



## 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**  
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut  
Thursday, March 12, 2020**

**Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasi, 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 10:02*

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Good morning. Let us pray.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good morning. Well, it has been morning for a while now. Nunavummiut, please feel welcome, as well as members. I'm sure that we will proceed smoothly today.

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

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 424 – 5(2): Minister Absent from the House**

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that the Hon. Joe Savikataaq will be absent from the House today to attend the First Ministers' Meeting in Ottawa, Ontario. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 425 – 5(2): Mine Training**

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): I say "good morning" to you, especially the residents of Quttiktuq.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to provide to the House an update on my department's work on territorial mine training initiatives. Economic Development and Transportation continues to collaborate with the Department of Family Services and

Nunavut Arctic College to draft the government's first territory-wide mine training strategy.

The recently approved, as of last night, 2020-21 budget included \$250,000 in one-time funding for my department to complete the strategy. Once complete, this strategy will provide vital guidance to all Government of Nunavut departments implicated in mine training and help focus and coordinate efforts to ensure that the training needs of industry and Nunavummiut are being met.

>> *Applause*

Increasing opportunities for mine training is the most effective way to ensure that the benefits of mining accrue to Nunavummiut and communities. It is imperative that Nunavummiut are prepared to take advantage of careers in the mining sector, and the completion of the Nunavut Mine Training Strategy remains a priority area for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Our government continues to support all sectors of our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

### **Minister's Statement 426 – 5(2): 2020-21 Consolidated Budget**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my recent Budget Address I provided an overview of the 2020-21 main estimates, including some of the key figures like our expected revenues and deficit. This year we chose to highlight these numbers on an accrual basis rather than the simpler cash basis we referenced in previous addresses.

Accrual budgeting provides a more complete picture of our government's expectations and fiscal health because it considers longer term impacts like wear and tear of capital. Mr. Speaker, drawing attention to the accrual figures was a good step forward for fiscal transparency.

I am pleased to notify members that we are making yet another step forward this year. Specifically the Department of Finance has prepared for the first time a consolidated budget for the year ahead.

Mr. Speaker and members, a consolidated budget pulls together information from all organizations within our government reporting entity, not just the core departments. Other organizations include the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Nunavut Arctic College, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation, and the Nunavut Development Corporation. By including each of these organization's budgets for 2020-21 and by presenting them together and on the same basis, a consolidated

budget provides a more complete picture of our government's expected situation over the coming year.

Further, a consolidated budget presents information on the same basis as do the audited financial statements we prepare at year-end. This will make it easier to compare our year-end results to our initial estimates, which is important for accountability.

Mr. Speaker and members, consolidating budgets is a more complicated exercise than it might seem. We are not just stapling different budget documents together. Instead it requires that each of our organizations prepare budgets that comply with public sector accounting standards. We then needed to adjust these individual budgets to properly account for related transactions, like when the PPD sells fuel to the Qulliq Energy Corporation to generate electricity that the Qulliq Energy Corporation then sells back to the Government of Nunavut.

For members' clarity, we are not changing anything about our expectations for 2020-21, and we are not changing anything to do with the appropriations our Assembly has been discussing. Instead we are showing existing information in a different way.

Mr. Speaker and members, consolidating our budget is not only another good step forward for fiscal transparency, but it represents an increasing depth of financial capacity across our organizations. When considered alongside our choice to use accrual figures in the Budget Address and alongside the financial statement discussion and analysis we prepared for our 2018-19 Public Accounts, another first for our government, the 2020-21 consolidated budget demonstrates our continued growth and financial sophistication.

Finally, Mr. Speaker and members, I should note that while we have prepared this as a standalone document for this first year, we intend to incorporate consolidation into future budget documents starting with next year's 2021-22 main estimates process.

For those interested, the 2020-21 consolidated budget document is available on the Department of Finance's website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

**Minister's Statement 427 – 5(2): Sakku School Renovation and Expansion  
Consultations**

**Hon. David Joanasié** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues and Nunavummiut, especially the residents of South Baffin.

Mr. Speaker, schools are the heart of many communities in Nunavut. As communities continue to grow, local facilities such as schools must adapt to meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, to meet Coral Harbour's growing needs, the Department of Education has been seeking feedback from residents and stakeholders about what they would like to see for Sakku School's upcoming renovation and expansion.

Mr. Speaker, from January 20 to 24 the school design team, consisting of staff from Accutech Engineering Inc., the Department of Education, and the Department of Community and Government Services, conducted the latest round of consultations with the goal of visualizing the future needs of the school and community.

The design team met the local district education authority, the hamlet council, students, school staff, elders, parents, and Nunavut Arctic College to seek input on what types of classrooms the community would like for their students, such as a sewing room, a carpentry workshop, or music room.

Mr. Speaker, the renovation and expansion of Sakku School means the community will be able to offer more services and activities for students and the Coral Harbour community. New classrooms will support future growth and more cultural programming and sport event hosting.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Sakku School will become a vibrant place for learning, playing, and gathering together, meeting the needs of Coral Harbour and its residents for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

### **Minister's Statement 428 – 5(2): Minimum Wage Increase**

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good morning, Cambridge Bay, Nunavummiut, and colleagues in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I pleased to rise today in the House to inform my colleagues of the increase to Nunavut's minimum wage. As my you may recall, in the fall of 2019 I stood before this House and informed the members that the Department of Justice would be reviewing the minimum wage in our territory and that I would report back during this session with the results of that work.

Between September and October 2019 officials in the Department of Justice conducted surveys with businesses in Nunavut, community members, and interested Nunavummiut. They also reviewed information regarding the cost of living in our territory, social

supports available, and the minimum wage levels across the country. The information gathered was used to determine the appropriate minimum wage for our territory.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that as of April 1, 2020, the minimum wage in Nunavut will increase from \$13 per hour to \$16 per hour. This represents a substantial increase from the existing minimum wage and will help support Nunavummiut and their families.

>> *Applause*

With this increase, Nunavut will have the highest minimum wage in the country, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Over the coming weeks the Department of Justice will conduct an information campaign to ensure all businesses and employees are aware of this change to the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut understands the high cost of living in the territory, and we are working to address gaps where we can. We want Nunavummiut to succeed and we are actively working to support a positive future for our people and communities.

My colleagues and I are proud to have been able to help increase the minimum wage and look forward to it becoming official on April 1. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Let's proceed. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Member Lightstone.

### **Item 3: Members' Statements**

#### **Member's Statement 645 – 5(2): In Support of the LGBTQ Community**

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge the importance of inclusivity in this House and in our communities. As elected Members of this Assembly, we have many privileges, including free speech, which is an integral aspect of democracy, and I wholeheartedly respect that. Another privilege and responsibility we have is to give a public voice to issues that concern our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the world is changing, including Nunavut. What may have been acceptable in the past may not be acceptable today. On a number of occasions I have made a commitment, including last week, to support a violence-free Nunavut, calling to end violence in all of its forms. I committed to speak for those who could not speak for themselves and to stand up for every Nunavummiuq. I also committed to doing so in this Assembly, in public as well as in private, and I will do so.

Sadly, to this day in the year 2020, members of the LGBTQ+ community, including Inuit, continue to face discrimination. I have received numerous correspondences from constituents over the last week regarding some controversial statements about procreation, which may have been hurtful and alienating to Nunavummiut. The term procreation has historically been used to justify one group's intolerance towards another group. It's my job as an MLA to represent my constituents and I would not be representing them properly if I did not stand up for the LGBTQ+ community when faced with intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, we need to accept everyone's individuality and celebrate it. It's with great pride today that I wear this rainbow pin in support. I will continue to make my views on this very clear, and I look forward to standing up in this House and defending the human rights of all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Member Towtongie.

### **Member's Statement 646 – 5(2): Income Assistance Reform**

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, I have always spoken about the prevailing authority that exists in the Inuit mind. When professionals came from the south, our elders were silenced of their world view. I will not be intimidated for my views or my opinions as an elected member, but that's not my comment. I am speaking on the income assistance reform.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this sitting I raised concerns regarding the income assistance policy, which considers winnings from such activities as bingos and lotteries as income and deducts any amounts over \$40 from income assistance benefits. (interpretation) I am very pleased that the minister has agreed to review this policy and hopefully she will bring forward amendments to the regulations.

It has been brought to my attention that it is not only bingo and lottery winnings which may suddenly put a large and welcomed sum of money into the pocket of income assistance clients. When they suddenly get this money, it is deducted again when they go to collect their benefits.

Now we are coming up to the season where some individuals may be receiving an income tax return. A person who had a seasonal or a temporary job could have earned a little bit of money for a period of time and when that work is no longer available, they may need income assistance to get by. However, if they paid taxes on their previous earnings, they may be eligible for a refund.

However, even if they put their income tax to good use, and I'm thinking of people who get income tax returns who try to buy big items when they get income tax returns for example... .

(interpretation ends) I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. It is not that long. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleagues. I have forgotten that today is our last day. It's good. I say "good day" to the people of Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet.

I want to make a proper statement, but when they get their income tax returns, they try to buy things like tables and household items. If they are hunters, they buy skidoos with it. When that happens, they are not able to get income assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many individuals who sometimes choose not to eat so that their children have enough to eat. Some people don't eat. They are living in poverty and they want their children to eat, and the child tax credit is being considered as income. (interpretation ends) Child tax benefits are not considered as income, but child support payments are.

Mr. Speaker, I know the minister strongly supports this and I urge the Minister of Family Services to review all of the *Income Assistance Regulations*, which she will, and to make changes at the earliest opportunity to ensure that our residents can keep more of their unearned income and use it to improve their lives and not have their income assistance benefits reduced as a consequence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Member Keyootak.

### **Member's Statement 647 – 5(2): Dog Slaughter**

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good morning" to the Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq and to those who are listening and watching our proceedings, as well as to my colleagues here.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I rise today to express my appreciation. This session has been a long one, but it is coming to an end. We thank our precious loved ones we have left behind. They are our support, our spouses, and are able to be quite patient. We have

reason to be thankful because they support us as our family members and we feel fortunate for that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to once again raise an issue I have previously spoken about. We all know that across Nunavut the dog slaughter is being spoken about again and I'm concerned about this in some way. Don't muddle the situation. There are elders who expected something to come back to them from the dog slaughter. Don't be confused about the whole issue and don't have false expectations. It is still being worked on and the people who are working on it are not being very open about it. People have been expecting something for a very long time, so the people who are responsible for that should continue to do the work more comprehensively here in Nunavut.

It should be better communicated and it should not create confusion. There is confusion about the dog slaughter right now and it needs to be addressed. I want the dog slaughter to be dealt with properly in Nunavut. Don't just confuse Inuit and don't leave them with false expectations. The work on this has to be done more diligently and Inuit who lost their dogs need to be kept informed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Main.

#### **Member's Statement 648 – 5(2): COVID-19 in Nunavut**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, people of Whale Cove and Arviat. I am sometimes asked by my constituents, "Where is our MLA?" Here I am. I am still in Iqaluit.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, we have been here for a month and this is our last day. I will soon be visible in Arviat and Whale Cove again.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the coronavirus. I am personally very concerned about it now. In thinking about the people of Nunavut, we know there are elders and government staff, people on income support, and people who live in overcrowded houses.

We expect that this new virus called COVID-19 will probably arrive in Nunavut. I am not trying to scare anyone or panic anyone in Nunavut, but I would like people to be very aware. When we catch a cold, we have to take good care of ourselves and if we catch a cold, be careful how you cough and don't go visiting other people, especially the elders, people who are 50 or 60 years of age or older.

In English it's stated, (interpretation ends) social distancing, (interpretation) which is don't go visiting around too much when there's a cold happening. It is not our culture as

Nunavummiut to not visit other people. We're always inviting people and we're always getting invited to go eat. It is not our culture at all to not visit. However, this virus is very serious. I would like my constituents to be careful and be aware of this.

I will have questions to the department of Health as to what their plans are for the coronavirus, the COVID-19 virus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Member Qirngnuq.

### **Member's Statement 649 – 5(2): Appreciation of Winter Sitting**

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good morning" to my fellow residents of Netsilik.

Mr. Speaker, I won't be asking questions about this. I rise today to express my appreciation. I have three things to be thankful for and I rise about one of them today. I rise today to express my gratitude to our staff here in the Legislative Assembly. They support us a lot as MLAs and when we come here, they help us and I'm grateful to them.

Also, I would like to say "thank you" to our interpreters behind the glass over there. I thank them too because they help the people of Nunavut understand. If the person is speaking English or Inuktitut, they help people understand.

Also, I would like to say "thank you" to my colleagues here and our government. We all work together when we come to Iqaluit, even though we go through difficult times and we spend a long time here. Mr. Speaker, that's why I rose today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Member Akeeagok.

### **Member's Statement 650 – 5(2): Pangagujjiniq 2020**

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, this year Pangagujjiniq will be starting on April 14 in Arctic Bay. They will start with the dogsledding competition to Igloolik. I welcome anybody who wants to go to Arctic Bay and watch or if you have a dog team, go and join the competition. It's a very popular race to be a part of.

This is the 21st year of the race and I'm very happy that it's going to be happening up there again. I welcome all Nunavummiut to come to Arctic Bay or to Igloolik because there will be a hockey tournament happening in Igloolik, where people from the High Arctic... . Visit either community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Aivilik, Member Netser.

**Member's Statement 651 – 5(2): Appreciation of Winter Sitting**

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to you all. I send my regards to the people of Coral Harbour and Naujaat. We will be there soon.

I want to rise on our last day to say “thank you” to everyone here. We all worked hard, and though we didn't always agree, we are bigger than our disagreements and we are here to represent the people of Nunavut.

You are all going to go home, so have a good time at home. It is a good time to go fishing for the women and men, as well as for those of us who not such great hunters, right Paulosie? We will be fishing, Mr. Keyootak.

The people I play pool with in Coral Harbor, Bobby Saviakjuk, Kataluk, and my *arnaqatik* and my in-law, Tommy Paliak, I will probably see you on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for taking care of us here. Have a safe trip home and I wish everyone a good and healthy spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Member Sheutiapik.

**Member's Statement 652 – 5(2): Appreciation of Winter Sitting**

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very thankful you have all been here in the city and that we are always able to work together. You are all going to be going back to your communities, so have a good flight. I always remember each of you even when you are not here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Member Kusugak.

**Member's Statement 653 – 5(2): Avoiding COVID-19**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, I say “good morning” to you and the people of Rankin Inlet. I am quite thankful that we are going to be able to go home now.

In the days to come, we will be at home. I'll be there probably in the next few weeks. I would like to say though that the people of Iqaluit are all very welcoming.

>>*Applause*

It doesn't matter where you see them, be it at restaurants or at the stores; they always say "Are you being treated fairly? Please feel like you are welcomed." They are always concerned about your welfare.

In Rankin Inlet, hockey is an event that continues to happen. I want to remind the people of Rankin Inlet to ensure they always wash their hands in light of the illness my colleague talked about. Every time you go inside, always make sure you wash your hands. It doesn't matter which building you are entering, and always be aware. Although we may not be familiar with this as a daily habit, it is a pandemic, so let's try to be aware. It is not about not wanting to shake hands and not letting people feel welcome, but it is something new to consider because we know that it is easily transmittable. Let's just be cautious and be aware. Let's have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Member Kaernerck.

### **Member's Statement 654 – 5(2): Appreciation of Winter Sitting**

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good morning" to the people Amittuq and my colleagues. Firstly, I also want to say a big "thank you" to our interpreters. Even though I'm speaking in Inuktitut, you can always translate my words to English. Our language is a big part of our culture. I can say that it was a difficult month as we neared the end.

I am one of the new people here, and I thought it was Wednesday, but it is at the end of our week already. I want to say "thank you" to our interpreters because it is challenging here, and you have to think about the right words, especially when we want to convey the concerns of our constituents. To my spouse, I want to say I'm thinking about you. I will pray for you and I hope that you are okay. I also want to give thanks to my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names. Let us continue. Item 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Written Questions. (interpretation) Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Member Keyootak.

### **Item 6: Oral Questions**

**Question 908 – 5(2): Qikiqtarjuaq Health Centre Replacement**

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River and my condolences to my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health. As the minister is aware, the community of Qikiqtarjuaq is in need of a new health centre. It's my understanding that the community is next on the department's list for a new facility. I have been a strong advocate for this project. I understand that it is currently in the planning phase.

Can the minister confirm if his department will be requesting funding for Qikiqtarjuaq's new community health centre in the upcoming 2021-22 capital estimates, which the Legislative Assembly will be considering later this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. Yes, that is the plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, minister. I also thank you for the response. I think the minister will recall that the Member for Gjoa Haven has raised the issue of needing adequate morgue facilities in our communities, on a number of occasions. Can the minister confirm if the design of Qikiqtarjuaq's new community health centre will also include a proper morgue facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we do the consultation, that topic with the community would have the opportunity to raise that as a concern. Typically, we don't have morgue services in our health centres. It is usually done in conjunction with the hamlet, but that is something during the planning process the community is free to bring up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important that the government consult with communities when it is building important new facilities. Can the minister indicate how his department has been consulting with the community on such matters as the design and location of the new health centre, and where it's going to be located? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the capital planning process, those consultations would occur once there's a budget associated with the project.

I just want to take this opportunity, if the Speaker will allow, when we do these community consultations, I can't emphasize enough on how important it is for members of the community to come forward and bring forward their ideas, concerns, and suggestions to any infrastructure project that we're developing in a community. It's very important to get that feedback before during the planning process instead of criticizing it after. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Whale Cove, Member Towtongie. I'm sorry. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Member Qirngnuq.

### **Question 909 – 5(2): Youth with Disabilities**

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Family Services.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I raised the issue back in November, but at the time the responses focused on funding programs for individuals with disabilities, which was not the focus of my questions, so I will ask again.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who are developmentally delayed, which is a specific kind of disability. These individuals attended school and some of them have now finished school, but they have nowhere to go and nothing to do.

Can the minister elaborate on what kinds of programs or activities are available for these young people who might have a developmental delay but still have lots of energy and a willingness to be active? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. I can't respond in full, but I can say that there hasn't been enough done for people with disabilities, especially what you identified. We have made an effort to include in our priorities that we could look at activities outside the schools. It's not just our department. We also have to work with the recreation departments in the communities, so we will work together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) There are lots of parents who are unemployed who may care for these young people with disabilities. It is very difficult for these families to support themselves, especially with

the added demands for looking after a child with a disability. Can the minister clarify what programs are in place to provide some respite for families who have a disabled child or youth? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) Last year, poverty reduction, that was part of the theme in trying to figure out respite places in each community. I have not seen the outcome of it yet. I do believe that communities are still trying to take stock of what kind of respite is available in each community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qirngnuq.

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for clarifying what I asked about. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it can be very difficult for family, especially if there are a large number of people in the household, to provide good care for a child's extra needs. Income assistance does not last very long in supporting a family, especially when there are additional demands on their resources.

Will the minister commit to tabling information in this House describing what programs, activities, and supports are available to families of children or young adults with disabilities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that we will have to work together on that. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, just a reminder that there is the society, Makiqatigiitsiarniq society, that obviously we work with and provide funding through the Rick Hanson Foundation. I do believe they're really involved in the communities.

I think we need to do a better job within our departments and the communities and our social workers. I can say that I will certainly direct my department to find out which communities have people with disabilities. How can we better coordinate? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Main.

#### **Question 910 – 5(2): Medical Certificate Waiver**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to direct my question to the Minister of Human Resources.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask some questions to the minister regarding infection control and measures in place to protect the Government of Nunavut workers with the COVID-19 virus, preventative measures because, as I do understand, there are no confirmed cases in Nunavut as of this moment.

Mr. Speaker, my first question is the government just sent out an email or the department did regarding a temporary waiver for medical certificates, and I wonder if the minister could explain the temporary waiver on medical certificates for government employees. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concerns and questions regarding this matter, Mr. Speaker. The particular waiver my colleague is asking about is in direct line with just a flu virus, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. The announcement or the message that went around to government employees says, "Until May 31, 2020, employees are not required to produce medical certificates for sick leave in excess of three consecutive work days or nine non-consecutive work days in the fiscal year, as outlined in the collective agreement." I appreciate this measure from the department.

I think it's important for government employees and everybody, if you feel sick, then you should have the ability to stay home, protect your co-workers, protect your co-workers' families, and stay home and don't go into work. I wonder if the minister could explain the underlying rationale for why the government or the department would be encouraging employees to not come into work if you're sick. I hope that's a clear question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's the whole reason behind this stay at home and don't need to get a sick note because if you're sick and you go get a sick note, well, you're just moving around with your flu and it just creates a compounding thing. The person who has to sign your sick leave then has to talk to you while you are sick, and in that process you will be running into family and friends, or people in the health centre. So the idea behind that is if you have the flu, stay at home and deal with your flu at home. Once you are over your flu, then you can get your sick form or what have you.

I would just like to add, because I appreciate my colleague only has a few questions, in terms of the COVID issue, our department is working through the human resources committee to ensure that public notices will come out regarding this COVID. Our

department right now is looking to deal with if it comes to a day where there is somebody with the virus in Nunavut, to self-quarantine.

During that process, if the individual or individuals have to stay home for two or three weeks, or what have you, they would not have their leave affected or end up having to be leave without pay because they don't have any and stuff. Our department is looking at waiving that in terms of having to stay at home so it doesn't spread. We are working through that and we are also having daily meetings at 4:00 to give all the departments an update and to keep the communication flowing.

Whatever we do at the end of the day, we will communicate with the employees, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I think it is very important that we share information on this and talk about this in a very rational well thought out way, like the minister just explained.

My last question is regarding Government of Nunavut workers who deal with a high volume of people in the public, for example, income assistance workers or maybe other positions where you have a lot of people coming and going from your place of work. I do realize there are precautions in place for health care staff, but for the other Government of Nunavut staff who deal with a lot of people, has there been any work done to plan, or to put in measures in place specifically for those Government of Nunavut employees? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate this line of questioning because people need to know and the first priority is not to panic.

As I stated earlier, the Human Resources department and all of the deputy ministers of all the departments have a daily briefing to keep each other updated, and through that process each department is mandated to take preventative matters in each department, and each department will take a look at how they can ensure that their staff who are on the frontlines have preventative matters provided to them. So each job site is different and each job site is taking a look at how they can keep the thing from spreading. They are working very hard on that and we appreciate the public's patience on this.

I would just like to reassure everybody that if there are some things coming in terms of what information the staff need to know, we will communicate it through the pipelines and make public statements if we need to, to make sure that people are informed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 911 – 5(2): Human Rights Act Submissions**

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

In my member's statement I spoke of the importance of inclusivity and human rights. The *Nunavut Human Rights Act* was passed into law by the First Assembly in 2003. The Act protects equality rights of Nunavummiut and safeguards an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life, free from discrimination and harassment. The Act created the Human Rights Tribunal as a place where Nunavummiut can go if they feel they have been discriminated against or harassed by a person, business, agency, or government.

The *Nunavut Human Rights Act* was later amended by the Fourth Assembly in 2016 to include explicit protection against discrimination or harassment based on gender identity, and gender expression.

I would like to ask the minister: since the Act was amended in 2016, have there been any claims of discrimination or harassment that have been filed regarding sex or sexual orientation, and if so, how many? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) *Koana*, Mr. Lightstone for your question. Just to give clarity regarding the *Human Rights Act*, the Act came into force in 2004 and the purpose of the Act, as the member stated, was to ensure that individuals in Nunavut are free from discrimination.

Mr. Lightstone is correct that in 2016 it was amended to include gender identity and expression. For the public information, the Act also prohibits discrimination on the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origins, citizenship, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, pregnancy, lawful source of income, and a criminal conviction for which a person was pardoned.

Between 2016 and 2019 the Human Rights Tribunal received 28 complaints. Due to ransomware we have not yet had the numbers for up to this date.

The Human Rights Tribunal has not received any complaints related to gender identity since it was added as a prohibited ground in 2016. However, the Human Rights Tribunal received one gender identity-based complaint back in 2012, which was resolved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lightstone:** *Koana*, minister. I appreciate all the additional information regarding the different forms of discrimination and harassment. I do believe that all are equally important.

For my next question, I would like to ask: since the amendments to the Act in 2016, and more importantly, what is currently being done to increase awareness of peoples' rights against discrimination and harassment based on gender identity and gender expression? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) *Koana*, Mr. Lightstone. As I stated earlier, we have received one complaint since 2012 and since the Act was amended in 2016, there have been no complaints.

Regarding how the Human Rights Tribunal advertises themselves, the Human Rights Tribunal is a tribunal, and does not have the same commission component as found in other jurisdictions. It conducts some public awareness activities, but those are specifically related to raising awareness about the tribunal process. It has not conducted any awareness campaigns related to gender identity.

The Human Rights Tribunal is working on updating its website, and hopefully that will be done by the end of this month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, Member Nakashuk.

### **Question 912 – 5(2): COVID-19 Preparedness**

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning and to the people of Pangnirtung, I wish you a good day. I would first like to say to my older sister Eva, who is celebrating a birthday today, and I wish her a wonderful good day.

I would like to direct my question the Minister of Health and it is an issue that was touched on by Mr. Main. It is regarding the COVID-19 virus, which is receiving very high interest in the media. We heard of one case in Ottawa, and I'm concerned about patients who are sent down south.

I don't want to create confusion, but do you have any plans for patients who stay at Larga and have to go to the hospitals daily? They have gatherings in the evenings, and some have very weak immune systems. What plans does the Department of Health have with regard to patients who are sent to Ottawa? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question again. Like my colleague from Human Resource mentioned, this is very important information to get out so people are aware and informed so that it helps mitigate panic.

Right now, and we will continue to follow the best recommendations from our health care professionals from all across the country. As everyone is aware, there has been a very high-profile media campaign, I guess if you want to call it, in that respect, but we are very aware. Things are changing, sometimes by the hour. As I know members continue to be aware of this, I am offering right now for the full caucus to meet either after the sitting today, or first thing tomorrow morning with my chief public health office, so that they can be given even more detailed information, and are informed for when they go back to their community. I'm putting that offer right now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that good response. As I stated earlier, for the people who stay at Larga and hotels, what kind of assistance are they getting for prevention right now? Are they being kept well informed about this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, the risk is still considered low in Canada, especially here in Nunavut. That being said, everyone has to make sure that they are self-monitoring. We know that there is a virus that is out there. We need to make sure that if there is any suspicion that we feel we may have come into contact with somebody, or somebody associated with somebody that has this virus, that they self-monitor.

By self-monitor I mean: be very conscientious of how you are feeling if any of the symptoms, shortness of breath, fever, uncontrollable coughing; if anyone feels those types of symptoms, to immediately self-isolate themselves until they can be tested. Contact the health centre or, like the member is questioning on it, travellers that we are sending outside the territory, we are going to continue to monitor, but I think you would be hard-pressed to find somebody in the world that is not aware of this virus.

Every institution is taking preventative measures, making sure that the cleanliness... We have all seen notices from some of the airlines and other businesses that are informing every one of the enhanced cleaning practices that are being done. And, all of the medical facilities that we partner with are very aware of this, and we will continue to monitor, and we will continue to practice best practices, as advised by the health professionals.

I don't want to make any political, rash decisions on this topic. It can be very emotional, people are intimidated by it, but at the same time it is treatable. We can take some safe measures ourselves, continue to practice safe hygiene practices that have been discussed all over the media and in here, and I just encourage people not to panic. There are steps

that we are going to continue to place, and I look forward to how everything is going to evolve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your final supplementary, Member Nakashuk.

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) We are all hopeful that it doesn't get worse than it has, but like I stated, there are those people that are most vulnerable, and some are weak in their immune system. It is very concerning that, God forbid, it doesn't happen in Larga or in a hotel where a lot of people meet in the evenings and sleep there, and eat there together and so on. God forbid if that were to happen, what is in place to ensure that these people are safe? Is there any accommodations being put aside for people that need special care? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickee.

**Hon. George Hickee**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to assure members and the public that whenever our patients are travelling to another jurisdiction; those jurisdictions also have emergency planning measures in place. There are plans in place for, as an example, Larga in Ottawa. It would fall under the Ontario and the Ottawa health system, where they would assist that business in making sure that the patients are being treated properly, or that if any concerns arise, that they would be treated properly.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Human Resources mentioned, there are updates every day to all department officials so that everyone is keeping on top of this. Things change by the day, by the hour sometimes, and sometimes by the minute. So, we are going to continue to keep everyone updated with relevant information as we receive it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 913 – 5(2): Activities and Expenditures of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation**

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Human Resources.

As the minister is aware, he sits on the board of directors of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation, which was (interpretation ends) “established to provide funding and other support for training and initiatives that will help Inuit obtain the skills and qualifications for employment.”

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, although I support the corporation's goals, I do not think that residents of smaller communities like Sanirajak are clearly aware of the corporation's work or how to access funding for projects.

I believe that it is important for the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation to make the effort to send representatives to visit places like my constituency of Amittuq, in order to explain how residents can access funding and support. Will the minister commit to raising this issue at the next meeting of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation's board of directors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To address his question regarding Makigiaqta's goals and how we can ensure that when training opportunities arise they are appropriately communicated, or advertised, it is important that all Nunavummiut have access to this information, and I can commit to discussing this issue at the next board meeting, which will have its next meeting in the summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernek.

**Mr. Kaernek** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like clarification. Can the minister clarify if any projects have been funded by the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation that were held in Igloodik or Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not quite understand the question regarding the creation of jobs. The programs are not for the creation of jobs, but instead for the opportunity to receive training required for certain jobs. I am not entirely sure because this refers to a time before I became a member of the board. We definitely advertise regarding the opportunity for upcoming training, along with who can apply, and for what kind of jobs they would be trained to be qualified for. That is the type of information that has been advertised, but actual jobs, I do not know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Kaernek.

**Mr. Kaernek**: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify my questions regarding funding projects. Were there any funding projects in Igloodik and Hall Beach and, if so, how much? If there were any, would the minister be able to table how many funded projects were submitted? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand his question now. No, there were no applications from Igloodik or Hall Beach. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, for your second time around, Mr. Main.

**Question 914 – 5(2): COVID-19 Preparedness**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. I rise to direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. Regarding COVID-19, on March 10, Canadian North airline made an announcement to the people of Nunavut that states (interpretation ends) “We are fully aware that we provide essential services to the people, communities, and organizations that depend on us. So, we must remain particularly vigilant in this situation.”

Mr. Speaker, I think this statement highlights how important it is that our transportation routes are working properly and that preventative measures are being taken.

My first question for the minister is: what additional measures are being taken in Nunavut’s airports to protect travellers from the potential infection of influenza or COVID-19? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All of us in the government have made plans and airports are where most public people go to. We have informed our custodians about the goal of keeping airports clean, and we have informed them that they have to be diligent. As you stated, the airlines also have reported on their actions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian North announcement states that the interiors of airplanes, such as the seats and the meal trays will be cleaned more often. I am aware that the government does not control the airlines since they are their own business. Is the minister aware if the airline companies in Nunavut are diligently cleaning their aircrafts, or is Canadian North the only airline that has made this type of announcement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven’t been notified personally, but it appears that Canadian North is the only one that has written to inform everyone. All the airlines are aware too. They all have their own policies, and the need to ensure everything is very clean is well-known and they have already sent out directions on how the cleaning should be done. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard that some meetings have been deferred or delayed while others have been cancelled all together. The Mining Symposium in Iqaluit was supposed to take place, and we have heard in the news that it has now been cancelled.

What about the other things under transportation? What about shipping companies and cruise ships? I know it is still winter, but I know the Department of Transportation is making plans about that. What can the minister tell us? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akeeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had a telephone conversation with my federal ministerial colleague. Today, all the ministers of tourism in Canada are going to have a teleconference where we will be looking at that issue exactly, because tourism has been affected a great deal already.

That mining symposium was supposed to bring in 400 people and they are no longer coming. For these things that are affected, we will have to make other considerations for them as a government. Canada has stated that to the end of May, they do not want cruise ships in Canadian waters. With that, we usually get 13 cruise ships in the summer time and they should just be stopped from coming up. There will be fewer tourists coming to Nunavut, but this direction is only to the end of May. These things take a long time to plan, so I expect that there will be no cruise ships coming in to Nunavut this summer. Thank you for asking questions about that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member Towtongie.

#### **Question 915 – 5(2): COVID-19 Preparedness**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

With regard to the COVID-19 virus, our children are in danger. Are the schools prepared? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education. Minister Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking that question. Mr. Speaker, with regard to COVID-19, we have been making plans and working together with the local district education authorities. We are going to try and keep them informed.

Mr. Speaker, we have janitors and cleaners in our schools, and they will be told how important it is to keep it even cleaner. School will continue and we will be applying our

plans, but if we need to shut down a school it will be communicated by the chief medical officer who will provide that direction if we need to close any of the schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Arctic Winter Games were cancelled, the ulu competition. Now there are different sports activities in the different schools and some gather. What planning has been done about that? For example, is *Arsarniq* happening? What have you prepared for that in terms of communiqués? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you again. We will try and keep the communities informed about COVID-19 and how much it is spreading. We do not want to cause people to panic, and each community or school should make up their own mind on what they want if there is going to be a big competition happening in the community.

For example, the district education authorities can make a decision regarding after school hours and to allow people to use the school gym during night time. They have the right to refuse those requests as well. That is their authority as managers. We are going to leave the decision up to them, and once we hear something we will convey the message on to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. I will recognize, for the second time, the Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

### **Question 916 – 5(2): Municipal Offices**

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Last week I asked a question about the inspection of hamlet offices and if the hamlet office in Pangnirtung can be looked at and renovated. When I asked the minister about which municipal offices in Nunavut have been identified for replacement, I did not get a clear list in the capital plans, but I recognize that the hamlet offices in Kimmirut, Rankin Inlet and Sanikiluaq are going to be renovated. I know that the hamlet offices in Pangnirtung and Kimmirut have been in use for 50 years.

(interpretation ends) Can the minister clearly explain how these three municipal offices were identified as being most in need of replacement? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Before I ask the minister to respond, I would please ask that you have your cell phones on silent mode. The Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question and that is why the bell rang.

Mr. Speaker, there is a group that reviews what the absolute priorities are, like hamlet offices for example. We sit on that committee and it consists of hamlet administrators who evaluate what the highest priorities should be for reasons such as health and safety. The three hamlet offices were reviewed and sometimes we have emergency meetings on intercommunity sustainability plans. The hamlet identifies the community priorities. So, all of these priorities are considered, and it was figured that these three needed to be the absolute priority. Once the funding has been applied to them, work will start.

So that is the process, and I know that the hamlet office in Pangnirtung will also be given consideration when they are in need of a new hamlet office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for explaining that.

Can the minister provide a clear update today on where Pangnirtung's municipal office currently stands in the schedule for replacement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that information with me as to where Pangnirtung is now, but it is on a list somewhere. I will find that list and I will communicate with the member through correspondence to inform her of where Pangnirtung stands as a priority and why it is where it is on the list. I will see if there is a need to put it higher on the priority list. I will communicate with the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I recognize that the minister's department has a budget for "building, equipment upgrades and minor projects." Can the minister confirm if municipalities can apply for funding from this budget to undertake repairs and upgrades to their existing office facilities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just remembered that this last summer when I was in Rankin Inlet at the hamlet office, I saw some *siksiks* that had come in through the wall. I wasn't going to talk about that, but I just remembered what I saw.

Mr. Speaker, yes, there is funding available but it is not a lot. Hamlets can submit requests for funding for building and equipment upgrades. There is funding available for that and they can try. This summer there will be money available where the hamlets can request it. I believe I talked about it yesterday where for offices and equipment to conserve energy, there is green energy funding available, and they can request that as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member Keyootak.

### **Question 917 – 5(2): COVID-19 Preparedness**

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me again. Mr. Speaker, this question was raised about COVID-19. It seems to be spreading everywhere now. I would like direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

The minister indicated, in response to a question, that cruise ships may be stopped from coming into Nunavut. They come to our community as well. Especially in our community, there are tourism operators, Inuit that take many, many tourists out and many tourists come. Is there a chance for that to be stopped as well? There are a lot of tourists who come in that are taken out by small boats from the community.

We have more than one tour operator in my community, so should they be told that there may be no tourists coming up this summer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The tourism industry has actually self-regulated so that they are not going to have tour packages. They stopped some of their own activities.

We have not actually finalized anything as of yet. I am going to have a meeting this evening with the tourism sector so that we can get an update. What I have heard is that it is still up to those cruise ship operators that plan to come up, but I can say that Nunavut is still open. We heard on the news last night that the United States has closed some of their links to stop any travel into the country. Different private groups are stopping on their own, but we want to hear that more for Nunavut tonight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Keyootak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for clarifying that. We know that tourism operators need to work in the short summer months. Is there going to be a public campaign to inform those tourism operators and people in the tourism sector to ensure that you work together with the private sector as to what is going on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are going to work together because we are going to have to do something to ensure that... . Let's say, for example, yesterday our Prime Minister has planned to ensure that there is money available for people to fall back on for assistance. This way, employees will have something there as a back-up. Tourism operators could look into that as well. They are fearful in some instances to travel to certain parts of the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member Main.

### **Question 918 – 5(2): COVID-19 Preparedness**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe there is still one minute left. I rise to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services, and it is in regards to what we talked about this morning relating to the COVID-19 virus. What has the department planned for income support clients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for that question. I was certain I was going to be asked that question for sure. (interpretation ends)

Mr. Speaker, after the ransomware, I think our department did really good in responding and providing the services. I don't have that level of detail, but I know that once this outbreak has come out, the division of Income Support was already looking at that. As we have been saying, the departments meet regularly, but I don't have that level of detail on how they are prepared, but I know that there was definitely discussion early on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that many Nunavummiut receive income support and that they enter income support offices each month. Have you considered providing them with an information letter from the Department of Health as a way to relay information on the COVID-19 virus while you are meeting with clients one-on-one? Has that been considered, or will that be considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am sure that the government as a whole has been considering how to continually share the information on how to avoid spreading. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): I apologize. Your final supplementary, Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Will the minister commit to giving some consideration to this idea? We all know that information is needed, and our income assistance clients are some of the most vulnerable people, I believe, due to issues such as overcrowding, lack of access to healthy and affordable food, and other compounding issues. So, will the minister commit to putting some consideration into distributing health-related materials to income assistance recipients in the short term, or as soon as possible? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I certainly do. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members, please note that the time for question period has expired. Written Questions. Member Main.

### **Item 7: Written Questions**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I have six written questions and I will get right to them.

The first written question, titled, “Activities of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee,” is directed to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

The second one, “Government of Nunavut Budget Development Processes,” is directed to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the third one, “Dental Services,” is directed to the Minister of Health.

The fourth one, “Community Health Centre Staffing,” is also directed to the Minister of Health.

The fifth one, “Court Interpreter Staffing,” is directed to the Minister of Justice.

The sixth written question, “Government of Nunavut Uranium Policy Statement,” is directed to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, my written questions are long and complex and I ask that all six written questions be entered into the record as read, but I am willing to read them if needed.

**Written Question 063 – 5(2): Activities of the NNI Policy Review Committee**

1. With respect to the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee established under Section 12.0 of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy:
  - a. Between April 1, 2017, and March 12, 2020, who were the members of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee?
  - b. Between April 1, 2017, and March 12, 2020, how many meetings of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee were held?
  - c. With respect to the meetings of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee held between April 1, 2017, and March 12, 2020, what were the agenda items of each meeting?
  - d. With respect to the meetings of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee held between April 1, 2017, and March 12, 2020, where were the meetings held?
  - e. With respect to the meetings of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee held between April 1, 2017, and March 12, 2020, what decisions were taken at each meeting?
  - f. Within the meaning of Appendix B of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Regulations, how many “reports from its periodic reviews” have been prepared to date by the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee?
  - g. What were the contents of each “report” referenced in question 1(g)?
  - h. What is the timeline for tabling in the Legislative Assembly the reports referenced in question 1(g)?
  - i. What specific recommendations have been made to date by the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy Review Committee with respect to:
    - i. Revisions to the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Policy?
    - ii. Amendments to legislation or regulations;
    - iii. Changes in administrative or regulatory structures; and
    - iv. Other arrangements?

**Written Question 064 – 5(2): Government of Nunavut Budget Development Process**

1. With respect to the Government of Nunavut's budget development process, how is the term "vacancy factor" defined by the Financial Management Board?
2. With respect to the Government of Nunavut's budget development process, what methodology does the Financial Management Board use to determine the approved vacancy factors for departments, Crown agencies, and territorial corporations?
3. With respect to the 2018-19 main estimates, what was the approved vacancy factor for each department, Crown agency, and territorial corporation?
4. With respect to the 2019-2020 main estimates, what was the approved vacancy factor for each department, Crown agency and territorial corporation?
5. With respect to the 2020-21 main estimates, what was the approved vacancy factor for each department, Crown agency, and territorial corporation?

**Written Question 065 – 5(2): Dental Services**

1. For those Nunavut communities which do not have resident dentists:
  - a) How many dental service providers are contracted to conduct community visits?
  - b) By community, from April 1, 2018 to March 1, 2020, how many days of dental service were provided to each community?
  - c) Which entity pays for the travel, accommodation and office space for dental service providers who are contracted to conduct community visits?
  - d) Which entity pays for the specific dental services provided by dental service providers who are contracted to conduct community visits?
  - e) For dental services already provided to clients during visits by dental service providers, which entity covers the costs for dental services which are denied payment under the NIHB program and where no other coverage option exists?
  - f) For dental services denied coverage under the NIHB program and where no other coverage option exists, what assistance is provided by the Government of Nunavut to community members who wish to appeal the NIHB decision to deny coverage?
  - g) What assistance is provided by the Government of Nunavut to pay for dental services recommended by a dentist but denied coverage under the NIHB program and where no other coverage option exists?

**Written Question 066 – 5(2): Community Health Centre Staffing**

1. Broken down by community for the 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 census years, what was the total number of the following health care worker positions at Community Health Centres:
  - h) Registered Nurses;
  - i) Nurse Practitioners;
  - j) Licensed Practical Nurses;
  - k) Psychiatric Nurses;
  - l) Community Health Representatives;
  - m) Interpreter-Translators;
  - n) Clerks;
  - o) Mental Health Workers;
  - p) X-Ray Technicians;
  - q) Custodians; and
  - r) Pharmacy Technicians.

**Written Question 067 – 5(2): Court Interpreter Staffing**

Question 1:

For the fiscal years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19, what statistics regarding court interpreters did the Department of Justice track?

Question 1a:

Please provide the statistics in the answer to Q1, in table form.

Question 2:

For the fiscal years mentioned above, what employment terms were utilized for the court interpreter positions within the department?

Question 3:

For the fiscal years mentioned above, what was the rate of compensation utilized for the court interpreter positions within the department?

Question 4:

How many years of experience and what specific certifications are required to work as a court interpreter for the department?

Question 5:

What are the impacts of court interpreter staffing shortages on the proceedings of the Nunavut Court of Justice?

Question 5a:

In which communities or regions is court interpreter staffing the most challenging?

Question 6:

What has the department done in chronological order to address the shortage of court interpreter candidates?

### **Written Question 068 – 5(2): GN Uranium Policy Statement**

Question 1:

When was the Government of Nunavut Uranium Policy Statement officially released?

Question 2:

What consultation activities were conducted when the Government of Nunavut Uranium Policy Statement was being prepared?

Question 3:

Does the government have plans to revisit and/or revise the Uranium Policy Statement?

Question 4:

How does the Government of Nunavut Uranium Policy Statement apply to the issue of small modular reactors (SMRs)?

Question 5:

Is there a process or avenue in place for Nunavut residents to inquire and/or provide suggestions on the Government of Nunavut Uranium Policy Statement?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Laughter*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Main. (interpretation ends) Do members agree that Mr. Main's written questions be entered into the record as read?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) There is agreement.

Written Questions. (interpretation) There are none. Item 8. (interpretation ends) Returns to Written Questions. Minister Akeegok.

**Hon. David Akeegok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to go back to Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. The member is requesting that we return to Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Mr. Akeegok.

### **Revert to Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**Hon. David Akeegok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a person who has entered the House. He provides a lot of country foods. Even though he is from Pond Inlet, he is also my in-law. I would like to recognize Kautak Kunnuk. Welcome to the House.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Please feel very welcome here in the House and please feel free to visit any time you are in this community. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say the name of my in-law. He always brings me seal skins. My husband's mother and his grandmother were sisters. David Akeegok is his in-law too, but Tugaqtii Mike Tyson is what we refer him as. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Nakashuk.

**Ms. Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to recognize a visitor. Her name is Rose-Tina and I mentioned her yesterday. She works at my office and she and her husband, William are here. I want them to feel welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that goes (interpretation ends) three times is a charm.

>> *Laughter*

This is the third time my nephew, Kautak, is here. I want him to feel welcome. When he goes to Rankin Inlet, I know I will see him again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Please feel welcome. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names on my list. Let's proceed. Item 9. (interpretation ends) Replies to Opening Address. (Interpretation) Item 10. (interpretation ends) Petitions. (interpretation) Item 11. (interpretation ends) Response to Petitions. (interpretation) Let us proceed. Item 4. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

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

#### **Committee Report 025 – 5(2): Report of the Striking Committee on the Revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees of the Fifth Legislative Assembly of Nunavut**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today of presenting a very brief report on behalf of the Striking Committee.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, the Striking Committee's report to the House on March 6, 2018 established the standing committee structure for this Assembly.

The report was received and adopted by the House and the terms of reference for the standing committees were entered into the record. Formal motions were subsequently moved to appoint members to committees.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the committee structure that we have established remains fundamentally sound.

However, in the interest of achieving greater balance in workloads and a more complimentary allocation of responsibilities, members have agreed that oversight for Nunavut Arctic College should be transferred from the Standing Committee on Social Wellness to the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development. Each committee will now have oversight responsibility for five departments, Crown agencies, or territorial corporations.

It is important to note Nunavut Arctic College's evolving role in training Nunavummiut for employment in a number of sectors of the economy including the mining industry, Mr. Speaker.

This concludes the Report of the Striking Committee. Consequently, I move that it be received and adopted by the House and that the revised terms of reference for the standing committees of the Fifth Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, which are attached to the report as an appendix, be entered into the record as read. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is requesting that the Report of the Striking Committee be received and adopted by the House and that the revised terms of reference for the standing committees of the Fifth Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, that are attached to the report, be entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** There is agreement. (interpretation) Thank you.

We will proceed. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Kusugak.

### **Item 13: Tabling of Documents**

#### **Tabled Document 279 – 5(2): Contract, Procurement and Leasing Activity Reports 2018-2019**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Contract, Procurement and Leasing Activity Reports for the fiscal year 2018-19. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Mr. Hickes.

#### **Tabled Document 280 – 5(2): Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal 2018 Annual Report**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal's 2018 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Minister of Justice.

#### **Tabled Document 281 – 5(2): Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal Annual Report 2017-2018**

#### **Tabled Document 282 – 5(2): Nunavut RCMP Shared Directional Statement 2019-2021**

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** I would like to table two documents today. The first one, the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal 2017-18 Annual Report and the Nunavut Minister of Justice and Nunavut RCMP Commanding Officer Shared Directional Statement for 2019-2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Justice, Ms. Ehaloak.

(interpretation) I'm sorry. I didn't hear that. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. I have one.

**Tabled Document 283 – 5(2): Speaker's List of Outstanding Tabling Requirements**

Thank you, members. I have one document to table today, which is a list of outstanding statutory tabling requirements. Thank you.

Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Let's proceed. Item 14. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. No. 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. No. 16. Motions. (interpretation) No. 17. (interpretation ends) First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 18. (interpretation ends) Second Reading of Bills. 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 40, 41, 42, and 43 and Tabled Document 65 – 5(2) with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will break for lunch and report back at 1:30.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 11:57 and Committee resumed at 13:30*

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

**Chairman** (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon, members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 40, 41, 42, 43, and Tabled Document 65-5(2). What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to review Bill 40, supplementary appropriation, and once we complete that, we would like to continue with Bills 42 and 43 with the Minister of Finance. Afterwards we would like to review Bill 44, with the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Ms. Towtongie, can you please reconfirm which bills you are referring to? Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to review Bill 40, and the supporting supplementary appropriation details, and then proceed to the clause by clause review of Bill 42, and 43, with the Minister of Finance.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. We will just pause for minute, please. Thank you. There was a bit of a mix up with which bills we are supposed to be doing. Ms. Towtongie, let's try again.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to review Bill 40 and the supporting supplementary appropriation details, and then proceed to the clause-by-clause review of Bill 42 and 43, with the Minister of Finance, (interpretation) followed by the clause-by-clause review of (interpretation ends) Bill 41 (interpretation) with the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 40?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Bill 40 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 3,  
2019-2020 – Consideration in Committee**

**Chairman:** Thank you. Before we move on, I would just like to take a moment to recognize a former Member of this Legislative Assembly here today, Mr. Steve Mapsalak. Please welcome him.

>>*Applause*

Minister Hickes, do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** If the committee will permit, yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Does the committee agree for the witnesses to enter the Chamber?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

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

Thank you. Minister Hickes, if you could please introduce your officials and then continue on into your opening comments. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. To my right, your left, Deputy Minister of Finance Jeff Chown, and to your right, my left, Greg Babstock, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Department of Health.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I appear before you today to present Bill 40, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020, No. 3*. Through this bill, the government is seeking to increase its overall appropriation for

government operations in 2019-2020 by \$54,835,000. This is about 3.1 percent higher than the \$1.74 billion the Assembly has already appropriated for 2019-2020 and would bring our government's total operations and maintenance appropriations for the year to \$1,794,000,000.

We are seeking these new funds to account for expenditures across three departments:

- \$50 million to the Department of Health so it can cover costs related to medical travel, mental health and addictions treatment contracts, physician services contracts, and health care services delivery;
- \$3 million to the Department of Justice so it can cover costs related to law enforcement and corrections; and
- \$1,835,000 to the Department of Family Services so it can cover costs incurred mostly to support residential care and foster placements.

Mr. Chairman and members, through last year's budget we decided to set aside \$30 million. We chose from the beginning to not allocate these funds toward specific expenses so we could more easily manage costs like these that arise over the year. Of the initial \$30 million, we have already used \$7.5 million through previous supplementary appropriations.

When we consider the fiscal impacts of Bill 40 today and use up the remaining \$22.5 million we had set aside, we are now forecasting a deficit of about \$88 million in 2019-2020 before year-end adjustments. Such a deficit is manageable but reinforces some of the messages I provided in my recent Budget Address. We will need to manage decisions and expectations carefully going forward.

I will point out two matters of interest. First, as I indicated in my Budget Address, we plan to set aside \$50 million in 2020-21 so that we have similar flexibilities next year. Second, the 2020-21 budget you are considering this session includes significant increases to the Department of Health's core budget in the areas that are driving the need for this supplementary appropriation, including:

- \$6.3 million for physician contracts;
- \$5 million for out-of-territory mental health contracts;
- \$8 million for general compensation and benefits costs from previous Nunavut Employees Union negotiations; and
- \$17.6 million to supplement our medical travel budget.

Similarly we are also seeking an additional \$2 million in base funding to support the Department of Family Services' residential care costs.

Our intent with these investments is to move towards right-sizing departments' budgets, something I know members would like to see. However, making these investments mean you do not have these funds available to apply elsewhere.

Mr. Chairman and members, this concludes my opening comments. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hicke. Are there any general comments? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Stephen pushed the wrong button and we went in-camera, so we will have to make sure that we are back on. How do we find-out that we are back-on? We're good? Okay, thank you. Let us try this again. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just wanted to acknowledge the Department of Finance's work to try and bring their budgets towards "right sizing." I will use that same term.

Eventually, maybe in Nunavut if we can make improvements in the needed areas, we won't have to have these supplementary appropriations, which have become a bit of an expected event in the House.

I would just like to note that, particularly in the medical travel file, going back to 2013-14, this medical travel seems to be like a bucket without a bottom, and no amount of money can fill that bucket up. I am certainly not suggesting that we should stop sending our patients south for treatment. We cannot refuse them that, obviously. I just wanted to note my concern on the medical travel in terms of the budgeting impacts. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. If there are no more general comments, we will move on. I will ask members to go to page 4 of the bill, Bill 40, and it is the Government of Nunavut *Supplementary Appropriation (Operation and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020*. Not Previously Authorized. Total Law Enforcement, \$1 million. Are there any questions? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In the briefing materials provided here it notes that deficits, "The RCMP is expecting deficits to address issues around overtime and prolonged medical leave for regular members, most notably associated with traumatic events."

That is concerning, and it also mentions "Additional costs unrelated to unforeseen emergencies including standoffs, and emergency response teams." Is there a trend in these standoffs, or things like traumatic events within the Law Enforcement Branch? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hicke.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my knowledge, there is not so much of a trend, it is very unpredictable. We have all seen media coverage on standoffs, as an example, or a traumatic event.

It does seem too prevalent, especially considering the fact that we have been speaking so much about anti-violence campaigns. This message needs to get out across the board that the RCMP and the By-law in communities, and any law enforcement and corrections staff need to continue to work with community members, and community members need to work with law enforcement so that we can do better in this area from a public safety standpoint. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It also mentions in the briefing note here "...proactive measures that were taken by the Corrections Division regarding threats to staff and inmate safety." It is my understanding that this ended up costing the department more money, but I would like to commend the Department of Justice for focusing on staff and inmate safety in this regard, even though it ended up costing the government more money.

It mentions here that when the new healing centre correctional facility is completed, things will improve within Corrections, so that is something for us to look forward to. It is just a comment, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you for your comment, Mr. Main. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 1 of the MLA briefing notes with regard to Bill 40, I just have a question. I don't quite understand this; divisional administration costs charged to "V" Division. I believe that is Nunavut, for administration services provided by the central RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. Does that mean if we get services from Ottawa we have to pay them? What does this mean, Mr. Chairman?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I understand, each division within the RCMP is responsible for its own expenditures and there is a centralized headquarters of the RCMP, and that if services are utilized out of there, there would be cost payback, the way I understand it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the second bullet of our briefing note, there was a riot in 2018 which cost approximately \$1.5 million and the division transported 22 inmates from the Baffin Correctional facility. Is there any contingency

funding in case there is another riot? Is there room for that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my final question.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, there are no specific funds associated with that, and hopefully we will never see that occur again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. I have no more questions on Law Enforcement. We will move on to Total Corrections. \$2 million. Are there any questions on Corrections? If not, Total Department. \$3 million. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Go to page 5. Department of Health. Not Previously Authorized. \$50 million. Are there any questions? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When we look at this \$50 million, it is broken down in the briefing material to different items. First of all, on the Health Care Delivery Staff, it is \$19.5 million, and it mentions that the nurse and support vacancy rate in community health centres is near 50 percent. Why did the department overshoot their budget, or overspend as a result of high vacancy rates with the staffing for community health centres? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. The statistic of the vacancy rates, the context is a little bit different. It may say that there is a 50 percent vacancy rate, but that doesn't mean the health centres are staffed at a 50 percent level. We forced to use outside service availabilities, whether it be through casual actions, through agency nurses, through contracts that we have, to maintain a certain service level in the health centre.

One of the challenges that we do have is typically, those services cost more than an indeterminate nurse, and when we are looking at the full staffing compliment, what were needed, that is why I said that that number is misleading. We can't function at 50 percent capacity, so we are forced to use outside services, but in addition to that, the overtime is a huge cost pressure that we are really struggling with right now, where in my opinion, we have to take a look at the whole health centre staffing compliment and that is one of the projects that I am going to be working on this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Also, under Healthcare Delivery Staffing it mentions some efforts or things that are being done by the

Department of Health to increase indeterminate nurse staffing. There are some different action items that have been worked on.

Are these things showing any results in terms of the increase or the rate of indeterminate nurse staffing? Or are these new and it is hoped for, but not showing any effect or improvements yet? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am actually very proud of our Nurse Recruitment Division. They have done an exceptional job, I'm going to say over last fiscal year, and then up to and including this fiscal year. They have hired over 200 indeterminate nurses.

One of the concerns that we have, and one of the things that we are really having to take a serious look at, and have been, is the retention. That is where the biggest challenge seems to be coming from. In my earlier response, we talk about the overtime and the amounts of hours that nurses have to put in to continue care. The member himself has brought up numerous times in the House the need to have closures to emergency level services only.

Where we really struggle, and I am going to be very blunt here, are sometimes the perception of some communities to be, again going back to violence, the treatment of staff, it is a huge concern for us when we get reports from our medical professionals that they do not want to work in certain communities because of some of the practices that have been brought to them in threats or unacceptable behaviour. I will lump into one category.

We all have a right to have a safe workplace. We all have a right to be able to voice our opinions in a professional manner. That is where I think the Office of Patient Relations has done an exceptional job to give people an avenue to bring forward concerns, but our retention is our biggest struggle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just my last question on this staffing issue, and I have other questions on medical travel; when a nurse or health professional leaves the Department of Health and goes somewhere else and they choose not to come back, is there a mandatory survey or exit interview attached to the contract, because personally I want to know why the retention is so low. If there are root issues that they can identify on their exit interview, then that is a first step for us to get to dealing with them. Are there any exit interview survey type things that are done? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** In short, Mr. Chairman, I wish there was a mandatory exit interview so that we could get full and honest feedback. It is a voluntary process. What I can attest and I have brought this up in the past; I strongly, and I cannot enforce enough how strong I feel, that I want everybody across the entire Government of Nunavut to fill out an exit survey upon their departure, not just to bring forward issues, but to bring forward some of the things we are doing right as well.

We too often focus on the negatives and there are a lot of great people out there working very hard for our population and for us here in the House. I do not want to paint everyone leaving or leaving the territory in a negative light. Sometimes just opportunities arise elsewhere, but if anyone is listening out there, please if you leave the public service, participate in an exit survey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) This has come up in the past, and I am not sure which department it was with, but I would fully support measures to make those interviews mandatory. If there is a way to do that, put it right in the contract, “As a part of your last pay cheque you are required to....” I don’t know if that is even allowed. Or, provide an incentive to the exit interview and say “We have this optional exit interview, and if you do it, we give you a cheque for \$300, and guess what? The interview only takes an hour.” Even the most discouraged or frustrated person might look at something like that. It is just an example.

On the medical travel, as I mentioned, it is going back a number of years. I’m looking at a list of all of the supplementary appropriations that have come forward over the years, and medical travel, medical travel, medical travel. So, first of all, what are the cost pressures on this medical travel item where, here there is another supplementary appropriation on it for money to go towards it? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. There are a number of cost drivers that influence our medical travel program; travel referrals for follow-up exams with out-of-territory specialists, looking at whether some travel could be deferred until there is a combination of things to be done. Is Telehealth being used enough? We want to make sure that we are coordinated and managing specialist visits to each region and could there be more clinics scheduled the territory, different management and case management from appointment referrals. I would have to say the biggest cost factor that is really dramatically impacting medical travel would be the Non-insured Health Benefits Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) When we were going through the Department of Health, I was trying to figure out myself how the Non-insured Health Benefits Program works when it comes to medical travel.

In a nutshell, when it comes to medical travel and the interplay between the federal money through NIHB and the Government of Nunavut's money, how does it work? Does NIHB pay for all the medical travel or for all the Non-insured Health Benefits for enrollees or beneficiaries? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm really glad the member has asked this question. This has been, I'm going to say, a frustrating endeavour that has been going on for over four years now, back when I was Health minister in the last Assembly.

When we look at Non-insured Health Benefits, as an example, one of the recent additions they made was maternal escort travel. That was done without consultation, but I think the biggest component, when you look at it, they cover full costs for dental and they cover costs for maternal travel for the escort, but it is still on a co-pay for the actual expectant mother and any other medical traveler that wouldn't be included under the dental or maternal. We only get reimbursed the co-pay amount.

I'll give an example: out of Arviat, a one-way ticket right now with our medical travel contract to Winnipeg is \$1,061. That is what it costs to send somebody down to Winnipeg for medical travel from Arviat. Of that, we get reimbursed from Non-insured Health Benefits \$125.

So, when we look at if there were to be a medevac out of Whale Cove, that could be around the \$22,000 range. Of that we get reimbursed \$125. So, when we look at overall medical travel expenditures, just in the last fiscal year, out of just Non-insured Health Benefit travel, associated travel, we spent approximately \$78 million of which we were compensated \$3.7 million.

When we look at our cost pressures, and that is why I say it is an exaggerated one, is that we have been underfunded since 1999. In the last Assembly, I took a very firm stance with then, Minister Philpott, and had a great dialogue with her at the time explaining that there really needs to be a recognition of cost-drivers. This is a federal program that Nunavut is funding more than we are receiving from them. It is costing us on average \$60-\$70 million a year; anticipating this fiscal year, \$72 million of costing the Government of Nunavut to work on a federal government program.

So I have laid very clear expectations as long as four years ago, to as recently as last week. I have signed, and if the Chairman will allow, I am going to elaborate fairly detailed on this one. I think it is an important message that needs to get out.

When we look at the Non-insured Health Benefit Program, where as an example, maternal travel, where an expectant mother going out, we would get reimbursed \$125 for that one-way ticket, yet they cover one 100 percent for the cost for the escort under maternal. Under dental coverage, they cover one 100 percent of the cost for the traveller and the escort. Yet, if you are going down for brain surgery, we would get compensated \$125 for your travel and zero for any escorts associated with.

So the inequity in this program is something that I have been very clear with the federal government on, that unless we are compensated appropriately for it, they can have it back. It is not our program. I have made that message very clear.

Back in 2017 when our initial contribution agreement expired, I was assured by the minister of the day that any agreement that we have come to agree upon would be back dated to the point when that original agreement had expired. So at the point I signed a one-year extension to get the work done.

Following that, I was no longer the Health minister. The Health minister of the day signed another one-year extension at the request of Indigenous Services Canada to get their approvals through finance and through the treasury board and whatnot. Then when that expired, I was back in this chair of which it still hadn't been resolved. So I gave them a six month extension to come to a solution on this matter.

Again, they said with the election looming that they needed more time. So I gave them a three month extension. The election occurred, December 31 occurred, I met with Minister Morneau, I met with Minister Hajdu, and I met with Minister Miller with Finance, Health and Indigenous Services, respectively.

At that point, again I reiterated that we cannot continue... I am here defending a supplementary appropriation for something that I feel is not our program. It is a federal government program. At that point, it was agreed upon that there would be some continued work towards resolving, but they needed more time. So I gave them another three months, which brings us up to the next couple of weeks, or three weeks from now, March 31.

In correspondence I received last week from Minister Miller's office, not only did they state that they gave us the same offer they gave me three years ago, of very little recognition. They are looking at increasing co-pay by a very marginal amount.

In addition to that, they reneged on their commitment that it would back-date. So now they are saying that not only will they not backdate it, or not looking at meeting what we are expecting to receive from this program.

So right now we are in the process of if they do not have something in the very near future, I will not be signing another extension, I will not be signing a contribution agreement, and the responsibility will go back to the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I am going to have to wait for Hansard to try and digest all of this...

>>*Laughter*

...because it has been a long budget session. It does not seem to make sense on the surface of it.

The minister mentioned the NIHB will cover one 100 percent of the travel for escorts or for dental, but if somebody is going out for surgery, they will cover \$125 of it?

How could they, on the one hand, sounds like they are doing the right thing when it comes to certain types of travellers. What is the rationale for treating different travellers different ways? I am just trying to understand why they would have made an agreement that does not seem to make sense to me. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the exact same stance that I have been taking. It does not make sense. When I look up Non-Insured Health Benefits on the federal website, it clearly states medical transportation as an allowable expense. Yet, we are only getting a fraction reimbursed from our expenses. So the member is correct. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main:** So medical travel is an allowable expense, so that would also include medevacs, and the minister used Whale Cove as an example: the \$22,000 medevac flight. We take the cost of one flight; I just want to understand this clearly. We take the cost of one medevac flight that might save somebody's life, and it costs \$22,000. How much does the Government of Nunavut pay, and how much does the Non-insured Health Benefits pay out of that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indigenous Services Canada would cover \$125 and the Government of Nunavut would pay for the rest. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That seems ridiculous on the face of it. If we look at the cost of the medevac and it says from Whale Cove to Winnipeg, would the \$125 even cover the cost of transporting the patient from

the community to the airport, to get on the flight? I am just trying to put it in proportion as an overall... Medevacs are expensive but they save lives, and that is why we do them. What would that \$125 cover? Would it cover 2 hours of the in-flight nurse, or 1 hour of the pilot's time? I am trying to put it into perspective. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would not even cover the pilots showing up at the airplane. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Well this needs to be fixed somehow because our medical travel budget just keeps going up, and up, and up.

So in the event that this agreement is not signed and the Department of Health does not sign the agreement with Non-insured Health Benefits, when was the last time that the federal government delivered this themselves, here in the territory? Do they have the ability to step in and provide this function here? I just want to know what the ramifications would be to not signing that agreement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Non-Insured Health Benefits program has been in existence I believe since the 60's, if I recall correctly. That being said, it was inherited by Nunavut when Nunavut was created in 1999.

To be honest, Mr. Chairman, I am amazed that it went for as long as it did before somebody did acknowledge the discrepancy and disparity and inequity of our government having to support the federal government. That is kind of the opposite from the way it is supposed to work. Even with regard to the extensions that I and the previous minister had allowed, I would never have signed the first one if I did not have the clear indication that it would be retroactively applied to any future agreement that was agreed upon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have any further questions on this. I just want to state that I think, based on the minister's explanation, it's ridiculous that Nunavummiut who are sick, who are sicker than most of the country, would be getting short-changed by our own federal government. I think it's sad and I think it's something that Nunavummiut should know about. I'll just use the word "ridiculous." That's just a comment. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main, and I would agree. Minister Hickes, do you want to comment? Please go ahead.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will just indulge me for a moment, I was reading in the paper a couple of days ago that when Prime Minister Trudeau met with the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Natan Obed, in the article it quotes the Prime Minister as saying, “We move forward on the path to reconciliation but we still have a great deal of work to do.” He wants to keep the momentum going and “dig in” on issues that are proving to be a challenge and “repeated a promise to reduce gaps between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of the country,” and also to “work to modernize the co-development approach to programs, policies, and legislation.”

Mr. Chairman, as recently as last week, we’re continuing to advocate that we have administered medical travel since 1999. We’re doing a lot better in a lot of ways. There are still issues that we’re continuing to work on through the medical travel review, but I think it has been acknowledged by all parties that we are best suited to deliver this programming. We just want to be compensated for our costs to get a cost recovery on this. I don’t think it’s an unfair example or an unfair expectation.

This has been going on for four years now. I have been hesitant to bring it up because negotiations were continuing and ongoing up until last week, where I got the letter from Minister Miller basically stating that the same offer I got last year was the only one I’m going to get and including the non-retroactivity of the funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qirngnuq.

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the opening comments on the first page. It states at the bottom, “Mr. Chairman and members, through last year’s budget we decided to set aside \$30 million.” I would like to ask what that money is for, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, the \$30 million that we had allocated to a contingency fund last year was to deal with any unforeseen expenses that weren’t budgeted for. Of that, we have already used \$7.5 million for other supplementary appropriations and we will use the remainder, \$22.5 million, to go towards this. This next fiscal year we have increased that contingency fund to \$50 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qirngnuq.

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It also states and at the specific expenses that we could easily manage, costs like these that arise over the years, as in your comments. What costs do you think that we could better manage? When we look at the budget, sometimes it's difficult to try to look at unexpected expenses. It's probably going to be required at some point perhaps, but maybe not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the member's question. Health is probably if not one of, the most difficult departments to do forecasting for. It is needs driven. Look at the current example with COVID-19. The amount of time that health centre staff have been using up through training or information processes, how we continue to have patient driven work. We can't always foresee how many medevacs we may need, or how much medical travel, or what types of specialists are needed in a community at a time.

So, it is very difficult to forecast, but we do our best with the money that we are allocated. It is an unfortunate reality that as we continue to be underfunded, it has necessitated supplementary appropriations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie, you had a question? Please go ahead.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just had a couple of questions when I was listening to the minister on Non-insured Health Benefits. How about long-term northerners? Are they included in that budget? We are isolated and they deserve some of the services that we get as part of the beneficiary situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood the question correctly; is it non-beneficiaries that get services? We do have an extended health benefit program to cover that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This one that I was reading, let me understand it clearly. Existing programming, such as NunaFam, is where medical students from Memorial University complete their residency requirement in Nunavut. These are students, so does that mean when they are completing their studies, are we, the patients, guinea pigs, and then later on after they have studied us, they go on to complete their medical training? What is the situation with that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question and I would love to clarify it. NunaFam is a phenomenal program that was originally funded by the federal government, and about four years ago they actually stopped funding it. Again, I had numerous discussions with I think, three different health ministers on that topic where, for a fairly small investment, it gives an opportunity to have a link where people practicing and studying medicine, it is part of their academic studies that they have to work in different health settings.

With the agreement that we have had with the university, those students have been coming here at the tail end of their training. So, it is like work experience. All doctors have to do it, but we've just got a special agreement so that they come here. Of that, we have had I believe three different doctors come to work here fulltime after graduating, if I recall the number correctly. There a number of doctors that are working locum contracts to come up periodically, so it has been a fabulous success of introducing physicians to Nunavut and giving them exposure and experience with the healthcare services that we provide.

Nobody is a guinea pig; it is all supervised and everything that is going on. It is part of the education process for all physicians. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. I don't have any more names for questions. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister. Thank you very much for all of the details that you have provided today. This has definitely been eye opening for a lot of us, and I wish you the best of luck in your ongoing negotiations on that front.

During one of your comments you had mentioned telehealth and how it is built into the cost-drivers of medical, travel and as potentially reducing the amount of airfare expenditures.

I just have a few questions on telehealth. First, I am curious to find out how well utilised that program is and whether or not the department is tracking the potential amount of travel that program has been saving. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is more of an hour measurement basically, so since about 1,900 hours up until mid-February in this fiscal year, but I will state one of the biggest challenges with the telehealth is the technology.

We have taken the step to upgrade a number of the units in different health centres over the past few years. As technology and internet bandwidth becomes better in the communities, we are able to utilise the technology a little bit better, but there are still quite dramatic limitations on it. Having a physician oversee, through a telehealth

appointment, they can't hear heartbeats, or fetal heartbeats, and things like that as an example. We do need higher speed internet to be able to fully utilise that service.

So it is not so much being measured of what type medical travel its defraying, or offsetting. It is more maximizing the usage of it, where we really, still in my opinion, are still underutilizing it. There have been some business cases brought forward to improve telehealth service delivery. Unfortunately with the cost pressures overall from the Government of Nunavut, we have not been able to go down that path, but I really hope that at some point we can find some money to invest in telehealth to really take advantage of that technology. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again thank you, minister, for that information. Would you be able provide us a little bit of background around the telehealth program? I thought it was a fairly new initiative undertaken by the Department of Health, and you had mentioned there is currently some upgrading that is going on or being required at our health centres before we can fully utilize that program. If you would not mind just providing a little bit of information about when that program began and what is the current state? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Telehealth has actually been around for quite a while. As with any type of technology, it advances fairly quickly, so we have made improvements as communities. I will use Arviat as an example, with the elders home that is in Arviat; we have recently strung fibre to that, or are in the process of it if it is not done already, to that building so that the Telehealth equipment be set-up in there for family conversations, any medical potential opportunities for telehealth there as well. So that is an example of emerging technologies.

As Community and Government Services has been rolling out that next level of bandwidth or technology in the communities, I cannot remember the term for the program that it is, we have been coming in right behind it and bringing it up to the next level of telehealth equipment to better take advantage of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a recommendation then a question. I am glad to know that the Department of Health does monitor the telehealth usage; he mentioned the 1,900 hours of use so far this year. That is good to know.

I just have a recommendation that the minister and the Department of Health start to also monitor the potential cost saving associated with the hourly usage. For example, you had mentioned 1,900 hours; is that 300 appointments or whatnot? Telehealth has definitely

piqued my interest and I will be following up with questions on it in the future. I just want to recommend that the minister try to monitor cost savings with that program.

My question: with regard to telehealth, will there ever be a point when telehealth will begin to make a dent in the growing demands of medical travel? Is this in the near future? Is this like several years down the road? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have just recently had... I can't even remember the title of the positions to keep track of the data management and tracking, the health information unit, that's what it is. My apologies, Mr. Chairman.

Building that capacity up, which will do a better job of tracking what those 1,900 hours encompassed, some of them are, again, like family chats, visiting electronically or through video, training opportunities for health care staff around the territory, information such as the COVID-19 issue that we're going through right now.

We're not doing a great job right now of tracking what usage; we're just tracking the hours. To get that level of detail in a short period of time would be really challenging as we're building that health information unit. I will appreciate a little bit of patience on that one, but I can assure the member that it's a recognized deterrence, I guess, to medical travel.

Again, it would be very subjective to see what appointment would actually offset medical travel. Maybe if it's a specialist follow-up through telehealth, then that would save a trip, but when we do a better job of our treatment of illnesses, sometimes it actually increases medical travel.

I'll look at cancer screening as an example. The better of a job we do at cancer screening, we're probably going to increase medical travel expenses in a good way. We're going to catch people earlier. There may be more costs involved in that, but people will live longer. To me that's well worth the expense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main. Sorry, not Mr. Main. Mr. Lightstone.

>>*Laughter*

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again thank you, minister, for that response. I have one more request.

The last time the minister was before the committee with a supplementary appropriation, we did have a quite detailed discussion on a number of those items and the minister was kind enough to provide the standing committee with a follow-up letter with additional information on what we had discussed at that time. So far, the minister has definitely

given us a wealth of information to consider both on the NIHB as well as telehealth programming.

I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide the standing committee with a follow-up letter, providing a little bit of the details behind Non-Insured Health Benefits and as Mr. Main had mentioned, in a nutshell, light, high-level information explaining the program and how it has evolved to where it's at today and where you would like to go with it, and both on the NIHB and the telehealth program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I and staff will go through the *Blues* to see what I had mentioned to see if there's anything glaring that's worth following up further with. I went into pretty good detail, but I'll take a look at the *Blues* and we will see if there's any other relevant information that I would be happy to share with the committee. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. I have no more names on my list for questions on this department. Department of Health. Not Previously Authorized. Total Department. \$50 million. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Moving on to page 6. Family Services. Not Previously Authorized. Total Child and Family Services. \$147,000. Ms. Kamingoak.

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

In the briefing note in the last paragraph it states, "Foster care costs are increasing because the department is approving more in special allowances paid for foster costs like room and board, young adults' birthday allowances, day camp allowances, and the materials and resources."

Mr. Chairman, I'm very grateful for foster parents who open their homes for children in need. They play a very important role in ensuring the safety and comfort of our most vulnerable. I fully support the aspects of the foster parent program. However, I am also aware there are many parents who depend on child tax benefits, on income assistance and whatever small benefits they can scrape together to provide the best of their abilities for their own children. Often these parents struggle to provide adequate and healthy food and clothing for their children due to the high cost of living. Many of them can't afford a fancy birthday party. I know many parents who can't afford the fee of summer day camps or other types of camps that are being offered throughout the year.

For children in foster care, the government is providing all this and more and I appreciate that, but my question is: how much of the additional \$147,000 for foster care costs is

spent on discretionary items like birthday parties, day camp fees, and material resources for foster children? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Kamingoak. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to switch witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Does the committee agree for a different witness to appear before the committee?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

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

Thank you. For the record, Minister Hickes, if you could please introduce the witness. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the committee members. With me, Yvonne Niego is the Deputy Minister of Family Services, and just to follow up, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Niego was working on some notes while the question was being asked. I wonder if the member could repeat it, please. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Kamingoak, if you could repeat your question, please. Thank you.

**Ms. Kamingoak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How much of the additional \$147,000 for foster care costs is spent on discretionary items like birthday parties, day camp fees, and material resources for foster children? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would Ms. Niego be able to respond to that question? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Niego.

**Ms. Niego (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have the exact breakdown with me currently, but what I can say is part of the cost, because the department has been trying to limit out-of-territory costs, the cost for in-territory care such as lower levels of care, which would be the foster care, costs are increasing, we would have more in-territory arrangements made with families, with extended families. One example of a Christmas and birthday cost per child would be, I can't recall exactly, \$100 or \$200 per child per year, if that gives a rough idea. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Niego. Ms. Kamingoak.

**Ms. Kamingoak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Yvonne for that response. Who determines whether a foster family is eligible to receive funding for the additional costs of birthday parties or to send a foster child to day camp? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, if Ms. Niego could respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Niego.

**Ms. Niego (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) For birthdays, Christmas; it is a standard set amount for a child, so if they are in care, then that would be included. However, part of that care decision-making process involves a permanency planning care committee. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Kamingoak.

**Ms. Kamingoak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one more question. I would like to ask if the department can get back to me on my first question, about how much of the additional \$147 for foster care costs is spent on discretionary items, if she can clarify. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Kamingoak. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department will respond to the committee. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is with the Department of Family Services; a deficit of \$1,835,000 last year, and the initial budget was \$1,570,300. It says “cost overruns are due primarily to residential care costs.” Are we speaking about the elder residential care in Ottawa, or is this something else? I want a clarification in that, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is totally separate. Elder care is serviced through the Department of Health, and out-of-territory children’s is serviced by Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towntongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Saying that, I do understand that children need a lot of high-level care, which Nunavut cannot provide, but we also have children in foster care within Nunavut that are removed from their families. Does this cost include a strategy on how to return these children back to their families within Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towntongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, those costs would be borne by the policy division or the operations division within a department. These are for the actual care costs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Lightstone, you had a question. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Ms. Niego. With regard to foster care, those children have definitely gone through a lot, and have had some very difficult experiences. So, when it comes to additional discretionaries to make things a little bit easier for them, I'm all for that. My question: looking at the historical appropriations for the Department of Family Services, I know it is a fairly young department, but the last three years the department has seen increasing supplementary appropriations; \$400,000, \$1.1 million, \$1.4 million and now, \$1.8 million.

My next question is: is this going to become a recurring event, or is the new budget that is about to be approved going to be sufficient? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The hope is to look at residential care costs. The deficit is a little over \$1 million. In the new appropriation that we just approved yesterday, that budget is increased to \$2 million more. Foster care costs, there was a deficit of \$625,000; \$1.3 million has been added to next fiscal year's budget. With regard to shelters, the \$146,000, that shelter budget is increased to \$2,107,000. The hope is that that will be sufficient as the line items grow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. I have no more names. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I didn't have a question until I got confused here. The bill itself, on page 6 of the bill, which we're looking at, it breaks down children and family services, \$147,000, and income assistance, \$1,688,000. Then I refer to the briefing materials and it only makes reference to residential care costs and foster care costs. Can the department please clarify for me just why the briefing and the bill don't use the same terminology? I'm sure it's a simple answer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies, Mr. Chairman. I was just getting confirmation that there was a previous reallocation internally. That's what made those numbers so confusing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) If I understand this correctly, there was money that was allocated from the Income Assistance Branch, it was put into residential care costs, and now you're proposing to restore those funds back to the Income Assistance Branch, for clarification. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we're talking about numbers, I'm quite comfortable with them. I'm not an accountant, but I happen to have one sitting beside, so with the Chair's indulgence, if Mr. Chown could respond to that question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Chown.

**Mr. Chown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of that internal reallocation in-year, the Income Assistance Branch is actually one of the branches that are short money. It's the location where we need the appropriation. However, the reasons for the over-expenditure are from other expenditures elsewhere. It's just that when this money was moved earlier in the year, they thought they would have enough money in this branch and then didn't. Had that money not been moved, the Income Assistance Branch would be fine operationally for the year. The explanation for the overage is different than the branch where the funds are actually required; a little confusing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Chown. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the explanation. On residential care in the briefing material it says that residential care costs have increased by about 7 percent each year, driven by higher placement costs and a greater number of placements. When we're saying 7 percent a year, that's a trend and thanks to the department for pointing out the trend, how many years are we looking back at? Is that 7 percent per year since the creation of Nunavut, 7 percent per year in the last two years? I'm trying to understand if this is going to continue. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been a fairly consistent trend. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) A clarification: is this out-of-territory residential care we're talking about or is it in-territory? Earlier both were mentioned and I just wanted to get that clarified. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Both. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There has been a lot of talk about elder care in this House recently in terms of being able to provide elder care in the territory. From the Department of Family Services' point of view, when do we start talking about providing more residential care in-territory for children or minors or those who are under Family Services' jurisdiction, or is that something that's already being discussed? I apologize, Mr. Chairman, if it's beyond the scope of the bill, but I'm trying to understand why we're facing these cost pressures. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. Unfortunately I don't have a fulsome answer for the member. It might be best directed to the minister at another venue on what their future plans are. Right now something like that would have to go into the full capital planning process and what type of work the department would be initiating. With the Chair's permission, I don't think this is the appropriate forum to ask that question to me anyway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main, you're done? Okay. Thank you. I have no more questions for Child and Family Services, the \$147,000. Moving on. Total Income Assistance. \$1,688,000. Are there any questions? If not, Family Services. Not Previously Authorized. Total Department. \$1,835,000. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to Bill 40 in your white legislative binder that's below your desk. In tab 40, you will find Bill 40. *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020*. Clause 1. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 2. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 3. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Go to the Schedule on page 2. Schedule. Supplementary Amounts Appropriated for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2020. Vote 1: Operations and Maintenance. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$54,835,000. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Clause 4. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 5. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 6. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 7. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to Bill 40?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to put Bill 40 on the order paper for third reading?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes, any closing comments?

**Hon. George Hickes:** Very briefly, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the questions that were raised and I know there was a lot of information under the health item to digest, as one of the members put it. I do look forward to continued support in this House with our lobbying efforts to be adequately funded across the health portfolio in particular. There are a lot of initiatives that we would like to move forward on that our fiscal position limits us. I appreciate the questions and I appreciate the support from the legislature, and I thank all the members. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Hickey. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out. We will take a 10-minute break before we move on and I ask all members to meet in the Members' Lounge, please. Thank you.

>>*Committee recessed at 14:49 and resumed at 15:03*

#### **Bill 42 – An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act – Consideration in Committee**

**Chairman:** Welcome back, members. I call the committee meeting back to order. I would now like to ask Minister Hickey: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Hickey.

**Hon. George Hickey:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Does the committee agree for the witnesses to enter the Chamber?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

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

Thank you. For the record, Minister Hickey, if you could please introduce your witnesses and then continue on into your opening comments. Minister Hickey.

**Hon. George Hickey:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As previous, Mr. Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance, and Jo-Anne Falkiner, Director of Corporate Policy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And my opening comments. Thank you.

I appear before you today to present Bill 42, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*.

Mr. Chairman and members, in order to cut down on the illegal sale of cannabis in Nunavut, we must increase accessibility to safer, legal cannabis. The proposed amendments support this by allowing the private sector to take part in a new legal market which holds the potential to stimulate local economies in our communities.

A private sales model is the most appropriate, effective system for our territory. It poses the greatest potential to have a real impact on the strong illegal cannabis operations which already exist in all of our communities.

In discussions with communities and other stakeholders, we have heard repeatedly that Nunavummiut see legal cannabis sales as an economic opportunity and want a system put in place where they can take advantage of the opportunities themselves.

Mr. Chairman and members, Bill 42 proposes amendments to the *Cannabis Act* which will accomplish the following goals:

- First, the bill clarifies the definition of a corporation so that businesses incorporated in the territory are on a level playing field with federally incorporated businesses.
- Secondly, the bill adds a requirement for federally licensed producers to register with the superintendent of licensing under the *Cannabis Act* in order to sell cannabis to Nunavut retailers. This will allow us to compare reported cannabis sales from retailers with the inventory they receive from suppliers, ensuring that all legal cannabis coming into the territory can be tracked.
- Thirdly, we are proposing changes to the Act that allow for regulations creating a new class of licence where cannabis could potentially be sold in existing commercial establishments at a secure and closely regulated cannabis checkout counter or window. This proposed approach will balance the economics of selling to the small markets in our communities with specific regulations to protect against encouraging minors to use cannabis.

Mr. Chairman and members, the proposed amendments will allow for fair and equitable cannabis retail in Nunavut by allowing private businesses to become Nunavut's cannabis retailers. The proposed model provides a streamlined approach for retailers, cutting down as many barriers to entry as possible, while still ensuring responsible oversight and regulation. If this bill is approved, Cannabis Retail Regulations can soon be implemented, which will allow Nunavummiut to walk into cannabis retail stores across the territory.

Mr. Chairman and members, this concludes my opening comments and I would be pleased to answer any questions my colleagues may have regarding this bill. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Does the chair of the committee have any opening comments? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some brief opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 42, (interpretation ends) *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*.

The standing committee does not object to the overall purpose of the bill, which the sponsoring minister described in his opening comments.

During the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee on the occasion of its clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 42, members raised a number of questions concerning its provisions and the government's plans regarding the retail sale of cannabis in Nunavut, including:

- The advisability of providing for more clear definitions of the terms "cannabis store" and "cannabis retail outlet";
- The status of the government's discussions with entities that have expressed interest in operating in the cannabis retail sector;

- The extent to which the government's licensing process for cannabis retailers will give preferential consideration to small businesses as a means to support economic development and job creation in the territory;
- The extent to which such otherwise prohibited activities as "brand promotion" will be permitted in stand-alone cannabis stores that do not permit entry to minors; and
- The government's position in respect to providing for a maximum number of cannabis retailers per community.

I also wish to take this opportunity to note that Bill 42 amends the *Cannabis Act* to provide for a number of new regulatory and reporting requirements on entities that wish to supply cannabis to retailers for sale in Nunavut. These entities are likely to be cannabis producers that are located outside of Nunavut and which operate under federal jurisdiction. During the minister's appearance before the standing committee, he indicated that the government's stated rationale for introducing these provisions is to enable it to "compare reported cannabis sales from retailers with the inventory they receive from suppliers, ensuring that all legal cannabis coming into the territory can be tracked."

Members note that although section 63 of the *Cannabis Act* presently allows for the territorial government to enter into information-sharing agreements with the federal government and other entities "for the collection, use, disclosure and exchange of information," the government chose instead to accomplish the objective of obtaining information concerning the cannabis supply chain by amending the statute in a way that might arguably be considered to constitute an attempt to impose territorial regulation on a federally regulated entity. The standing committee is hopeful that this approach does not prove to be problematic in the future.

The standing committee recommends the passage of Bill 42 to all members.  
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Are there any general comments? Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This cannabis store and cannabis retail outlet, I do hope that Inuit business people will actually be taking part in it, but at the same time, we have entities like the Northern Store or the Co-op and other stores in Rankin. We actually have about five, but the smaller communities do not. I do hope the government's position will be to ensure that the smaller communities will have retailers per community. That is the comment I wanted to make. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. No more comments. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Not speaking as the Chairman, just speaking as an MLA for Arviat North-Whale Cove, I agree with Ms. Towtongie, and I would encourage the department to highlight the differences between having a stand-alone store, or an operation that is community owned and operated, versus a corporate approach. I understand that under the *Cannabis Act*, before

issuing a license for a store or a kiosk, the department will be conducting consultations with the community, and I would encourage the department to highlight or make clear the different approaches that are available.

I think communities will, through that process, be able to speak for themselves in terms of what they would like to see, and what types of businesses they would like to support in the community through the consultations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Are there anymore general comments? If not, I'll ask members to go to Bill 42 in your legislative binder. It is under tab 42. Bill 42, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*. Clause 1. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 2. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 3. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 4. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 5. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 6. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 7. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 8. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 9. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 10. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I wanted to at least put in one question on this. On clause 10 where it says “With respect to cannabis retail locations...”. I just want to clarify, when it says “cannabis retail locations” is that referring to a kiosk type store, or is that referring to any store where cannabis will be sold? It is not clear from the way the bill is written. Sold, not “stoled.”

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thanks for that clarification, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct; that is associated with the kiosk model. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So, just to clarify: under these kiosk-type operations or locations, there will be no advertising permitted, and there will be nothing visible that will encourage, or could be seen to encourage cannabis use by our youth. I just wanted to clarify that because I think it is very important to make sure that our youth are not being, in any way, encouraged to take up drug use. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the member is correct. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. No more names. Clause 10. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 11. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Ms. Towtongie?

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted clarification on clause 11; “...by replacing ‘or a former licensee’ where it appears with ‘a former licensee, a registered supplier, or a former registered supplier.’” Across Nunavut, I don’t know any former licensee, or registered supplier, or any former registered supplier. It’s new. What is this referring to? I need clarification, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towntongie. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct, yet in the future, there will be former suppliers and this allows investigators to still go in and access their records. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Towntongie.

**Ms. Towntongie:** So, if they're speaking of a "former registered supplier", are they talking about a supplier from the south or a former registered supplier in Nunavut? What's the situation with this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It could be both. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Clause 11. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Clause 12. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 13. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just wanted to take the opportunity to get the department's position on the issue mentioned in my opening comments to this bill in terms of Nunavut's ability to impose a territorial regulation on a federally regulated entity. I think by bringing forward this bill, the department has shown that they are of the opinion that they have that ability to impose territorial regulation. I wonder if we could have a bit of elaboration on that note or explanation for people like myself who don't fully understand this area of the law. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically, we've mirrored the federal regulations on that so there are no added barriers to any licensees in the territory. They will be expected to provide the same information under their federal licensing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So if you're mirroring the federal requirements, it sounds almost like a definition of duplication.

Did the department look at the ability to go into information sharing agreements with the federal government so that they could access information without duplicating effort? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To a degree it is a duplication, but yet it still allows, when the federal government looks at a jurisdiction, it looks at the overall, you don't look at Nunavut, making sure that the retailers or licensees are continuing to fulfil their obligations. We would look at it as a community basis, so the information's the same but the usage is slightly different. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So it will be mirroring the federal requirements, but there will be additional details that the suppliers will have to provide to the Nunavut government. They will have to provide a breakdown; we shipped this much cannabis to this community and this supplier, but they wouldn't necessarily provide that information to the federal government. I'm just trying to get a clarification on that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to get the subject matter expert in play here, Ms. Falkiner could respond to that question through you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Falkiner.

**Ms. Falkiner:** The information we're looking for is retailer-specific, so the registered licensed producers from outside the territory would provide us with information of the specific retailers they provided the information to and on Nunavut's side, we would collect up the information from all the retailers and provide it back to the federal government. It's a slightly different nuance, but not a difficulty on the part of the people who will be reporting to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the clarification and thank you for using the words "not a difficulty" because I think it is important to remember that the illegal, unlicensed suppliers of cannabis into Nunavut don't have to fill out any paperwork. They don't have to have an accountant. They don't

have to fill out a single form or anything like that and that's who these legal suppliers are going to be competing against once we have retail stores.

I just want to encourage the department, whatever registration regime you put in place, please make it as simple and easy to use as possible because that is how the legal suppliers will displace the unlicensed or illegal suppliers. The proof will be in the pudding, to use a saying. Once the legal suppliers are in Nunavut and operating, I hope to see them succeed. That's just a comment. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you for your comment. Clause 12. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 13. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 14. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 15. Agreed? Oh, sorry. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question with passing this regulation that the objective might be considered and the lawyer can clarify it for me. What if it's considered an attempt to impose territorial regulations on a federally regulated entity? I want clarification on that before we agree to clause 15. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're not regulating them; we're just registering them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. You're good, Ms. Towtongie? That's good. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) This clause makes reference to registration fees. I think this is something that would be in the regulations, but what does the department have in mind for a registration fee for a registered supplier in terms of how much? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Right now the number we're planning on using is \$100. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main, do you have another question? Please go ahead.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's a very nominal fee and I question why the department would require a registration fee in the first place. If it's just going to be \$100, it's obviously not a huge cash grab. It's not going to be a huge revenue source for the Nunavut government. Has the department considered waiving the registration fees or set the registration fee at zero or is there a reason that you require a registration fee from the suppliers? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically it's to put some type of a nominal, as the member mentions, to avoid any frivolous applications. If it was free, as an example, some people may do it as a lark. If it's going to cost them a hundred bucks, they might think twice about it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is good to know the rationale behind that. I would encourage the department to try setting it at zero and then if you have frivolous applications coming in, then you can put in place a registration fee. Again, I just wanted to reiterate that the legal suppliers of cannabis do not have to do any of this.

I am concerned that the government is going to in one way or another, despite well intentioned bills or actions, is going to put the legal suppliers of cannabis at a disadvantage to the long-established unlicensed suppliers. I will leave that there as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. No more questions. Clause 15. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 16. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to Bill 42 as a whole?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Do members agree to put Bill 42 on the orders of the day for a third reading?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Are there any closing comments? Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the members support on this. I have been questioned in the House a few times now on why we do not have retail sales and this will help us move to that next level of having them available across territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. We are going to move on to Bill 43. Minister Hickes, do you want to keep the same witnesses? You are okay with the same witnesses? Okay. Minister Hickes if you could go ahead with your opening comment please.

**Bill 43 – An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods –  
Consideration in Committee**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the members. I appear before you again today to present Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this proposed amendment is to reduce the length of the consultation period required prior to licensing a physical cannabis retail store.

The current *Cannabis Act* requires a minimum 90-day consultation period prior to licencing the first cannabis store in a municipality, and a sixty day consultation period for each subsequent license.

The proposed amendment will shorten the consultation periods to sixty days for the first store, and thirty days for any subsequent stores.

Mr. Chairman and members, as my staff worked to map out the licensing process; it has become apparent that the existing time frames are unnecessarily long and inefficient. I am comfortable that reducing the minimum time for consultations will still allow adequate time to understand the views of communities while reducing the length of uncertainty for private businesses interested in becoming cannabis retailers.

Mr. Chairman and members, this concludes my opening comments and I would be pleased to answer any questions my colleagues may have about this bill. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Does the chair to the committee have any opening comments? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some brief some opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 43, (interpretation ends) *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*.

The standing committee does not object to the overall purposes of this bill, which the sponsoring minister described in his opening comments. The standing committee notes the importance of the government providing clear information concerning the minimum level of the public support it considers necessary for approving the issuing of licences for cannabis stores.

The standing committee recommends the passage of Bill 43 to all members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Any general comments on Bill 43? If not, I ask member to go to their legislative binder to tab 43; you will find Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*. Clause 1. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to Bill 43 as a whole?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to put Bill 43 on the orders of the day for a third reading?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Hickes, any closing comments?

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank the members for their understanding and support of this. I think it will help streamline the process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your officials for presenting the bill to us and answering our questions. With that, Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out.

### **Bill 41 – An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act – Consideration in Committee**

I will ask the Minister of Justice if she could go to the witnesses table, please.

Thank you. We're dealing with Bill 41. Minister Ehaloak, do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee?

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Do members agree for the witnesses to enter the Chambers?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

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

Thank you. For the record, Minister Ehaloak, if you could please introduce your witnesses and then continue into your opening comments on Bill 41. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right and your left is Adrienne Silk, she is the Acting Deputy Minister, and to my left and your right is our Policy Lawyer, Erin George, and standing by in the audience is Amy Short, who is our Legislative Counsel.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today to discuss Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trustee Act*. This bill amends the *Guardianship and Trustee Act* by removing the references to specific ministers and changing the regulation-making authority.

Responsibility for the Act is currently shared between the departments of Justice and Family Services. Because of the planned transfer of the Office of the Public Guardian, which is currently under the Department of Family Services, to the Department of Justice, it is necessary to amend the Act to remove reference to the Minister of Family Services.

As well, the regulation-making power under the Act will be changed from the Commissioner to the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will now take questions.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Ehaloak. Does the chair of the committee have opening comments? Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some very brief comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*.

The standing committee is in support of this bill, which the minister described in her opening comments.

As of April 1, 2020, the Office of the Public Guardian will be transferred to the Department of Justice, where it will merge with the Office of the Public Trustee.

Members appreciated receiving detailed information from the minister on the number of files handled by these offices which share similar mandates and structures and it is anticipated that the sharing of administrative services and other functions will allow for efficiencies in service delivery.

Given the pending amalgamation of the two offices, it was not clear why the department did not take the opportunity to revise both the *Guardianship and Trusteeship Act* and the

*Public Trustee Act* in order to consolidate the mandates of both offices under one single piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments. The standing committee recommends the passage of Bill 41 to all members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Are there any general comments? If not, I'll ask members to go to Bill 41 in the legislative binders. Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*. Clause 1. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What are the average caseloads for both the Office of the Public Guardian and the Office of the Public Trustee? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one moment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. The average caseload, active files, as of April 24, 2019 is 272. Under the public guardianship, active files are 162. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just a clarification, is that the average caseload of each office or is that the active number of files? Just a clarification. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The total average caseload per year is 535 and we haven't figured out what the average caseload is per year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Ehaloak. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Maybe the department will be able to get back to us, the committee, at a later date in terms of the average caseload.

My final question is: was any consideration given to revising the *Public Trustee Act* so that one piece of legislation could provide for the mandates of both the Public Guardian and the Public Trustee, especially now that they will operate out of the same office? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The *Public Trustee Act* deals with individuals who are deceased, so it's one Act that deals directly with the deceased and the *Public Trustee Act* deals with individuals who are still alive and who need help. That's why there are two separate Acts.

What we're doing here is we just want the... . Currently the *Guardianship Act* reports to the Minister of Family Services and the *Public Trustee Act* reports to the Department of Justice and it refers to both Acts referred to the Commissioner that makes the changes. What we're trying to do with this Act is that we want the *Guardianship Act* to report directly to...if passed, it will fall under the Minister of Justice and the *Public Trustee Act* falls...the reporting goes to the Minister of Justice, but we want to change, instead of the Commissioner having the powers to make change, it would be the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Ehaloak. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm aware that there are two separate Acts that govern the two offices and the minister mentioned that one deals with people who are deceased and one deals with people who are not deceased. Is that something that prevented the department from amalgamating the mandates of both offices in one piece of legislation? Is there like a legal principle where if it's going to be about deceased people and people who are not deceased, they can't be in the same Act? I'm just trying to understand why this approach wasn't taken. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very good question. Just in speaking with my acting deputy minister, we can look at that and possibly look at trying to change it so that they do fall under one Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. I guess the answer to my original question is no; that consideration was not given to putting them under one Act. I guess that is my last question, is that this was not something that was considered previous to the standing committee's suggestion or questioning on this subject. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we did not think of putting the two Acts together because we did not think that there would be a problem with the amalgamation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Towntongie.

**Ms. Towntongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question. Did the departments consider that with the sharing of administrative services and other functions the issue of conflict of interest between detailed information on the number of files handled by these offices? My final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Towntongie. Minister Ehaloak.

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no conflict of interest; they work together. They need information from each other in order for the departments to function. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Clause 1. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 2. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 3. Agreed?

**Some members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 4. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Clause 5. Agreed?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to Bill 41 as a whole?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Do members agree to put Bill 41 on the orders of the day for third reading?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Ehaloak, any closing comments?

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take this time to thank the members for reviewing this Act, and great questions during standing committee. I

want to thank the Departments of Justice and Family Services for their hard work, and this will make the process streamline a lot easier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Ehaloak. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your staff for answering the questions here today. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out. Mr. Akoak.

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

*>>Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

*>>Applause*

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

### **Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole**

**Mr. Rumbolt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bills 40, 41, 42 and 43 and would like to report that Bills 40, 41, 42, and 43 are concluded and are immediately ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*>>Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder?

*>>Laughter*

Mr. Akoak is the seconder.

*>>Laughter*

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Question has been called. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

*>>Applause*

(interpretation ends) Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

### **Item 21: Third Reading of Bills**

#### **Bill 41 – An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act – Third Reading**

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, that Bill 41, *An Act to Amend to Amend the Guardianship and Trustee Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 41 is now ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance.

#### **Bill 40 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020 – Third Reading**

**Hon. George Hickey**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 40, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020*, be read for the third for the time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is in carried and Bill 40 is now ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance.

#### **Bill 42 – An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act – Third Reading**

**Hon. George Hickey**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 42, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 42 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance.

#### **Bill 43 – An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods – Third Reading**

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

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 43 is ready for assent.

Mr. Clerk, will you please determine if the Commissioner of Nunavut is prepared to enter the Chambers to give assent to the bills.

### **Assent to Bills**

**Commissioner Nellie Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you. Please be seated.

As Commissioner of Nunavut, I am pleased to give assent to the following bills:

- Bill 39, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2020-2021*;
- Bill 40, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2019-2020*;
- Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*;
- Bill 42, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act*; and
- Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Cannabis Act Respecting Consultation Periods*.

The sun has returned and each new day brings more light.

I used to shake members' hands on my way out, but I will not do that.

I wish all members a safe trip home to your constituencies and families. I am very grateful for the hard work that you do for Nunavummiut, and I look forward to seeing all of you again during the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Going to Item 22. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

### **Item 22: Orders of the Day**

**Clerk** (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that there's a meeting of the Full Caucus at nine o'clock tomorrow morning in the Nanuq Boardroom.

*Orders of the Day* for May 26:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions

7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - 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.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you.

### **Speaker's Statement**

Before we adjourn, I am pleased to take this opportunity to say a few words.

I first wish to remind the residents of Baker Lake that a by-election will be held in the community on April 27, and to note that detailed information concerning the by-election is available from Elections Nunavut.

We very much look forward to welcoming Baker Lake's new member to the House at our upcoming spring sitting.

As the constituency's seat is currently vacant, individuals and organizations should contact the appropriate department and minister regarding issues that fall under the responsibility of the territorial government.

As is customary at this time, I am pleased to thank our interpreters...

>>*Applause*

...and our pages...

>>*Applause*

...for their work in keeping our proceedings running smoothly in the Chamber. We're always given water.

>>*Laughter*

We will not get thirsty while we're here.

I will take a moment to recognize our pages by name:

- Alexis Vincent;

>>*Applause*

- Maye Vincent;

>>*Applause*

- Christopher Idlout; and

>>*Applause*

- Hayden Salsman.

>>*Applause*

I again thank you all. I also wish to thank my constituents in Igloolik for their support and to again emphasize that although my role in this House has changed, my office is always ready to assist residents.

Finally, I thank my family for their support, which I draw on every day. It's evident that all of our families support us when we leave them in our communities.

This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation ends) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House Adjourned at 16:00*

