

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Paul Quassa
(Aggu)

Hon. David Akeeagok
(Quttiktuq)
*Deputy Premier; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation*

Joelie Kaernek
(Amittuq)

David Qamaniq
(Tununiq)

Mila Kamingoak
(Kugluktuk)

Emiliano Qirngnuq
(Netsilik)

Tony Akoak
(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
Management Board; Minister of Health;
Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister
responsible for Suicide Prevention; Minister
responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission*

Margaret Nakashuk
(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 Joanasi
(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
the Nunavut Housing Corporation*

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 2, 2020**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeegok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaermerk, Ms. Mila Kamingoak, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:31*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Good morning. I ask Member Qirngnuq to say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Member Qirngnuq. Good day, fellow Nunavummiut. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly as well as visitors in the gallery. Please feel welcome.

Speaker's Statement

Just prior to commencing our meeting, I want to voice a few comments on various subjects we face in parenting our children. Our children must have the options of healthy lifestyles as they grow up, and especially optimistic people to emulate every day. They are our future as they shall succeed us. Let them be proud in our actions as we fulfill the role of their leaders today. That was my preamble prior to today's meeting.

Let's proceed to Item 2. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Government House Leader, Minister Sheutiapik.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 389 – 5(2): Minister Absent from the House

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the members that our colleague, (interpretation ends) Hon. Patterk Netser, (interpretation) will be absent from the House from March 2 to 4. (interpretation ends) During his absence, Minister Kusugak will be Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Minister Joanasie will be Acting

Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Deputy Comm... (interpretation) I'm sorry. Premier of our Government, Mr. Savikataaq.

Minister's Statement 390 – 5(2): Nunavut's Deputy Commissioner

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the people of Arviat.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to formally congratulate Nunavut's newest Deputy Commissioner, Rebekah Uqi Williams. Ms. Williams was sworn in to the role on December 20, 2019. Stand up so people can see you in the audience.

>> *Applause*

Congratulations.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Commissioner is an important role that helps ensure that a duly constituted government is always in place and that the democratic freedoms of the people are protected.

Mr. Speaker, this individual acts as the head of state when filling in for the Commissioner and is also responsible for various statutory and customary responsibilities. It is an important position and one that Ms. Williams will carry out with dignity and great respect.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Williams is originally from Arctic Bay, she has a long and distinguished career in Nunavut, as a former Member of this House and as a former Deputy Minister of Justice and Family Services.

Again, fellow members, please join me in congratulating Deputy Commissioner Williams on her new role. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome, (interpretation ends) Deputy Commissioner (interpretation) and your husband, who is here. Welcome.

Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

Minister's Statement 391 – 5(2): Government of Nunavut Recognized as One of Canada's Top Employers

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good day. Good day to the people of Rankin Inlet and Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Human Resources, it gives me great pleasure to announce our recognition as one of Canada's top and best employers for 2020 in two different categories:

- Canada's Top Employers for Young People; and
- Canada's Best Employers for Recent Graduates.

This is the third year in a row the Government of Nunavut (GN) has achieved these distinctions. The annual Canada-wide competition is organized by Canada's Top 100 Employers Project and the results were announced in January of this year.

Mr. Speaker, the GN should be proud of these achievements, as they demonstrate our commitment on moving forward with our priorities aimed at strengthening our human resource capacity across the government. We have strong programs that attract a lot of young people and recent graduates, and we encourage them to complete their education and work for us.

Mr. Speaker, the GN was selected as a top and best employer based on our attractive overall workplace. Two of the highlighted programs were the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program which helps eligible Inuit employees gain post-secondary education and qualify for hard-to-fill jobs and the Financial Internship Program, which also offers experience to GN employees in finance and accounting-related fields through on-the-job training, mentoring, access to academic courses, and other learning experiences.

Mr. Speaker, our Career Broadening Program also impressed the project organizers. This program provides on-the-job experience for Inuit employees and allows for career-broadening assignments that run up to 12 months.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the employees who made this happen. This recognition encourages us to continue our excellent work and keep our winning streak going next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Minister Hickers.

Minister's Statement 392 – 5(2): Nutrition Month

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year Canadians across the country celebrate National Nutrition Month in March. The theme of this year's campaign is "More Than Food." It is a reminder to all Canadians that healthy eating is more than just the foods you consume; it is also how you think about and enjoy food. Nunavut is an active participant in Nutrition Month, as we continue to promote a diet of country food and healthy, store-bought foods.

Mr. Speaker, Nutrition Month reminds us of the importance of healthy eating and the positive impact that good nutrition has on our health and well-being. Whether you eat country foods or store-bought food, ensuring we have lots of variety to get the nutrients we need for good health is essential. Mr. Speaker, I encourage Nunavummiut to be mindful of their eating habits, cook meals often, make water your drink of choice, and savour the moments when eating with family and friends.

Activities are planned throughout the territory by community health representatives, Department of Health dieticians, and others to encourage healthy eating with country food, supporting healthy store-bought food choices, and by bringing people together.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to Nutrition Month, once a year a special day is dedicated to dieticians across Canada. Always held the third Wednesday in March, Dieticians Day will be celebrated on March 18, 2020. Dieticians are committed to using their specialized knowledge and skills to translate the science of nutrition into terms everyone can understand to unlock food's potential and support healthy living for all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut's dieticians recognize the importance of country foods and healthy store-bought foods in our diet and are the trusted choice for reliable, life-changing food and nutrition advice. Dieticians continue to support Nunavummiut in incorporating nutritious foods in our diets to reduce chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, in our territory.

Mr. Speaker and members, please join me in thanking our territory's dieticians on their continued hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Minister Joanasié.

Minister's Statement 393 – 5(2): Honouring Nick Newbery

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, members, Nunavummiut, and visitors in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened on the recent passing of Nick Newbery, a well-known Nunavut educator and photographer, who passed away on February 19 in Nova Scotia at the age of 75.

Mr. Newbery lived in Nunavut for over three decades in Taloyoak, Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Iqaluit. His time in the north was spent teaching and writing, including a series of middle school resource manuals. He also helped developed and ran the Terry Fox Program in Iqaluit for at-risk teenagers for 17 years.

After retiring from teaching, Nick returned to Nunavut on many occasions, including in 2015 to donate his over 4,000 photographs and slides. The collection is a beautiful representation of people in the communities where he taught and even some of the momentous events of our territory; including the 1993 signing ceremony of the *Nunavut Agreement*.

Mr. Speaker, his photos are presented as a 40-year record of Inuit during a time of change, thereby contributing to a critical recording of Inuit history and culture. His graphic images are accessible to the public on the Nick Newbery Photo Archives website managed by Culture and Heritage and receives high interest from Nunavummiut and Canadians at large. His photographs can be viewed at www.newberyphotoarchives.ca.

Mr. Speaker, our condolences to Nick's widow, Terry Newbery, an outstanding midwife and nurse during her time in Taloyoak. Nick Newbery will be fondly remembered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item 2. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Minister's Statement 394 – 5(2): National Social Work Month

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) March is Social Work Month across Canada. Every March, individuals and organizations across the country recognize the meaningful contributions social workers make in the lives of families and communities.

During National Social Work Month it is important to acknowledge the role our social workers and frontline staff play in Nunavut and highlight the important contributions they make in our territory. This includes community social services workers, family resource workers, clerk aids, and clerk interpreters. All of these positions play an important role in providing culturally safe services.

While it is important to recognize our frontline staff, it is equally important to acknowledge the impacts made by Nunavummiut that staff work with daily. This is a

time to celebrate the community members who are committed to creating positive change across the territory.

Uqaqtitsijii, my department recognizes the importance of increasing the number of Nunavut Inuit in social services to ensure we can deliver services that are reflective of Inuit language, history, and culture. As such, my department is actively working to increase the number of Inuit social workers by:

- Working closely with Nunavut Arctic College to support the Social Services Worker Program and identifying current employees to take the program and upgrade their skills;
- Exploring opportunities to assist Nunavut Inuit gain the skills and education necessary to become social workers;
- Identifying career mentorship opportunities for Inuit; and
- Identifying positions specific for Inuit, including family resource workers, which are vital in building experience for Inuit to eventually enter the social work profession.

Uqaqtitsijii, National Social Work Month gives us the opportunity to recognize and celebrate our frontline staff for everything they do. On behalf of my department, I would like to extend a huge thank you. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Acting Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Minister Kusugak.

Minister's Statement 395 – 5(2): New Board Members

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to take this opportunity to update you on the exciting changes to the housing corporation's board of directors.

Mr. Speaker, last November the housing corporation requested applications to replace the three members of the board whose term expired. I am happy to report that we received interest from an overwhelming number of qualified applicants.

Mr. Speaker, the housing corporation was since able to appoint very capable individuals, including John Hussey and Peter Tapatai. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that Bob Leonard was reappointed to the board and selected once again as chair. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Leonard has served with the NHC board since it was formed in 2011 and has provided great leadership and experience to the corporation. I am confident he will continue to lead the board with strength and commitment.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the board plays a critical role at the NHC by providing strategic oversight on governance issues and overseeing corporate risk management

functions. The board has guided us through two years of clean audits and expect they will do so again this year.

Mr. Speaker, I wish them luck in their busy year ahead and the appropriate minister is looking forward to meeting with them in Rankin Inlet at the end of March. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Let's proceed to Item 3. Members' Statements. Member Rumbolt.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 613 – 5(2): Office Space for Sanikiluaq

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Sanikiluaq and the people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to return to an issue that I thought was close to being resolved, but now I am concerned that it will continue.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of office space in Sanikiluaq is an issue that I have raised a number of times in this Assembly. Without office space, the Government of Nunavut has difficulty hiring staff because there is no place to put them, and those staff that are hired have to work in overcrowded conditions or in conditions that do not provide the privacy that clients deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I have been quiet on this issue recently because I thought that once the new health centre was built in Sanikiluaq, the old health centre would be released by the Department of Health and turned over to the Department of Community and Government Services for other uses, such as office space.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that may not be the case. I have been given to understand that the Department of Health may retain the building for its own purposes. This leads me straight back to my original concern: what is the government going to do about providing much-needed office space in Sanikiluaq? At the appropriate time I will be asking questions on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member Keyootak.

Member's Statement 614 – 5(2): Issues with Social Services

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the people of Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River, those viewing and listening, as well as my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice a concern about what the Department of Family Services is doing and it has been a concern in some communities.

We are all aware there is the Ilisaqsivik Society and that they travel to communities to provide counselling when there is trauma in a community. They travel to communities to help out when there is an accident or a trauma in the community.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that all the communities have social workers who deal with such issues. In part they have stated in the past that when counsellors travel to communities during difficulties with social workers in the communities that they have been sent to assist, it appears that social workers may not be working closely with the counsellors. If social workers are not working well with the trauma team, I believe that this is an issue.

For that reason, at the appropriate time I will be asking a question to the Minister of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member Qirngnuq.

Member's Statement 615 – 5(2): Healthy Schools, Healthy Students

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to my fellow residents of Netsilik and my colleagues here.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for our students, who will be the leaders of our future. (interpretation) Mr. Speaker, in my dialect that is our goal.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the other week I was visiting the community of Taloyoak in my constituency and I had a surprise invitation from one of the classes. This invitation came from a very young grade, that is, the grade 5 students. I was very happy and honoured by the invitation.

Mr. Speaker, these young students wanted to ask me a number of questions. They asked me questions about my role. They asked questions about suicide. They asked questions about goods, cost of travel, and how and why I became an MLA.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I said that is what I would do in my representative role for my constituents and that I will be a strong advocate for them. (interpretation ends) Mr.

Speaker, what I realized is that having a good space for learning in helps students to achieve their education. Feeling safe and comfortable allows them to focus on attaining knowledge. Education and knowledge are the keys to a successful future. We need to ensure that our students have a healthy environment in which to learn.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I will have questions on this issue at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member Akoak.

I apologize. It's the list I have here; I can read. Members' Statements. Member Lightstone.

Member's Statement 616 – 5(2): Child First Initiatives

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise awareness of the Child First Initiative, which is federal funding under the Jordan's Principle, which is specifically allocated to ensuring Inuit children have access to health, social and educational products, services, and supports.

This past fall the Council of Yukon First Nations was approved \$4.4 million under this funding to address the high rates of food insecurity amongst their youth and will use this funding to provide two hot meals a day in their schools. Further, this funding is not just going to purchasing food supplies but also transport kitchen supplies and labour.

Meanwhile, food security continues to worsen in Nunavut. This is a serious matter that we must address in this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I will have further questions on the matter at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member Kamingoak.

Member's Statement 617 – 5(2): Suicide Prevention Resources

Ms. Kamingoak: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues, Kuglukturmiut, and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against suicide. Mr. Speaker, I cannot express strongly enough that our smaller communities need resources readily available to help those in need. Resources like on-the-land programs have proven a positive impact and are very successful. Mr. Speaker, being on the land and getting the help from your own people is often the best. These programs are especially effective amongst our youth, who often don't get to enjoy the experience of being out on the land and the strength and peace that our land brings.

Mr. Speaker, since the last summer my community of Kugluktuk has lost more than a handful of people and it has had such a negative impact on the community. Just recently I lost an uncle to suicide and last summer he lost his son to suicide.

Mr. Speaker, the level of despair grows and people don't seem to know what to do about it. Mr. Speaker, suicide should not be a normal choice. It should not be considered as the way out of one's despair.

Mr. Speaker, I am so saddened that children are growing up hearing of people, family, friends, and the parents of their friends are deciding to end their own lives.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any objections? There are none. Please proceed, Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we cannot force a person to seek help, but I also know that if the resources are available and are used, they can make a difference.

It is taking far too long to address this issue. Mr. Speaker, it's 2020 and our people are living with trauma from the past and the present, and we are still fighting for indigenous services, Mr. Speaker. *Koana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member Joanasie.

Member's Statement 618 – 5(2): Kimmirut Hockey Camp

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We feel for you, my colleague, and your community and the other communities are in our thoughts.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that hockey is going to start in Kinngait next week. It's an annual event and it happens during our winter session. I wish that I will be able to attend the hockey tournaments next year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize these individuals who have been working on this since 2006, Mr. Robert Matthews, who was a teacher and organizes the hockey tournament, which is a joyful event. The participants are boys and girls who are in school. They have had support from everywhere. I would like to recognize the district education authority, the hamlet council, and people from Sussex, Ontario, who also donate skates and hockey equipment to the teams.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the organizers. They will be having exercises and I look forward to seeing many participants and observers, but one thing that makes it an extra special event is that there's going to be a music festival at the same time. I would like to thank all the organizers in Kinngait and we look forward to seeing this happen on an annual basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Member's Statement 619 – 5(2): Return of the Sun Celebration

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day and good afternoon, my colleagues. I say "good day" to the people of Pangnirtung. First of all, I would like to say "good day" to the person celebrating their birthday today. Abraham Angnakak is 83 years old today. I wish him and his wife a happy day.

I rise to speak of an event last week on Friday, where the Atagoyuk School and Alookie School, with the assistance of the RCMP, provided a day trip on the sea-ice for students. The (interpretation ends) brunch (interpretation) was served earlier in the morning at school and the rest of the day was spent celebrating the "Return of the Sun."

There are now spring events that are being incorporated into the return of the sun celebrations and they welcomed all residents of Pangnirtung, which shows our magnificent scenery with the return of the sun and signifies the return of spring activities, which includes many hours outdoors.

Springtime events will start cropping up soon and I wanted to speak to this event that now occurs annually, as we had over 200 participants, parents and students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 620 – 5(2): Congratulations to Rebekah Williams on Her Appointment

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I offer my condolences to residents of Arctic Bay, in particular because the elder who just passed on. Also, I empathize with my colleague as anyone committing suicide creates shockwaves.

Today I rise to commemorate the kinship name that my parents named me with, Turngaaluk, and I was able to see my kinship wife on occasion while she was still alive, and her name was Tugaaq and she was my favourite kinship wife, and my actual wife

Carol is named after one of my in-laws so sometimes we use our kinship terms to act like we are in-laws.

However, the actual Inuit Turngaaluk and Tugaaq had children in whom I take great pride as I am proud of all their accomplishments as they live in various places in Arctic Bay, Iqaluit, and all over Nunavut. Starting from the parents, they have contributed a lot to their communities.

One of them was recently celebrated as the Deputy Commissioner as she is one of my kinship daughters. It is her desire to serve her fellow Inuit that she took that role. I am also doubly proud since she is married to our Ningauraaluk and I sometimes forget his actual name as that is his title. I wanted to voice my feelings due to their constant service.

Sometimes memories of past parents can be quite strong, especially when they take pride in your accomplishments. This means our elder will now rest in peace, and due to their joy in me, I expressly thank them along with my wife and we both smile to you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Let's proceed. Item 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Questions. Minister of Economic Development and [Transportation], Minister Akeegok.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 818 – 5(2): Departmental Grants and Contributions

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On February 26, 2020, Question No. 818 – 5(2), asked by Pat Angnakak, MLA for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, the question:

“When I questioned the minister about the issue last year, he was unable to provide detailed information about what kind of board governance training was being provided to assist the association's board members in fulfilling their oversight responsibility. Can the minister update us today on this issue and can he confirm who are the current board members and executive director for the association? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.”

The response:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to supplement an answer I gave during question period on Wednesday. The Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu requested information on the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association, specifically on their status with the Registrar of Societies, their deficit, current board and staff.

The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association is in good standing with the Registrar of Societies. On July 2, 2019 the organization hosted their annual general meeting and the board of directors met on July 15 to elect a new executive. The current board includes 12 directors, which I am happy to list. The executive is composed of three artists: Jesse Tungilik as the chair, Abraham Tagalik as vice-chair, and Lucie Idlout as secretary-treasurer. The executive director is Janet Brewster. The other board members are Ceporah Mearns, Annie Petaulassie, Lavinia van Heuvelen, Lalena Flaherty, Elizabeth Gordon, Helen Kaloon, Tanya Scott, Rebecca Mearns, and Mary Petooloosie. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. (interpretation) There are none. Moving on. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member Lightstone.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize a constituent and fellow graduate of Inuksuk High School, Mr. Saumik Darehshoripour, who is sitting behind me.

>>Applause

Mr. Darehshoripour just began working with our Member of Parliament, Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, as an outreach assistant. As our MP has a high demand of travel, Mr. Darehshoripour will be her eyes and ears on the ground here in Iqaluit. Thank you.

>>Applause

I would like to recognize another fellow Inuksuk High School grad and classmate, Ms. Noodloo Pishuktie.

>>Applause

Ms. Pishuktie works with the Government of Canada in Pilimmaksaivik, the Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut, and will be taking part in the career fair which is taking place here in Iqaluit on March 4 and 5.

I would like to thank Ms. Pishuktie as well as Mr. Darehshoripour for your contributions to the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I recognized her in my minister's statement, but I would like to formally recognize Ms. Rebekah Uqi Williams and her husband, Glen Williams. Welcome to the House and everyone, welcome our new Deputy Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome, Deputy Commissioner and Glen Williams. Please feel welcome anytime in the House. I also extend the welcome to all Nunavummiut. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have some very colourful people in our constituencies, and I have a few, Mr. Mazdak and Pelagie Darehshoripour are two of the more colourful people in my constituency. Unfortunately they are not here today, but their son is here and I wanted to recognize Saumik Darehshoripour, an incredible young man and I know he will do a great job working with our Member of Parliament. I would like to welcome him to our House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. Oral Questions. The first name on my list is Member Kamingoak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 834 – 5(2): Wolf Sample Collection Program

Ms. Kamingoak: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and they concern the minister's statement that he made last Thursday concerning his department's Wolf Sample Collection Program.

As the minister will recall, he had previously announced that 146 wolves had been harvested in the Kitikmeot under this program during the 2018-19 season. Can the minister provide an update today on wolf harvesting numbers in the Kitikmeot during the 2019-2020 season? *Koana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that information right now, but what I can tell the member is due to snow conditions in her community, the wolf harvest has been very low yet out of her community. Hopefully when there's more snow and more hunters go out, we will be able to get better numbers.

I met with Kugluktuk's HTO manager and we talked and she says that one party tried to go out and they were unsuccessful due to snow conditions, but at that time another group

of hunters was going to go out to the designated area where the wolf harvest normally takes place. I have not heard whether they were successful in getting to their area or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary to the question, Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker. The issue of wolf predation of caribou in our region is also currently being discussed in the Northwest Territories legislature. During last Wednesday's sitting of their House, concerns were raised about the specific issue of aerial shooting of wolves. Can the minister confirm if this issue came up during his recent meeting with his NWT counterpart and can he clarify what our government's position is on the issue? *Koana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the subject of aerial shooting of wolves in the Northwest Territories did come up at our meetings in Yellowknife. It is not on our radar. It's not something that we're looking into even. We are relying on our capable and talented wolf hunters to take care of our wolf situation here in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, an ongoing issue that I have been raising is that of the rate paid to Nunavut hunters for wolves that are harvested under the Wolf Sample Collection Program. In his statement to the House last Thursday, the minister indicated that the rate is currently \$300 per wolf per hunter. Can the minister confirm how this rate currently compares to that paid to NWT hunters and will he commit to increasing it for the upcoming 2020-21 harvesting season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the Northwest Territories decides to pay to their hunters is their decision and I respect their decision on the amount that they pay, but just to clarify, the top amount that the hunters get for wolf samples in the Northwest Territories is only in one area. They have different rates for different areas.

One of the areas where they pay the highest is the Bathurst caribou wintering grounds. We have made arrangements with the Northwest Territories where people of mostly Kugluktuk, but anyone that hunts within that designated area, will also get \$900 on top of the \$300 we give them for wolf samples. We feel that the \$300 was a good round figure for here in Nunavut and it has been taken advantage of.

Mr. Speaker, last year was a trial year. It was successful and I think it's doing what it is intended to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Question 835 – 5(2): Income Assistance Reforms

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me properly. I say “good day” to the people of Rankin Inlet North and Chesterfield Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for our Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very disheartening that income assistance clients have their benefits reduced simply because they have had the good luck to win at bingo or in a lottery.

Can the minister clearly explain why the *Income Assistance Regulations* punish individuals who are already living with limited means by reducing their income assistance benefits if they have bingo winnings? That is disheartening. I would like to know why that is the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you for asking that question. When I heard that for the first time, I was surprised too. Changing regulations takes time. It is being reviewed to see if we can change that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, (interpretation) Member Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recognize that income assistance is intended to provide support when individuals have no other means to buy food or clothing. However, winning a sum at bingo or in a lottery may give these same individuals the opportunity to buy items like snow machines or hunting and fishing equipment, which they can then use to provide more for themselves or their families.

I was amazed by the regulations. Some clients win \$40 and that \$40 is investigated. In Nunavut \$40 cannot buy anything. Maybe it can buy a bit of pampers and toilet paper. That's about it.

Can the minister indicate whether the reforms being considered by her department will review the practice of considering winnings from such activities as bingos or lotteries as income when determining the amount of income assistance benefits a person is entitled to, or consider not investigating a \$40 winning? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it's not easy to change legislation. Policy would have been one thing, but it's in the legislation. When I heard about the bingo winnings and the \$40, I gave directions to my staff to look into the legislation, but we know in this House that there are many legislations. I can't say when that legislation will actually be amended. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Member Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that income assistance clients are being punished for having a bit of good luck. We all need hope and a bingo win is a sign that good things can happen and it can help them buy big items. We should be able to enjoy our windfall instead of receiving it with one hand and then having money taken out of the other hand.

Will the minister commit to revising the *Income Assistance Regulations* to ensure that income assistance clients will no longer have their winnings from bingos, such as \$40 winnings, or lotteries considered as income? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Ms. Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can't just arbitrarily give direction to staff to stop doing something. The legislation itself has to be changed. My goodness, if I started running my department or our government on just giving direction and put aside legislation, we wouldn't be running properly. I have already given direction to my staff to look at amending the legislation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Member Rumbolt.

Question 836 – 5(2): Plans for Sanikiluaq's Old Health Centre

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Health.

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement I addressed my concerns about the fate of Sanikiluaq's old health centre once the newly built health centre is open for business. Can the minister clarify whether the old health centre will be surplus by his department and handed over to Community and Government Services when the new health centre is open, yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, I have been around this House for a while and I know the member continues to raise the issue of office space in Sanikiluaq, and I recognize it's a very important issue.

At this time we are putting together a potential submission for capital dollars next capital cycle to look at repurposing that building. Our future plans for that building will be contingent upon those capital dollars being available or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the department does not intend to surplus the old health centre, can the minister confirm whether the whole building will be used for health services and programs once the health centre is open and running, or if some space will be made available for the Government of Nunavut's other departments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member. Mr. Speaker, what our future plans are that we're hopeful to incorporate is a wellness centre for the community for different mental health programming, elders' teas, different youth programming, and a number of different resources to be utilized in the facility.

Mr. Speaker, as we go through that analysis, we will have a better idea of office space. With the current plan that we are looking at submitting, there are four offices that would be continued, one of them being a family services office that is currently being used out of the facility. We will have a better idea one, when we know if there are capital dollars available to move forward with that proposal and if there are not capital dollars available, then we will likely surplus it to Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want people to get me wrong. If it's going to be fully utilized by the Department of Health, it's great for the community. This is something that should have been decided two or three years ago when they were in the planning stages of the new health centre, and I could have continued the fight for office space for my community.

Mr. Speaker, if the old health centre building is not going to be transferred to Community and Government Services, what will happen to the three staff housing units that are on the top floor of the building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member's patience. We did rush the Sanikiluaq project by deferring another project that is now currently being done as well too, but it did speed up the process where maybe it rushed some of the planning. That being said, with regard to the accommodation units that are part of that facility, we're not looking at relinquishing those at this time, especially until we get the staff housing units that the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation spoke to recently. We will be continuing to use those units and potentially in the future continue to use them for health staff and transient housing available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Member Keyootak.

Question 837 – 5(2): Coordination of Social Services

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Family Services.

We're aware that we all go through hardships, everyone does, and one of our colleagues stated that and I have her words in my mind. Losing our family is very hard. All communities are working hard on it because we all get touched whenever anyone in any community commits suicide.

Now, we all know that there's a group in Clyde River, the trauma team that goes out from Ilisaqsivik. They go out to different communities to go and help in traumatic situations and when they're going through too much hardship in a community.

I asked a question last year about social workers and I believe all communities have a social worker. They have counsellors in all the communities, I believe. When the trauma team goes to the communities from Ilisaqsivik, they go to a strange community and they find they can't really work with the community social workers and a lot of times the social workers are not in the community when the trauma team is there. The social workers are hardly ever there.

I brought this up last year to make sure that social workers help the trauma team when they're in the community. Can you give us an update on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking about that again. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, when it comes to trauma in the communities, Quality of Life coordinates the supports going into the community. Family Services does not coordinate it. Family Services are not mental health workers, but I'm sure if they needed help in the community for social work, they are more than happy and capable of helping in the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had asked in the past how many social workers are employed in Nunavut. Do you have a plan in place to replace the current social workers in the communities with Inuit? We often find that Inuit are hesitant to go and talk to the social worker because they feel they are too foreign to their own culture and beliefs.

I would like to encourage that because we need more Inuit working and employed in our communities that can better work with Inuit who understand and know their own language and culture. Mr. Speaker, I know that many people do not want to approach social workers. Is there a plan in place today to employ Inuit social workers in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. Though the work social workers do is challenging and there are not that many vacant positions in our department, I am very proud that the (interpretation ends) income support workers and regional managers (interpretation) are all filled with Inuktitut-speaking employees. (interpretation ends) I am proud to say under Family Wellness, 20 social workers, 2 foster parent coordinators, and 5 family resource workers are bilingual, as also are case aids, some of them partially bilingual. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second supplementary, Member Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for the clarification. We all have challenges, particularly in the smaller communities because the language in the communities is very strong. That is why I commit to continuing the fight to ensure that services are provided in our language so that our people will know how to access services available to them.

We also need better services to ensure that we reduce suicides. The high number of suicides is a part of our major social problems right now. Perhaps there needs to be programs and delivery services for young people and also of course for adults. Elders often talk about their problems and many of them do not want to approach the office because of the current language issue.

Is there an expectation that there will be an increase in the number of frontline workers that are going to work in the department who are bilingual? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope so. That is our plan. It is part of the human resources employment plan and it is also our plan. (interpretation ends) When we are recruiting, we have gone as far as identifying some positions to have the requirement to be Inuk, so we are working hard to try to increase our employment. I am proud to say that 63 percent of our employees at Family Services are Inuit. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Question 838 – 5(2): Healthy Schools, Healthy Students

Mr. Qirngnuq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement I spoke of the importance of having a good facility to learn in, for our students to attain the level of education that you and I have attained.

Can the minister tell this House when he will be tabling information on future plans for the new school in Taloyoak? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, we do have preplanning work being done for an addition to the Taloyoak school. At this point I have no details around when plans would be coming into the House. It would be through the capital planning process that those details would come out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will go to my question directly so that it's clear. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as a government we want to see our students succeed, and we are committed to helping them achieve that success.

Mr. Speaker, when those grade 5 students invited me to visit their class and asked me questions, I noticed that they are committed to learning the knowledge that we have attained. How else can they succeed and attain knowledge unless they are in a safe and comfortable environment?

Can the minister describe what commitments his department is making to ensure that these young students will achieve their goals and make their future a success?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member again for his question. I applaud him for reaching out and having a dialogue with the grade students about his work and the work that he brings to Talurjuarmiut.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of having a healthy learning environment, it all starts with the people there and I think this is where we want to emphasize having a good, healthy learning environment involves the students, the staff, and the community overall.

Just to share an example, I have heard in some communities or schools they talk about a K to 12 school all under one roof and having it impact negatively on the younger students because they see bullying in the hallways, but I think this is an opportunity where we need to have the older students step up and be the role models that the young people need to see in our schools.

We need to flip that mindset around the school environment and how we foster that and talking with the students, the school team, and the community. I encourage the member to have those dialogues on an ongoing basis to have the best learning environment for all grade levels and hopefully we can see that across the territory moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second and final supplementary, Member Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that response. I'll also ask this question. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions I have risen in this House to address the importance of safe and comfortable environments to ensure the health and happiness of our communities.

Will the minister commit to working with the school representatives in Taloyoak to ensure that the environment is safe and healthy for students, staff, parents, and all members of the community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. We are working with all communities with every DEA. We want to ensure that the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq policy is in place and implemented, used and understood by all parties.

Mr. Speaker, further to that, I recommit with my staff at the regional school operations. They deal directly with all schools and I would encourage the member to have, again, the dialogue with parents, the community, students, and school staff as well. We should be

open and transparent around how we address having a healthy learning environment and reaching that point so that our students can benefit from the education program to the best of their abilities. I only encourage it and thank the member for his question.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Let us proceed. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Member Lightstone.

Question 839 – 5(2): Child First Initiatives

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education.

As I mentioned in my member's statement, the Child First Initiative is designed to ensure Inuit children have equal access to health, social and educational products, services, and supports.

Given our high rates of food insecurity amongst school-aged children, I was quite happy to hear that the Yukon First Nations were able to utilize this initiative to provide children in their schools with two hot meals daily.

My first question to the minister is: has his department made any submissions under this Child First Initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. I have heard briefly about Yukon First Nations accessing the Child First Initiative towards food programming. I believe it was in the fall that it was announced and I've had, I would say, preliminary discussions around a proposal that would see something similar for Nunavut. At this time I don't have any further details, but there are some discussions around putting together a proposal that we can support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. I do hope that the department will take this seriously and will commit to producing a proposal to access funding on behalf of Inuit children. My next question is: will the minister commit to doing so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was also going to say that we have submitted a separate proposal, not for food programming, to the Child First Initiative.

Our proposal is around mental health support at the school level and we are working toward and have approval for a pilot project on that.

In terms of the question Mr. Lightstone asked, as I said, we have been in discussions preliminarily and this involves the president of the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. We are trying to work with different parties to put in a proposal that we can all support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my last question, we all know it's a difficult, lengthy process to apply for any federal funding program. In this particular instance it took Yukon First Nations a total of a year and a half before their final funding was approved. Considering how lengthy and difficult the process is, I would like to ask if the minister or the Department of Education would be able to provide assistance through other organizations, such as our DEAs, who might be interested in accessing this funding to ensure no child goes hungry in their schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do on occasion get proposals of different types from DEAs, so we do on a case-by-case basis look at any type of funding request that they may have and look at potential partnering opportunities. That's always on the table and I encourage DEAs to think outside the box, so to speak, and addressing some of the educational challenges that we face.

Right now the President of NAM, Mr. Bell, has initiated the discussion after seeing what the Yukon First Nations successes have been, and we have indicated that we would provide the details that he requested from the Department of Education in terms of number of Inuit students we have and so on and so forth. We would support a proposal and we're moving forward in that direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, Member Akoak.

Question 840 – 5(2): Human Resources Policies

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to wish my grandson a good day today. He just turned 16, so happy birthday to Sport. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit the issue of the government's human resources policies, including the bad weather and office closure policy that is provided for in section 1011 of the government's *Human Resources Manual*.

Mr. Speaker, the question that I and other members have been raising about this issue is the question of where the final authority rests under the policy to make decisions about office closures in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, when this issue was first raised last year, the minister made what I understood to be a very clear commitment to devolve and decentralize this authority to local Government of Nunavut staff and to remove it from bureaucrats in Iqaluit. However, in reviewing the minister's responses to my questions of last week, it is not clear to me if this has actually happened.

Mr. Speaker, my first question to the minister is this: for the record, who has the final authority to make office closure decisions, the deputy minister or local Government of Nunavut staff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was quite clear. Unfortunately I wasn't. I will reiterate, Mr. Speaker. Effective April 1, 2019, the Deputy Minister of Human Resources, in very close consultation with designated local officials, those are the local staff in the community, will be responsible for the decision to close services or offices in that community. It is jointly with my deputy of human resources and advice of the local staff, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member for Gjoa Haven, Member Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government should believe in local people. They are there when there's bad weather there. It should not be made here from Iqaluit. They're not where the bad weather is. I'm glad you understand that.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, his department's business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to "review and revise the Human Resources Manual directives and policies to ensure alignment with Inuit Societal Values." Mr. Speaker, there are dozens of sections in this manual. Can the minister indicate what areas have been identified as being a priority for review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any specific sectors that are under review, but they're constantly being monitored by our staff to ensure that the policies are relevant, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Member Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I noted last week, the department's bad weather and office closure policy appears to have been last updated in August 2013, almost seven years ago. Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to ensuring that an updated version of this policy is published before the Legislative Assembly reconvenes for its spring sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just mentioned earlier that there was, effective April 1, the new call for deciding when a community should be closed due to weather-related issues. It was done on April 1, 2019. We are constantly monitoring the situations and updating them when necessary, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the weather related to school closures, it is left entirely to the local district education authorities. Those local district education authorities decide whether a school will be closed or not. Mr. Speaker, I thought I would make that clear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Member Qamaniq.

Question 841 – 5(2): Municipal Water Infrastructure

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the residents of my community, my fellow residents of Tununiq, as well as my colleagues.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

As the minister will recall, the Government of Nunavut's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan was submitted to the federal government last year under its Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

One section of the GN's plan addresses the issue of water infrastructure. It indicates that “Nunavut obtains its freshwater for domestic use from lakes and glacier melt. Water is pumped from the source to a water reservoir or directly to the Water Treatment Plant. For the majority of communities in Nunavut, treatment consists of chlorine injection at a truck fill station that is overseen by water truck delivery drivers. This single barrier approach to treatment will no longer meet Canada's drinking water guidelines and territorial upgrades will be required. The Department of Community and Government Services is currently working on a project that explores the benefits of standardizing the design of Water Treatment Plants.” Can the minister update the House today on the status of this project? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my colleague, for asking those questions. Mr. Speaker, this issue has kept returning to discussions held in this House, of the importance of having safe potable water within Nunavut. In past years different water delivery systems have been adopted by different communities. Some melted ice, while others have water truck deliveries, while some use utilidor. These different water delivery systems use different treatment procedures with differences in communities as some add fluoride.

There are many different ways of water delivery, all of which have different treatment options and we provide the materials based on their specific water system. Every system also has differences, which we noticed. The work CGS is currently doing relates to these different water systems and how different treatments can be standardized to provide safe potable water and it would allow for more options for Nunavummiut. That's our goal, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will appreciate, it is essential that the current water infrastructure in our communities be kept in good working condition. Concerns have recently been raised with me regarding the urgent need for repairs to Pond Inlet's water station. Ongoing problems with the community's water station have resulted in the municipality having to cut holes in the ice of the reservoir in order to pump water directly into the water trucks, which is an unacceptable situation that I understand has been ongoing since last year. Will the minister commit to reviewing this situation and advising me of what action his department is taking to address the situation in cooperation with the Municipality of Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I feel for you. In regard to the lack of water in your community, we've had problems with equipment breaking down. When there are other problems, our first priority is to have potable water available in all communities. Yes, I'll make sure that we will give you an update. Our staff is currently working on this situation and working with the Municipality of Pond Inlet. We will keep you updated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Member Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most communities in Nunavut do not have utilidor systems and are unlikely to be getting utilidor systems anytime soon. It is important that our municipal water trucks be in good condition. Can the minister indicate

if his department has worked with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities to develop a comprehensive inventory and set of condition ratings for water trucks in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I would like to thank you for asking questions about potable water. Mr. Speaker, we usually work with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities to determine if it is possible to provide more funds to the hamlet in order to be used for service trucks and to make sure that we have an adequate number of working equipment. Yes, we have a close working relationship with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities and if there is a need to increase the equipment or if they are not adequate, we make sure that we are well aware of the situation in each community, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Before we proceed, I would like recognize my two grandchildren. I believe that it is their first time here. The eldest one, Anguti Devon, caught a polar bear last year.

>>Applause

If you would stand, please, Devon Quassa-Angilirq, and his little sister Teevai, and my wife.

>>Applause

Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Question 842 – 5(2): Pharmacy Products in Canada

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be directing my question this afternoon to the Minister of Health.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, during the minister's appearance before the Standing Committee on Social Wellness, members had asked questions on the pharmaceutical products that are provided to the community health centres. The minister provided additional information to the committee indicating that most pharmacy products are purchased through a warehouse distributor and distributed to the health centres across the territory.

Can the minister indicate to this House how much money is spent on health centre pharmacy supplies on an annual basis? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have to go by memory on this. I believe our pharmacy budget is approximately \$5 million a year, but I will stand to be corrected on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of my question is, in Pangnirtung it has been observed that the health centre often receives large amounts of pharmaceutical products that end up not being dispensed, expiring, and accumulating. Additionally there seem to be other products that the health centre cannot keep consistently stocked. My next question for the minister is: how do you keep track of the amounts of pharmaceutical products given to communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our pharmacy inventory has a standard for each health centre. Each health centre has medications from our formulary list and those would be replaced as they expire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It is a concern that health centres may not have the necessary medications on hand when they are needed by medical clients. In the regional centres where there are private pharmacies, it is much easier to get the necessary medications in a timely manner. However, in more remote communities, medical clients may have to wait longer for the medications they need.

Will the minister commit to reviewing the way in which pharmaceutical products are distributed to the health centres and how they are monitored to ensure that health centres have adequate supplies on hand when they are needed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're just in the process of finalizing our full review and implementation plan for the *Pharmacy Act* this fiscal year. It's one of the things that we are looking at and those would be part of the discussions where people have an opportunity to provide input into our ongoing plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I may add as well too, I did get a real stand here corrected on the pharmacy budget. It is \$4.9 million. I said approximately \$5 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. You have a good memory. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Main.

Question 843 – 5(2): Nunavut’s Debt Cap

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues. I rise to direct my questions to the Minister of Finance.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in the recent budget on page 6 under fiscal indicators it details the government’s borrowing limit, which currently stands at \$650 million and is set by the federal government. Mr. Speaker, out of our \$650 million debt cap, Nunavut has currently used up approximately \$452 million, which leaves a little under \$200 million on our “Visa card.”

My first question for the minister is: has the Nunavut government formally asked for an increase to the debt limit set by the federal government, yes or no? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won’t say maybe this time; I’ll say no. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I was reviewing the proceedings of the federal finance committee meeting from February 19, last month, and in it the federal finance minister, Bill Morneau, mentions territories, plural, in terms of jurisdictions that are interested in increasing their borrowing limit. The Northwest Territories is out publicly and made it known that they are looking for an increase to that debt cap.

My second question for the minister is: have there been any informal discussions with the federal finance minister with regard to the debt cap? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I meet with the Minister Morneau, the topic has come up because we did meet in conjunction with other territories’ representatives, but at this time it’s not something we’re looking at exploring. We do recognize that we have a lot of infrastructure needs across the territory and if at some time in the future that is an option that would prove to be effective, it’s something that we would keep on the table, but at this time we’re not looking at increasing the debt cap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Then my next question for the minister is: why not? It sounds to me, reading the proceedings of this finance committee meeting, that this is something the federal finance minister, “It’s something we’re looking at in considering quite seriously.” Mr. Speaker, I’m curious as to when our federal partners, who have much deeper pockets than we do, saying that they’re open to considering this, an increase to the debt cap in other northern jurisdictions, why has the Nunavut government not come forward and request an increase to the debt cap. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a good question. When we look at servicing a debt cap, a healthy chunk of our debt that’s on the books is used to support the Qulliq Energy Corporation’s lines of credit. It doesn’t mean it’s our Visa limit *per se*. It doesn’t mean it’s our Visa balance, but we have to make sure that as we’re able to service debt, we use the limit as the number that we use. We do have some ongoing lease obligations.

The way the accounting methodology has changed over the last couple of years, our long-term leases have a debt to it, so that impacts our debt cap, so that would be decreasing each year. Mr. Speaker, we’re always open to major investments and partnerships that are available, especially with the federal government. As projects come to arise, we have to make sure that we’ve got enough money available and, if need be, we will tap into our debt cap as needed if we have to for infrastructure projects that make sense.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to be very wary of servicing any debts that we incur. One of the challenges that other jurisdictions have brought up is it is an ongoing challenge. I believe it was quoted with the Northwest Territories that 2 percent of their budget goes to servicing the debt. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of ongoing needs and we want to make sure we manage our money fiscally responsible and, if at such time that this government determines that a project is worth using debt that’s available to us, we will do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member Angnakak.

Motion 071 – 5(2): Extension of Question Period

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 39(7), I move, seconded by the Member for Pangnirtung, that the time allotted for oral questions be extended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order and is not subject to debate. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried and question period is extended for an additional 30 minutes.

(interpretation) Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Member Angnakak.

Question 844 – 5(2): Devolution of Government of Nunavut Responsibilities

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue of devolution today but from a different perspective than what we're used to talking about in this House.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the delivery of health and social services programs to indigenous peoples in other Canadian jurisdictions, there has been a trend in recent years towards devolving these responsibilities to self-governing bodies.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Nunavut and the president of Nunavut Tunngavik recently signed a new cooperation protocol. As we all know, NTI does not hesitate to criticize the government for how it thinks we are doing in the delivery of public services.

Can the Premier indicate if NTI has expressed any interest in the GN devolving responsibilities and resources in the areas of health care and social services program delivery to the organization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government deals with the indigenous organizations through the ICPC program. I have met with NTI and no, there have been discussions about devolving any of the service providers such as Health or Family Services, to the best of my recollection, from the government to NTI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier will recall, one of the resolutions that were passed at NTI's 2018 annual general meeting concerned the study that the organization planned to do concerning the issue of self-government. I'm not sure if NTI has publicly released the resolutions from its 2019 annual general meeting or not, but can the Premier describe the extent to which the conclusions of the self-government study were taken into account during the development of the government's new cooperation protocol with NTI, Katujjiqatigiinniq? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to remind you I am the Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Katujjiqatigiinniq Protocol is about communication and how we work together. The study that NTI commissioned about self-government, it is their study. I don't know if the results are done or not, I don't know if they will share it with the public, I don't know if they will share it with the government, and if anybody has questions about NTI's self-government study, they are free to ask NTI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new protocol between the government and NTI contains a significant focus on issues related to language and culture. Is the Premier willing to consider the devolution of current GN responsibilities and resources in these specific areas to NTI and our territory's regional Inuit associations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When cabinet and I and NTI president and board members all met, we all met together and we never talked about divulging or transferring any services the government does. By legislation we are the service providers for a large number of services that we provide in Nunavut, and that is how the current state is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Question 845 – 5(2): Coronavirus Preparedness

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my fellow residents of Amittuq.

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health regarding the new COVID-19 illness. Many of the residents in my other constituency community are very concerned about this. The coronavirus has arrived in Canada. When Nunavummiut and my constituents go to Ottawa... I see on the news that there are now 19 cases in Ontario. How can the people of Nunavut be protected from this illness? It has arrived in Canada. How can the people of Nunavut who go for medical travel down south protect themselves? What is the government doing to protect them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From a government standpoint we are preparing our health centres and continuing to dialogue nationally through our chief medical officers and our chief public health officers to make sure that we are aware of ongoing situations as they arise.

Mr. Speaker, I can say first and foremost, like any virus, practise safe hygiene practices. Make sure you wash your hands frequently. Don't touch your face. Make sure that you continue to wash and cough into your sleeve to make sure that you're not passing anything on around you.

Mr. Speaker, the risk is still quite low in Canada and all the health care professionals across the country are aware of this ongoing issue, but I just want to really emphasize to all people, make sure you practise safe hygiene and you can avoid contact with this virus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it's getting dangerous. It's getting worrisome. We are concerned about the people who have to go to hospitals in Ontario. Can the minister explain to us: is the Nunavut health department working with the Ontario health department closely? What are the indicators of people having this virus? Does the health department know how it is spread and how you can tell if someone has it? Can you tell the constituents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the most common symptoms are a fever, difficulty breathing, and coughs. That being said, it is influenza season across the country as well too. We should be continuously practising safe hygiene habits to make sure that we're not passing any viruses around that may weaken our immune system.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to communication with Ontario health, it's all across the country. We are all continuing conversations. There are teleconference calls and training sessions, not every day but quite frequently during the week to update statuses. Anytime anyone would show even just a suspicion that they may have come into contact with the coronavirus or COVID-19, there are safety protocols that are put into place with isolation. If you suspect that you may have been in contact, please contact your nearest health care professional.

Some people are self-isolating if there is any suspicion that they may have come into contact with somebody from the regions where, in Wuhan, China, now as it is spreading around the world. Obviously we want to keep on top of everything, but I do want to stress to people that it is still maintained as a very low risk of contact here in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, (interpretation) Member Kaernerker.

Mr. Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To stay on that topic, some of my constituents go to work at the Mary River mine. Mary River gets its own jet flight from the Montreal area. Can the health department do something to protect the workers at Mary River to make sure that they are covered health-wise? To ensure the health and safety of workers that go work in the mines at Mary River, is there funding available to do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not a matter of funding. It is a reportable disease or virus, if you want to call it that, where anyone who has or has suspicion of having COVID-19, there's a legal obligation for the reportability of it and we would take any measures necessary in the territory here to protect our population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Member Main.

Question 846 – 5(2): Coronavirus Preparedness

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to direct my questions to the Minister of Health as well, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) My first question for the health minister is to follow up on my colleague's questions on the coronavirus. My first question is: does Nunavut have a specific plan to respond to a pandemic? I realize that coronavirus has not yet been declared a worldwide pandemic, but it may have the potential to become one. Do we have a pandemic preparedness plan and what are the elements of it if we do have one? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, right now the risk is very low to have COVID-19 impacting Canada, especially in Nunavut. That being said, we are planning for the worst, hoping for the best, I guess, is the common term that has been put out there. We've had discussions with all of the health centres to make sure that there are isolation suits and equipment that are available in the communities.

We do have some isolation rooms available across the territory at the Qikiqtani General Hospital, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay, I believe, so there is a plan in place. I do want to assure members that if by some chance that this does get not out of control but more of a challenge, we do have a plan in place to protect our population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It is reassuring to know that there is a plan in place. Under that plan, the minister mentioned some communities have isolation rooms in their health centres. For communities without isolation rooms, would responding to this virus involve sending individuals from one community to another or would there be some other way to isolate patients in a community that doesn't have an isolation room in their health facility? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would depend on the severity of the impact of illness. If it is a high impact and severe diagnosis, then we would have to take steps to potentially look at transportation, but isolation is the best course, if any space can be found in a community where people can be isolated. It's similar back when we had the H1N1 virus. I think it was about eight or ten years ago. There were a lot of lessons learned from that so that we have been able to update and better plan for any future mass impact. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The minister mentioned preparing our health centres. It's an unfortunate fact that our health centres across Nunavut are under-resourced and struggling to meet needs in many cases as it is without this new virus being in Nunavut. It is concerning when you put that into consideration.

My last question for the minister is: have any jurisdictions in Canada made commitments to provide additional resources to Nunavut if we request them, namely, health care professionals? Do we have any jurisdictions that have indicated that they will help us out if we are in need in the future? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are quite a low number of cases in Canada, although we do want to make sure that we're keeping wary or very aware of what can happen or what's going on. At this time there hasn't been a need to identify and we will continue to monitor the situation. We do have a number of standing offer contracts with health care provision of health care professionals through different contracts that we could entail, as well as it depends on what's happening in other jurisdictions on how free they would be to be able to provide assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Member Keyootak.

Question 847 – 5(2): Medical Travel Escorts

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, many people are patients who have to go to health centres or to Iqaluit or outside the territory and they have medical escorts, particularly those that come from around Baffin Island go to Iqaluit. Many do require escorts, particularly those that require longer treatment. When they come into Iqaluit, sometimes they come in through medevac and they go directly to the Qikiqtani General Hospital. Their escort also has to follow the person being admitted to the emergency room.

They go through such a tremendous challenge in their life. This has occurred several times and brought to my attention by many of my constituents. Escorts have to be constantly available, but the problem they encounter is that they have no mattress to sleep on. Sometimes escorts just sleep on an available chair.

I was also recently informed that in the Tammaativvik Boarding Home, when they're at the hospital, there's no room at the hospital and there's also no room elsewhere. They have to stay with the patient because there's no room at the boarding home. I would like to know who has set this up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our office of medical travel works very closely with the boarding home here in Iqaluit to work on expected loads and coordinating specialist visits with room availability. We all know that it's a very big challenge here in Iqaluit to find alternative accommodations. We have lost a couple of hotels in the last few years and we're in the process of two more being built right now that we're hoping will alleviate some of that pressure.

Mr. Speaker, as the member said in his preamble, oftentimes when these unexpected medical travel trips have to occur, it can become challenging for the boarding home to find suitable accommodations for people. Sometimes through necessity, there are circumstances where common areas are used, on a short-term basis, to provide a least a roof over somebody's head.

It is never the intention that we want to put somebody in an awkward position, but at the same time when people are travelling for medical travel to get the health care that Nunavummiut deserve, there are sometimes accommodations that are difficult to find and we have to do whatever we can with our boarding homes to provide the best service that we can provide at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a one-time concern, but it has been raised to me several times. Sometimes the boarding home here doesn't have knowledge that they are a patient's medical escort. What they have been often told is that they have to stay close by to the patient and not be at the boarding home.

I would like to see some assistance on this matter because it is a challenging time for them and then for there to be no space at the Tammaativvik, they are being told that they cannot leave the hospital at all. Are you able to work with and speak directly with those that have the contract for the boarding home that at least they can have a place to sleep at the boarding home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are regular communications with my medical travel staff and the contractor on the service provision, and they do work very closely. I can say from a complaint standpoint for the Tammaativvik Boarding Home, the number has gone down dramatically over the last year or so or maybe a little bit longer, as it has been improving.

Mr. Speaker, again, when we are looking at accommodations in a city here in Iqaluit that doesn't have a lot of accommodations, especially for the sudden medical travel patients, it is a challenge. We can't plan around that. That is one of the challenges where we are in constant discussions with our service provider to see what alternatives can be made. Again, I am looking forward to additional facilities being opened here in the capital city that would be able to deal with some overflow, such as the two hotels that are currently under construction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Member Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the minister to provide a directive to the staff at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home. When medical patients arrive into the city, they sometimes don't get the notification from the hospital staff and whether an escort was provided. The communication between the hospital and the boarding home sometimes results in escorts without a room when they get tired. This applies to critical escorts and to the point where the escort doesn't agree with their assessment. Can this issue please be resolved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will follow up with my officials on this matter, but I will also take the opportunity that any time somebody is on medical travel, the contact information for the Medical Travel Division as well as the Office of Patient

Relations can address any concerns as they arise. As I stated, I will continue to raise this issue with my officials. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Member Qamaniq.

Question 848 – 5(2): Fuel Tax Rebate

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. During Friday's committee meeting we talked a bit about the fuel subsidy and I tried to ask a question about fuel rates. I sometimes make mistakes because I am a new MLA and I learn from my mistakes. I'm not sure, but perhaps I'll direct my question to the Minister of Finance.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in the past the Government of Nunavut provided a fuel tax rebate a few years back to homeowners in Nunavut. The federal government recently implemented the carbon tax about a year ago. Is the Department of Finance going to provide or have considered providing a fuel tax rebate to homeowners in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't remember the title at the time, which is almost a shame, as I was a very strong proponent of it when I was on regular members' side.

>> *Laughter*

It was to do with the home heating fuel rebate. I cannot remember the exact title of the program that we did. I am assuming that's what the member is talking about. With regard to that, it was a reaction to the fast escalation of fuel costs. We do acknowledge that there have been some increases associated with the carbon tax, but fuel prices overall are generally trending down, so it hasn't been explored at this current time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Member Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are you able to look into the possibility of resurrecting a subsidy for those homeowners who are in need of a subsidy for their fuel costs? I know that we are able to ask another question with regard to supplementary questions. In addition, are you able to look into it in the near future for this possibility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I could have another discussion with my officials and we will coordinate with the trend of fuel pricing with the Petroleum Products Division to see if that is something that would make an impact with regard to the fuel pricing structure. We can look into it again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Let's proceed to Item 7. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. (interpretation) Item 8. (interpretation ends) Returns to Written Questions.

Just before I move on, I would just like to remind everyone in the House that the phones, keep your phones quiet. I keep hearing a buzz.

(interpretation) Item 9. (interpretation ends) Replies to Opening Address. (interpretation) Item 10. (interpretation ends) Petitions. (interpretation) Item 11. (interpretation ends) Responses to Petitions. (interpretation) Item 12. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove.

Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 022 – 5(2): Bill 42, An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 42, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that it is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that was clear. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Bill 42 will appear on the order paper for Wednesday, March 4.

(interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Moving on. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 258 – 5(2): News Release: Yukon First Nations Launch Nutritional Meals Program in Rural Communities

Tabled Document 259 – 5(2): Article: First Nations to Participate in Hot Meals Program

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table two documents together today. The first is the news release of the Yukon First Nations launch of their nutritional

meal programs in schools, as well as the article in *The Daily Star* with additional information about the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Continuing on. Item 14. Notices of Motions. There are none. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. There are none. Item 16. Motions. 17. First Reading of Bills. 18. Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 39 *amma* Bill 40 with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take 20 minutes.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:51 and Committee resumed at 16:16*

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

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon, members. 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. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of Bill 39 and the 2020-21 Main Estimates for the Department of Education. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Are we in agreement that we first start with Bill 39?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Chairman: Thank you. When we left off on Friday, we were dealing with the Department of Education and so at this time I will ask Minister Joanasi: do you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Joanasi.

Hon. David Joanasi: Yes, Mr. Chairman, please. Thanks.

Chairman: Thank you. 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 escort the witnesses in, please.

Thank you. Minister Joanasia, if you could please reintroduce your witnesses. It's my understanding that you have some further information for the committee that you said you would provide on Friday and I will give you an opportunity to present that. Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have here with me on my left Deputy Minister Kathleen Okpik and to my right, Abraham Suleiman, who is the comptroller at the department.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I handed out a copy of a bit of an explanation with regard to the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program and it shows a bit of the enhancement details. It's there for the committee for use of reference. We have committed to providing that, so it's before you now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasia. When we left off on Friday, we were on page G-4, Directorate, with a total operating and maintenance budget to be voted on was \$3,920,000. We left off with Mr. Lightstone asking questions and he wasn't quite finished, so I will give him the opportunity to finish his questioning. Mr. Lightstone.

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

Last Friday during my opening comments or return to the minister's opening comments, I expressed my disappointment that the department has yet again failed to request approval for new funding dedicated to creating universal, territory-wide breakfast and lunch program. I hope, for the sake of the countless hungry children, we will one day have such a program.

In the meantime I would like to ask the minister if you have instructed your department to provide any additional support to assist our teachers and community members who voluntarily run the current programming. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Staffing in our schools continue to support voluntarily food programs at their own leisure. This is over and above the already jam-packed day of planning and trying to deliver education programs. I think this is a discussion we continue to have with our partners and stakeholders around food programming. We will continue that dialogue.

Further to that, I haven't sent directions *per se* to the department, but it is a discussion that we've had in regard to looking at our budgets to see if we can perhaps enhance the food programming. We're just taking a preliminary look through our budgeting cycle, whether or not some funds can be re-profiled for that or again, when we have the exchange about the Children First Initiative, there are prospects of having outside sources of funds, third parties. This is something that we're continuing to work on and we will go from there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on. My next topic is the departmental surplus or lapsed funds that I had discussed last year.

First, I would like to point out that I'm glad to see that the lapse of funds have reduced or declined recently. In the 2018-19 Public Accounts, the department had unspent \$3.8 million compared to \$6.5 million the previous and \$5 million the year before that. I am glad to see that the minister and the department are ensuring that those funds are utilized appropriately. Further, last year I identified that a significant amount of the department's lapse was due to travel and transportation. I'm happy to see again that the department has actually taken this into consideration and it has a reduction in the budget request for travel.

However, last year I called out the department as we were pleading for the GN to do more for our children. At that time last year the minister had stated that he will direct his staff to maximize using these funds to the full potential and had indicated that he will give direction to the department to reprofile funds to ensure that any funds do not go unspent. My next question is: did the minister follow through with that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have focused this year's budget on reallocating and re-profiling funds towards the Student Achievement Division to provide better supports in this area. Further to that, I have directed my department specifically around grants and contributions towards the Early Learning and Child Care Division to maximize spending those funds that are earmarked for that purpose. It's along the lines of investing in the youngest people in our territory and to ensure that those funds are spent where they're meant to be. I have directed that.

For this year's budget, 2020-21, its focus has been on student support. This is an area that has been highly prioritized with the Auditor General and the inclusive education report that was conducted in line with our revisions through Bill 25. This is an area that we continue to spend a lot of attention and I think we will continue to do so in future budgets as well. The need is great and so right now the focus has been on student achievement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response, minister. Last year when the minister had indicated that he would be re-profiling funds, I believe the topic that was under discussion at that time was the need to provide assistance to our school faculty who are voluntarily running our food programs. I would like to ask for further clarification if any of the re-profiled funds had gone to provide any sort of support

to those teachers and school faculty that are running food programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we didn't reprofile any funds for food programming this cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on for now. I just want to make myself clear once again that I really encourage the minister and the Department of Education to provide more assistance to our school faculty and the other volunteers that are providing this crucial service, ensuring that our children are not going hungry and going forward, if there are any unspent funds, it does go towards feeding hungry children. I'll move on for now.

Recently during the televised review of the Auditor General report last fall, one topic that the minister had brought up was the Department of Education had indicated that it supports "Take Your Kid to Work" Day to assist students to explore possibilities. My next question is if the minister would be able to elaborate a little bit further about that program and if he intends on expanding it going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We reviewed to explore some alternative scheduling scenarios for certain students and this is something that I think has been discussed before, especially if there are students that show great potential of a certain trade or skill set that they want to pursue after their high school and/or post-secondary education, trying to match up with their interests and passion.

I think that's something that we can entertain and trying to get our students when you take your kid to work. I get that it's a very flexible date to have. The student might not necessarily be your child, but you get paired up with someone that might be interested to work in that field. I think this is something that is ongoing and we will continue in future years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response, minister. It does sound like a very great initiative for our youth, but some of the minister's comments were a bit conflicting, so I just want to confirm: did this actually take place? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this took place. “Take Your Kid to Work” Day takes place and it is voluntary. I think that students get identified if they want to be placed in work and then they can be placed in a certain work placement for the day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification, minister. I’m just going to dig a little bit deeper on this particular item. Where exactly did this take place? Was it just here in Iqaluit or was it in several communities and what offices? What was the success of this program and will the minister be expanding upon it next year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don’t have those details, but maybe Ms. Okpik can elaborate a little bit more in detail on how this program gets rolled out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Okpik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was directed more toward grade 9 students to follow their parents to work. This was done across Nunavut. We make information available from our communications department, but we do not monitor how many actually participate in any given year. At education headquarters on that day we are open and welcome students. We had students in our office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Okpik. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next is a request for the minister. I really do believe that this is an excellent program and it is definitely something that will be crucial to ensuring that the next generation will consider the GN as a preferred place of employment. My request to the minister would be that for the next such “Take Your Kid to Work” Day, the minister closely monitor the success and report back to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we could take note of how much uptake we get in the future years and I would be willing to share the details once we have that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. It is much appreciated. Moving on, just recently, I believe within the last six months, the Government of New

Brunswick had released a green paper introducing a policy that they are researching in where their department of education is looking at moving away from age-based grades and grouping children together based on their skills and abilities. Given the difficulties that our teachers have in teaching a broad range of varying levels of students, I would like to ask if the minister has ever or would ever consider such option. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. I have noted New Brunswick's pilot project around assessment and this is something we are keeping an ear out to see how that is playing out in other jurisdictions.

If you will allow, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Okpik can share a bit of detail around, I believe, in the early days of the territory, there was something similar that had happened here in Nunavut. If you will allow, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Okpik can share some details.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Ms. Okpik.

Ms. Okpik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I do know that in the early days after Nunavut was created and the Department of Education found our staff in Arviat in the curriculum division did some research and had some work done on this, but we never pursued it. I think those people working at that time would really be happy to hear that I think they were probably trailblazers in that area. I would have to go back into our files, reports, and that type of thing and hopefully, because of ransomware, we would have to see if that's available electronically, but we can certainly check to see if there are hard copy reports still available. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Okpik. We are on page G-4. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,920,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. G-5. Policy and Planning. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$2,614,000. Questions? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, (interpretation ends) maybe just a clarification. Is this the right time to ask questions about retention and promotion decisions? I believe it's covered by policy under the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. It's my understanding that these kinds of questions will be asked under corporate services, which is the next page. Mr. Main, do you have other questions? No? Okay. Any questions? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Returning to last year, I did bring up the issue or idea of creating a teacher recruitment and retention bonus similar to that offered to nurses. I would like to follow up on that and ask if the minister has taken that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a topic that has been brought up a few times now and it's not something that we're pursuing *per se*, but it's an idea that has been floated. Right now we are continuing to focus on our student-educator ratio and looking at the full complement of staff and how we can get that ten-year recruitment and retention strategy. I think this is an area that will also be covered through that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was looking at the budget itself. The Policy and Planning Branch saw a large spike in travel and transportation in '18-19. Here we have over \$300,000, but prior year's was well below \$100,000. My first question is: in '18-19, what was that spike in travel for and going forward, what is the intended purpose of that travel? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pretty sure that had to do with the *Education Act* consultations and charters involved and whatnot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now that the *Education Act* consultation is complete, will this branch be returning to the minimal travel that it had previously experienced? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will give me a minute.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the simple answer is yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, you're good? Sorry. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me. I just have two questions. The first one is the Nunavut *Child Day Care Act*. The plan to review and amend or replace the Nunavut *Child Day Care Act* has been included in a number of prior year business plans. The draft 2020-23 business plan once again indicates that the

legislation will be reviewed and amendments will be proposed. Why is it taking so long to amend or replace Nunavut's current Daycare Act? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. We are still very much on Bill 25 currently. The intention has always been to review the *Child Day Care Act* once the *Education Act* has been completed. There has been some preliminary internal work that has begun to look at what parts of the *Child Day Care Act* may need revision and/or amending. Further details would have to be worked out once the *Education Act* review has taken its course. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for his [response]. My final question is, the department's Inuit employment plan leave program provides an opportunity for Inuit employees to pursue full-time post-secondary studies to advance their careers. I'm curious: currently right now, 2020, how many employees are benefiting from this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question.

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

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we've had three employees complete their education leave through the Sivummuqaqaallirutiksats program so far. These are Inuit employees and as of January 2020, there are seven active employees enrolled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasia. We are on page G-5. Policy and Planning. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$2,614,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Moving on. Page G-6. Corporate Services. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$4,746,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to return to a topic that I brought up again last year and it's the Nunavut Community Access Program, the \$85,000 grant, which I believe is provided to community libraries to ensure that everyone in the territory has access to Internet. Last year I had pointed out that these funds continue to be lapsed and I see again in '18-19 that grant funding has yet again lapsed. My first question to the minister is: why does this essential funding continue to go unspent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to get Mr. Suleiman to respond to this question, if you will allow, Mr. Chairman. Thanks.

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

Mr. Suleiman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the NCAP program, in past years it was not in good standing. The department decided, because of the importance of the program and its delivery, to hold onto that funding until the organization was able to get back into good standing. As of 2019-2020, the legal registries has provided us that information of NCAP and we have in 2019-2020 provided that funding to NCAP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Suleiman. Just a reminder, the use of acronyms can be very difficult for translators, so be cautious of that. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding that the Department of Culture and Heritage provides, I think, block funding for Nunavut libraries. My next question to the minister: wouldn't it be more appropriate if this Nunavut Community Access Program funding was transferred to Culture and Heritage, who could then distribute these funds directly to libraries as opposed to an association that is not in good standing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My staff in the Department of Education as well as my staff at Culture and Heritage have been discussing this item and I think we will see whoever can take it in terms of if it better fits with library services at Culture and Heritage. It's work that we will see if it can be done that way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again I would like to pose some questions on travel and transportation. It's good that the budget request has diminished somewhat, but once again I want to point out that the average travel for this branch, which only has less than 30 positions, is under \$200,000. What specifically is this budget request for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A large part of it is to do with our IT division to visit schools on a regular basis. There's also SMART Board and training to take place, health and safety community visits. Those are some of the types of travel and transport line items. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is the budget for the Corporate Services Branch of the Department of Education is projected to decrease somewhat in the 2021 year. Have any initiatives been delayed or postponed due to reduced financing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie: My next question, my final one, a number of the department's priorities in this year, 2020-23 business plan, address the use of information and communication technology. What are some of the department's biggest challenges in this area? My final question, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, ransomware was one, for example, but in terms of servicing 40 plus schools throughout the territory, there are some positive things that are going on with regard to IT. For example, the Connected North project is getting more and more schools online, which is having a good impact on schools being able to access online resources. It's something that's good, but in terms of challenges, it's having all the equipment in place and having the training supplied in order for the staff at the school level to be able to use the equipment and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. My first question is related to the business plan on 113. It is a 2019-2020 priority, but I'm wondering in regard to the first bullet where it talks about the development of a supporting policy on school excursions and land trips. I know that's a really important and popular activity that the kids look forward to in the springtime. How would this new policy affect this kind of activity? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Ms. Angnakak. We have a school excursion policy and forms. They are available to staff, but the main purpose is to ensure the safety of our students and staff when they do go out on excursions of different types. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering: in terms of the development of a supporting policy, how does that go towards ensuring the safety of children? Can you give an example of what has changed in this policy that provides better safety for the children going out on school excursions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a checklist that goes with it and the deputy minister approves on certain excursions, but for example, criminal record checks are to be done for any type of supervision that might have to take place during an excursion. Those checks and balances are done prior to approval. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 114 of your business plan it says here on one of the bullets under Priorities 2020-21, "Finalize options and an implementation plan for consideration for the rollout of a full-day kindergarten program." What is the status of that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are currently consulting with internal and external stakeholders regarding all aspects of full-day kindergarten and the potential impacts it would have. We are expecting to provide cabinet with our record for decision that aligns with an implementation plan and funding options. That would be this coming fiscal year, 2020-21.

Again, we have looked at our current facilities to see what is currently ready to go for full-day kindergarten. Some of them require capital investments and of course all would require O&M and extra PYs for full-day kindergarten to take place, so looking at all of those options as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to slow down a bit.

I know that some of the schools are at capacity. If you're going to add another class, what happens to communities that are at capacity and they have no room to add a full kindergarten? Maybe some communities do. Does that mean that the communities that have that capacity will go ahead and those that don't can't or are you going to try to roll this out all at once? What's your position on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't seen those options in detail yet, so those are still yet to be worked out and ultimately be presented to cabinet. I can't really say much further to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the areas that I think it will have quite a big impact is early childhood education. Has the department looked at that? I'm assuming it's going to be a positive impact but perhaps more of a stress on the department. I'm wondering what the department's position is on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's part of the stakeholder engagement that's currently taking place, seeing how child care facilities would be impacted by a full-day kindergarten program. It's still part of this review going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I want to remind members that what I said on Friday goes for today, that members would only get one opportunity to ask questions on each page. We are currently on page G-6. Corporate Services. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$4,746,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page G-7. Early Learning and Child Care. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,159,000. Questions? Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have very many questions here, but I am concerned about the long waits that parents have for child care. From a departmental position, what are the main challenges for communities and for bigger communities like Iqaluit when it comes to providing adequate child care services? I understand that in Iqaluit we have a waitlist of 700 plus children and so that's quite alarming. That means that some parents can't go to work or to school because they have to stay home with the child. I'm wondering: what is going on there, what kinds of challenges are you seeing, and how is the department working to address some of those challenges? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Infrastructure is one and having qualified staff, to have fully equipped child care facilities too is another. When I went to the federal-provincial-territorial meeting on early learning and child care, all the jurisdictions across the country were talking about how the early learning and child care facilities have a tough time retaining staff too. That's because most don't provide benefits

packages and the wage is not comparable to some of the jobs that are...there are better job opportunities that people would rather go to. These are some of the challenges not just within Nunavut but across the country. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to children and elders, sometimes if you look at the budgets, they are the least paid or the money is just not there and I think we need to change that. When we talk about our children, it is just so important that they get a good start in life and one way is through early childhood education. It's a great way of getting ready to go to school.

What is the position of the department to look at having early childhood educators or even the supervisors, the educators, I guess, to be considered staff of the department so that you don't get that big of a turnover rate? You have more stability because the pay is there. What is the department's position on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned, some child care facilities are having a hard time staying open for various reasons. We work with licence holders in the territory to identify some of the challenges or issues they deal with and come up with possible solutions.

There has been an idea of incorporating all daycares under the GN. It was kind of explored before in the past and there are talks of the possibility of examining this, but staff in our department have also tried to initiate discussions around having like one regional board of daycares rather than multiple, small, individual... . This is something that we have tried to engage in.

In Iqaluit, for example, there are so many different daycares. To have one board would streamline and maybe make better use of some of the resources that are currently in these facilities and/or maximize on the child care spaces, whether it be infant or higher age levels. It is something that we are open to discussing and it is something that we will continue to talk with our stakeholders about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I agree. I think it's a very important area and one that we will talk in the distant future or we will make a decision like ten years from now or whatever. I would like to see a bit more commitment from you as the minister that this will be a topic of conversation and the decision should be made sooner than later.

One of the things I did in 2013 when I first thought about becoming an MLA was to go visit all the daycares, and I held meetings with them just to talk about some of the

challenges that they were experiencing. In our discussions we were talking about the possibility or it would be great if there was a possibility of having one new building that was owned by the daycare and have all the daycares kind of come together to own this building so you are only paying for one light bill or one fuel bill, you have one playground, and you could have different classrooms, like one for all Inuktitut, all French, mixed. This is the kind of talk that was going on and they really had some good ideas.

I'm really hoping that as the minister, maybe that is what needs to happen and maybe you have already done so. I don't know, but if you haven't, I would recommend that Iqaluit would be a good start. We have, as you say, multiple daycares and I think having one board and one area for all daycares to go would be a good idea.

The other thing is the waitlists. As a young parent, you have to phone every daycare and put your child on the waitlist, so your child could be on multiple waitlists. I understood when I looked into this that it might be something to raise with the city because in Ottawa I understand it is the City of Ottawa that looks after it. What happens is they phone and then whatever the next space is available, that child goes to that. It's just a more focused and organized way of dealing with the long waitlist. Maybe that's something as well that the minister can go and do.

What I would like to see from the department, and maybe the minister can talk about this, is more of a commitment to really look at the staffing because we really need a stable environment for early learning and child care. It makes sure that they have a really good start in life and I think that is vitally important. It will pay off in the end where maybe we're not seeing so many social issues due to the challenges of going to school. If you can get somebody a good start with proper food programs, I think that goes a long way. That's my last question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. You speak quite fast at times and it is hard for translators to keep up with you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will commit to having our staff perhaps approach the city and have a discussion around, let's say, talking to all the daycare facilities here and see what the appetite is because, as far as I am concerned, they are all incorporated and their own boards set up on their own terms. Some like the Tumikuluit is all Inuktitut focused whereas some others aren't so much. I think it's just trying to get everyone on the same page. What the same page looks like, I think, is something that we can try to aim towards. I can commit my staff to doing that at the very least. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Minister Joanasié. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Continuing on the topic of daycares and funding, I brought this issue up last year in fact that the Early Learning and Child Care Branch continues to lapse \$1 million to \$2 million a year of their funding. Last year the

minster had indicated that one of the barriers was reporting requirements and had mentioned that it was looking at removing some of these barriers. I would first like to follow up on that topic and see if that has been accomplished. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, through the bilateral agreement that we have with the federal government, what we did was streamline our application for grants and contributions process and removed some barriers that might be hinging on some of the applications from the facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next topic that I would discuss is the Healthy Child Initiative, which seems to be lapsing up to 50 percent of its budget. It's almost a million dollars, which the department has set aside to help feed young children healthy, nutritious meals. Why is it that this fairly important initiative is lapsing funds? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Can you hold on a second?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is all application based, so we're not getting as much uptake on this initiative as we would have hoped to. In addition to that, there might be some misconception around this to pay for food programming. This is more to provide supports for those that aren't... (interpretation) What was it? (interpretation ends) Support services are for additional programs and services for children aged zero to six and require extra specific supports to reach their full development potential. Also, the other piece to Healthy Children Initiatives is to provide community initiatives for things like moms and tots programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another topic that I would like to discuss is a recent health study had indicated that children in Nunavut coming into kindergarten are often not at the level where they should be. This means that children entering the education system are behind and this only gets further complicated as children progress. The situation is compounded year after year. These children start off behind and they stay behind, and it gets worse year after year. My question is: what is the department doing to address this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the current facilities that have licences, we provide training opportunities to allow staff that work in child care facilities

skills on how to best be able to address some of those concerns that Mr. Lightstone brought up. I think that this is where the Healthy Children Initiatives can also play a part on how to best support children that might need that extra support prior to them entering the elementary school grade levels. It's a matter of identifying and connecting the parents and families or guardians with the service providers.

Hopefully that answers the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your letter dated February 17 to Ms. Nakashuk's committee gives a total number of child care spaces in Nunavut as 1,224. Does the department have an idea of what the waitlist is like? The 1,200 positions or spots in the whole territory, do you track the waitlist across the territory and, if so, what's the ballpark figure? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have a breakdown by region and space category. We do have about 1,105 infants or preschool or school-aged that are on the waitlist territory-wide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Would the minister be able to provide that at a later date in terms of your numbers? If it's broken down by region or by community, it would be useful information for follow-up. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hold on a second.

I believe we only have regional statistics, so we can provide that. I think that must have been overlooked. It's something that we thought we were going to provide in the letter, but we didn't. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In the letter you also mention day homes, which my understanding is it's a privately run child care facility, and the list that's provided here, it says that there are three day homes in Iqaluit and none anywhere else in the territory.

When an individual is interested in looking at this as a business opportunity because it's my understanding it could be operated from a home, it doesn't have to be a purpose, it

could be a basement in somebody's home... . Let's say for example in Arviat if there's an individual who wants to start up a day home, who do they go and talk to first? Is there a contact person or a resource person that can help them with business planning and maybe not business planning but understanding the regulations around this?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our early childhood education offices, I think, and we have regional reps that they would be best approached to talk about regulations and/or licensing requirements. There are inspections involved and so they can go from there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Would the department be able to look at maybe communicating or putting something out to communicate to the public that this is an option? I think there might be an understanding that daycare or child care has to be government run and it has to be a quasigovernmental facility, but the ability to do it from a private sector might create a few more spaces across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the suggestion. We can follow up with some communication out to the public on this. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm just moving on. In the same letter you mention staff wages and you mention a bunch of different factors that contribute to child care facilities struggling to keep their staff and the fact that they can't offer them enough benefits. In terms of the impact on the child care facilities and the services that they can offer in those child care facilities, I know that it's not the Department of Education that runs these facilities, but when you have that staff turnover all the time or constantly, what are the impacts on the actual child care that's provided, the quality of the child care at the community or facility level?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gets reduced, simply put. I'm personally impacted with one of my children who attends daycare on part of the afternoon and they were short-staffed today, so he couldn't go to daycare. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's concerning when you have that turnover and thank you for all this information that you provided by the way. It's very helpful. On table 7 you list the average early child educator wages. At the very top end of the scale, ECE diploma or degree, you have listed in the average wage of \$25 an hour. Just maybe a clarification, so would this be an early childhood education degree like a four-year degree that has been completed and at the end of a four-year degree, the graduates can look forward to an annual wage on average of \$25 an hour? I just want clarification on that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's looking at all of the child care facilities in the territory and looking at how many of them have an Early Childhood Education Diploma or a degree. Some of them are earning that much on average. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It doesn't seem like an overly generous wage and it maybe explains some of the turnover. I'll just leave it at that and I'll say that it's concerning because I think these positions are important.

My last question is around the resources, which is in the business plan, language and culturally based standardized program resources for families and early childhood programs and services. I note that on page 141 of the business plan, this is great to see, it says "Resources developed to date include over 600 student books and teacher resources in Inuktitut and over 250 in Inuinnaqtun." I think that's awesome.

My questions are: is there a way for parents who don't have their children in these daycares to access those resources? It mentions here that the resources will be provided to the licensed daycares or the licensed early childhood facilities. Is there a way for parents outside of those facilities to access the resources? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our targets are the facilities themselves, but we do have, for example, there's "Tell Me a Story" book bag that has been provided to parents through such things as the prenatal nutrition program that communities have. This is something that is available and I suppose if there's a request from a parent, it can be looked at too.

The other thing that is an overall departmental K to 12 resources, we have a catalogue of all our material, so we have been talking about having the early childhood component of all these resources also catalogued and how we can better make them available publicly, whether it's through libraries. As I mentioned before, our target is the facilities themselves, whether it's a preschool, a daycare facility, homeschool. Those are the main places where we distribute these. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's pretty understandable. These daycares should be provided Inuktitut books, but using Arviat as an example, if someone wanted Inuktitut books outside of the daycare and they're not being sold at the Northern or the Co-op, the parent has money, so where are they going to go buy the books? This should be considered. I think they would greatly benefit from this before they enter kindergarten. They have to practise reading.

(interpretation ends) I'll just flag that for maybe the department to look at how to get more reading and literacy type resources into the hands of children before they get to the school system. Whether it just means you're giving away free books at your daycares or whether it's done through another avenue, I don't know, but I just wanted to flag that. (interpretation) That's it for me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department works quite closely with Inhabit Media to develop a lot of our resources and they do have probably much, if not all, of the stuff that has been developed. They might even have an online store, so that's something worth looking up or following up with Inhabit Media. They may have a specific catalogue or resources for daycares or age-appropriate, so depending on what you're looking for, they may have it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 116 of your business plan, there is \$170,000 for the Young Parents Stay Learning program. It identifies the age below 18. Would those aged 18 or older not be able to receive assistance through this program? That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qamaniq. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If they're at the age of 18 or under and going to go to school, it provides assistance so that they can attend school and their children can be in daycare. That's what it's for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If a person is over 18 and they choose to go to school, would they be able to get assistance even if it is written that way? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I'm not mistaken, they would be able to get assistance through the Department of Family Services based on their age. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 117 of your business plan it states in English, (interpretation ends) "Implement an early childhood development strategy specifically aimed at families who" do not "access early childhood programs." (interpretation) Beneath that it states that "Development of this strategy has been delayed. This work is expected to begin 2020-2021." Can you clarify why it was deferred? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had to defer it slightly. I think it's the plan, the (interpretation ends) Early Learning and Child Care Framework. (interpretation) Once that is completed, it will progress, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lastly, right below that it states in English, (interpretation ends) "Support child care societies, facilities and other stakeholders to participate in consultations related to the replacement of the *Child Day Care Act*." (interpretation) This has also been deferred to 2020-21. Both of these seem to have been deferred. I would like to know what the reason was for the sudden deferral. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wanted to get the work started on the *Child Day Care Act*, but after the completion of Bill 25, we would deal with the review of the *Child Day Care Act*. We have started discussions with different stakeholders. We want to get prepared to reach our goals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. We are on page G-7. Early Learning and Child Care. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,159,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page G-8. Curriculum, Resources and French Education. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$7,600,000. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 120 of the business plan it mentions the Nunavut Literacy Framework. I have seen some of the resources that have gone into schools under that literacy framework and it seems to be developing nicely at schools I have visited anyway. Is there any evidence to date to show that this literacy framework is having a desired effect on literacy rates in the schools? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been very anecdotal comments from our staff who are using it this to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I guess it is anecdotes. I'll ask the minister for an anecdote, if he can share one or two. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. I'll refer it to my deputy minister because I think she knows more of the anecdotal side of things, if you will allow her, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Okpik.

Ms. Okpik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Last week we had professional development taking place with educators. One of the groups that the minister and I met with actually stated that they found that the Titiqqiriniq work was very beneficial. We have made sure that educators are aware as to why it's very important not to change the terminology in the books themselves because they're tied to assessments. Getting that message out to educators is continuous.

The whole thing around Titiqqiriniq is to ensure that we do have some type of reading program that assesses where and what level that child is reading at. It is not intended for us to go out and say to the public, "This is how many children are at reading levels." It is to ensure that we provide that support at the school level and the class level. I can commit to providing more information on some of the outcomes around it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Okpik. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for offering to share additional information. I'm just interested mainly in whether this is something that has been shown to be effective and, if so, how effective.

Also on the same page it mentions the Alberta curriculum and that the Alberta curriculum was not recommended to continuing using it in Nunavut. Which jurisdiction's curriculum was found to be better than Alberta? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course the ultimate goal is to have all Nunavut-made curriculum and resources. Until that time we will continue to develop ongoing and also adapting or adopt from other jurisdictions, including Alberta. We do use curriculum from Saskatchewan, the NWT, and I believe Manitoba, if I recall right, but I stand to be corrected. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm looking at the curriculum from the different jurisdictions in your annual report. I just wanted to understand that statement there that the Alberta curriculum was not recommended. It's not feasible for us to have a 100 percent Nunavut-made curriculum overnight, so we're going to have to keep borrowing from different jurisdictions. In a general sense the department will move away from using Alberta curriculum in the upcoming fiscal year. I just wanted to clarify that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We took note. It was quite recently that Alberta had announced that they were going to relook at their entire curriculum and that was put on hold. Just keeping those in mind, I think this where we're taking an approach where maybe we need to relook at this on a larger scale and see if there's something that we can work out better given that their curriculum review process has been halted and we're not sure where they're going with that as of yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm assuming that it would take quite a while to "de-Albertafy" the curriculum because mathematics, science, chemistry, physics, a lot of it anyways, as I am looking at, is Alberta based.

On the school health program curriculum, it says in your annual report "1995, NWT." Just to clarify, is that the health curriculum that is currently in use across Nunavut, it is from 1995? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I believe you are correct in that case. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's listed as a priority in the current fiscal year, implementing health curriculum to ensure it sufficiently... . Implement health curriculum, is that referring to implementing the 1995 curriculum from the NWT or is this a new curriculum that is coming into the system? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be new and scanning other jurisdictions around what's happening across the country. This is actually the current curriculum that's from 1996, actually, just on that, but it's still something and we are meeting with the Department of Health on collaborating on a number of areas to see how they can be of assistance in this area when we're developing new Nunavut-made curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just on this health curriculum item, it's a priority in the current fiscal year. In the next fiscal year on page 121 I don't see a specific mention of health curriculum. I just wanted confirmation that this work is going to continue.

I'll just jump ahead to my next question, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me. Will this work on health curriculum include material on family planning and Planned Parenthood along the lines of concerns that have been raised in terms of the need for family planning, I'll call it? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, all of our ongoing curriculum development might not specifically be listed as a priority in our business planning cycle, but it's an ongoing process.

With regard to his latter question, current curriculum that we do have, under Aulajaaqtut, we do cover such things as and it's at different grade levels, age-appropriate, reproductive system functions, the relationship between endocrine system and menstrual cycle and those types of things. It's menstruation, reproductive process, which is stages of... . It's by grade level. There are different topics around unplanned pregnancy, for

example. These are topics that are covered in our Aulajaaqtut curriculum from K to 9. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. 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 be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. There's a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Ms. Sheutiapik. The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

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

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that the Standing Committee on Legislation meets tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. in the Nanuq Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for March 3:

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. (interpretation ends) This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 3, at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:48*

