

NUNAVUT HANSARD
UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020
IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 55

Corrections:

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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*

Cathy Towtongie
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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 9, 2020**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanase, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Ms. Mila Kamingoak, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk, Hon. Patterk Netser, 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. Can you say the opening prayer, please, Mr. Netser.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good day. I almost said good morning. Good day. You were well rested today.

>>*Laughter*

This morning I wish to inform you that Member Pat Angnakak will be absent from the House due to personal reasons.

I will recognize the Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go directly to Item 14 in the *Orders of the Day*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 14 in the *Orders of the Day*. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will proceed to Item 14. Item 14. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Member Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 075 – 5(2): Extended Adjournment – Notice

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, March 11, I will the following motion:

(interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, that pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, that when the House concludes its present sitting, it shall be adjourned until May 26, 2020.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will ask for unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions. Again, Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Motion 076 – 5(2): Legislative Assembly Appointments and Revocations – Notice

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again give notice that on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, I will move the following motion:

(interpretation ends) NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Amittuq, that Tony Akoak, Member for Gjoa Haven, be appointed a member of the Management and Services Board.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will ask for unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Motion 077 – 5(2): Referral of Tabled Document 65 – 5(2) to the Committee of the Whole – Notice

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, that Tabled Document 65 – 5(2), *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut on the Conduct of the Fifth General Election*, be referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration.

At the appropriate time I will seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions. Let's proceed. Item 15. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 15: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

**Bill 43 – An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods –
Notice**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, that Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) Let's proceed. Item 16. (interpretation ends) Motions. (interpretation) Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Main.

Item 16: Motions

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? (interpretation) There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Main.

Motion 075 – 5(2): Extended Adjournment

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

(interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, that pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, that when the House concludes its present sitting, it shall be adjourned until May 26, 2020.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Motions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main. I'm sorry, Mr. Main. The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays?

I'm sorry. I believe it's Monday today. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

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

Motions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again ask for unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Main.

Motion 076 – 5(2): Legislative Assembly Appointments and Revocations

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

(interpretation ends) WHEREAS the Member for Aggu has taken the Chair of this House as Speaker;

AND WHEREAS section 38 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* provides for the appointment of members of the Management and Services Board;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make appointments and revocations;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Amittuq, that Tony Akoak, Member for Gjoa Haven, be appointed a member of the Management and Services Board;

AND FURTHER I MOVE that the appointments of the Hon. Paul Quassa as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation, a member of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, a member of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development, and an alternate member of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and Privileges be revoked.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

(interpretation ends) Motions. (interpretation) Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Mr. Lightstone.

Motion 077 – 5(2): Referral of Tabled Document 65 – 5(2) to the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, that Tabled Document 65 – 5(2), *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut on the Conduct of the Fifth General Election*, be referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

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

Thank you. Let's proceed to Item 17. First Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I request consent of this Assembly to waive the one-day notice requirement to allow for the first reading of Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The minister is seeking consent to have Bill 43 read for the first time today. Do the members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is an agreement. Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

(interpretation) Thank you. Let's proceed to Item 18. (interpretation ends) Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) Item 19. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 39, 40, 41, and 42 with Mr. Akoak in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 62 – 5(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

>> *Applause*

I ask that members remain at their desks so that we can immediately proceed with the Committee of the Whole.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

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

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Good afternoon, colleagues and (interpretation) people who are watching the proceedings. (interpretation ends) 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, 40, 41, and 42. 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, commencing with the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, followed by the departments of Human Resources and Culture and Heritage. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 39 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2020-2021 – Economic Development and Transportation – Consideration in Committee

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

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

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Bernie MacIsaac, Deputy Minister, and to my right is Adam Fisher, Director of Corporate

Services for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Akeegok. The opening comments were done on Friday, so I will ask the members if they have any general comments. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just a very short general comment, I am very to see that that the department is making changes this year in terms of how they're delivering their funding. I think that's in line with suggestions or discussions we had in previous years, which was for a number of years that the programs within ED&T were relatively static, and it's good to see change, that the department is making changes and adjusting things and trying new approaches. I think that's really encouraging and that's the end of my comment. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: General comments? Seeing none, before we go on to questions, we're just going to be having one member to one page on the line of questioning, ten minutes or eight. Thank you. We are on Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. Mr. Main.

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

(interpretation ends) Page 233 mentions about your grants and contributions. Your second priority for this year, it says, "Develop and Implement performance management system for...grants and contributions..." What is the department's vision or idea for "performance management system"? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Mr. Main for his opening comments. Yes, this is geared towards, as part of this, is to start looking at how our grants and contributions are performing in the economy of our territory. One of the examples is that when we do provide grants or contributions, one of the things that we want to be able to report is how many jobs were created as a result of this, those types of performances that I think were lacking in our programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The performance management system would track things like jobs created. Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself, but at the end of the day would this translate into increased reporting to the Assembly in terms of the grants and contributions? We know that the grants and contributions report, which is for the whole government, just has one line item or one line that will say, "\$200,000, a brewery." That's it and the name of the recipient and that's all the information that is provided to the Assembly. Will the information be compiled and

passed onto committee members or the Assembly as a whole? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. The grants and contributions that have been reported to the Legislative Assembly is that one line item, but in each department, we're asked to provide more comprehensive reporting. I don't want to get ahead of myself in terms of whether we report it to the Legislative Assembly. I think our goal is to provide this to the public and that we provide information to this House. What we're trying to do is show our grants and contributions are helping the economy, so that there is a huge jump in terms of jobs, and that should be reportable and something that I look forward to doing through this implementation of performance management system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'll jump back a page to 232 and it's on the subject of NNI, Nunavummi Nangminiqqtunik Ikajuuti.

First of all, I think what's happening with Family Services and your department or the minister's department is encouraging in terms of working on training plans around infrastructure projects. That's something I'll be watching closely.

Right at the bottom of page 232 it mentions work with Community and Government Services in terms of how the NNI Policy is being applied within the government. Right at the bottom it mentions "...including the introduction of a bid adjustment cap." It was my understanding that when the new NNI Policy came into place, the bid adjustment cap, there was no cap under the new policy. I wonder if that could be clarified. Is there a bid adjustment cap that's being applied or is this a potential change? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no bid adjustment at this time. It's something that, between the Department of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services and the government as a whole, we're seriously looking at. I don't have anything specific right now, but it's something that we're working towards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm looking at the priorities for this upcoming year and it says that this work with CGS is to continue. When it comes to applying a cap for projects... . Let's say for example, the jail down the road, the \$80

million jail, I don't call it a healing facility; it's a jail. It looks like a jail, functions like a jail, it's a jail. When you look at a project like that which is in tens of millions, how would this bid adjustment cap that you guys are looking at work? Are you looking at going back to what was under the old NNI Policy or would this be applied in a new manner? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Chairman, those are very good questions and the very questions that we are talking amongst us because it is something that we seriously need to do.

Looking at the correctional facility that we're building now, it has prompted this, along with some of the other major infrastructures that are within our territory. The discussions are taking place right now and as you mentioned, this is a priority for 2020-21. It's a 2020-21 priority in terms of having completed these discussions and come up with...any decision that this government makes when it comes to NNI, there is a consultation process and some communications that we will need to do if we make any changes, but at this point I cannot say which way it's going to go right now because it is in discussions and I don't want to presume what others have to say when it comes to this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On the bid adjustment idea, do you have an internal timeline? Do you have a date by which a decision will be made, yes or no? I mean, I'm on the outside here and I'm trying to understand what the timeline is so I can look to see what the decision is once it is made. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is time. I don't have a specific time. As you might be aware with this NNI, we do have a very stringent process that we have to follow, one of which is we need to consult with NTI in writing for a certain period of time and those exchanges can last longer if there are more questions related to this and also, working with the contracts and making sure the contract regulations are in sync. There's a lot of work that still needs to take place.

I think what the new NNI, which started the implementation when we started here as the House, still a very fluid process and it's something that at times we can't necessarily determine the time. If there are going to be any changes, we need to be aware of our own procedures in terms of what our capital process is. There's a lot of work that needs to get done here and that work is being done right now, but I don't have a definitive date when that will happen and if it will happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I would just like to state that I'm of the opinion that getting rid of that bid adjustment cap was a mistake and that it needs to be rectified, particularly because we have this lingering issue about paper companies. You know, if we're going to give a bid adjustment cap to a company and we know that, they're true-to-goodness Inuit-owned firm, Inuit-run firm, sure. But if it's a paper company, then that's when it gets problematic. So, I just wanted to state that on the bid adjustment.

Moving backwards, on page 231, between the Nunavut Development Corporation, the budget for this year is \$3.35 million and the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation and the budget is \$900,000.

So, the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation saw their budget go up by \$200,000 which is about a 28 percent increase, and the Nunavut Development Corporation didn't see a single penny increase.

I wonder what the process is within the department when they are deciding, like, do you go to these corporations and do you say "do you guys need more money?" or is there a process where they come and they can put a business case to the department? I am trying to understand that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They do have and allow for them to put a request into the department to make any types of changes. I think there are more changes that the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation would like to see, and that's something that I'm working closely on with them.

This one is one of the results that we got when we looked at the, explored the potential updates to Nunavut Business Credit Corporation. On page 233, there is some wording in terms of what we are doing.

While we are reviewing exploring between those two, in discussions with the two chairs and myself, after a lengthy review, this \$200,000 came up and that's one of the changes that we'd like to see that we took from our department, the Department of Economic Development and Transportation and moved it over.

So, it's not necessarily new money, it's new money to the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation. But this is going to allow us to streamline their programming and our programming and NDC's programming. That's some of the work that NBCC has asked to do and that we're supporting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) And when I read the status update on page 233 which mentions an increased role for these two organizations in supporting large and medium businesses; I think that its referring to the reduction in the budget for strategic investments programs. So, you're trying to drive more of that "big ticket" applications towards NBCC and NDC, just to clarify that rationale or am I mistaken? (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Correct. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So when you look at Nunavut Development Corporation, they have subsidiaries in Whale Cove and Arviat. So, I'm a huge fan of the Nunavut Development Corporation, on the record. They create jobs, they do amazing work and I would be fully in support of a budget increase for them. But it's not in the stars this year.

When it comes to the idea of amalgamating the two corporations, I know that it was in the letter of expectations to both board chairs, the references to the topic and in the letters of response I seem to recall one of the organizations was kind of in favour or their response was favourable and the other one not so much. Where are we right now in terms of the idea of combining these two corporations into one? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: With full discussions with the chairs and I have attended with some of the board members with the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation this year, in terms of discussions on whether to amalgamate or not, a lot of discussions that have taken place and as you mentioned, there are some areas that I think could take advantage of being amalgamated.

Currently looking at the two and I should say the three because we're an integral part of it as Economic Development and Transportation, through this, this is one of the works that I think we're putting \$200,000 towards the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation to make sure that the three of us figure out exactly what we are doing and where we can enhance our businesses and/or our grants and contributions and at what point should a person, an individual who wants to create a business or part of the development corporation, we need to better understand this.

I think that was the outcome of the discussions I had with the two chairs and something that, through the letters of expectation, I wouldn't be surprised if they respond back saying that this amalgamation is not necessarily their way to go right now, but that we

need to have further discussions in terms of who is doing what and where and how we can streamline this better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just have one last question. It's on page 263 underneath your Inuit Employment Plan and it jumped out at me because it's something you don't see very much in other departments. At the top of page 263 it mentions increasing *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* capacity of the department and it says that you're working on developing and implementing an Inuit culture and language program. I think that's interesting and I just want to understand what this is going to involve a little bit more as the department plans. That's my last question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This one is to help our current staff along with the people who are looking at our grants and contributions in terms of how to implement *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* more into the department and also to the way we offer and provide grants and services. I think this is the priority so that we have a better understanding in terms of what IQ is within the capacity of the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is on the business priorities, 252, and it tells me in the third bullet, "The department contributed to the development of an innovative approach to procuring the Government of Nunavut's scheduled air transportation requirements. By including the cost of scheduled air service available to the public (such as Economy Fares)..."

Looking at that, a 30-minute flight in Nunavik by Air Nunavut, 30 minutes return is \$468, but a 30-minute flight from Iqaluit to Kimmirut return is \$1,100. My question is, a significant reduction in the cost of air travel has been realized for much of Nunavut's travelling public. I don't see that happening. I see air travel increasing, so where is that coming from? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question from my fellow member. It is difficult to compare the price difference at this point. What I can say is through our procurement that we did on our request for proposals for the airlines, these were the costs or the fares that were provided by the airline for us in terms of what the public and the government's prices were going to be.

For the next steps as we continue this process, and especially while there is a merger that has taken place, it is very closely monitored. I think examples like this will continue to provide to the airlines, and also provide to ourselves, in terms of the question why there are so many differences; it is hard to say exactly why there is such difference between two northern communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Akeegok. I could say the same flights between Gjoa Haven to Taloyoak, a 20-minute flight, \$300 one way. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have only two other questions. First of all, I am really pleased with community transportation initiatives. It is going up to \$1.8 million. I am just wondering, that \$1.8 million is so needed by each of the communities for their own initiatives...this year, 2019-2020 has...what am I trying to say? (interpretation) There is a lot of need for that money and the communities constantly run out. There is never enough of a budget. In the coming year, is there going to be enough for all the communities to request funding from this \$1.8 million? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not changing the budget. Looking at this, it is true what you are saying; the communities have a big need for it. Sometimes we get proposals that are over \$5 million just for that program and there is usually around \$2 million in the budget. I will look for more funding for it. We will always look for more funding for it so that we have more funding available to us. It is very popular in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I would like to ask is: my constituents in Chesterfield Inlet are building a road and it is getting close to where they want to go, to Josephine River. They work on it every summer and we heard that within the Keewatin, the federal government is going to be looking at the communities like Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove and Arviat to see how they can get a road in between them, like a highway to connect the communities.

This building of roads... (interpretation ends) Can the minister identify, based on the Kivalliq intercommunity road study, what the next steps are? We're really looking forward to it after the study. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have made a request through capital funds and we're using that money to do the study as to how it will actually be and in 2020-21 this will be the first transportation study. The study has started and we don't know what they're going to find yet. The study has started and that's all I

have to say right now. We have asked them to do a study about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker...oh, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) This will be my final question. Now, many policies in the Department of Transportation, including the Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy and the Strategic Investments Program Policy, will expire within the next 15 months. As of today, it's very useful for the communities, like the minister agreed. As of today, what is the status of your department's work to revise or renew these policies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for being aware of these things. We don't want the policies to expire. We're trying to renew them. Some of them are expiring on March 31, 2020, but my staff are working on them and they have been asking questions to the entire government as they're working on it. We just need to have more discussions with the departments first. If we haven't updated them after March 31, we will be able to defer them, but it has to go through cabinet, which normally happens when these policies are coming up to expire. That's what we have been doing, especially for the four main policies that will be expiring. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The last name on this page, Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

On page 236, the Country Food Distribution Program states that "This program supports the harvesting sector through investments and operations funding for modern energy efficient community freezers, retrofitting existing harvesting infrastructure, and by supporting locally identified harvesting and training initiatives that benefit the harvesting economy in every community of Nunavut." My question is: are these grants and contributions funds being fully utilized in every community in our territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work with the 25 communities and each of these communities have different capacities along with our own capacity, and there are times when it's fully utilized or not fully utilized, but it all depends on in terms of how this fund comes. Through this Country Food Distribution Program, we deliver it in a proposal based and also direct to the hamlets.

For the member, I just want to applaud your community. I think your community has done a wonderful job in terms of utilizing the Country Food Distribution Program, where

I believe they also have additional federal dollars to add more programming when it comes to the harvesters there.

I was reading something about Kugluktuk that made me really proud that our programs are working in terms of helping harvesters and helping our elders in terms of feeding the community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank the minister. I agree my HTO is doing a wonderful job with that grant and this year they harvested musk ox distributed to the community. I work in the HTO building so I felt the buzz and it was very humbling to see.

My next question is: since that was such a wonderful distribution, if my HTO use that benefit are they allowed to apply for another grant if they chose to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This program, which is sunsetted to the end of this month which I'm working really hard to make sure that we continue this. There are two schedules to this program: The first one is Schedule A, in which the community can get up to \$30,000 for locally identified opportunities to support harvesters and an additional \$10,000 for their freezer.

And, there is another schedule which provides up to \$800,000 and that's towards community freezers. So, there are ways for each community to try and seek funding.

As I mentioned, some communities such as the member's community are taking these dollars and stretching it with other federal dollars. So, I encourage communities to find ways.

If we can help as a department, I think through my opening comments we're putting more of our grants and contributions to the regional level. At our regional offices, they can work directly with the hunters and trappers or the hamlets to stretch as much of the dollars that they can get with our government for these wonderful initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question: The country food distribution program remains stagnant throughout the year. Will your department commit to increasing that line item? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the 2020-2021 we are asking to keep it the same amount. For any future, I think, and through our review of these, I think the sunset causes us to review these. We are looking to how we can enhance some of our programs. But for the current proposal that is before us for 2020-2021, we are recommending to seek approval with the same amount. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list is Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to return to my colleague's questions regarding the NNI Policy; specifically they capped the bid adjustment. The minister had indicated that there's currently no adjusted cap at this time and I believe, mentioned that there was with the previous NNI Policy. Would the minister be able to refresh our memories: what was the previous cap that was associated or the previous cap that was tied into the previous NNI Policy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go by memory here. I know I'm getting the information in real time, but it's coming a little slower than it is. If I recall, the cap was up to \$250,000 or the first \$250,000, if I recall. If I need to correct it, Mr. Chairman, I'll correct that through you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That seems like a reasonable amount, considering how much of a bid adjustment that our most recent capital projects have been inflated by.

My next question is: how was it that these caps were removed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, with the last Assembly, there was a major review that was done in terms of what was working and what was wasn't working with NNI. This would have been one of the recommendations of removing the bid adjustment. I don't want to necessarily try to find out the reasons why. I think what I'm doing or what I'm trying to do with the help of my cabinet colleagues is to move forward. How did this happen would be very good to understand, but to move forward, I think definitely we need to take a very serious look and we're taking a very serious review of this particular bid adjustment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is: does the NNI Policy have a specified time period where a review would be conducted and, if so, when will the next review begin? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there is set major review requirement under our legislation or under our regulations of happening at 2022. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

Within your opening comments, on the very first page, the written material has three areas, one above the others in sequence up to the third paragraph. It speaks to the additional funds for the management changes within fisheries, sealing and furs and what has changed. This is what I want clarified, especially as it is geared for our hunters or I am not sure. Mr. Chairman, I would like to clearly understand that section hence my question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this fisheries and sealing strategy will now fall under the Department of Economic Development and Transportation again, as it was 2009 when the division was within the department. The positions under the division, including the fisheries and the (interpretation ends) quotas (interpretation) for their work will receive more departmental support as that is our objective. This division is being transferred as that has fisheries, sealing and economic development priorities compliant with our department. That is the vision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fisheries division is understandable to be transferred, however, for sealing issues and furs there is absolutely no market for sealskins and no demand. What kinds of specific programs or priorities have you developed for the sealing division? That's my question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Yes, thank you. Yes, sealing is something we shall not give up on and we can search for new ways to incorporate sealskins into the products we produce and search for new markets too.

If you look at the entire world, there are pockets and countries that are interested in purchasing sealskins for their own usage, and we will look to areas where we can ship the sealskins and how to develop new products that allow for the purchasing of our skins. Prior to the market crash, the skins were a very good source of income for our hunters.

We believe that this sector can be resurrected, so we are using a variable pronged initiative, and further, at this time, the federal (interpretation ends) Department of Fisheries and Oceans (interpretation) has signalled to us that they wish to re-engage the myriad ways that sealing can be restarted as they want to recommence the sales of seals.

I am quite happy in seeing that, but the anti-sealing fanatics have a powerful movement, and we need to find factual ways to combat their lies and to lessen the negative impacts they incur by occupying them with other considerations. Perhaps we can find a less objectionable practice that doesn't attract the anti-sealing crowd and sell to other markets in the world, or alternatively, Nunavummiut are excellent at innovation and many of our artisans are creating beautiful products using sealskins, and our chairman illustrates what kind of product can be sold to create income.

Nunavummiut are very creative and innovative. We can certainly promote and market that industry so that we could continue to sell and push the sale of sealskin. We want to ensure that our proposed budget can continue so that our budget is approved first and these initiatives commence in April. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This other matter, when looking at the overview of the world markets, as southern Canadians too watch the commercial sealing hunts, and they make a big fuss about blocking the harvesting of harp seals. There are many Inuit who could benefit if the meat or skins were made available to them, but to look at our fellow Inuit in the circumpolar world, such as in Alaska, Greenland or even parts of Russia, what kind of information has been provided or if nothing has been made available for our perusal. What is the status of our fellow Inuit, have you heard any announcements or news on that front as they are our fellow seal hunters who also depend on seals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last month I believe it was where the Premier along with several of our ministerial colleagues attended the meetings in Ottawa.

There were some Americans who came from the White House offices to Quebec City, where they did their work, but he was asking the group how he could provide more assistance to Nunavut on that front, and whether they could offer any relief.

We told them that the biggest obstacle is the American legislation *Marine Mammal Protection Act*. This act disallowed the sale of marine mammal parts to be imported into their country, and if they will be doing a legislative review, or even to see how to change it, we wanted to be provided the information as soon as possible if any changes are being contemplated.

Changes can be implemented quite quickly and there was a legislative change related to polar bear harvesting by tweaking the legislation here and there. I believe it can be pursued that way, and whenever American legislators arrive, we will continue to push for changes that impact us.

I would want your support especially when it comes to being up to date with the American legislation that isn't ours, such as that American legislation I mentioned that has severely impacted us. We lost the ability to sell products to Americans. I am just letting you know that whenever there is anybody from the political arena that wants to be engaged, we certainly welcome any discussions to open the viewpoint of our territory's concerns. And, because we have been blocked by Americans, we cannot sell, even though many people still want to buy. They cannot buy and trade because of the ban. It is better if we are open and I think that is the approach that we can take. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you. We are on Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted. \$10,797,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Agreed. Page K-5. Economic Development. Total Operations and Maintenance. Ms. Nakashuk. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm just going to, first of all I, want to put a plug in for the minerals and petroleum resources staff that you have in Arviat. They do excellent work. I note that in your Inuit employment plan, that office you have in Arviat is an example where Inuit employment rates are higher when these jobs are located closer to the people.

Has the department looked at that office you have, minerals and petroleum resources in Arviat and if any staffing increases or any increases in responsibilities that you could transfer over to that office? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes and I think with these business plans and the main estimates that are before us, what I am proposing is quite a significant change in terms of how our department works, and if we can branch it out further to where they are directly to the communities. That is one of

the areas that I have directed my staff to pursue and start putting in resources where it is needed.

I think for a good example this Community Engagement Support Program, if I understand it, that its going to be administered out of Arviat through that shop. Those are some of the areas that we are looking in terms of giving greater responsibilities to those that are very close to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) That is good news. When it comes to how you are administering your grants and contributions money which are listed on page 235 and 236, you are proposing that more of this money will be delivered through your regional offices in Rankin Inlet, Kugluktuk, and...I forget what the other one is; Pond Inlet... or there are two in Baffin.

So, how is this new arrangement going to work? Specifically, are you going to require more staff at those regional offices because they are delivering more money? Or is it doable with your current allotment of staff? (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Yes, Mr. Chairman. There are four communities. The one that was not mentioned was Pangnirtung. Pond Inlet, Kugluktuk and Rankin Inlet are the regional offices that administer these programs.

We are bringing more of the money in terms of the grants and contributions and what I have committed in terms, as part of this, is to have another look at our departments, and if there is more work that is required as a result of these things, I would be very much in favour of moving some of the positions over.

I think through my staff and through my senior management staff, we would be very willing to look at the Economic Development and Transportation as an entirety and see where we need to put our resources.

I think as a result of that, I think a lot of these recommendations that I received and that I am supporting and I hope that I get the support this House in terms of proceeding.

I think it is through those hardworking staff that we will then justify whether we need to bring in more person-years into those regional officers. How that is going to happen? That is going to be another combination of a number of things that we will need do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So under this new policy, or the new arrangement that you are proposing, there are all these organizations such as Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association, Nunavut Tourism, chambers of commerce, all these different organizations. Their amounts were previously, I guess parcelled off on their own, and they did not fluctuate all that much, but now what you are proposing is that all the money is going to be grouped together in one fund; and these organizations have to come in and apply each year, including Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium and the Nunavut Mining Symposium.

I mean, have you had any feedback from any of these organizations in terms of how this new arrangement is going to work? And are... What is... I guess, what does the department... why will this be a better approach than the previous one? I guess the is the simplest way to ask it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From our perspective, combining these from separate line items to support evaluating partners based on comparable metrics. I think that is one of the critical things.

Also, if you look at, if you are comparing from before, these are eleven separate systems and that all have room to grow. If we lump them into one and focus on a common system, I think there are more ways of helping these partners in terms of advancing their goals, which leads to our goals too. I think that is the way that I have been looking at this program partnership from my lens. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 238, priority for this upcoming year is...right at the top, it says "Trying to ensure that programs are delivered consistently and with equitable access for all Nunavut communities."

Maybe there are some issues there, where more of the funds were going to a certain community, certain ways, but when it comes to your regional staff, the ones who are delivering programs, how often do they go out and travel to communities, say for example Whale Cove?

I know that there is an Economic Development Officer in every community, but having the department staff there can also really move things along for small business applications, business planning and whatnot.

So how often do they travel to different communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that the minimum we expect our regional offices to deliver, to visit their communities at least twice a year combined with work very closely with community economic development officers when going through some of these programs. If there's any ideas or suggestions that's coming, there's a regular ongoing engagement between the communities and our regional offices. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the department have any internal guidelines such as say Whale Cove for example? Our staff will visit Whale Cove at least three times a year. Is there anything that spells out what the expectation is in terms of visiting different communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe there is nothing formal. But as part of the regional operations, each of those operations we give direction to our staff in terms of they need to visit the communities on a regular basis.

From what I understand in an informal way is that they are expected to visit at least two times into their communities. In each of our program officers have designated communities that go and visit and to try and build a rapport with the communities.

I think with what we are asking for of moving more of our grants and contributions to, I think that's going to even enhance it more and allow for more interactions between our partners within our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I fully support what the department is trying to do and maybe just for food for thought the next step in my mind is giving Economic Development Officers some sort of signing authority.

For example if we're talking small time grants say for carvers or for seamstresses give them signing authority and they take an application to their economic development committee and they say okay this person is a good carver lets approve them for \$900 worth of tools they want on the spot and let them write the cheque so they don't necessarily have to... or use a voucher system similar to what you use with ransomware and Income Assistance Program.

That's the kind of thing use to be able to happen in the 70s up in north and nowadays here we are 40 years later well we are waiting for a cheque to come from Iqaluit. You know it seems that is just food for thought in terms of signing authority.

I'm going to move on. Tourism, it's very bureaucratic. The permitting process is difficult. I was happy to see on page 241 it says support a streamlined system for tourism permitting. So what will this priority item involve for the department? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, Mr. Chairman, for the comments our member just made regarding the more authority need to go to communities in terms of approving funding. I think we did that last year where certain things we required as a department did not make a whole lot of sense such as that the hamlet needs to put out a motion and they need to do a community plan. It all had very bureaucratic things where a lot of that was that barrier from my perspective was moved out in order for the communities to do what they know best which is to start up their economic development portion.

I think I'm going to continue and I'm glad that it's being raised here in the House in something that helps us in terms of moving this more in terms of allowing communities to be more empowered. I fully support that to what our member's comments is that we need to be less bureaucratic in order to move some of the funds that are really needed by our artists, really needed by our economic, our tourism opportunities that are there. I think we're moving in the right direction from my perspective.

On the tourism in terms of streamlining our guidelines and regulations, a lot of this is to discuss it with our permitting folks, whether it's the national parks or the cruise ships. I think, through our MOUs, what we're doing is streamlining it so we know who needs to do what. There needs to be a level of guidelines and there needs to be a level of regulations, but what we're trying to do is to streamline it so it becomes a one-stop shop, if I could say that, so people who are getting into either the cruise ship understand what regulations are there and what needs to get done.

For our departments, I think one of the things that is happening is that the Canadian tourism is looking at all their regulations and guidelines too, so we're trying to streamline a lot of these so we could be more effective. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 240 on the status update on the tourism permitting thing it says, "Going forward the department is reaching out to other tourism stakeholders..." Who are the other tourism stakeholders that are referenced here? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it was this year that we signed a memorandum of understanding with the cruise ship associations. I forget their

acronyms. It's an acronym which I just it a cruise ship MOU because that's what it is. We reached out and to help understand each other because, from the community's perspective, these cruise ships are doing more harm than good in some of the cases. We need to do it in both ways and making sure that the cruise ships don't go to sensitive areas. I think the emphasis on this has been towards the cruise ships as other tourism stakeholders. I'm sure that there are more, but I'm just focusing on just that one right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm not sure; maybe the time was still running.

When it comes to cruise ships, I believe one of the Inuit associations had recently brought forward a position or a concept in terms of putting in place fees on cruise ships. I'm not sure if they were docking fees or how they were planning to charge them. Does the department have a position on charging cruise ships to either come into a community and dock at a community or to transit the waters near a community? Does the department have a position on any of that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's under 241, "Support a streamlined system for tourism permitting." I think that's what we are going to try to do as much as possible in terms of if there are any fees or any permitting that's required that we should try to put it in one stream.

I think what we saw and have seen in the Inuit organizations is that they're putting systems in place into the lands that they own and defining in a good way in terms of if there are going to be any activities, there are going to be fees. That's no different from any of our grants that we put into, whether it is territorial parks or national parks, for certain fees.

We're also in discussions with some of our community folks in terms of whether there should be fees to the communities. I think, through our business planning priorities, this is one area that I would like to see the outcome of this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I do not know how much time I have left, but I will just keep going.

On the mining side of things, first of all, under the Nunavut Prospectors Program, I had a constituent who was a successful prospector, he is no longer my constituent unfortunately, he is now Mr. Savikataaq's constituent,

>>Laughter

but we are still very proud of him, John Tugaaq. I know that under Nunavut Prospectors Program, I believe it is \$8,000 an application. Has the department looked at creating a separate program or something that you would call like, “Advanced Prospectors Program” where they could access larger amounts of money to further their claims? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not think we have one specifically for prospectors, but if there are any advancements that any of our residents want to do, we do have different programs that allows... that starts, in terms of giving them more ways of supporting. Not necessarily through our prospecting which is, as mentioned about \$8,000 that is contribution-based, something that I am looking into in terms of how we can make this more accessible to our *Nunavummiutait*.

There are also exceptional circumstances up to \$8,000 or maybe awarded more towards transportation costs. So, there are different ways and I think what our prospectors have to do is talk to our departments. I think through the mineral divisions that we have, I think there are different funds and ways of funding these things, and typically when it comes to the exploration side of things, exploration companies probably not a single person, but exploration companies go to other companies where they can try to leverage some funds.

So there are ways of doing it. I think our department is a very good department in terms of trying to support our prospectors because if they cannot go through that we also have a small a business support program where there are strategic investment programs that we can definitely help out and work with in advancing more from my perspective without changing any of our policies at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker...Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you, minister. When it comes to exploration projects, the government participates in environmental assessment and whatnot through the sustainable development committee, and it is my understanding that it is the assistant deputy ministers from the... ok so who sits on the sustainable development committee, and will the department be tabling the updated terms of reference for that committee in the House? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, sorry.

>>Laughter

The sustainable development committee is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment and the Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Transportation who is to my left here, he co-chairs this committee.

It is the committee of all the deputies in the government, where it impacts the environmental assessments, or where it impacts on Economic Development or Environment. Those terms of reference are done through the Premier's Office, through him, as the deputy minister oversees in terms of a lot of these committees. I can't speak for the Premier or for this committee whether we're able to table it or not, but it's one that oversees when it comes to the environmental assessments. That leads up to the deputy ministers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The new terms of reference which were recently revised and it's mentioned here in the business plan, will the new terms of reference be tabled in the Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not the appropriate minister to say yes or no on this. I'll definitely follow up with our Premier and our government whether to table this or not. At this point I don't think I'm the appropriate minister to respond to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I want to applaud the department for starting work on a mine training strategy and I know that you're also working on a Nunavut economic development strategy. I think both of those documents will be very important to guide the government in the years to come and I would like to applaud you for doing a strategy in the first place as opposed to saying, "Oh, we don't need a strategy. We know what has to happen." Strategies are in place for a reason and it's when things are important.

My final questions are on oil and gas, Mr. Chairman, and I'll just throw them all into one question. I noticed here on page 245, oil and gas is mentioned a whole bunch of times in terms of developing a position and then the moratorium on oil and gas development in Nunavut. My question is: when will we see the government...? It makes reference to a position on oil and gas. When will the government or the department be releasing their position on oil and gas moratorium, and approximately how many billion dollars of oil and gas do we have in Nunavut?

I know oil prices are crashing right now, but I think we have a good chunk of Canada's oil and gas here in Nunavut and I just wanted to understand the scale. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think our Premier did a wonderful statement in this House on the development of our territory, that we should conclude our devolution agreement before further moratoriums are to take place. From my perspective, it also includes oil and gas. In the devolution agreement, part of their mandate is to also negotiate for oil and gas offshore. Yes, part of it is inshore too. I think, if we can say that we need to have that agreement in place for us to determine whether oil and gas should occur here.

I don't think in our lifetime, in this legislative lifetime we will see oil and gas licences issued under this government. We need to have a firm devolution agreement that allows us to determine whether we want oil and gas. It is too premature from my perspective of being told that we are not allowed to, where it is to be banned or a moratorium to be in place and something we have been trying to communicate.

I applaud our Premier for making a very strong stance when it comes to the devolution agreement *vis-à-vis* the lands and resources, which includes oil and gas. It's something that I will continue to support our government in terms of it needs to be our decision. Some of the numbers that are in the past for known oil in our territory at not today's prices, not this morning's prices, but in the normal price of things, if I understood, we're talking trillions of dollars that could take place.

For example, under Tallurutiup Imanga, there were known oil reserves in the Lancaster Sound area. If we look at it, you're almost looking at two or three Hibernias that could have taken place, but that's no longer available to us to make the decisions. There are further known oil reserves that are being taken into consideration for conservation areas. It's something that we definitely want to be part of the discussions. For the rest of the oil and gas, if there is any, our territory should be the one that makes that decision. It shouldn't be made by decisions outside of this legislature. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on this page. Economic Development. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$30,467,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Before we go to the last page, I will take a few minutes break. Thank you.

>>*Committee recessed at 15:07 and resumed at 15:25*

Chairman: Welcome back, committee. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. We're on page K-6. Transportation. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the business plan the department talks about improvements in delivery of motor vehicle services, including examining options for online and telephone services. It states, the status is, “The department has successfully connected the Taloyoak Government Liaison Office directly onto the Motor Vehicle Information System,” which has significantly improved service delivery. If the minister could update us today on where the department is at with rolling a similar system out to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. Our plan is for at least ten of our... Here’s what I know in terms of rolling this out is in order for it to be successful, you need the core business network in the offices where the government liaison officers are located in the communities. My plan is to roll those out to those ten communities, which I’m trying to get a list of those if need be. That would be our immediate.

The other one in my opening comments that I mentioned is that I’m working with Community and Government Services and Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to roll out the remainders. That portion, that work, I don’t have a definitive timeline on both of them, but for those that are not in the core business network, it’s going to require more work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, on the same priority where you mention you were going to examine options for online and telephone services, in what way are you going to use a telephone service in order to improve the system? The telephone has been around for many years and it’s my understanding that information is not really accepted over telephones. You have to either email it or mail it. Can you explain why you state “telephone service” in there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think money comes through the telephone, if I’m correct. That was the plan to set up the 1-800 number, to allow for other, multiple staff to be able to answer the number when it rings. I think one of the complaints that we have heard, especially from the outlying communities, is that some of our staff did not reply and that was one of the attempts to try to do and to try to allow for the public to know where to find what the status of their applications are. That’s what it’s referencing when it comes to the telephone. I know they have existed forever. It’s just a different model of how we’re thinking. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I asked about this 1-800 number, I think it was, last fall and I was asking when will this number be up and running so that people can call into this number. If the minister could update us today whether this number is now available and, if not, when will it be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at our capacity in terms of what we have in our offices, there has exploration of that 1-800 number and what it would do. Maybe if I could ask my deputy to provide more justification as to why it has not gone online yet. From what I understand, and maybe I am answering the question here Mr. Chairman, is that there is the initial look at... . In terms of putting a 1-800 number I do not think... . It was going to achieve what we thought it was going to achieve. I think that is one of the reasons that we are not necessarily putting it out right now. I think our focus is to get those that are in the core business network going. That has become our priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok, do you still want your DM to answer the question? Mr. MacIsaac.

Mr. MacIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister answered most of the question. The number is available, I do not have the number available on what it is, but at this point we do not have dedicated staff available to answer that particular phone.

As the minister suggested, there is the possibility that we could distribute responsibility for answering that phone throughout our various motor vehicle offices.

Our efforts right now are, as the minister said, trying to use the Government of Nunavut's online network as a way to resolve a lot of these issues. At the same time, we are examining the whole structure of our whole motor vehicle department and this telephone service will be part of that examination. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So you have a 1-800 number but nobody to answer the phone. That is pretty interesting. Why bother setting up a phone line if nobody is going to answer it? It does not make sense to me.

If you could give me some idea on the backlog of driver's licenses and general IDs throughout Nunavut; is there still a major backlog in this area on people obtaining their driver's licenses and general IDs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was and probably will still continue to be a backlog. I do not have the figures in terms of how many backlogs there

are. Since the ransomware took place, that added more backlogs. Sorry about that, Mr. Chairman.

How we are trying to get to those backlogs is by sending our regional and our headquarters staff into the communities where there are backlogs. I do have a schedule somewhere in terms of which communities are being visited, in terms of the timelines. Some have already been visited and for some there are still plans to visit the communities where some of our motor vehicle staff from headquarters and regional offices are going. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another one of your priorities is to continue to provide training for local-based drivers' examiners in conjunction with municipal partners and others. You go on to state that you are planning to have training for three more communities this year: Pond Inlet, Kimmirut, and Clyde River.

How many communities to date have the capabilities of providing the drivers exam in the communities and how many are left to do? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Chairman, if I may, could I ask to switch one of my witnesses to answer some of these questions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let another official into the witness table?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

For the record Minister Akeeagok please introduce your official. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right, John Hawkins is with the Department of Transportation, he is the ADM, Associate Deputy Minister under Transportation, the person is in charge of transportation.

If you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, I would like Mr. Hawkins to respond to the MLA's question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to find the answer on the paper here. The examiner training is available in Arviat, Baker Lake, training was done in Pond Inlet, however the examiners were not certified at the end of it; Cambridge Bay,

Sanikiluaq and Kugluktuk. We have training planned for Whale Cove as soon as arrangements can be finalized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you and what is the timeline to getting these driver examiners in all Nunavut communities or do you have a timeline? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. It's a combination. It's up to every community to put the request in. And it is also from our side, to send the appropriate trainers to get to the communities. I don't have a firm timeline in terms of how many will get done.

Failing that, if there are communities that don't have it yet, what we are doing, we are sending our examiners out to the communities, filling out the backlogs and also at the same time trying to entice the communities to get that training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding these trainers in our communities are only trained to issue class 5 driver's licences and no other class.

So I guess my next question is around, I know for a class 3 if there is a call for a class 3 in our community which is our municipal trucks they all require a class 3 driver's licence and it's my understanding the way it works if there is enough call in a community let's say 6, 8 or 10 people are interested. Then an examiner is sent into the community to train them to do this. Which is fine.

What happens in a case where, for example, if somebody wants a class 4 which is a taxi, a class 2, which is a school bus and a class 1, which is a tractor-trailer; and there is never going to be a call where you need 6 or 8 of these. In the smaller communities there might be one. So, what options are out there for these one-offs, for lack of a better word, in order for them to get the training they need? If there is employment available in our community, will they be required to find a way to get out to another community and get it, or what options are there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Anything higher than class 3 as the member mentioned is very limited when it comes to the communities. So, when an individual identifies that they are looking for class 1 or 2, then motor vehicles examiners and their testers then start working with the individual to try to figure out where to get the examinations and how to get the examinations. Sometimes before they do, they require

medical certifications. They're coached along the way in terms of "You need to do this" and "You need to do that."

When it comes to the examinations, from my understanding, the examiner would go to the community. There are a very limited number of examiners that we have in place, even for class 3 testing, because there are examinations and then there's the testing component, and those two are delivered by two separate individuals. It can't be the same one. A majority of our class 3 examinations to the communities are through the Municipal Training Organization and then our examiners that do the testing would be the ones that go to the community.

We do the same thing with classes 2 and 1 where we work with that individual. I don't have the specifics in terms of how that gets. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many communities, I guess you include the city of Iqaluit, actually have somebody in place who can train somebody for the class 1 and the class 2? Is it only in Iqaluit or are there other communities that are able to provide that service as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I'm told, Arctic College and where the Municipal Training Organization does the training for the class 1's and class 2's, if need be, those become available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you. If Arctic College provides the training, so are you saying that Arctic College will provide this in every community or it's only available in certain areas? Which Arctic Colleges are providing this training? You stated that Arctic College would be the one to provide the training so that somebody can qualify for the class 1 and then they go out and do their driver's exam, but I don't think that option is available in every community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Yes, Mr. Chairman, maybe through you, if I could ask my Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Hawkins, to respond to this. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't train actual drivers. We examine drivers and in these communities we talked about at the beginning, we train the

examiners to do the class 5, but we don't train the actual drivers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you. Okay, so the department examines the drivers and it goes back to my original question: which communities can a person be tested in for, let's say, a class 1 and a class 2? Is it only Iqaluit or can this type of testing be done in other communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to call them for those that contact our department, either through the government liaison officers or directly to our departments, when they ask to get their tests done, we would be able to go to that community and have our examiners test the individuals. When it comes to the actual training or the requirements for training, that's something else, but for any examinations, if there is one in the community, working with our departmental staff, they would bring the examiner to the community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to supplement some of the questions my colleague had asked regarding the concerns we have about the fact that there's no one able to answer the phones. I know a lot of residents call and that they are not able to get through, particularly when it is travel through airlines connecting, through these kinds of things of course, language is a difficult thing when you are not able to communicate, especially when there is nobody able to answer the phone. Let us say for example at the airport, there is nobody at the airport that is able to respond in English, rather in Inuktitut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As for the airlines themselves it is under their responsibility to hire someone who can answer the public in the languages. The airlines themselves, as my fellow minister stated though, there is some funding that businesses like airlines can access to provide a service in Inuktitut.

And so anyways, at our office, I could speak for my office, whenever someone answers the phone, I believe that someone answers in Inuktitut. This is because we have identified someone who is available for when someone wants to speak to our office.

So, we try to direct the call to someone in our office to be able to communicate with the caller. However, as for the airlines I had said earlier what my comment was. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this area will be receiving some fixes, so I will look forward to seeing the work. Let me move onto another subject.

In the 2020-2021 business plan, reports state that improvements to airports is a priority, and that in 2020-2021, you will be looking to finish evaluating the needs of airports in all of the communities as well as the division of airport properties.

So, you want to complete a review of commercial land and building space leases in effect at Nunavut airports. What is the goal of this review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the communities that are close to, or surrounding their airports, and we are reviewing the land, the space, the lease, the rates, and what could be available for potential building space. We are looking at if this land is only available for use in airport related work or other types. As for the land, the review is for the airports and how best to utilize that land. So what we are trying to do is to review and do a comprehensive review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman: Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. Your 2020-23 business plan states that one of the priorities for the 2020-21 fiscal year is to “Develop two major rehabilitation priorities for submission to Transport Canada Airports Capital Assistance Program.” What are the two rehabilitation priorities being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through this proposal submission, we are submitting capital projects for funding approval from (interpretation ends) Transport Canada (interpretation) and the two projects we are planning, to use Pangnirtung as an example, the capital costs will be extremely high for us to fund it so we must really brainstorm with (interpretation ends) Transport Canada (interpretation) as they try to allocate funds towards transportation challenges throughout the country.

Further, the other community I will say in English (interpretation ends) Whale Cove, (interpretation) Tikirarjuaq? Okay. Whale Cove is the other community that is the subject of our capital planning exercises to determine if we can submit them through this proposal to the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, minister. Within your proposed business plan, I want to first ask about the (interpretation ends) priorities for 2020-21, it's to "Manage the Kivalliq inter-community road study."

(interpretation) Can you provide some clarification on that? One of my constituency community of Igloolik is situated on an island, and I really saw that reference to (interpretation ends) road study (interpretation) where potential roads will be reviewed. What exactly is in this study? Can you explain what that study involves? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funds are available via proposals using this fund, called in English (interpretation ends) National Trades Corridor Fund (interpretation) and we received some funds through that pot of funding to commence a study on the Kivalliq communities and how they can be linked by road. That's what we're trying to use that for and it would be under the 2020-21 priority year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have you considered the Amittuq region for this type of road linkage studies? I would want to see a linkage connecting the two communities of the Amittuq region? Can you also conduct a study towards that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, we are only looking at the communities listed in the priorities for this upcoming year using this funding and through this proposal. This will be a landmark study that allows us to develop a template, and if this road is possible, and is feasible, then we would be able to transfer that to other communities, however, at this current time for 2020-21, we are only focussing on the communities listed. Nonetheless, I believe the study we conduct on road linkages will also form a template that allows us to look at future road linkage studies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, governments' capital planning priorities and projects, both federal and territorial, seem to overlook the smaller communities' needs.

Ever since I took my seat, I have fought for Amittuq, yet we have never seen a capital project or even any types of plans or studies for capital planned projects. This is why I commented on that, as economic opportunities can be created through a small project.

As the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, I want you to commit to studying this in the future. However, I'll just change the topic, Mr. Chairman. There was a question earlier to the MLA for Uqqummiut regarding airfare costs. As the transportation department, you are aware that it is very costly to travel around the north.

For example, in Hall Beach to Igloolik it is a 10-minute flight yet it costs just over \$200 for one way. As the transportation department, would you be able to find support or engage with the airlines to ensure that our rates are lowered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to respond that, when it comes to capital projects in all communities, we are always looking for funding to help. We always have to look at all communities as a government and try. On page 252 in our department plan, whenever there are federal infrastructure programs, we try to apply projects and identify priorities for all communities. I just wanted to comment on that briefly as well as this comment about the airlines.

When the merger happens and Mr. Chairman if you could bear with me. First of all, the fares for the communities we put out a request for proposals for medical and duty travel it included airfare for Inuit or people or economy airfare and it's through that what the prices and fares will be and how they can be changed and there's room there. The contract was for four years with two possibilities of extensions for up to six years. This was a little different than what we asked for.

After the merger on what is now called Canadian North the federal minister has directed that airfare was a real concern by our public to keep an eye on them and they will be keeping an eye on them too. And if they need to be reviewed, then they would do the review. It's a two-part response. As these two things happened at the same time on airfares. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is with capital projects, and how transportation can provide assistance. So, I want to ask you now, now that the two airlines have merged do you agree with it, or do you disagree with it? You'll probably do a study on it with a lot of concerns out there after the merger. Are you going to listen more to Nunavut or listen more to the airlines. And that's my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a government we spent a lot of money on airfare and we put that fact in the contract. We've committed to keeping an eye on it, we will monitor it. We're looking for a person through Community and Government Services that we want to be made well aware of that situation and

monitor it. I believe that as a government, with the amount of funds we expend, that we can speak to these issues with the airlines.

As well, I want to respond properly, however, this issue requires the careful collaboration of the departments and parties on these issues, especially where we have to return and restudy plans.

I am grateful to members, when I get those types of questions as they also provide more background on what we are trying to achieve. I would like to thank you as members for asking questions on that issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have many questions, but in the business plan under Nunavut airports business plan on page 257 for 2020-2021 it states, and remind me if this was already asked, it says (interpretation ends) “Undertake live testing of emergency response plan at eight airports in Nunavut.”

(interpretation) I do not know how many communities they did that in. What kind of testing do you do and in which communities will this work commence in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the actual communities, I don't have the detailed information about them handy, but through you, I can identify which communities are within the correspondence I mentioned.

An ongoing type of testing process includes every community airport, for example, the activity listed on page 256 shows which communities were tested. They are: Naujaat, Igloolik and Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, Grise Fiord, Kimmirut, Kugaaruk and Coral Harbour.

Due to logistics, we rarely do all communities simultaneously and this is why airports are divided into groupings of three communities. We work with (interpretation ends) Transport Canada (interpretation) to determine the groupings.

Both departments must always know the status of each airport, especially in cases of emergencies where we have to deliberate on what is required. We carefully study each community, and the changes if any to the airport, as we must renew the policy that allows that.

One community is required to have a complete testing every four years. That is why we have eight groupings of communities and we anticipate requiring three years to complete each grouping. This is an extremely important requirement that allows us to be well prepared for emergencies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can he provide more detail on what kind of planning is done for emergencies? I would like to know exactly what is tested in the airport. If there is an emergency in the community or at the airport, what consists of the testing? I would like clarification on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. As I stated earlier, the tests have to be done every four years. For example, in the case of an airplane crashing, what would we do? Or, if there is a fire at the airport what would we do?

The hamlet, the fire department, the RCMP, the health centre and different organizations in the community dealing with emergency situations, for example, we hold meetings with the group in case this happens, and to use Pangnirtung as an example, if this happened in Pangnirtung, what would we do? We plan annually, we plan it for three years on being prepared on paper and we look at that with them. Before the fourth year we have an emergency exercise, and we plan with stakeholders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right underneath it seems to be a little bit different. (interpretation ends) undertake tabletop testing (interpretation) what is the difference between that? That is my next question, Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank the member asking about the difference between those two.

The one called tabletop; we work on those on an annual basis. At all of our airports before the fourth year, for instance we have to plan an emergency exercise. That is the (interpretation ends) live testing of emergency response. (interpretation) These eight communities will hold exercises this year, and to all the airports in case of an emergency. See if we are planned properly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have to test them all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With it being run that way, and while they are being tested, do you review which community is at more of a risk if there was an emergency within the community?

We are all aware that in Pangnirtung, the airstrip is right in the middle of the community, and it has been mentioned that the tank farm is right nearby. They are near the front of

the runway, and they say the airstrip is too short and this has been a concern for many years.

That is why I am asking that question. If they identify a risk in a community, what kind of plans are there for Pangnirtung? We know it is going to cost a lot of money on what is being planned. What other options have been planned for? I would like to ask those questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All communities are different and have different emergency plans.

Pangnirtung on what facilities are close together. We have to plan for them, because we do not want to see any emergencies, but we have to be well prepared for one. That is why we try to have good plans.

In our plans, we look at the length of the runway, and what facilities they have. We know what is there and sometimes we have different regulations. As an example, for the Pangnirtung Airport, the regulations outline that all airplanes that land there must be lighter than a certain limit so there is more room than a full load.

That is why airplanes can't be fully loaded in terms of overall deadweight poundage. The regulations would change if the legislation was changed. It limits what can be used or what loads cannot be transported.

Indeed, with some of these challenges, it does impact the community and we have commenced the plans, and whenever you review airport studies the shortness of the airstrip is quite obvious, which results in less than full loads and the overall weight of each plane must be carefully managed.

It is also listed in the regulations of the Airports legislation, and whenever an emergency or situation occurs, the airlines are immediately notified if changes have been made. It's that way that we always try to have things planned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make this my last question. During any fiscal year, your department conducts visits to each communities and where studies have commenced in the previous year, then the communities are clearly identified. Pangnirtung has had a plan for many years, so I imagine another study may be required for emergency planning? That's my last question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. We divide them into eight groups, since we have 25 communities, so each group has three communities. This report we compiled speaks to 256 different completed activities.

There were 16 or 17 activities we need to place in one of the years. I don't have that information currently, however, once I clearly understand which communities have existing plans, and then I can provide that information via correspondence to you, Mr. Chairman.

Alternatively, I can copy the members and that way we can all be on the same page of understanding on which communities have existing studies being done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the business plan on page 257 under the priorities for 2020-21, the facilities standards will have to be completed at Nunavut airports. How many air terminals are there in the communities? I hope that was clear, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All Nunavut airports have air terminals. With the airport infrastructure, I was anticipating this question. For example, airport parking garages, at this time I don't know which communities have them or if we own them or if we go through the hamlets. I don't have that information at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure you will keep us updated on what is required at the airports for parking facilities, how many airports in Nunavut have parking garages? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are 18 or 15 communities that have parking garages and there are 7 or 10, I'm not sure I'll have to look into that, that have no parking garages. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure we will be seeing the documents but are you anticipating building any more in those communities that do not have any? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): In my documents it says that we will try and have them completed. For those communities that do not have any, that would be under capital projects. Then I will be able to give you an update at that time. I do not have any documents that are for capital projects and I cannot tell you which communities are going to be prioritized and where we are going to start building. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was queried about earlier, close to the 2022-23 marked as it is the last bullet. Which is written “To conduct live emergency response plans testing in six Nunavut communities?” Which communities have been identified, or are the communities still under consideration today? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated earlier, once we know which communities where we are going to do testing I will respond to your question in correspondence, either to the chairman or to each member, but this will be provided as written material. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It will become understandable once we will get the information and we look forward to seeing that document.

Let me move to another page, page 254. This was brought up earlier by one of our colleagues but it is related to that comment and part of it, particularly, the first arrow stating “The department will make improvements in delivery of motor vehicle services digitally” and I wonder about Taloyoak as it is included as one of the communities that would operate this type of motor vehicle services.

This last paragraph is outlining the department that is identifying how best to use that service as it is provided, and especially with the potential to increase employment opportunities in all the communities is important. Is it in place now or is it still at the planning stage? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the people of Taloyoak who had made that request and we know that it’s doable. We would like to see that done in all the Nunavut communities, but we have to rely on the Internet and we know that there are ten communities that already have Internet and we will have to look at the other communities and decide how we’re going to make improvements. They can

send documents from Taloyoak instantly down to Ottawa and they can get their licences that fast. We have made people wait for a very long time and I do apologize. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many years is it going to take to complete the improvements? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. We will have to be properly prepared and make sure that everything goes accordingly. We would like to start with six communities over this year. Taloyoak has been completed and we would like to get the requests and so on. There are still some communities that we can't provide the service to. As I indicated in my opening comments, we're going to be working with the Department of Community and Government Services and EIA, so I can't give you a date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) First I want to follow up on the driver examiner training issue. Is the minister able to get the committee members a written summary in terms of where the backlog is at the examination level and give it to the chair at an appropriate date? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the minister for his assistance to date. I have some class 3 students in Arviat who have been waiting for their examination for a number of months.

Page 255 of the business plan mentions temporary alternative general identification document. (interpretation) I would like to know exactly what that is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department is looking at alternatives. We have the general identification document which we use like a driver's licence. We're looking at what alternatives we might use in case an individual

doesn't have an ID with a photo. We're looking at what we can provide that you can have access to immediately or sooner than what we're using now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 252 of the business plan on your Community Transportation Initiatives Program, I was looking at the report and some communities have applied for up to \$1.7 million under this program and then some communities have more than one application.

Has the department considered putting a cap on the amount that you are allowed to apply for under this program and putting a cap on the number of applications? Because, it's important to make sure that the money is made available in a manner that's fair to all communities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In our policy, about our contribution, it does state that we cannot approve up to \$300,000. It does not stop the communities from giving us the big picture and that allows us to work closely with the community and look at what the areas will be that get distributed for projects.

So, yes there is a cap. But that doesn't stop the proposals from coming, in terms of what they are looking for. I applaud the communities for being very creative when it comes to seeking this very popular program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On the same page 252 it mentions the Kivalliq inter-community road study. I'm just wondering, so that's going to happen in this fiscal year. How is input from say hunters and trappers organizations and or elders when it comes to where to build the road and how to minimize impacts on caribou or other animals? How is that going to be included in this study? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: I apologize Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is very critical that those organizations help shape this study. We are doing the road study to ensure a lot of those are answered before we put any road system into the region, and this will help us determine whether we can or not.

I think the input of the hunters and trappers organizations and our elders, along with key stakeholders to help us understand whether this is feasible and also even doable. I think that is what this study is going to be.

So what I will do is encourage everybody that has a stake in it to provide input into the study. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) And that's exactly what I wanted to hear because it's the community members, the hunters and the people who know the land and who would probably have a lot of valuable input to provide in terms of where, which way to build a road to minimize impacts and to make them work better.

On page 253 it mentions air terminal buildings in five communities, including Whale Cove. Really looking forward to seeing that new air terminal building. So this is in 2020-2022, I just wanted to confirm when it comes to the O&M side of this capital project that everything is on schedule to see the construction of these air terminal buildings begin in 2021. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'm saying that very cautiously, because, every construction you might run into hiccups and we don't know that yet. But that is our anticipation, and something that through this that we will monitor, and get construction in place for those five communities. I'm hoping that there will be no hiccups, because those airport terminals are very much needed for those communities and it will shape for the next other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I hope that when these projects do come on line, when they are being built, that they are built in a way to maximize the local labour content. Say for example in Whale Cove. I do not want to get too far into capital, but just, we are really looking forward to seeing that new terminal.

Another item I noted happily in your business plan was, it mentions the accessibility ramp in Arviat at the airport, it is on page 257. Another big need when it comes to the Arviat airport is an equipment shelter, and I am not asking about capital. I am asking about the maintenance. We have excellent maintainers working in Arviat, I believe one of the best maintained strips in the region.

The thing is, we do not have an equipment shelter and so those maintainers have to work harder than I think they should have to with that equipment shelter there. I just wanted to know as it pertains to the operations and maintenance, whether an equipment shelter has been identified as something that is a need that is impacting the operations of that airport? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very much looking forward to completing the 20-year needs study for every one of our communities.

I think through this budget what I have done and through these open comments is that we have shifted about \$1 million to the transportation side. More particular to the airports side, because it has been chronically not being funded. It is something that I'm trying to work really hard on, in terms of getting it properly funded.

Also looking at the capital side, it is great to have airport terminals and an airstrip, but not having a shelter hinders and it is a huge barrier, and I think one of the members started that earlier too, in one of the communities. He was asking about when those shelters are coming.

Those shelters are needed, and needed right now to a number of communities, but where do we get the money is the biggest thing. It is something that I as a minister struggle with, in terms of trying to find ways of getting those monies to get the shelters.

So, as a minister, that is something that I am trying to do, and it is difficult at times because we go through our capital planning process, we go through this, our capital estimates and the need outweighs the money, and shelters fit in that too.

It is across our departments, the need to have these things. To that point, creative ways have taken place, and I applaud Kugaaruk as one very good example of how they, without the shelter that they are able to make ways. I think Arviat is one of those communities too, is that they have been able to find ways of maintaining our critical equipment, but is this the right way?

From my standpoint, if we had the money, I think we would build those shelters right now, but we do not. I come and do a reality check, and it's that we do not have that money readily available for us.

So, we find creative ways of insuring that those equipment's are operational, and I applaud the communities, and particularly most of them are done by the hamlets and those...they find creative ways of making sure those equipment's are available, along with our staff. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, minister.

(interpretation ends) I would just like to highlight that the Hamlet of Arviat is also facing a parking space crunch and there is nothing on the horizon for them in terms of more parking garage space.

So we have two government and municipal facilities where there are all pressed for space. It's just an example, the infrastructure deficit and how it is affecting the community.

Another priority on your business plan, page 257 is "Delivery options for safety management systems." Right now, I believe it is a contracted service with the Winnipeg Airports Services company, that's the name, and so what delivery options are on the table? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, could I ask Mr. Hawkins to respond to that question? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it is important to have some independence in the safety management system to have a third-party doing some portion of it, but it does not all have to be done by a third-party. The third-party usually has to oversee it and audit it. We are looking for the right balance there, where a third-party outside agency or company would do some portion of it, but where the majority of it would be done in-house by the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So as opposed to how much will be contracted and how much will be done in-house by the government, that is what you are looking at, it just says "Review delivery options for this fiscal year" and then implementation would be the next fiscal year 2021-2022. Does that coincide with when the existing contract with the provider will expire? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

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

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Also at the top of page 257 it mentions the proposal that was put in for a runway overlay for Whale Cove and Pangnirtung and they have been "Submitted to Transport Canada for consideration."

Have those applications been approved? I know it is something that is needed for Whale Cove in a big way. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: *Qujannamiik*. We have not gotten any confirmation of those yet to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When is the department anticipating a response? I want to be ready to make some noise if these applications do not get approved because this is our basic transportation infrastructure. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is something that I continually raise with Minister Garneau on the Airport Capital Assistance Program, the need for a northern...because with these proposals we are competing against the whole nation. Historically, Transport Canada just says "Oh, we're doing this now, here is what it is" and you are getting this response.

I do not like how that process works. I think it needs to be formulated where we should know when to get a response, whether we are getting in the queue or not. The timing is strictly at the federal level and something that I will continue to have discussions with my federal counterpart about, in terms of how we need to deliver this in a better way. As I always stated, we need to have a northern component so we can have a focus and some level of timing so we can all work together.

Having to rely on announcements in two weeks, for example, Hall Beach, it was sitting in their books for seven years. We were waiting for the response and our staff got a call saying, "An announcement is coming up in a couple of weeks, but you can't say anything." I didn't get anything until the announcement was getting like within a day I got the notice. That's not the way to operate these infrastructure dollars from my perspective.

It's something that we really need to work with the federal counterparts to ensure at least your community will know whether it's getting it or not. If it is, those time frames need to be better coordinated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I fully support your push for that northern-specific fund. I hope it comes to fruition.

I want to talk about jet fuel. Looking at the communities where jet fuel is available, they're all provided at the exact same price, except for one community. I flagged this

issue with the minister for the Petroleum Products Division, but I just wanted to ask if the transportation side is aware of this situation and the implications it has from an economic development perspective on where airlines operate out of. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad you raised it with the minister responsible for petroleum products. That's the one that determines in terms of the pricing. As our department and as the minister, I help shape that through the leadership of our minister in terms of those fuels. I am aware and it's something that's there.

For transportation in terms of where they're going and what they need, from my perspective, I have conversations with our airlines and they determine what kinds of planes they're going to be using, how much fuel they're going to need. Those types of discussions take place at the departmental level and it is when it's identified, what we try to do is communicate that through our system because our department is not the one that determines where the jet fuel goes, but it is through our ongoing input that those take place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Would the minister be able to commit to looking into this jet fuel pricing along with your colleague, with the Petroleum Products Division minister? I have pointed it out before. It should either be the same price for every community or it could be differentiated based on the economies of scale and the quantity sold, but right now it's neither. It's all the same except for one community and that is not fair in terms of airlines operating out of other communities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll definitely have discussions with my minister colleague, but it's his program and that program under petroleum products. I'll leave it to their expertise in this for them to respond. I can't commit to providing a response on a product that's administered by another department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. My final question is on page 252, which is this new contract under where airfare economy fares were included in the contract. It is my understanding that the economy fare airlines are providing are cheaper than a duty travel fare for a government bureaucrat.

I know it was more than one department that worked on this contract, but was the rationale for saying that a government bureaucrat sitting on the same plane as a person going on holiday, why would the bureaucrat's seat cost more? What was the rationale for that?

I mean, if you are sharing the purchasing power, as it was explained by the minister before, you would make the bureaucrat's seat and the economy class seat the same. But it seems, in my understanding anyways under this contract, for those economy class you have gone further and the bureaucrat seat costs more than an economy class seat.

I am just trying to understand it better. (interpretation) My final question, Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of our request for proposal and the report that was done, the determination was that this government has some buying power in terms of for the seats. As a result of this report, and looking at the market, the public had and we have needed to be affected if we just focused on the medical and duty travel as part of this government.

I am understanding this government has deeper pockets than our Nunavummiut. Though our discussion and especially with Nunavummiut it is that they have been looking to have a reasonable price for them to travel to visit their families or vacation.

Through our request for proposal, we put that as one of the rates in terms of the pricing and as a result of this, the public seats were cheaper than the government's and I think it is most to do with our proposal rates in terms of for the new contract. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your priorities 2021-2022 it states "Monitor progress of construction of air-terminal buildings" and Kugluktuk is on there. We are excited for that new terminal as well, but my question is, we do not have wheelchair access ramp on the airside.

What are your department's plans to come-up or deliver that access? Or is that at least two years, more than two years until we see a new terminal? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Why wheelchair ramps were not built when it was being built is beyond me. What I am doing is looking forward... . What I have been doing is looking forward, so any new terminal that is coming up that is going to have a wheelchair access.

So that is, for your community, that is the planning; that when the new building is built, that is the kind that you would have the wheel chair access. Any new buildings that are not being built yet where there is renovations requirements we are adding the access to those communities as we know that they will be used for long periods of time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Kamingoak.

Ms. Kamingoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So Kugluktuk will not be getting a wheelchair access ramp until we get a new terminal? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question (interpretation) when we first became MLAs we saw the airports. Within Nunavut there was a Nunavut-wide plan and we read that there will be a relocation of the Pangnirtung airstrip to another location and then after that we were told that that had stalled or stopped.

On page 257 there is a note about airport under your priorities that there is just going to be Whale Cove and Pangnirtung completed proposals “And submitted to Transport Canada for consideration.”

Why was the plan stalled for Pangnirtung when it was already submitted under the National Trades Corridor Fund? That is my first question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Yes, thank you. For Pangnirtung we did try under that fund of the National Trades Corridor Fund. We tried at the time. We submitted a proposal, when at the first time they had this open. As to what you are talking about, where there is government submitted program proposals that would be available for 20 years and discussion around Pangnirtung to relocate.

Of course, you know that money has been a barrier. It is a barrier and it has been a challenge. We have not forgotten about it but it will require a lot of capital expense. We are looking at where can we find funding for this project and we need a good plan in place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You had identified that it would be for 20 years to plan airports in our future, and the plan is well-drafted. Kimmirut and Pangnirtung airports would both be hazardous if any emergencies occurred.

However, my question I want to ask is: here in Iqaluit, we have an expensive international airport, and I wonder why that type of overall funding amount cannot be transferred to Pangnirtung as it will require copious amounts of funds so why isn't any set aside?

And with respect to Kimmirut's airport, since we are all from Nunavut, why aren't they receiving the same infrastructure as the rest? That is my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The thing about it is that governments change and priorities change. When proposals get submitted, I cannot answer for any previous governments, but we do know that it's going to require a lot of resources, which we don't have, and we have to look for funding we could access under the National Trade Corridors Fund. We're able to participate under that and we try to send proposals for capital expenditures for consideration, but it requires a lot of great planning.

I also want to comment that this is a 20-year initiative, but we have to have well-researched proposals and find the best plan. We need to have well-researched proposals. When there is no funding available, we get behind and so the funding that's available now... . When we try to set aside a budget for this planning, we have to consider all this when we want to submit these proposals, but this would be under capital funding and we would need to have a building.

We want to have all these needs, but it's like a lot of the things that require a lot of expenses. I could just reiterate that it requires a lot of funding that would require assistance from other governments or other sources. That's what I wanted to add to my fellow colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that. I'm thankful to the minister because all of us here in the Chamber have read and as part of your responsibility or the priorities under 2023 that there are some things that we have to continue. On page 257 there are some things that are as part of priorities, the 2020-21 priorities, there are "two major rehabilitation priorities for submission to Transport Canada Airports Capital Assistance Program." These two major priorities will require a lot of extra funding under this program. If you can provide an update on what's happening to these two major priorities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm done.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, proposals for the two items I mentioned, our present airport needs to be worked on, airstrips are resurfaced, and that's what we expect to use those airports for a long period. That's why we put aside a budget. Right now there are two options for Pangnirtung. We need to upgrade the present airstrip and that's what we're proposing. We understand quite well that we would have to move the airport because of the growth of the community. We know there are safety issues that it definitely needs to be relocated. It's the money that blocks the way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Last name on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding that Motor Vehicles Acts across Canada have a section which regulates driver's education or driver's training programs. My first question is: does our own *Motor Vehicles Act* have a similar function in it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If I understood correctly, the legislation does have it but it is not in the regulations yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So my next question is: have there ever been driver's education or driver's training programs offered within the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For which class? If I could ask for a clarification in terms of which class he is talking about, because there are different levels, I believe there are seven levels of classes.

For level 5, which is the regular drivers like myself that drive this, there is no driver training per se, similar to what other jurisdictions do in terms of level 5. But for other classes, yes there are some trainings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just respond to the minister. To clarify, my question, my question was referring to class 5, the regular driver's license that is required for many jobs in the territory. Has the department, EDT ever worked with any

other organization to offer class 5 driver's license training education programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not at this time. During this appearance I think it was evident that we do have capacity. We do have issues with our own systems and that has been our focus, is to fix that. I think down the road, when we do have the capacity and when we do have the systems in place, I think that will be our next ideal plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 154 of the business plan, the last bullet states that in the current year the priority was to undertake assessment of the need for driver training schools in conjunction with Nunavut Arctic College and the Nunavut Association of Municipalities.

The status was that, in conjunction with other Canadian jurisdictions and the federal government, the division has agreed to implement mandatory entry level training for class 1 commercial driver's licenses originating in Nunavut.

Before continuing on my theme of driver's education, would the minister be able to elaborate a little bit further on the status that was provided under that priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the Class 1, that was at the national level, so we are required under that for that particular class. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, while economic development and transportation was undertaking the assessment with arctic college and the Nunavut Association of Municipalities for the need of driver's training schools, was no other classification of driver's education training identified? For example Class 5? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at our capacity, the ones that we're doing right now, that we're working with the Municipal Training Organization, and Arctic College, is on class 3 and the lower classes.

For class 5, we do provide the testing at an individual level and what we do and allow for in those individuals is the manuals to read up on and then they get tested. When they pass the test, we issue them the highest class which is level 7, which is the training, which allows them to practice their driving with another, like drivers with a class 5. Through that, that's how we are doing the training per se, when it comes to class 5. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, my next question is: does the Department of Economic Development and Transportation recognize a barrier to achieving class 5 driver's licences? Sorry, does the department recognize that so many households do not have access to a vehicle, do not have vehicles, let alone access to one. Does the department recognize that as a barrier to successfully achieving the class 5 driver's licence? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Mr. Chairman. The short answer is yes. The long answer is, that's why we work in conjunction with Nunavut Arctic College and also the Nunavut Association of Municipalities.

Typically, the municipalities have the right vehicles for any on-road training. I think each community has different ways that they are doing, from my understanding, this week our examiners are down in Kimmirut for the class 5 and the hamlet is offering their vehicles for testing.

So, there is creative work that is being done thanks to our department and to the municipalities to try and find ways of getting people to get their class 5 licences. But right now, the emphasis is that the individuals are the ones that really need to get in and learn the manuals and ask to get trained and utilization of the vehicles. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Continuing on the topic, the need for driver's training schools in the territory; there are so many benefits. That is why every other jurisdiction in Canada has allowed for driver's education. You know, from lower insurance premiums, knowing how to maintain your vehicle, rules of the road and most importantly personal responsibility.

So, my next question is: what needs to be done within our government to allow for driver's education schools, whether it be government or privately run to begin providing these benefits? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what really need to do right now and the questions I get here in the House, is that our department, especially in the motor vehicles department, we need to get our capacity in order. We need to get those back-logs done and start focussing on the regulations that we need, to go to the next level which would be adequate training and figure out where those training can come through.

I think discussions with Arctic College is the right step, and in every other jurisdiction, I think most of the drivers testing is done by an institution outside of the [issuers.] As a department, we are the examiners and we are the issuers of licences. Right now I can't do that to most communities. As is stated in the business plan, we just did a successful pilot project in Taloyoak, which now I need to expand that to the communities.

Tacking on another training on top of that, I don't know what value it would be right now at this point if we get all the right training and they can't get examined. That's a problem with myself and something that I'm committed to fixing this portion of the motor vehicles so we then can look at down the road some other training that's required and something that my member just mentioned has a lot of benefits to the individuals and something that we strive in doing, but I'm being honest here is our capacity does not necessarily allow for that right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the capacity issues that every departments face and when it comes to the current existing backlog versus the regulations that would be required to implement driver's education or training programs, I see those as two very different things. One is operational and one is policy and whatnot.

My next question is: under the current legislation, the current *Motor Vehicles Act*, would it be possible for DEAs or the Department of Education or the department of college to apply to get this driver's training program certification to provide this much-needed training and certification? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, through this, yes, we are looking for partners and yes, we are looking for institutions that will be able to deliver the training. What we need to do is provide them the curriculum or the information that will allow them to provide the adequate training and the right regulations.

I think timing is right and I understand that the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College will be in front of us to look at their budgets. They're right in the middle of their own review of what programs should be delivered at Arctic College. Is this one of them? What are the priorities? There are so many priorities that we have with the limited resources that we do have. It comes down to: are we ready for this? What I'm saying is that from my side as a legislative is I'm going to focus my efforts on those and in the backlogs before jumping into something new. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it might be my last question.

When would it be possible? When would the Department of Economic Development and Transportation be in a better position to allow our schools or the college or the private sector to apply to provide this type of driver's education training program? Are we looking at five or ten years down the road? When will the public have access to safe and secure, certified driver's education training? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a timeline for this. We are open for any institution that wants to come in or any institution that already exists here. It might be the Nunavut Association of Municipalities or Arctic College. If they want to deliver this type of program and are able to, we welcome them.

As for the motor vehicles that I am administering right now, through this House, I'm seeking for approval to have our motor vehicles be more accessible so that more people can get licences through our system. Right now, with the backlogs and with our core business networks, we're not able to deliver the same level that we need to provide to our Nunavummiut and that's my priority for this, but if there's any institution and if anybody that wants to get training is willing to pay for that, go for it. For under Motor Vehicles, this is going to be my focus is to get our licensing done and our regulations and that's what I'm seeking for approval for this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on Transportation. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$50,782,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page K-3. Economic Development and Transportation. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$92,046,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded the Department of Economic Development and Transportation?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Closing comments? Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I would very much like to thank my officials who are here with me and all our staff in our department who

did a tremendous job. Yes, this gives us an incentive to go ahead with our plans and we have heard what you need from your communities.

I would like to thank all the members for all their suggestions and questions within our department and the Government of Nunavut. Thank you very much. I'll make sure we get things going. Lastly, I thank you all for your questions and suggestions. They're not falling on deaf ears. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I would like to thank you also for answering the committee's questions. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. We will take a five-minute break while we set up.

>>Committee recessed at 17:18 and resumed at 17:25

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

Chairman: Good evening. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. I would now like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I do, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

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

For the record, Minister Kusugak, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is my Deputy Minister, Sheila Kolola, and to my left is my Assistant Deputy Minister, Grant McMichael.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman and colleagues, I am here today to present the 2020-21 Main Estimates and the 2020-23 Business Plan for the Department of Human Resources.

It has been a productive first year for our newly formed department and we are happy to share our achievements and our continuing plans to develop and deliver effective and responsive human resource policies, programs, practices, and services. As a central administrative department, the Department of Human Resources provides leadership and

management support to departments for Inuit employment planning, employee training and development, staffing, employee relations, and job evaluation.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Human Resources continues to work in partnership with departments and corporations to strengthen human resources capacity across the public service. We focus human resources policies and programs on Inuit employment at all levels of the public service and ensure that government processes and programs operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

For 2020-21, the department will have a total operational budget of \$28.1 million with the majority in three areas:

- Compensation and benefits, of which is \$19 million;
- Service contracts of \$4.6 million; and
- Purchased services of \$2.2 million.

Mr. Chairman, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a healthy and respectful workplace that supports employees to bring their diverse talents, skills, and energy as they deliver high-quality government programs and services to Nunavummiut. To this end, the Department of Human Resources is creating a new Employee Wellness Division with eight positions that will deliver comprehensive employee wellness initiatives based on Inuit societal values.

Mr. Chairman, as a government we continue to develop capacity and capability while fulfilling our obligations under Article 23 to achieve a representative public service. In addition to our operational budget, the Department of Human Resources administers an additional \$50 million multi-year fund for Inuit employment initiatives through the settlement agreement.

We have raised and updated the Amaaqtarniq Education Leave Program Policy to remove barriers to post-secondary education for eligible Inuit employees, resulting in a record number of 15 Inuit enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies at various universities and colleges across the country. Through this program and other training and development opportunities funded and coordinated by the Department of Human Resources, Government of Nunavut employees are prepared to fill professional, specialized and management positions within the government.

The Department of Human Resources also works with departments through the competitive staffing process and the direct appointment process to build our government's workforce capacity and to reduce the number of long-term casual employees. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year 57 Inuit employees have been direct appointed.

Mr. Chairman, in order to facilitate the recruitment and retention of Government of Nunavut employees who deliver programs and services to Nunavummiut, the Department

of Human Resources has assumed the governance and administration of the revised Staff Housing Policy and now chairs both the Staff Housing Allocation Committee and the Staff Housing Appeals Committee. Both committees operate with a shared focus on ensuring the allocation of housing enables our strategic and operational requirements across all departments and drives our Government of Nunavut Inuit employment goals and objectives.

The Department of Human Resources recognizes the support received from the Nunavut Housing Corporation during the transition and looks forward to an ongoing partnership with the Nunavut Housing Corporation as we continue to enhance the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Program.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Human Resources has worked very hard in 2019-2020 to fulfill our government's priorities and we will continue this work in the new fiscal year. Our priorities for 2020-21 include:

- Leading and monitoring the implementation of the Government of Nunavut's updated Human Resources Strategy;
- Monitoring the progress of the government-wide Inuit Employment Plan to 2023 and continuing to identify and address any barriers to Inuit employment;
- Working with the Department of Culture and Heritage to continue reviewing and revising the *Human Resources Manual* directives and policies to ensure alignment with Inuit societal values;
- Working with the Department of Finance and the Nunavut Housing Corporation to implement enhancements to the Staff Housing Program and other housing-related employee benefits;
- Developing a respectful workplace program focused on conflict management and alternative dispute resolution and rooted in *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and Inuit societal values;
- Collaborating with departments to identify unique staffing needs and develop one-year workforce plans;
- Working with experts and key stakeholders to develop a long-term employee wellness strategy that addresses the changing complexities of a diverse and growing workforce; and
- Providing workplace education and training for public servants, with an emphasis on increasing Inuit employment and developing strong Inuit leaders for the government and the territory.

My department will work collaboratively with other departments and stakeholders towards achieving our common goals. We will keep you and this Legislative Assembly informed of our efforts.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I conclude my opening comments and am able to answer questions from the committee. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2020-21 Main Estimates and 2020-23 Business Plan of the Department of Human Resources.

The department's proposed 2020-21 operations and maintenance budget of \$28,168,000 represents a 5.5 percent increase from its 2019-2020 main estimates. The number of positions in the department is increasing from 128.0 person years to 133.0 person years. This increase is primarily a consequence of the creation of a new Employee Wellness Division in the department.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of October 23, 2018, the Premier announced that the government's current Harassment-Free Workplace Policy would be reviewed by a "working group involving female deputy ministers, human resources experts and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit coordinators" to "ensure it adequately addresses and meets the needs of women who have experienced inappropriate behaviour or sexual harassment in the workplace." The standing committee continues to look forward to progress being made in this area and an updated policy being tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The standing committee also looks forward to the timely tabling of the government's new Human Resources Strategy.

The issue of long-term casuals has been a longstanding issue of concern for Members of the Legislative Assembly. On September 9, 2019 the Government of Nunavut issued a news release which announced that the cabinet had issued direction to "...foster Inuit employment across the public service by substantially increasing the number of direct appointments of long-term casuals." The standing committee supports this direction.

The Department of Human Resources has responsibilities in respect to establishing the government's overall Inuit employment targets. It is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made to date in increasing Inuit employment in the Government of Nunavut. Information that is contained in the government's quarterly employment reports indicates that a total of 1,216 Nunavut Inuit were employed by the government as of December 31, 2004. By December 2019 that number had increased to 1,842. This represents an increase of approximately 51 percent over the 15-year period. It is important for the government to develop realistic timetables for achieving full representativeness across all occupational categories in the government. This is a significant challenge. The government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that as of December 31, 2019, the Government of Nunavut had a total of 5,143 positions, of which 1,842 were filled by Nunavut Inuit. 1,822 positions were filled by non-Nunavut Inuit employees and 1,478 positions were vacant. In order for the

government to achieve an 85 percent Inuit workforce for a fully staffed organization, it needs to hire approximately 2,529 new Nunavut Inuit employees and not lose a single one of its current Nunavut Inuit employees.

On September 18, 2017 the Government of Nunavut's new Inuit Language Incentive Policy was announced. Under the policy, the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit has the responsibility to "develop, review, recommend and administer tests that evaluate Inuit Language proficiency." Employees may receive an allowance according to a three-level scale. The standing committee again notes that although it recognizes the appropriateness of requiring employees who are applying for a new and/or higher allowance to undertake an assessment, the policy's current requirement that all employees undergo a mandatory reassessment every five years to determine whether or not they are still proficient in their language is unwarranted, especially when contrasted with the apparent lack of any assessment requirements for employees receiving a bilingual bonus for the ability to use the French language in the course of their employment. This concern was noted during the Legislative Assembly's consideration of the department's proposed 2019-2020 main estimates. It is disappointing that the department has not taken any actions to address the standing committee's concern. The standing committee also notes concerns with the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit's capacity to administer language proficiency tests in a timely manner to employees living outside of the capital.

The standing committee strongly supports the government's Summer Student Employment Equity Program, which provides valuable work experience for Nunavut youth. Approximately 3,468 students, approximately 80 percent of whom were Nunavut Inuit, have participated in this program since 2001. However, the standing committee again urges the department to review the program's definition of "Nunavut Student" to ensure that only Nunavut Inuit and long-term residents of the territory are eligible to participate in the program. At present the definition is insufficiently rigorous. This concern was noted during the Legislative Assembly's consideration of the department's proposed 2019-2020 main estimates. It is disappointing that the department has not taken any actions to address the standing committee's concern.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2020-21 Main Estimates and 2020-23 Business Plan of the Department of Human Resources. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. I'll open the floor to general comments. Comments? Seeing none, we're going to do the exercise that we have been doing for the last couple of days where your name will be only entered once on that page, your 10 minutes. Thank you. Human Resources Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$17,510,000. Agreed? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to say "good evening." I hope that this exercise won't take us too late into the night. I'm sure we all want to get home to our families, so I'll try to keep it brief.

My first round of questioning is going to be on the letter we received from the minister last year dated February 28, 2019. The third topic of discussion in that letter was whether or not the GN was moving away from a manual leave and attendance to an electronic system. The response indicated that a new software system is currently being designed that will hopefully remove the need for manual leave and attendance and it's expected to be piloted later in 2019. First I would like to ask for a follow-up on the status of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was that letter signed by me? Okay. Mr. Chairman, I'll have to follow up on that and see where we are on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on, another one of the questions was how many of the departmental positions require an HR professional certificate. The response indicated that many of the positions would require some post-secondary training. However, the GN uses experience as an equivalency certification in those instances. More importantly, the minister indicated that the Department of Human Resources senior management team will be looking at offering a professional development certification program available for all HR employees to increase capacity and building on career development. Next I would like to follow up on that. Over the last 12 months, has the minister and the Department of Human Resources followed through on this HR certification program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have my deputy respond to that action, Mr. Chairman, through you. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Kolola.

Ms. Kolola (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Human Resources workers, some of the positions are for that purpose, to do human resources. Because it was a new department last year, we had just a few staff and now we're adding onto them. We're trying to see which employees need more training in the Department of Human Resources.

My associate has been checking to see within Canada, other jurisdictions, what sort of policies that they have with human resource staff and which would best apply to Nunavut. For 2020-2021 we want to be able to present that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I started off with those two topics is because I think they are extremely important to the human resources function of the entire Government of Nunavut.

I understand that there is... every department has a position that maintains leave and attendance for every individual in the department and currently the manual process is extremely time-consuming and lengthy. I definitely encourage the department to move towards that electronic system.

Secondly, the Canadian Human Resource, CHRP designation, I cannot recall the actual acronym for it, is just as important as the CPA in the Department of Finance. I am curious to find out how many of our HR professionals that are currently working in the HR field, not just in the department, but amongst all GN departments have the certification? That is something that I will be following up at again on a later date.

Moving on. Last year as of April 1, the Department of Human Resources had approximate sixty of the positions filled.

So, my next question is: would the minister be able to provide us with a status update as of today; how many of the 128 positions are currently staffed by indeterminate employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman as we kind of try to tally this up. One moment please.

Thank you for your patience, Mr. Chairman. I could not agree more with Mr. Lightstone in terms of how important it is to have our human resources staff with the CHRP designation and we will strive towards that throughout the different departments that are working in HR.

In terms of how many we have filled so far, we have a current full-time equivalent of employees in those categories of 65. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify of the total 128 positions, there are only 65 fulltime employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to my next question. As was indicated in the current opening comments as well, last year's opening comments, the standing committee was pleased when the Premier announced that the government was currently putting together a working group of all-female deputy ministers and human resource experts as well as IQ coordinators to ensure that it adequately addresses and meets the needs of women who have experienced inappropriate behavior or sexual harassment in the workforce.

The purpose behind this is of course extremely important and to date we haven't heard very much about this working group. I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide us an update on the progress that has been made. How many times has this all-female deputy ministers committee met and what has been discussed and when will it begin to see some traction coming out of it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Can you slow down a bit for the translators? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My deputy would be more than happy to provide those details through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Kolola.

Ms. Kolola (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee that you're talking about, we had started last year and the deputy ministers, all women, were participating and there were also some staff that were involved. It wasn't just the deputy ministers and we were reviewing the harassment policy and anyone that would be harassed in the workplace. They were looking at inappropriate behaviour or harassment in the workplace.

Also, as you know, there are many different types of forms that have to be filled out in the workplace, particularly as to the harassment policy. There was discussion around having a form that's easy to fill out.

One of the things that they wanted to see is to improve and incorporate Inuit and also incorporate *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*. One of the things that we were asked particularly from culture and heritage and through our culture, how we can incorporate Inuit more and Inuit language, as well as Inuit traditional knowledge. There were eight principles that were identified and that could be used under this policy.

As a committee, one of the things that were asked to be included and we could talk about it, but I'll mention two. One of the things that is to talk about feelings and (interpretation ends) to be respectful, mindful of others through an attitude of empathy, (interpretation) and not to belittle, (interpretation ends) discourage all behaviour that is belittling, humiliating, offensive, hurtful, or rude. (interpretation) Those were some of the things that were to be included. Also, some people feel they don't always want to disclose

because they feel like they're put in a position not to be able to do that. Those are the things we looked into.

We have looked how we can explore more how to change the policies and we're looking at that and then probably through the approval process, they will be looked at and approved in the spring. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response, Ms. Kolola, and I look forward to seeing that in the spring.

Moving on to the next item in the opening comments is what was repeated this year in the chair's opening comments how disappointed the committee was when we again urged the department to review the program's definition of "Nunavut Student" to ensure that only Nunavut Inuit and long-term residents of the territory are actually eligible to participate. I would like to ask the minister and the Department of Human Resources if this is an issue that the department is going to take into consideration and if and when we can expect to see some policy development in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that question. The students seeking summer employment is very important for the government and Nunavut students should be prioritized for casual employment. We are working on that and we are now reviewing it. We know there are improvements that can be made and how we can improve on it and how is actually eligible as a Nunavut resident or Nunavut under this criteria. Sometimes those summer students, how we can improve on that, right now we are reviewing that and we're expecting probably before summer, before the students want to apply for summer employment, we will probably have more teeth into that. We're reviewing this at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. The next item I would like to discuss is the issue of the staggering amount of casuals within the Government of Nunavut. It has been brought up for years and I'm disappointed to see the figures in the most recent annual report which indicates that the total number of casuals continues to grow.

I understand that this is prior to the Department of Human Resources creation, but I would like to ask the minister for an update today. How many casual employees are there working for the Government of Nunavut? Last year I recall there was a figure of 25 percent of our workforce was casuals. Has that ratio increased or decreased or remained stagnant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that question. I am very pleased to hear your question on casual employment because it's an important part of our work. December 31, 2018, the casuals, as we call them, there were 948 and 2019, 851 was the number. There was a smaller amount and we want that proceed to keep having lower numbers every year for the casual numbers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm running out of time, so I'll move on to the next topic and it's something that I brought up last year and it's the issue of transfer assignments and how beneficial it is for employees to utilize transfer assignments to gain experience. An issue that I highlighted last year was the fact that only 32 percent of employees on transfer assignments were Inuit employees, a majority were not. Looking at the most recent annual report, that percentage has gone down from 32 to 28 percent. Last year I did flag this for the minister's concern and I would like to ask: over the last 12 months, what progress has been made by the minister and the Department of Human Resources to try to encourage more Inuit to take advantage of transfer assignments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As this is part of our important work in our department and what you're talking about, well, it is our target to encourage more Inuit who could be casual workers and also to be transferred. I regret that I do not have the current numbers for this past year.

From December 31, 2019, there were 138 that had transfer assignments, and we had 48 Inuit so we want to see that number rise, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response, minister, and I hope that when I return to the topic next year that we will see some substance on that front. I would like to move on.

The Department of Education recently informed the Assembly of their new initiative encouraging employees to bring their child to work, to expose them to the GN office environment.

My first question is: has the Department of Human Resources been monitoring this, and is there any plan to implement this GN wide? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not keeping tabs on that but we do support it. Whenever that initiative comes out, we definitely encourage the initiative but we do not keep tabs on the numbers and how many kids follow their parents, but we do support it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to hear that the department does support that type of initiative. Does the Department of Human Resources intend on implementing a similar program within the Department of Human Resources, if not GN-wide? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are many things that we want to do and as we are settling down, this is one of things that we will look into. By bringing children to work, they learn quite quickly about how offices operate and it is obvious that we support it, but in the coming years we will be keeping a close watch on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to another topic. It is the staffing function within the GN. I am glad to see that the average length of time of a competition has reduced somewhat, but one of the challenges facing competitions, which is identified every year, is the fact that the rate of full-time positions continues to grow across the GN and the Department of Human Resources Staffing Division does not. It does not grow at the same rate, and this further complicates this competition process and the length of time.

Last year, I recommended the minister to consider increasing the compliment of recruitment officers within that division to help alleviate that issue and it is unfortunate that we did not see an increase on that front.

My next question is: does the minister recognize, as indicated in the *Public Service Annual Report*, that the number of staffing consultants is a challenge with the turnaround time within the recruitment process? And if so, will we see an increase in future years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When positions are advertised... on how we can improve that, there are many reasons that it took a long time. Jobs are advertised for this period when we know the number of applicants, it takes a while to prepare the people who will decide who gets a position and since the meetings

are not held for quite a while and once they meet the job applicants are not available. There are many things that need to be done.

Then will do improvements on those and their positions are there with the on for one of the reasons it takes a long time. And the other reason unless until all the other reasons are dealt with I don't know if we can speed up, we'll speed up the process on the need to increase the number of employees on how we can hasten the process.

Mr. Chairman, yes we fully understand what she is saying and that's our goal which one is a priority which one is less of a priority. But I know we're heading in that direction. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name on my list, Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have three questions. I don't understand in the business plan on page 47 transferring teachers and health workers do not get transferred and Qulliq Energy Corporation and in Arctic College does this mean that some government employees do not want to get transferred out of Iqaluit when they apply for higher positions.

So, do I understand properly for an example if deputy ministers want to be located in Rankin Inlet they can be in Rankin Inlet or Cambridge Bay. I would like to clarify that first of all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understand the question correctly, we don't deal with transfers. It's a department would it be Education or Qulliq Energy Corporation, it's those departments that control that. We are Human Resources. It's outside of Human Resources' department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman if I understood the question properly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secondly, on September 9, 2019 the government had an announcement had initially urging direct appointments of long-term casuals.

(interpretation ends) How does the department currently define what is a long-term casual then define what is a long term casual employee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a simple question to answer and it's difficult at the same time. Some are four months or eight months they're casuals with a new department the number of casual employees are there for too

many years according your statement. We had an idea would they be direct appointments to their positions. This will be two years or longer for different departments, even though shorter term casual employees can be involved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my final question. How many direct appointments have been approved to date by the cabinet during the current 2019-2020 fiscal year have been for Nunavut Inuit and how many have been for non-Nunavut Inuit? That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm done.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2019-2020 there were 54 direct appointments for Nunavut Inuit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Okay, 54 Nunavut Inuit. The second part was: how many have been for non-Nunavut Inuit like from Labrador, the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): One, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Are you done? Okay. Last name on the list, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm going to return to the letter from last year which is on the topic of how many of the jobs within the department require HR professional designations. In the letter from the minister of last year, a specific question was asked, "How many of these positions require professional certificates?" In the written response, all it says is that "We will be looking at a professional development certification program."

Is the minister able to commit to giving a definitive answer on this? How many of your positions will require a professional certificate, which would include equivalencies, like hiring an engineer? You want somebody who is certified, who is a specialist, and who is an expert in human resources. (interpretation) I would like to know if he can respond through correspondence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): I can respond to you right now, Mr. Chairman. There is no professional designation needed, but it would be an asset if you are professionally designated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to clarify, there are no requirements to have an HR certification within any of the positions in the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. (interpretation ends) There is no requirement at this time; it is an asset to have it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Would the minister be able to provide numbers on how many employees of the department currently have that type of a certification, a nationally recognized HR designation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will be able to provide the numbers that the member asked for once we have them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I appreciate that. (interpretation) Thank you, minister.

(interpretation ends) On this issue of the Inuit Language Incentive Program, the fact that Inuktitut-speaking employees have to get reassessed every five years and French-speaking employees do not, is the minister able to commit to fixing this? Either we should change the provisions for the French employees so that they are also reassessed every five years or I feel we should remove this five-year mandatory reassessment from the Inuktitut-speaking Inuit Language Incentive Program recipients. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes we will review French speakers to see if they do not need to be reassessed, and why Inuktitut-speakers has to be reassessed. We will be reviewing that too.

We...once we come up with a decision, we can provide it to the members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In the letter received from the minister last year, and when we asked this exact question and the response was “The reassessment is to ensure and confirm proficiency levels and eligibility.”

Is this something that happens within the workforce? Say you have an Inuktitut-speaking teacher and they get assessed, does the Department of HR have evidence to show that in the five-year period that some of these Inuktitut speakers are forgetting how to speak, or they are losing their language?

I am just trying to understand why this would have been put in there in the first place? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It can probably be review, but we are reviewing it the other way around. Once they are reassessed Inuktitut, maybe they will start from the bottom? If they keep using Inuktitut inside the school if the language is growing then after they were assessed capable then they will get higher pay. That is the route we want to look at our the proficient Inuktitut not the other way around.

We want it to go higher as we see it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So if I understand correctly, you have somebody who is at level 1, and they could be assessed? Or say they are at 2, they are in the middle and they get reassessed because it is mandatory, and they would either stay at the same level, or they would move up.

So with my understanding there are different tests that are done for each level. So if you are at a level 2, and you are reassessed the level 2 pass that, is it mandatory that you also do a level, whatever the higher level is, level 1 or level 3.

Are all the mandatory assessment going to involve testing at more than level? How would that work?

It is not at all clear to me how this is supposed to work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It does get confusing and we are working with that with Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit.

Let me get the details on those particular questions with them and come up with a better, a detailed response because that is... those are very good questions, and they should be responded to fully. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just wanted to clarify, employees have the ability to self-identify or apply for assessment.

In theory if the mandatory reassessment was removed, there would be nothing stopping employees from moving up the scale and getting reassessed when they fill out the form and moving up to higher level of the Inuit language incentive bonus.

I just wanted to clarify that, if that is correct or not. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Moving on to page 15 your annual report, Public Service Annual Report the average time to fill a position was approximately 141 days and I think this is at the heart of why we keep on running into casuals and have to turn to things like direct appointments because the competition process is cumbersome.

If we look at 140 days, I know it's an average, 140 days starts when the position is advertised, what are the next steps and what are the average timelines within that 140 days when you have somebody hired? How many days does the advertisement have to be out? How many days does the interview process take, checking references? I'm trying to understand what's inside of the 140 number and I realize it's an average, so it may be difficult to answer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have my assistant deputy minister respond to that through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. McMichael.

Mr. McMichael: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. It's hard to say in terms of what takes the most length of time. We're reviewing the process now in terms of tracking the cycle time in terms of hire to determine exactly that. Sometimes it could be where the panel members are not in the territory; they're on leave. Sometimes it takes extra time to get translations done. There's a multitude of challenges in terms of the process.

What we are doing is tracking cycle time to see what is taking the length of time and how we can make improvements. We're also trying to clean up process, so streamlining where we can in terms of approvals or steps that are taken. We're also working with departments, trying to be proactive in terms of understanding what some of their staffing needs are so that we can be prepared when competitions come forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have heard that mentioned a few times. There are issues with the interview panels. Let's say a job competition goes out and then you get a whole bunch of applicants and then you want to move to interviews, but then the panel members are on leave. In that case, if one of the panel members is on leave, what happens to the job competition? Is it just on hold until all the panel members come back and are off of holidays or would you appoint somebody else onto the panel? I'm just trying to understand why it takes so long to run a competition. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, normally it would be if the panel is not there, they would put it on hold until the panel member is available, but on occasion they do replace the panel member with somebody else. I think what's important here is we are seeing these in the system where we have to delay hiring and right now our department is working to shorten that by getting away from having put out job ads knowing that panel members will not be available. We are looking at putting out job ads where the panel members ensure that they will be present at the closing or when they're going to do interviews.

Our department is working now to ensure that the length of time between a job advertisement and hiring an individual is shortened by doing things like that, by doing things like ensuring beforehand that all the panel members will be here when the interview time happens. We're looking at things also in the same tone of the appeal process. Now that we have Internet, this month anyway, and we have cellphones and availability of people instantly, do we need to have a three-week or two-week appeal process? Could we shorten that?

We are looking at all these to try to ensure that we are hiring people in a timelier manner, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The appeal process is mentioned in here on pages 15 and 16 and it's tied to, my understanding, union kind of conditions around hiring. When we look at the two-week period of 14 business days, that's what it says in your report, up to 14 business days, almost three weeks...anyway, maybe I'm confused. What has to be done to reduce that appeal time? I mean, you keep the right to appeal in place, but shortening it down so that our government can get more people hired and the HR piece can run better. What has to happen to reduce that appeal time? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has to be discussion with the union, take a look at our regulations and make amendments to them, and have it go through the cabinet, not necessarily in that order, but those are the steps that have to be taken in order to change that setting, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think the reason I'm asking about the competition process and everything along these lines is I feel that's the best way to hire employees. Direct appointments are not the best way to staff your workforce. We should be taking the best, the cream of the crop and running it through a competitive process.

It's encouraging to see here on page 16 of your report, it says, "The GN is committed to staffing positions through the competitive process," and it outlines and it says, "Direct appointments are an appropriate method to staff hard-to-fill positions when the regular recruitment process has failed." When I read that, it implies that you have run a competition, it has not worked, and then you would look at a direct appointment. I have to try to square this with the direction that was given by the cabinet, which was to increase direct appointments. On one hand, the GN is committed to the competitive process; on the other hand, you have made decisions to increase direct appointments.

It mentions here that the direct appointment documentation process includes the use of a checklist, recordkeeping, and carefully screening proposed appointees. At any point in a direct appointment process, is there screening done for conflict of interest? The reason I ask this is that some casual employees become casual employees as a result of I'll call it inside information or opportunities that come through possible conflicts of interest. Is that something that is part of your checklist or the process when it comes to direct appointment? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I couldn't agree with my colleague more. Casual to full-time direct appointment is definitely not the way the government should be hiring the public service. I think the job opportunities are out there and people who would like to work for the government should be given a fair chance to apply for a job through that. I agree with you and that's where we are headed and we want to be.

In terms of the casual hire and making sure that there is no nepotism or conflict that way, we keep our ear to the ground on that. I know, being a minister responsible for two departments, if and when there is a casual employee who may be or is on the list for direct appointment, it goes through the checklist to ensure that it's not my sibling or my whoever that gets that job. I'm just saying me, but to make sure that it's not that they're being hired that way, Mr. Chairman.

The biggest ears we have out there is the general public and I assure you we get notified if there is any inkling of that and I encourage it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm glad to hear the minister shares my concerns about this. When I put in a written question to the department on conflict of interest and direct appointments, the response is very informative. So, thank you for the response. It helped me to understand the process.

When conflict of interest is declared for whatever reason there is different ways to deal with it. One of the ways is it ends up with the deputy minister's desk within each department.

So for the government as a whole is there any tracking of how many times conflict of interest is being declared. I mean ideally you want to see steady numbers because you want people to be self-declaring when there is a conflict on human resource issues. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there is a record kept of people declaring, I believe in the response to my colleague. At that point, there had been approximately 10 employees who declared perceived conflict of interest. So there is tracking, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: The last name on my list Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is in your opening comments. (interpretation ends) You stated for 2020-2021 service contracts at \$4,600,000 and purchased services at \$2,200,086.

I am curious to know like how many service contracts, can you give some examples as to how many service contracts the department has? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. I would like to defer this question to my deputy through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Kolola

Ms. Kolola (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we look at D-4 under Service Contracts for example Employee and Family Assistance Program and I will read in English.

(interpretation ends) The contract also comes out of here for the Ethics Officer, some mediation services, we also provide some development around job evaluation practices or workplace assessment and investigation. Some of the contracts also include consultations like the professional recruitment services or human resource advisory services. Those are just some of the examples. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The other one is the purchaser which would include...is that separate from what you just outlined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is separate. It is for moving and storage services for new GN employees, job ad placements, and then also things like the venue for doing the long-term service awards and using a venue for NEU collective bargaining and things like that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The reason I asked is I was curious to know about the other programs that are run through HR like the Hivuliqtiksatsat policy and *asingit*, management, *taikkua* programs. I know they seem to be growing and it's really good to see that other programs are coming up. I guess I'm just curious to know if there are any other programs. I'm not sure how many there are. Can you maybe clarify that and if the department is planning to come up with more programs to offer training programs like those? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Yes, it's great to see programs like Sivuliqtiksat that we run and the other programs that can provide on-the-job training where the staff eventually gets promoted. We have other ideas as well to initiate other programs so that Inuit can progress in their workplace and other Inuit to go into government workplaces. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to check into this priority in 2019-2020 that sounds like has been worked on before, (interpretation ends) "Work in partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Canada to enable the use of Nunavut implementation funds to increase and enhance Inuit employment through education and training..." (interpretation) What has happened since then? How has it grown? What other things have you initiated since then? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe you can allow my deputy minister to respond, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Kolola.

Ms. Kolola (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me check into this.

What the member just mentioned, five have been started. The money that we got from the federal government under the settlement agreement, there are five of them being used right now on what the member just mentioned. The Inuit employment committee tells us what we should be initiating as a government and human resources department. They were interviewed.

After that two more started. The health department wanted to start that too to have an on-the-job training program. The diploma program is from that. The justice department wants to train ten people to go to Algonquin College, to be trained in Algonquin College and the committee has started meeting to see how else we can use that money that is supposed to be used for Inuit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for explaining that clearly.

I would like to move on to another question. On page 41, in your (interpretation ends) business plan, priorities 2020-2021, in partnership, in the third bullet, in partnership with Department of Culture and Heritage continue to review and revise the HR Manual

directives and policies to ensure alignment with Inuit societal values. How is this being done? How is it being monitored? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work with different groups because we want this to progress well in the department.

All the things that the HR is working on, we have to keep updating them and improving them and following what Inuit traditional ways of doing things.

Listening to our staff working on this and how we need... how we have to encourage Inuit to use their traditional ways of doing things. We talk to people walking on the road. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The reason I am asking that is when we are talking about, and I say everywhere and every department where they outline and have these... the eight ISV, the Inuit societal values that are to be used in the workplace.

It has been mentioned before too that some of the HR issues could be, if they are... let's say someone was complaining about bullying and it was further investigated that some of the investigation they mean that it was not bullying, but... and if people could take it differently.

Like say for example if let's say in ISV and employee was not *tunnnganaq* and it is in the Inuit societal values (interpretation) when welcoming... if the person was not welcoming and welcoming is a part of the accepted ways and (interpretation ends) underlying issues like that in terms of employees that may not be very friendly in their jobs.

Like some of... I am not saying that... it has been brought forward too that (interpretation) some of them are not welcoming. (interpretation ends) How does HR monitor like, issues like that.

How do you make it an under laying thing where you have to be friendly and if you are not, like how does the department practice or use that as a, I do not know, separating that from bullying? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our departmental staff, when it comes to dealing with these, they go through, as we mentioned before, we do have spending money and we do training of our departmental staff and other employees in terms of dealing with professional workplace conduct.

There is a difference between being told to do your job and being bullied. If someone tells you to go to work at 1 o'clock, instead of going to play Nevada, that is not bullied, that is being told to do your job.

There is a difference between being told to do your job and being bullied. If someone tells you to go to work at one o'clock instead of going to play Nevada, that's not being bullied; that's being told to do your job. There is a line there. There is a difference there. Someone being stern to somebody, yes, of course, could sound to not be friendly and stuff, but our staff are trained and training to listen to both sides of the story, hear both concerns, and go in and settle the matter this way.

There are many different values that I think are going through that process, Mr. Chairman. We work through our new Employee Wellness Division to work on this and other issues. This is specifically the area where we are putting effort into understanding the difference between those two and many other issues, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It's hard to kind of get a definition I guess or how to move forward to bring forward issues like that, especially when it comes down to ensuring people really do value the practices that the government pushes for.

(interpretation) To move on to something else... (interpretation ends) "Work collaboratively with the Department of Finance and the Nunavut Housing Corporation to ensure implementation of enhancements to the staff housing program and other housing related employee benefits." I'm not getting into the benefits and I don't want to get into capital, but how does the department determine that there needs to be more housing available in a community that's decentralized? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Ms. Kolola.

Ms. Kolola (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. HR was created this year and staff housing allocation as to which department will get the houses, there's an allocation committee that sits and we could only do that this fall because we had capacity issues. My assistant is the vice-chairman and we work with the housing corporation. They had already decided last year before the Department of Human Resources was created as to who would get the staff houses.

We wanted to plan for the future for government staff in the communities. We want to review how many there are and how many are filled and how many are vacant, these are

homes, and we would look at the regions and see which ones we could actually have people move in and see which ones have been vacant for a long time. I know it's obvious that we have heard that the smaller communities have no housing available, even for staff housing. We want to say by this summer, working with the Nunavut Housing Corporation... . We have seen that positions for whichever community or department that they need to provide staff houses for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do HR and the housing corporation and is that because the...you are not informed between each other? You had just said that you will want to look it and review it more.

When there is a position that is open, and when it is not filled it is like the housing...the staff housing that was there seem to be forgotten about and never filled in by staff because it was not filled in.

It is not hail by housing, it is no hailed by HR and so it does not seem to fall under any department. I just want more clarification on what are you going to review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is because just this past fall, we actually just became a department and now that there is a department and the department is able to work with other departments to look what positions are open, and how and who and how many, or housing could be filled or allocated.

There used to be a different policy for staff housing and staff housing used to be set aside and set aside for a community because it would be identified to a position.

When a position you want to open a PY and open it up and then it was held by the department other than...so these are the kinds of issues that were in the past and it is not that way now.

The associate deputy ministers help in identifying these kinds of issues that needs attention and decisions are made as to what communities will have a position and which position will require housing and who will get the housing.

So there is working being done on these types of issues. We know that there needs to be improvements and we are looking for ways to improve our operations. We do not want to see an empty unit just sitting there when we know that there is a crunch in housing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that. That there is being some work to deliver a more effective and we know that sometimes Family Services staff require housing and a long-term employees that have been unable to get housing, for example.

Sometimes they try to wait a long time to get into government staff housing. They sometimes as a smaller community we tend to look at vacant units. So that is good to hear. That there will more effective approach to look at and review underway to look for ways to improve in our communities. I have no more questions, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on Human Resource Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted, \$17,510,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: B-5. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. Put your hands up. All those opposed. We will go 'til 7:30.

>>*Laughter*

Okay, let's try this again.

>>*Laughter*

Put your hands up. All those in favour, eight. All those opposed, eight.

>>*Laughter*

I'll vote in favour of the motion.

>>*Laughter*

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials. I will now rise to report progress.

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Akoak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

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

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? No one wants to be the seconder? Ms. Towtongie. The motion is in order. (interpretation ends) To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

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

(interpretation) Thank you. Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for March 10:

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

- Bill 43

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 39
- Bill 40
- Bill 41
- Bill 42
- Tabled Document 65 – 5(2)

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker: In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 62 – 5(2), this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 10, at 9:00 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 19:02*

