. I don't see anything on the business plan about a rebate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to pass the buck with the Zamboni driver beside me, but this is something that finance would be able to answer your question on, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague from Arviat and Whale Cove asked about this, but it says, "Finalize a drum removal initiative throughout Nunavut" and it talks about outpost camps. Is this limited to outpost camps or can it also include federal Crown land or Inuit-owned land to remove oil drums? What exactly do you mean by finalizing this initiative? Can you elaborate a little bit further about what you intend to do in finalizing this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of finalizing this initiative, we're planning a drum removal initiative in those communities of Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok for 2020. That would pretty much close our work on drum removal. As I said, we have removed over 3,700 drums to date and this initiative we have right now is to finish that process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question is: once this is finalized, does it mean that CGS will no longer budget in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It doesn't necessarily mean that. It just means that we are finalizing this. There may be other projects similar to this that come up, but as for this, it is to finalize this, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We're done with this page, so go back to page J-3. Department Summary. Community and Government Services. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$256,631,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do the members agree that we have concluded the Department of Community and Government Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any last comments from the minister? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the questions and comments that were brought forth by my colleagues.

We have a massive department with a lot of staff and they do a tremendous job. I just want to take this moment to commend each and every single one of them. They do a lot of hard work and they do it very well, to the best of their ability, Mr. Chairman. Our department is growing and moving forward and it's exciting. It's exciting to be the minister responsible for this department. I have been privileged to have some of the best staff across this territory and I thank them for it.

I also want to thank Mr. Seeley for having sat here in my left winger and then we had him changed out. I would like to thank my colleague sitting beside me for being able to answer some of the questions we had before us.

My commitment is to keep you as much informed as I can. I gave that commitment when I sat here two years ago and it continues today. Please don't wait for COW to happen to ask me questions. Let's keep this communication flowing for the betterment of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman: I would like to thank you also for answering the committee members' questions. I'm sure they had more to ask, but they will ask you in the future.

Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses out? I'm asking the members to stay in their seats so that we go on to the next department. Thank you.

Bill 39 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2020-2021 – Education – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good morning. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. The next department that we will be dealing with is the Department of

Education. I will ask Minister Joanasié: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee agree for the witnesses to go to the witness table?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. Now, for the record, Minister Joanasié, if you could introduce your witnesses and then proceed on into your opening comments, please. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thanks again, Mr. Chairman. To my left, to your right is my deputy Kathy Okpik and to my right is Abraham Suleiman, who is the comptroller for the department.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, I am happy to appear before you and the Committee of the Whole today to discuss the 2020-21 proposed budget of the Department of Education. For the 2020-21 fiscal year, my department is requesting a total of \$232,873,000. This reflects a collective increase of \$9,240,000 from the 2019-2020 main estimates.

As of April 1, 2020, the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program, better known as FANS, that currently resides with the Department of Family Services will be transferred to the Department of Education. To allow for comparison, the numbers from the FANS program are reflected in the 2019-2020 figures of the Department of Education.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, as part of the transfer of responsibilities of the FANS program, a business case has been submitted that seeks to bring \$1,916,000 of new grants and contributions monies to the Department of Education that will enhance the FANS program. The proposed FANS program enhancements in financial aid serve three purposes:

1. Reducing the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by students, for example, normal living expenses like transportation, food, etcetera, thereby lowering financial barriers;
2. Increasing supports for students' material needs, such as tuition and related educational fees, so they can better focus on their studies, increasing retention and program completion; and finally,
3. Improving supports for part-time students, creating more opportunities for Nunavummiut to pursue post-secondary education while remaining employed.

In addition, my department has allocated \$1,998,000 to meet the provisions of the Nunavut Teachers Association collective agreement, which expires on June 30, 2021. The increase in teachers' salaries is 2 percent for the school year 2020-21.

Lastly, the Department of Education is also requesting \$5,326,000 to meet its funding obligations to make sure the territory's student-educator ratio complies with the *Education Act*. The student-educator ratio is calculated yearly based on actual student enrolments and is used to determine the number of teaching staff for each community.

The funds requested will be used to support 64.5 teaching positions that have been hired in prior years, but due to vacant positions in prior years, the department was required to fund the positions from within its approved budget.

Mr. Chairman, great strides are being made in our education system to expand services and supports available to our students, ensuring that those resources we do have are being used to maximum effect. I thank the members for their continued support of the Department of Education, which enables us to carry out our mandate. With sufficient resources we will together provide the best education for our students.

I would be happy to respond to questions from the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasi. Does the chair of the standing committee have any opening comments? Please proceed, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness, I am pleased to make opening comments as we begin deliberations on the proposed 2020-21 budget of the Department of Education.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education's proposed 2020-21 operations and maintenance budget is almost \$233 million, which represents an increase of \$17 million from its 2019-2020 budget. The standing committee notes that this increase in funding is primarily due to the transfer of the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program from the Department of Family Services, the addition of staffing positions to meet student-educator ratio requirements, as well as an increase in compensation and benefits allocations in accordance with the terms of the collective agreement with the Nunavut Teachers Association.

Mr. Chairman, despite the planned addition of new staffing positions, the standing committee notes that the department continues to struggle to fill teaching positions. Members encourage the minister in his efforts to recruit more Nunavummiut into the teaching professions, and specifically supports initiatives to recruit graduating high school students as well as encouraging non-teaching education staff to pursue teaching careers.

During the minister's appearance before the standing committee to discuss his draft business plan and main estimates for 2020-21, members were given to understand that a

new formula for determining student-educator ratios in Nunavut schools is ready to be implemented, and members look forward to receiving details on the anticipated changes and how they will impact future expenditures and resource allocations in the areas of staffing and support.

Mr. Chairman, during his appearance before the standing committee, the minister also indicated that additional funding would be allocated in 2020-21 towards inclusive education with the contracting of specialists to visit all schools across the territory and to provide services in such areas as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy. Members support this initiative and will be interested to receive updates on how the results of the relevant diagnostic tests and psychological or physical assessments will impact the department's future plans for meeting its inclusive education obligations.

The standing committee continues to support the department's collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College to provide additional training to student support assistants, who play an essential role in the delivery of inclusive education across Nunavut's schools.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee recognizes that attendance in school remains one of the critical factors impacting the success of our students. While the committee appreciates that the department is implementing its family engagement program through such activities as the establishment of a website, members encourage the minister to explore outreach options which directly engage those families with non-attending children.

The standing committee was pleased to note that the department continues to offer the Young Parents Stay Learning program which enables parents in high school to continue their education by providing financial supports for child care.

Members of the standing committee continue to have concerns regarding the delivery of early childhood programs in Nunavut's communities and encourage the minister to move forward with his department's plans to review and amend or replace the current *Child Day Care Act*.

Members appreciate the member's willingness to consider the implementation of full-time kindergarten. Members recognize that not all communities are currently in a position to undertake such an initiative given space and staffing capacities. The committee looks forward to updates in this area.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education will be assuming responsibility for the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program that has been under the jurisdiction of the Department of Family Services.

During the minister's appearance before the standing committee to review his draft main estimates for 2019-2020, members appreciated receiving information on the department's

plans to enhance the FANS program which will better support Nunavummiut who are pursuing post-secondary studies.

The Department of Education also offers programs aimed at supporting adults who wish to improve their educational qualifications, such as obtaining their High School Diploma under the new Pathways to Adult Secondary School initiative. The standing committee is in full support of all initiatives which encourage and assist adult Nunavummiut in furthering their educational or career opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. Individual members may have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Nakashuk. I'll now ask members if they have any brief general comments for the Department of Education. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I want to repeat an issue or a concern that I raised last year, which I was not alone in addressing, I would like to mention, the fact that once again, the Department of Education has not brought forward any movement on incorporating funding for food programs in our schools.

I believe that if children are to be successful in achieving their education, giving them all the tools necessary, including ensuring that they have nutritious meals and the energy to focus on their education, is one of them.

Mr. Chairman, again, repeating what I said last year, I am extremely disappointed that another budget has come forward without any new initiatives for food programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would like to echo my colleague's comments. I don't want to repeat what he said, but I believe that it's a well-known demonstrable fact that when children are hungry, they cannot learn properly. It appears to be a bit of a jurisdictional issue between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Education.

It's concerning that we have low attendance and low educational attainment. I think that situation, the attendance and academic achievement, could be positively impacted by provision of school food programs. I would like to again encourage the department to look into this and I think that we will have some detailed questions on this matter on the appropriate page. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. No more general comments? Moving on. Before we proceed, the Department of Education has nine branches that need approval. A number of these branches have fairly small budget amounts in them. I'm going to exercise my right

as Chairman and only allow one round of questioning per page, with the exception of G-10, where it's quite a large budget and I may allow extra questions at that time.

We will start off with page G-4. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,920,000. Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the department is the business plan for 2020-23 indicates that the work on the family engagement campaign is ongoing. I'm curious: what are the priorities for this campaign and what types of resources are being used to make it a success? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The family engagement strategy is still under development. It's anticipated that we will be rolling this out in the very near future, but the intent is to get families and communities involved around students' participation and how they fit into the education system. There are different ways we can approach this. This is trying to get all the parties involved.

Just as an example, for students in high school particularly, some students might have classes only a certain part of the day and other times when they're not in school, they like to work. However, to ensure that everybody who is in school is supposed to be in school, some businesses have opted to ensure that they don't hire any students that are supposed to be in school.

That's just an example of how we want to try to engage families and the community to ensure that when a student is supposed to be in school, they are. That's one approach, but there are many different, multi-pronged approaches that we're trying to get families, communities, elders, and the business community involved so that students are in school when they should be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question and I thank the minister for that, but my final question, we do have an issue with attendance right across Nunavut and the business plan for this year, 2020-23, indicates that the department has been developing a registration and attendance tool kit for district education authorities. I'm curious: what is included in this tool kit and how will it assist district education authorities in addressing student attendance? My final question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towntongie. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is another initiative in relation to the family and community engagement. The DEAs want to provide support for registration and attendance policy. In some cases where there are not any policies in

place, we ensure that there's a template to use, but this is all towards having more students in our schools, again, when they should be.

We have hired a contractor to help us with this attendance and registration policy. Again, it would have multiple items to help foster attendance registration and those practices in place to support students, families, and everyone involved to know what needs to take place and understand if a student is not attending or has dropped out, what are the processes that trigger re-engaging them and those types of things. Those are some of the items that would go into the tool kit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister.

(interpretation ends) I just wanted to follow up on my colleague's questions on the attendance policy work. Can the minister confirm whether this work will be looking at examples of things that have been done in other jurisdictions to improve attendance, specifically in areas with big attendance problems such as Nunavut, such as inner city neighbourhoods or developing countries? I believe that when it comes to attendance, we're on line with those types of areas. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can look into this further in terms of what it encompasses. I believe, as part of this process, they do look at an environmental scan or inter-jurisdictional initiatives, taking into account similar contexts with our remoteness in Nunavut, I suppose, looking at other jurisdictions and populations that are comparable to Nunavut and how we can benefit from what's already out there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The minister mentioned a contract that had been awarded. Once that contract is completed, what will the department be left with? Is there an action plan? Is there a series of recommendations or options that will be presented? Specifically I'm interested in what incentives can be offered to parents in order to see their children attend school. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We hope to have a strategy in place to address the attendance and registration and overall student achievement and the intent is to have a greater enrolment, higher graduation rates overall in the long term. I keep going back to what's in it for the family, the student.

I think this is where we need to think about the benefit of an education system, how it has an impact positively in our lives and being, I suppose, open to how... . The department is there to support students in their learning development and their journey and their life. How do we fit into that as individuals, as a collective, making sure that students and families understand how we can better fit into the education system?

I don't know if that covered the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would like to suggest to the minister that as you are working with your contractor on this attendance file, you keep all options on the table and that includes providing financial incentives to encourage attendance. You could call it cash for kids or something like that, whatever you want to call it. It has been used in other jurisdictions and it's just a suggestion from me that that should be explored on the table.

On the ten-year education and recruitment strategy, I wanted to ask about the educator recruitment and retention strategy. I may be on the wrong page number, but if the minister has a status update in terms of the development of that strategy, I would appreciate it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have composed a committee that would help support this strategy moving forward and it includes Nunavut Arctic College and two divisions in our department, Advanced Education and Educator Development. That's in place, but the strategy would outline ways to retain, recruit, and promote the teaching profession for our educators for the short, medium and long term, and specifically looking at Inuit educators, tying into... .

The strategy would be a three-pronged approach. The first focus is the short-term needs like immediate, second would focus on the longer term and the sustainable development of Inuktitut-speaking teachers, and lastly, retention strategies on how to keep our teachers teaching in the field. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My final question is: when do you anticipate this strategy being completed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have tied this recruitment and retention strategy with our ten-year overall departmental strategic planning session. They

will coincide with each other and that is anticipated to take a little longer than if we had just done the recruitment and retention strategy by itself. They go, I would say, hand in hand. At this time I can't say when we can expect that to roll out, but it is still an ongoing process at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and your officials.

First, I would like to thank you for the new additions that you have put forward under FANS, Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. This is definitely a move in the right direction and something that a number of us have been pushing. Once again I applaud that initiative and look forward to seeing the positive benefits that I'm sure we will see.

I guess my first question is, as FANS is in transition and will be moving into Education effective April 1, your opening comments state that a business case was submitted. My first question is: who submitted this business case? Was it the Department of Education or the Department of Family Services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question was, during the minister's appearance before this standing committee, we had requested information providing a comparison of these new initiatives to the former allowances provided under FANS. I would like to ask why that information wasn't provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: If you give me a minute.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. It might have been a minor oversight and we will look at providing the committee with the details. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for his response. That information would be beneficial to us passing this budget.

I do believe that my colleague next to me can hear my stomach grumbling and I am definitely getting a bit hungry. I do have further questions, but I would like to put forward a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion carried. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 39 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Please wait. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? The seconder is Mr. Akoak. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Continuing on to Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. There are none. Going to Item 22. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that the Management and Services Board meets at two o'clock this afternoon in the Tuktu Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for March 2:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions

12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 39
 - Bill 40
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Before we adjourn, I would like to thank our pages here and their chaperone, Tanya Kenalogak. Please give them applause.

>> *Applause*

Sheba Nattaq.

>> *Applause*

And their chaperone, Mary Owingayak.

>> *Applause*

Also the pages from Iqaluit who will be here next week are Alexis Vincent and Maye Vincent.

>> *Applause*

Sergeant-at-Arms.

You probably thought you wouldn't meet again.

>> *Laughter*

However, please know that the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 2, at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation ends) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 11:51*

