

**NUNAVUT HANSARD**

**UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021**

**IQALUIT, NUNAVUT**

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Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 55

***Corrections:***

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**PLEASE RETURN ANY CORRECTIONS TO THE CLERK OR DEPUTY CLERK**

## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

### *Speaker*

**Hon. Paul Quassa**  
(Aggu)

**Hon. David Akeegok**  
(Quttiktuq)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Economic  
Development and Transportation; Minister  
of Human Resources*

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(Amittuq)

**Pauloosie Keyootak**  
(Uqqummiut)

**David Qamaniq**  
(Tununiq)

**Emiliano Qirngnuq**  
(Netsilik)

**Tony Akoak**  
(Gjoa Haven)

*Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole*

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak**  
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Health; Minister  
responsible for Seniors; Minister  
responsible for Suicide Prevention*

**Allan Rumbolt**  
(Hudson Bay)

*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the  
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**Pat Angnakak**  
(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu)

*Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole*

**Adam Lightstone**  
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

**Hon. Joe Savikataaq**  
(Arviat South)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and  
Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of  
Energy; Minister of Environment;  
Minister responsible for Immigration;  
Minister responsible for Indigenous  
Affairs; Minister responsible for the  
Utility Rates Review Council*

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak**  
(Cambridge Bay)

*Minister of Community and Government  
Services; Minister responsible for the Qulliq  
Energy Corporation*

**John Main**  
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk**  
(Pangnirtung)

*Minister of Culture and Heritage;  
Minister of Languages; Minister  
responsible for the Nunavut Housing  
Corporation*

**Hon. George Hickee**  
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

*Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial  
Management Board; Minister of Justice;  
Minister responsible for Labour; Minister  
responsible for the Workers' Safety and  
Compensation Commission*

**Patterk Netser**  
(Aivilik)

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik**  
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

*Government House Leader; Minister  
of Family Services; Minister  
responsible for Homelessness; Minister  
responsible for the Status of Women*

**Hon. David Joanasic**  
(South Baffin)

*Minister of Education; Minister responsible  
for Nunavut Arctic College*

**Calvin Pedersen**  
(Kugluktuk)

**Cathy Towtongie**

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield  
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## Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	1
Ministers' Statements .....	1
Members' Statements .....	6
Returns to Oral Questions .....	10
Oral Questions.....	12
Tabling of Documents .....	30
Notices of Motions .....	31
Motions.....	31
First Reading of Bills .....	34
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters .....	35
Report of the Committee of the Whole .....	62
Orders of the Day .....	62

**A.**

**Daily References**

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 ..... 1

**B.**

**Ministers' Statements**

535 – 5(2): Pink Shirt Day 2021 (Savikataaq) ..... 1  
536 – 5(2): Culture Week at Nunavut Arctic College (Joanasie) ..... 2  
537 – 5(2): Pink Shirt Day (February 24) and Anti-violence (Sheutiapik) ..... 3  
538 – 5(2): Nunavut Black History Society (Nakashuk) ..... 4  
539 – 5(2): Healing by Talking (Kusugak) ..... 4  
540 – 5(2): Reporting Tools for Violence in Nunavut Schools (Joanasie) ..... 5

**C.**

**Members' Statements**

789 – 5(2): Celebrating Uvagut TV (Kaernerik) ..... 6  
790 – 5(2): COVID Information and Misinformation (Angnakak) ..... 7  
791 – 5(2): Issues with Education during COVID-19 (Main) ..... 8  
792 – 5(2): National Trade Corridors Fund (Simailak) ..... 8  
793 – 5(2): Respect for Inuit Culture (Towtongie) ..... 9  
794 – 5(2): Annie Pootoogook Park in Ottawa (Joanasie) ..... 10

**D.**

**Returns to Oral Questions**

Return to Oral Question 1139 – 5(2): Fuel Purchases (Ehaloak) ..... 10

**E.**

**Oral Questions**

1142 – 5(2): Fuel Prices (Netser) ..... 12

1143 – 5(2): 2021 Budget (Angnakak).....	13
1144 – 5(2): National Trade Corridors Fund (Simailak).....	16
1145 – 5(2): Airport Infrastructure (Kaernek) .....	17
1146 – 5(2): Mental Health and Addiction Services (Qamaniq).....	19
1147 – 5(2): Housing Construction (Lightstone) .....	20
1148 – 5(2): Air Transportation Sector (Rumbolt).....	22
1149 – 5(2): Senior Fuel Subsidy (Akoak).....	24
1150 – 5(2): Delivery of Education in Arviat during COVID-19 (Main) .....	26
1151 – 5(2): Water Infrastructure (Towtongie).....	28

**F.**

**Tabling of Documents**

344 – 5(2): Sanirajak Marine Infrastructure Feasibility Study (Kaernek) .....	30
345 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Legislative Assembly (Speaker) .....	30
346 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut (Speaker) .....	30
347 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut (Speaker).....	30
348 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (Speaker).....	30

**G.**

**Motions**

103 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 55, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act – Notice (Towtongie) .....	31
104 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 56, Liquor Tax Act – Notice (Towtongie) .....	31
098 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 36, Mental Health Act (Towtongie) .....	31

099 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 52, Nunavut Petroleum Products Commission Act (Towtongie).....	32
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

**H.**

**Bills**

Bill 60 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – First Reading.....	34
Bill 61 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – First Reading.....	34
Bill 63 – An Act to Amend the Traffic and Safety Act – First Reading .....	34
Bill 64 – An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act – First Reading .....	34
Bill 65 – Apprenticeship and Certification Act – First Reading .....	35
Bill 62 – An Act to Amend the Judicature Act – First Reading.....	35
Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Health – Consideration in Committee.....	36

**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Wednesday, February 24, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeegok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickee, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Patterk Netser, Mr. David Qamaniq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Mr. Craig Simailak, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:31*

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Good day. Can you say the opening prayer, please, Member Simailak.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good day, Nunavummiut and those who are following the proceedings. Please feel welcome as your Legislative Assembly reconvenes, and your MLAs will be hard at work today. We will keep you in our thoughts.

We will proceed. (interpretation ends) Ministers' Statements. (interpretation) Our Premier, Mr. Savikataaq.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 535 – 5(2): Pink Shirt Day 2021**

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

Prior to commencing my statement, I want to wish a happy birthday today to my daughter-in-law, and I hope you have a good birthday today. As well, I would like to wish my daughter-in-law and son a good day. Although they are not doing anything, it is their special day. (interpretation ends) Happy birthday, *ukuaq*.

Mr. Speaker, every year on the last Wednesday of February we celebrate the Canada-wide Pink Shirt Day event. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it's obvious that we all need to support and lift each other up.

Mr. Speaker, every year the Government of Nunavut works with the Canadian Red Cross to encourage people across the territory to wear pink to show their support for anti-bullying. We all know how dangerous and harmful bullying can be to our children, youth, and even to adults.

We all have a role to play in anti-bullying and to stand up against it when we see it happening around us. Today is an important way to stand together in our fight to curb bullying in all forms, and work together to achieve Inuuqatigiitsiarniq - respecting others, relationships and caring for people.

Mr. Speaker, today all members have been given Pink Shirt Day buttons to wear, to show that we all stand up to bullying at work, at home, and in our communities. I am proud to wear mine and show my support. At the end of the day, respecting one another and working together to encourage kindness, respect and positivity are more important than ever.

Mr. Speaker, let's work together to end bullying in all its forms. We've got this and we support one another here and from afar. Happy Pink Shirt Day! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Joanasie.

#### **Minister's Statement 536 – 5(2): Culture Week at Nunavut Arctic College**

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Nunavummiut, as well as the residents of Kinngait and Kimmirut.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand up today and recognize the important events that take place during the month of February. February is Inuktitut Language Month as well as Black History Month. It is also the time when Nunavut Arctic College hosts activities to students to celebrate its cultural week.

Mr. Speaker, each year the college dedicates a week for students to learn more about cultural activities outside their classroom. The college encourages all students to use this time to connect with the broader college community as well as to connect with the practices, skills, and knowledge that have always served Inuit in good times and challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, students at the Kitikmeot Campus in Cambridge Bay had the opportunity to engage in activities, such as storytelling, viewing archival movies, carving, throat-singing, and felt tapestry during the cultural week.

Mr. Speaker, students at the Nunatta Campus in Iqaluit have a wide range of activities that focus on land, clothing, and tools. Activities ranged from making all parts of the qulliq and learning *inugait* to hunting ptarmigan or rabbit.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the staff and faculty of Nunavut Arctic College who work to provide these important opportunities for students to engage further with our land, language, and culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends)  
Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Ms. Sheutiapik.

**Minister's Statement 537 – 5(2): Pink Shirt Day (February 24) and Anti-violence**

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. My dear husband is at my office and he's probably watching the proceedings. I'm so happy you are here, my dear.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, today we continue to recognize the importance of building healthy relationships in observation of Pink Shirt Day, a national day of solidarity to end bullying. This year the Pink Shirt message reads "spread kindness." This is a valuable lesson for all children and youth.

Pink Shirt Day reminds us to consider the impacts of bullying in our communities, our schools, and to share innovative ways to support our children and youth in becoming positive role models for themselves, their peers, and their communities. It is important that victims of bullying know they are not alone and there is help and support available.

I would also like to take this time to recognize that bullying and violence of all types will not be tolerated. Nunavut experiences rates of family violence that are 12 times higher than the national average and a rate of suicide nine times higher when compared to non-indigenous Canadians.

Together we can continue to model healthy relationships in our homes and send a united message that violence does not belong in our families, our communities, and our territory.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear!

>>Applause

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik:** Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for the Status of Women, it is important to commend the efforts of those working to end any form of violence in Nunavut, be it violence in the community, school, workplace, or home.

Together let's send a message to spread kindness and that bullying, and violence is not tolerated. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends)  
Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Minister's Statement 538 – 5(2): Nunavut Black History Society**

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I also say “good day” to the residents of Pangnirtung.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I had the great honour earlier this month to attend the opening ceremony of Black History Month. It was very important to attend the event to continue the necessary work of nurturing a strong and meaningful relationship between the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Black History Society.

I would like to congratulate three Nunavut residents who received awards during the ceremony. Iqaluit Deputy Mayor Janet Brewster was awarded the Sankofa Community Collaborator Award, Clayton Greaves was awarded the Sankofa Social Justice Award, and Dr. Camilius Chike Egeni was awarded the Sankofa African Descent Person of Excellence in Nunavut Award.

I also had the tremendous honour to accept a gift for our Executive Council of a painting by 14-year-old Whale Cove artist Kenia Pike. The imagery shows the similarities and differences between black and Inuit cultures and expresses the reality that we are all one race. The beautiful work of art will be displayed in this building.

Mr. Speaker, as we witnessed during the powerful and moving Black Lives Matter march in Iqaluit this past summer, there are strong similarities and allyship between black and Inuit cultures in Nunavut. Continuing this discussion is embedded in the priorities of the *Turaaqtavut* mandate and in several of the Inuit societal values.

Mr. Speaker, the more we collaborate, the more successful we will be in helping develop a more vibrant and thriving territory. I encourage my colleagues in this House to participate in Black History Month activities that continue in February and March, including a film festival, dance events, a fashion show, and a mental health talk.  
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

**Minister's Statement 539 – 5(2): Healing by Talking**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day. Good day to the residents of Rankin Inlet.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, mental health is as important as the physical health. Mr. Speaker, my department is committed to providing all Nunavummiut access to responsive mental health services that are culturally appropriate and as close to home as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that this past January the Department of Health's Territorial Mental Health and Addictions Team, in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada, launched the "Healing by Talking" program. This program brings the option for long-term counselling to every person in every community across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, not only does this program enhance our ability to provide mental health services; it brings these important programs to Nunavummiut, allowing them to heal at home and close the support of their family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, the "Healing by Talking" program is a network of virtual counsellors that can be accessed remotely by phone from the comfort of home. Through this program, clients can seek help with issues ranging from addictions and depression to anger management and grief counselling. The funding provided allows for up to 22 hours of counselling for clients.

Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of the innovative solutions the Department of Health uses to ensure quality, effective and accessible care is available to Nunavummiut wherever they live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

### **Minister's Statement 540 – 5(2): Reporting Tools for Violence in Nunavut Schools**

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ensuring that our schools are safe and welcoming places to learn is one of my department's highest priorities. We want to ensure that our students have a positive learning environment in which to grow as learners, and that our school staff feel safe and supported as they go about their important work.

We know that school violence is a concerning reality across Canada and in our schools here in Nunavut. I stand before you today to reassure you and all Nunavummiut that we are aware of these concerns and the impact they have on our school staff as well as our students.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in line with the *Turaaqtavut* priority, Katujjiqatigiinnivut, the Department of Education, along with the Nunavut Teachers Association, established the Safe Schools Anti-Violence Committee. This committee is developing a new reporting tool for school staff that will be implemented by fall 2021.

Mr. Speaker, this tool is designed to reduce barriers for reporting violence and ensure that we are collecting robust data to identify specific areas of concern. It will be standardized to ensure all incidents are captured the same way across the territory. This data will also

inform additional training and supports for school staff and students, and enable my department to allocate the required resources to address any violent incidents in schools.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education has a zero-tolerance policy for violence in schools. My department is committed to addressing 100 percent of all reported violent incidents in our schools. Improving the tools for reporting violence in schools is another step to proactively look after the health and safety of our students and school staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

### Item 3: Members' Statements

#### Member's Statement 789 – 5(2): Celebrating Uvagut TV

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the residents of Amittuq and Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about and to congratulate Uvagut TV. Today they are celebrating the opening of the new channel in Igloolik, as it showcases Inuit culture, language and people daily and it will be on air at all times.

Now, I wish to include within this acknowledgement, a person who was recognized within Nunavut previously at the highest level, Dr. Zacharias Kunuk. He was recognized after creating the company and working for 35 plus years, and today he is able to provide multi-media shows and now this television channel. This will allow Inuit language and culture to dominate this channel of Uvagut TV.

>>Applause

We are very appreciative that he has moved forward towards this initiative and that Inuktitut language and culture will be available on television.

Another matter I wish to voice, Mr. Speaker, to clarify, is that this channel is available on the Co-op cable channels, if people wish to watch and it is on channel 267 on the Co-op cable, and in Sanirajak it would be channel 9. I do not have the information about any other communities, but that is how it is set up in our area. And further, it is also available via Shaw Direct, if you wish to watch on that satellite, and it would be channel 267 on Shaw Direct.

My apologies, Mr. Speaker, I should have stated previously that it is channel 240 on the Co-op cable, and pretty soon this will also be made available to Alaskans, Siberians,

Labradoreans, and Nunavik. I hope everybody will be watching this in Nunavik and Nunatsiaq, 208 is the channel.

I would like to recognize people of Igloolik, in particular Zacharias Kunuk along with the Inuit TV network. It's great now that we can all now be able to watch the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud that Uvagut TV will now be available throughout Nunavut. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Member Angnakak.

### **Member's Statement 790 – 5(2): COVID Information and Misinformation**

**Ms. Angnakak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to address some concerns that have been brought to me by constituents and also that I have heard on the radio and that are circulating around on social media.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is important that we talk about these concerns because there seems to be a lot of misunderstandings out there regarding the COVID vaccine, what it is, how it may affect our bodies, and what to expect from it.

Mr. Speaker, I am not a doctor or a biochemist and I certainly don't pretend to understand all of the science behind the COVID vaccine. However, I was pleased to note that the Government of Nunavut's website, right on the opening page, has a link to some very useful information about the vaccine which clearly explains what is in it, how it is administered, how it works, and what possible side effects you might experience when you get it.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that there are some very real concerns and valid reasons for some people not to want the vaccine, and I respect that.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of and maybe even know someone personally whose mental health is being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Not being able to visit with family, not socializing, or living alone and having our daily contact with other people severely limited, it all takes a toll on our mental health.

Just having to adjust to a different way of life can be very hard. My colleague from Arviat has spoken very eloquently about the extreme levels of fatigue and the frustration that people can experience in these difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking some questions on this issue to help overcome some misunderstandings and put us on a more positive path to a healthy future after COVID. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 791 – 5(2): Issues with Education during COVID-19**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues, if you are able to see me.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, today is Pink Shirt Day, which is for the awareness and support of anti-bullying campaigns. We should support it, and today is a day for anti-bullying. Bullying has to be in the past. Young people should know that bullying will come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, I have a statement about education. Our school closed in November here in Arviat and it is still closed. I know that the Department of Education has been working around the clock. However, I have been informed by parents and the school staff that they have concerns. The parents' concerns relate to the fact that children are not getting the education they require and perhaps they have lost some educational hours. In English it is called (interpretation ends) learning loss. (interpretation) The staff members at the school have been experiencing many different barriers as well, yet they continue diligently working in their field.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we all agree as members that education is a very important area and has great benefits to the lives of our youth and maybe even to the community as a whole. Education should not be a lesser priority. The ongoing school closure in Arviat is a concern. At the appropriate time I will have questions to the Minister of Education regarding the actual situation here in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Member Simailak.

**Member's Statement 792 – 5(2): National Trade Corridors Fund**

**Mr. Simailak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has introduced the National Trade Corridors Fund. I believe this is a tremendous opportunity for the Nunavut government to utilize, and I am glad that they have been putting it to use to help develop our territory.

One such project I am very interested in is the Kivalliq Intercommunity Trade Corridor, as I believe this will connect neighbouring communities from Baker Lake down to Arviat, and hopefully end up connecting down to Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, by connecting these communities with an all-weather road, this will enable people to travel back and forth by truck and Honda. That would be a lot of fun, personally.

>> *Laughter*

>> *Applause*

We would be able to use freighter trucks and trailers as well to transport materials at a cheaper cost as opposed to airfreight only. This road will enable our youth to travel for quick weekend tournaments or even a quick couple exhibition games on a Saturday and be back on Sunday before school starts on Monday. This would offer competition to help improve their skills and create lifelong friendships.

Mr. Speaker, this is what communities all across Canada have been doing for decades, and Nunavut is finally on a path to get there. I thank the minister and his staff for working on this project. Nunavut is finally on a path to creating major investments that will affect multitudes of people, but I do have some questions around this subject, so at the appropriate time I will be directing my questions today to the appropriate minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

### **Member's Statement 793 – 5(2): Respect for Inuit Culture**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today wearing pink, recognizing that we must respect each other. I also have a "however" to add. My ancestors were the first people here in Nunavut. (interpretation ends) On Pink Day, we have to recognize that Inuit were in Nunavut first.

As you know, there was an article that was done by an RCMP officer's wife saying that our culture was simple and primitive. That troubled me. All I am saying is to the individuals that have come after our ancestors have survived to Nunavut, and you are one of the first negotiators to change the map of Canada, that if they are going to request our respect on Pink Day, then we must ask of them that they respect Nunavut and our ancestors because it's 2021.

These types of articles calling our culture simple and primitive are unneeded and they should not have been printed. That's why I wanted to stand because each of us are calling for other cultures to be respected, but in return, those cultures have to respect the Inuit culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for South Baffin, Member Joanasie.

**Member's Statement 794 – 5(2): Annie Pootoogook Park in Ottawa**

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize and commend the City of Ottawa's Community and Protective Services Committee for their recommendation to change the name of an Ottawa park in memory of late Annie Pootoogook.

Mr. Speaker, Annie Pootoogook was a distinguished artist from my hometown in Kinngait. Her artwork has captivated and continues to intrigue many Inuit art enthusiasts, collectors and galleries with her drawings of images depicting contemporary Inuit life.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Annie's family, friends, and fans, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all individuals and organizations, notably the Government of Nunavut through Premier Joe Savikataaq, as well as the Department of Culture and Heritage and a number of Inuit organizations, the National Art Gallery of Canada and the Ottawa Art Gallery, who have supported renaming Sandy Hill Park in honour of the late Annie Pootoogook.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank Ottawa city councillor Mathieu Fleury for bringing this forward within his role on council. Thank you very much.

Finally, I wish to personally applaud Stephanie Plante for initiating all the efforts behind this proposal and collecting the support necessary to make this happen. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker and members, please join me in paying tribute to Annie Pootoogook and the legacy that her name brings to Ottawa, the Inuit community and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. No. 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Ehaloak.

**Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions****Return to Oral Question 1139 – 5(2): Fuel Purchases**

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon to Nunavummiut and my constituents, especially my granddaughter today.

Mr. Speaker, our colleague, Adam Lightstone, MLA for Iqaluit-Manirajak, asked a question as myself as Minister of Community and Government Services, No. 1139 – 5(2).



Mr. Speaker, I rise today to supplement an answer I gave during question period on Tuesday, February 23, 2021, to the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, requesting information on fuel prices.

Mr. Speaker, in case there was any confusion from my answer yesterday, I want to clarify how COVID has impacted our current fuel pricing. Our fiscal forecasting was skewed by lower fuel consumption during the pandemic, leading to the need to raise fuel prices.

In the face of the global pandemic, at the height of Nunavut's COVID-19 outbreak, and so close to the holiday season, the government did not want to place a further burden on Nunavummiut by increasing fuel prices. Additionally, we recognized that the price increase for a few months of 2020 would ultimately be reversed in April 2021, when the full effects of the favourable fuel resupply were realized. We had hoped that this would be realized through Bill 54.

Fuel pricing is a complicated process and one that we are trying to make more efficient and stable with legislation through Bill 52, *Nunavut Petroleum Products Commission Act*, and Bill 54, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*.

Mr. Speaker, given that Bill 54 was already before the Assembly, it was determined that a friendly amendment would be proposed to increase the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund. By doing this, fuel prices would actually drop as of April 2021.

This proposed amendment was prepared and correspondence sent to the standing committee with the intent of full discussion during this sitting of the Legislative Assembly as part of the review of Bill 54 that had been deferred from the November 2020 sitting.

As you can see, there are complexities between these two bills. COVID led to serious implications to the Government of Nunavut's fiscal forecasting and our ability to help with ongoing fuel purchasing within our current frameworks.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, I look forward to working with my colleagues in this House through the legislative process in the Committee of the Whole for Bills 52 and 54 to find solutions to help with the stability and reliability of longer term fuel pricing and adjustments.

Again, I apologize if this led to confusion, and I look forward to continuing this discussion to ensure we are doing everything we can for Nunavummiut in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. (interpretation) Continuing on. No. 5. (interpretation ends) Recognition of Visitors in the

Gallery. (interpretation) We will just proceed. No. 6. Oral Questions. First one will be the Member for Aivilik, Mr. Netser.

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

#### **Question 1142 – 5(2): Fuel Prices**

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I send my regards to the people of Coral Harbour and Naujaat. Spring is in the air, and there are many people hunting and going out on the land. This is enviable, as we are hunters here too.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask questions to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, during yesterday's oral question period, the minister informed the House that the Petroleum Products Division has "secured approximately 70 percent of the 2021 resupply season." For the record, can the minister clarify how much the government has spent to date on the 2021 fuel resupply, and can she clearly indicate what impact this will have on the price that Nunavummiut pay for their home heating fuel and gasoline? I know that she mentioned that in her return to oral question, but can you please clarify that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. The exact amount of how much money we have spent on the fuel, I don't have that detail of information, but I can get the information for the member.

As for the fuel pricing and what the PPD expects to expend by the end of March, those figures, we will definitely get that information for you as we would have known exactly how much we have spent by January 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the minister for answering the question. Mr. Speaker, during yesterday's oral question period, the minister also informed the House that, and again I quote, "If more monies had been collected on fuel price arrears, Petroleum Products could have secured more fuel when market prices were lower." For the record, can the minister clarify the value of these arrears and can she indicate what actions the department is taking to collect the arrears which she mentioned in yesterday's question period? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) When it comes to recovery of debts and individuals or businesses owing to petroleum products, the department reviews those debt recoveries or long-term debt expenses that haven't been recovered from individuals on a regular basis. Those amounts, I do not have that information at this time, but we do review those debt recoveries that come to the minister's office for review and for further discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, it sounds like some group or person owes a lot of money to the Petroleum Products Division and it sounds like they're having trouble paying that old debt. It sounds like the government is not going to be requesting money from these organizations that owe a lot of money. Are we going to end up paying for their debts? (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Again I thank the member for his question. Just for the member's information, as of November 30, 2020, the Petroleum Products Division's accounts receivable balance was \$38.3 million compared to \$76.9 million on March 31, 2020. This is a decrease of \$38.7 million, or 50 percent.

The decrease in accounts receivable can be attributed primarily to collections of arrears from the Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the commercial customer class, the local governments, for example, the hamlets. Accounts receivable balances are not expected to increase dramatically for the 2020-21 fiscal year-end. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 1143 – 5(2): 2021 Budget**

**Ms. Angnakak** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have some questions today for the Minister of Finance about this year's budget. I'm thinking about giving him a break tomorrow, maybe.

Mr. Speaker, a number of things jumped out at me yesterday during the minister's speech.

This year's budget indicates that the GN expects to collect \$21.8 million in rent from GN employees who are in staff housing during the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the Nunavut Housing Corporation is currently undertaking a review of the public housing rent scale and we know that questions have been asked about such issues as high-income earners living in public housing.

Can the Minister of Finance indicate if his department will take the lead in undertaking a similar review of the current staff housing rent system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the staff housing review that has been ongoing and obviously there have been some delays with the COVID situation of being able to, a lot of people were working from home for a period of time. Mr. Speaker, that's encompassed in the same review. We're taking a look at different options for how, a homeowner rebate or if you're in market rent.

As that review matures and as we come back to the legislature, well, through cabinet first, we will be coming to the legislature with more information as that review gets finalized. Unfortunately I don't have any details on when that will be right now. I'll have to check with my officials, but the Nunavut Housing Corporation has the lead on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I think we all look forward to hearing more information about that, maybe through the relevant minister.

Mr. Speaker, when the Legislative Assembly was asked to approve the legalization of cannabis at the beginning of our term, one of the expectations was that the government would see increased revenues as a result of decreased illegal activity. However, it appears that the reality is not working out quite as well as was hoped.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget documentation indicates that "Nunavut continues to face steep competition from the illegal market, including sophisticated online sales, whose established distribution networks and price competitiveness have proven difficult to undermine, particularly in the absence of walk-in stores."

Can the minister confirm how many applications to open walk-in stores are currently being reviewed by his department, and can he indicate if the government will be reconsidering its position on selling cannabis directly to residents through the Liquor and Cannabis Commission? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, the federal government legalized cannabis; we just regulate the sales of it.

Mr. Speaker, there has been one applicant to date. There has been some interest from a couple of other applicants, but they haven't formally submitted an application. As a matter of fact, I believe it was last week we sent out another call to remind Nunavummiut that they can put applications forward for vendor sales in person.

Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear from the get-go on this that until we have physical stores that we can walk into, it's very difficult to counter the illegal market. It's too available and it's too easy to purchase through other means if you don't have a credit card or Internet access to purchase online.

We're going to continue to work with applicants as they come forward. There has been one, like I had mentioned, that's very active right now and from the latest review that I have been given, it's very near completion and they're just fine-tuning, I guess, the physical store to make sure it falls into the parameters of our legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister's Budget Address indicated that the government has "paid out \$2.8 million so far" under the Nunavut Essential Worker Wage Premium Program. Information published by the government indicates that the program ended in September of last year. Can the minister indicate if he is considering renewing or extending the program until such time as the current state of public health emergency is declared to be over? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This program has been very well received by Nunavummiut, and I appreciate the federal government working with us to relax some of the early rules that they put in place that we don't kind of fall under. We have been very flexible with that program and it's working very well, that applicants are applying for it. It is still active. Mr. Speaker, in fact we're looking at a very shortly upcoming enhancement of the program to expand some of the parameters to make sure that we fully utilize the monies that were provided to us by the federal government before fiscal year-end. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Member Simailak.

**Question 1144 – 5(2): National Trade Corridors Fund**

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and they concern the issue of the National Trade Corridors Fund.

As the minister will recall, the federal government has provided funding under this initiative towards the Kivalliq Intercommunity Trade Corridor. This project aims to establish an all-weather road corridor between neighbouring communities in the region. During our fall sitting, I was pleased to receive confirmation that the scope of this project has been expanded to include Baker Lake. Thank you, Simeon. I know that was your work.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this important project, including current estimates as to its total cost? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was approved previously which I am happy to announce, although we had to make small amendments. When these amendments occurred, the funding we requested was affected and the funding we wanted appropriation for occurred in the House. These funds have not been changed to date, although we have included that in our plans now.

We added that to the funds from the federal government and our Government of Nunavut, which ended up with us spending \$6 million, or rather, that is what we have budgeted for the road feasibility study. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. Can the minister confirm the extent to which the Municipality of Baker Lake and Agnico Eagle Mines have been involved in the planning for this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next step is that we're going to put a request for either a tender or a request for proposals to get the work done. When we made the amendments, we didn't reach agreements with Transport Canada until late October. We now have that and so now the next step is that the work will start to get going.

One of the top priorities that I have asked is that communities do be part of this and from the regions. I don't have specifics in terms of which stakeholders, but definitely the

hamlets and Agnico Eagle Mines are on as a part of our stakeholders to be considered for this part of the consultation phase. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. I'm sure the Municipality of Baker Lake is eager to get working with the Government of Nunavut on this project, so I'm sure they will be coming up with some sort of a response.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering: can the minister confirm the extent to which ongoing transboundary issues with Northern Manitoba may impact this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This project specifically is strictly within the communities; it's nowhere near the boundary of Manitoba. When we were planning this, we wanted to do it on a smaller scale where we would try to get the communities connected. Our long-term vision still continues to go down to Manitoba and we have not done that part and it's not part of the scope of work that's going to be for this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 1145 – 5(2): Airport Infrastructure**

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and they concern the issue of airport infrastructure.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it has recently been reported in the news media that the Royal Canadian Air Force has been planning to undertake assessments of airfield infrastructure in two communities and Sanirajak was one of them. Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify the extent to which his department has been involved with this work?  
(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. (interpretation ends) I haven't been contacted related to this, but I'm sure that my departmental staff are aware of this. I'm trying to find out that information that you just mentioned. I think that's great and those are great initiatives. Whenever the air force does do these assessments and

when they need to be a part of it, good things come out of it when it comes to our airports. If there is a study, I welcome that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, in early 2019 the federal government announced approximately \$9,973,000 in funding under the Airports Capital Assistance Program to rehabilitate airside surfaces and upgrade lighting at Sanirajak's airport. Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that I have seen work taking place at the airport.

However, the department's business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the upcoming 2021-22 fiscal year is to "Undertake full runway rehabilitation and lighting replacement at Sanirajak." Can the minister clarify if this is a new project or not? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is the ACAP, the Airports Capital Assistance Program, that was approved for the \$9 million that was for the Sanirajak Airport. All that work is ongoing and it's still going to continue on to 2021-22. That work is being worked on and those will be part of the terms and conditions. When we get to the capital, I can update further and I would be very pleased to provide further briefings to my colleague on this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kaernerck**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister that I'll be getting a response. For my last question, as the minister is still aware, his department published a 20-Year Infrastructure Needs Assessment for Nunavut Airports in April 2014. Can the minister confirm when an updated report will be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the 20-year report, that's not complete yet. It's one that once it's complete, as I committed in previous appearances, that once this is done, some form of it will be tabled in this House, but it's something that I have yet to see the full report on and I can't commit to tabling a report that's not complete. At this point it's a work in progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



**Question 1146 – 5(2): Mental Health and Addiction Services**

**Mr. Qamaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I send my regards to my fellow residents of Pond Inlet and say “good day” to them and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, my questions will be directed to the Minister of Health and they concern the potential number of personnel who could work within the mental health and addictions fields.

Your predecessor stated previously in this House by stating this response: (interpretation ends) “Health is dedicated to increasing mental health and addictions treatment capacity across the territory, with a focus on community-based services and supports.”

(interpretation) Now, I would like to pose this question to the minister today: as of now, what is the overall number of positions within the fields I mentioned that work in my constituency of Pond Inlet earlier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank him very much for mentioning mental health issues, as dealing with people’s mental health is very serious in Nunavut. A lot of us Nunavummiut need help.

Right now in Pond Inlet there are two positions; one is for a licensed mental health professional, and the second position deals more with counselling. There are two positions right now in his constituency dealing with mental health issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Qamaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for clearly indicating how many employees we have in our community. My next question is if those positions are filled by permanent employees or by casual employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don’t know if they’re casual employees or not, but those positions are filled. Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to get more information, I can provide it to him once it is available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Qamaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for his response. I think that it would be better if I received that information by way of correspondence in regard to those positions.

The previous Minister of Health also indicated that there would be training involved for mental health workers. I don't know whether or not there can be an increase in the person years or if they're going to stay at four. I would like to ask the minister if he could commit to increasing the person years by two positions in our community or if there could be training provided on the job.

The previous minister indicated that there would be training involved, and that training should be taken into consideration when they fill the four positions. There are only two positions that are filled, and I believe there are four person years. Can the minister commit to increasing the number of employees at that office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the member asked that question. Mr. Speaker, of course, we have very few Inuit mental health workers, and if we can increase the numbers, I would be more than pleased to see that. I have had discussions with our staff and we would like to see permanent mental health workers in all of Nunavut.

I'll make sure that I also have meetings with Arctic College because we are gradually increasing the number of nurses from here who are bilingual and so on. We are also seeing more legal advisors or lawyers. We would like to focus on increasing that number and get people trained to fill those positions. We would like to see mental health workers who know Nunavut and the people, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

### **Question 1147 – 5(2): Housing Construction**

**Mr. Lightstone**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Before I get into that, I would like to congratulate the minister and welcome her to the portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is well aware, an issue that I have been raising throughout our term is the need for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to address our housing crisis by identifying ways of constructing more units at a lower cost.

Mr. Speaker, I have encouraged the Nunavut Housing Corporation to be open to exploring new ideas, including pilot projects for tiny homes, modular construction

methods, and I have supported measures to reduce construction costs by addressing contractor practices.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased that the Nunavut Housing Corporation acted on this advice by issuing a request for proposals last year to undertake a comprehensive construction cost review. The request for proposals terms of reference indicated that the corporation expects to have a draft report no later than November 2020 and a final report no later than February 5, 2021.

As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly was informed last fall that the RFP has been awarded to NVision Insight Group and Colliers Project Leaders Incorporated, and the work is expected to be completed shortly.

The first question I would like to ask the minister is if the minister would be able to provide an update on the status of the draft and the final reports, and ask: will the minister commit to tabling a copy of these reports so that all MLAs have the opportunity to consider its findings and recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Minister Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank Mr. Lightstone for asking that question. I also welcome his question. It is currently under review, but we are almost complete with it. Well, the report will be completed before the end of our government's term. It is currently being reviewed, but it is being finalized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lightstone**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response. As the final version of the review is finally almost completed, I hope that the minister will take the opportunity to table the draft report.

Moving on to my next question, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's request for proposals to undertake a comprehensive construction cost review indicated that one of the specific issues that it is examining are "recommendations for implementing cost control measures to ensure efficient use of funds."

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, amendments to the NNI Regulations were published in last December's edition of the *Nunavut Gazette*, and they indicated that new bid adjustment caps have been approved in relation to major construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is: can the minister confirm the extent to which the changes to the NNI Regulations will impact the Nunavut Housing Corporation's construction costs for public housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. The NNI Policy is currently in place and it's currently being reviewed. We would like to make sure that everything is adhered to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lightstone**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my final question, as the minister is well aware, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's current business plan indicates that one of its priorities has been to "Continue engagement with Regional Inuit Associations on potential collaborations to provide affordable housing for Inuit on Inuit owned land." The business plan also indicates that meetings have taken place between the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

For my final question, I would like to ask: can the minister tell us today what specific actions and commitments resulted from these discussions, and can the minister confirm when the Nunavut Housing Corporation will next be meeting with the heads of the three regional Inuit organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. We haven't set any meetings with the three regional Inuit organizations, but we are all aware that it's very important to meet and to work together and collaborate with the regional Inuit organizations. We will make sure that you are informed should there be any meetings with the organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 1148 – 5(2): Air Transportation Sector**

**Mr. Rumbolt**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Earlier this week I tabled a copy of recent correspondence that the Mayor of Sanikiluaq wrote to the minister. Can the minister assure me that he will respond to the mayor's letter in a timely manner and that he will table a copy of his reply in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Minister Akeagok.

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and for the transportation portfolio. Yes, I am committed to responding. We are working on the draft and once it's done, I plan to table that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. It's just the beginning of the day.

>> *Laughter*

Your first supplementary question, Mr. Rumbolt.

**Mr. Rumbolt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to that reply when it's ready.

As the minister will recall, I have been raising concerns regarding the ongoing air transportation situation facing Sanikiluaq. As he is well aware, the lack of scheduled airline service to the community has had a major impact on my constituents. When I last raised this issue with the minister during our fall sitting, he indicated that his department was looking into the concerns that have been raised by the municipality and me. Can the minister update me today on what specific actions he has taken to address these concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud our member colleague here for raising this and your mayor. With this pandemic, it has shown that there is one community that does not connect to any of our communities and when all the borders are closed, your community even seemed like it was closed off to our territory too. It is a very huge concern to us too.

Through this and through the correspondence that has been coming, I have instructed through my department to have a working group that could look into this and try to find some options, which is why it's taking a bit longer in terms of responding because a lot of good work is happening behind the scenes right now and something I'm hoping that that letter will be very positive to you and to your mayor on what next steps will take place in terms of air travel for Sanikiluaq, which a lot of good work has taken place.

In terms of the working groups between various departments, from Finance, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Health, Justice, and the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Rumbolt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister and his staff for the amount of work that they're putting into this initiative. As the minister mentioned, he has a working group between different departments working on options for Sanikiluaq's issue.

I wonder if the minister can share with us today what some of these options are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The various options, because there are a number of charters that our government has taken from various agencies and various departments, and using that, one of the options is that we do ask the existing airlines whether they can set up a route from Sanikiluaq to here with the help of the government's assistance. That's one of the key options that we're looking at.

The other option is to look at rerouting the current planes, where it goes, and that's not an option that we really are pursuing because a majority of it is through cargo. There are a number of factors that are taking place and if we continue using the charter system, it's almost like a weekly basis that's taking place right now. Those are different, various options, and I think one of the good work that we're doing and I'm hoping that we do start some sort of a trial, especially right now when we do have money that is coming in from our federal partner for the airlines and see if this route is viable.

I think that's a positive move that I think our government will be making and something that I want to applaud the mayor and yourself, my colleague, for raising this very important issue to this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 1149 – 5(2): Senior Fuel Subsidy**

**Mr. Akoak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to all of my colleagues and the people of Gjoa Haven, and if my wife is watching us on TV, (interpretation ends) good afternoon.

(interpretation) I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues, as well as myself, have addressed the issue of the Senior Fuel Subsidy and asked that it be made more accessible to all seniors across Nunavut and not just those who meet certain eligibility requirements.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues, as well as myself, have addressed the issue of the Senior Fuel Subsidy and asked that it be made more accessible to all seniors across Nunavut and not just those who meet certain eligibility requirements.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly explain why seniors who are on income assistance are not eligible to receive the Senior Fuel Subsidy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. It's obvious that elders are always discussed in this House, of course. With respect to your question, they already receive income support and they are already identified as (interpretation ends) basic income support. (interpretation) That is the way it is established now. Perhaps in the near future we may be able to revisit how changes may be made, but I can say right now that that's the way it is arranged. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Akoak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister has also indicated in writing to the Standing Committee on Social Wellness that seniors who are on income assistance have 100 percent of their fuel paid for by income assistance.

Mr. Speaker, however, a number of my senior constituents have gone to the income assistance office to ask for fuel to heat their homes only to be told that they cannot have fuel support because they are on income assistance.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify why my constituents are being refused fuel support and explain what other options might be available to them to get support to pay for their fuel needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate to hear that. I do know personally, in meeting with my staff, that since the pandemic measures started, some elders in the smaller communities who, for the purpose of fuel subsidies, some were given support for fuel while we paid the bill. It's unfortunate that some elders were given that response and I will look further into this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Akoak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for letting us know that you will be looking into this.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for anyone during the cold winter months if they do not have enough fuel to heat their homes to be safe and comfortable. Today I am told that the

temperature in my community is minus 61 with the wind chill. That is cold and it's going to continue for the next few days.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to reviewing the income assistance policies and the Senior Fuel Subsidy policies to ensure that nobody, especially the elders, especially our seniors, are not left out in the cold when it comes to their fuel needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I will gladly look into it. Because of the questions that have been raised in this House for the last little bit, in our proposed budget this year, you will see that we are intending to try to help our elders by increasing the litres from 3,500 to 4,000. It is the proposed litres. We have been listening to your statements in this House on protecting our elders, but I commit to look into that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 1150 – 5(2): Delivery of Education in Arviat during COVID-19**

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sit to ask questions to the Minister of Education; I'm not standing, for your information.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I had questions on education in Arviat with pandemic measures taken in the community. There are a lot of concerns amongst parents and staff at the schools from personal conversations I've had.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have a question to the minister. What barriers has the Department of Education seen? I believe it's almost a hundred days. Looking at Arviat, what barriers has the department found in the pursuit of delivering education to our youth?

(interpretation ends) Just for clarity, I'll repeat myself, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. Can the minister explain what specific challenges have been encountered with the delivery of remote instruction in Arviat over the past 100 days? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking a question from Arviat. We are thinking of our colleague and the residents of Arviat as this has made a big impact on the community, and we empathize with the teachers and our students over there.



Mr. Speaker, we have been in the planning stage. If any community is affected by COVID, we try to continue the delivery of education, but there are barriers that arise and we try to come up with solutions in support of communities, along with the Kivalliq Regional School Operations.

For example, the use of remote learning, although computers have been distributed, not all students will have access. We know that. However, on an ongoing or daily basis, all week, for example, our teachers have to get back with their students with how their remote education is going. Some homes, however, don't necessarily have phones and it has been difficult in the area of communication.

When the pandemic measure started, people hesitated to get education materials from the schools that would be used for remote learning. This was one of the barriers at first, but we have a policy in place and according to the health department's guidelines, we are continually moving ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I now have another question that I'll ask in English. (interpretation ends) Can the minister confirm whether there was transmission of COVID within any of Arviat's three schools back in November-October and explain if that has impacted the delivery of remote instruction in Arviat? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasié**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. I cannot confirm whether or not there was transmission within the schools in Arviat. However, I can state that we did have staff that were impacted by COVID and I'm not aware of whether or not transmission occurred within the schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I would appreciate it if the minister could look into that further and it would be, perhaps, useful to understand for the whole territory whether or not we did have transmission occurring in the school. It's important to understand or to learn in terms of what happened.

My last question is about the potential grade 12 graduates living in Arviat. Are potential graduates in Arviat still on track to receive their High School Diploma this spring or will they have to do extra work or perhaps spend extra time within the school system in order to receive their High School Diploma? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasié:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again thank the member for his question. This is something that we're looking at moving forward. In the springtime or last spring, rather, in 2020, we looked at a jurisdictional scan on what was going on across the country and this winter we have decided and have presented the option for grade 12 students to opt to do the departmental exams, the mid-terms, and going forward, this is something that we will look at.

Just a follow-up to that on the learning packages and the coursework that students are expected to do in any of the stages, the work that the students are doing will be assessed by our teachers and the school staff, and this will be an ongoing thing, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet, Member Towtongie.

#### **Question 1151 – 5(2): Water Infrastructure**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services, and they concern the issue of water infrastructure.

As the minister will recall, her department issued a request for proposals in October 2020 for "Architectural and Engineering Services for the Rankin Inlet Utilidor Replacement Project." As the minister is aware, I have raised the issue of Rankin Inlet's aging utilidor on many occasions.

Can the minister update me today on the status of Rankin Inlet's utilidor replacement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for her question. The Department of Community and Government Services is working to upgrade Rankin Inlet's utilidor to address low water pressure, leaks, and low capacity. Community and Government Services secured \$73.4 million to upgrade the most critical portions of loops 1 and 2, and design is expected to begin in January, which we just passed, which is January 2021. The department is hopeful that construction can begin on the upgrades during the summer of 2021, to be completed in the summer of 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for her response. However, in January of this year the people of Rankin Inlet were issued a boil water advisory in our community. Our water is actually brown and yellowish in colour like urine. It's very worrisome. Can the minister indicate what steps are being taken to reduce number of boil water advisories? (interpretation ends) Can the minister indicate what steps are being taken to reduce the number of boil water advisories that Rankin Inlet residents are experiencing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for her question. The department is monitoring and working to ensure that those boil water advisories are not consistently current, and they are working to ensure that the system that is working right now is functioning so that these boil water advisories are not as frequent as they are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Concerns continue to be expressed in the community about discoloured water in the current system, and we always have to go to the Co-op and pay for our water. It costs money.

As the minister is aware, her department's business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the upcoming 2021-22 fiscal year is to (interpretation ends) "Engage with relevant stakeholders to develop an action plan for the Drinking Water Strategic Framework to support implementation of key elements from the framework." Can the minister confirm when she will be tabling the Drinking Water Strategic Framework in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Again I thank the member for her question. The Department of Community and Government Services was working with stakeholders to ensure that these repairs were being done to critical infrastructure for the water pipeline, but because of COVID, it has delayed part of the project.

Because we use the Nunavut Water Board's drinking strategy right now, we're working to ensure that it's updated. Once I have a confirmed date as to when that will be tabled, I will inform the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Please note that the time for question period has expired. We will proceed. No. 7. Written Questions. No. 8. Returns to Written Questions. No. 9. Replies to Opening Address. No. 10. Replies to the Budget Address. 11. Petitions. 12. (interpretation ends) Responses to Petitions. 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. 14. (interpretation) Tabling of Documents. Member for Amittuq, Member Kaernerck.

#### **Item 14: Tabling of Documents**

##### **Tabled Document 344 – 5(2): Sanirajak Marine Infrastructure Feasibility Study**

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wish to table today copies of motions that were recently passed by the Municipal Council of Sanirajak concerning the proposed feasibility study for new marine infrastructure, as well as my letter of support.

Mr. Speaker, marine infrastructure is an important priority for my constituency, and I encourage all members to review this information with care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### **Tabled Document 345 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Legislative Assembly**

##### **Tabled Document 346 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut**

##### **Tabled Document 347 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut**

##### **Tabled Document 348 – 5(2): 2021-2024 Business Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth**

I have four documents to table today. They are the 2021-24 business plans of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut, the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, and the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Continuing on. Notices of Motions. (interpretation ends) Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towntongie.

**Item 15: Notices of Motions****Motion 103 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 55, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act – Notice**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 26, 2021, I will move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 55 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

**Motion 104 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 56, Liquor Tax Act – Notice**

**Ms. Towtongie**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 26, 2021, I will move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 56 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. (interpretation) Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 17. Motions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

**Item 17: Motions****Motion 098 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 36, Mental Health Act**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) WHEREAS Bill 36, (interpretation) *Mental Health Act*, received second reading on October 31, 2019;

AND WHEREAS the bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration;

(interpretation ends) AND WHEREAS Rule 68(1) provides that bills referred to a standing committee shall not be proceeded with until the Assembly receives the report of the committee or 120 calendar days pass from the day the bill was given second reading;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee has been giving careful consideration to the bill;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee requires additional time in which to complete its work;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 36 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the mover of the motion and the co-chair of the standing committee with Mr. Main, I am pleased to take this opportunity to speak briefly in support of the motion that is before the House today.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my motion, Bill 36 has been under consideration by the standing committee since its referral following second reading in the House. I am pleased to report that the standing committee has been making steady progress in its consideration of the bill.

The standing committee has been reviewing submissions from stakeholders, a number of productive exchanges have occurred with the sponsoring minister, and approximately two dozen motions are presently being reviewed by the standing committee.

The bill is important and complex, and warrants careful consideration. The standing committee takes its responsibility to scrutinize proposed legislation very seriously.

I anticipate that the standing committee will be in a position to report back to the House at the upcoming spring sitting, and I ask all members to support the motion before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Motions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

**Motion 099 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 52, Nunavut Petroleum Products Commission Act**

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) WHEREAS Bill 52, *Nunavut Petroleum Products Commission Act*, received second reading on October 22, 2020;

AND WHEREAS the bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration;

AND WHEREAS Rule 68(1) provides that bills referred to a standing committee shall not be proceeded with until the legislative receives the report of the committee or 120 calendar days has passed from the day the bill was given second reading;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee has been giving careful consideration to the bill;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee requires additional time in which to complete its work;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 52 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. If I understand correctly, I believe that she indicated 120 days. (interpretation ends) To the motion. Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. John Main is my co-chair, so I miss you, John Main.

(interpretation ends) As the mover of the motion and the Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I am pleased to take this opportunity to speak briefly in support of the motion that is before the House today.

(interpretation) I would like to note that my comments in respect to this bill also apply to the other motions which I am bringing forward during this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my motion, (interpretation ends) Bill 52 (interpretation) has been under consideration by the standing committee since its referral following second reading in the House, which took place during our recent winter sitting.

(interpretation ends) I am pleased to report that the standing committee has also been making steady progress in its consideration of the bill, and has been exchanging correspondence with the sponsoring minister.

(interpretation) The bill is important and complex, and warrants careful consideration.

I ask all members to support the motion before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

Motions. No. 18. First Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

### **Item 18: First Reading of Bills**

#### **Bill 60 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – First Reading**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 60, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. First Reading of Bills. Please raise your hand so that I will know who to acknowledge, as I won't be naming those who don't raise their hands. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

#### **Bill 61 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – First Reading**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 61, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. First Reading of Bills. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeegok.

#### **Bill 63 – An Act to Amend the Traffic and Safety Act – First Reading**

**Hon. David Akeegok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for Arviat South, that Bill 63, *An Act to Amend the Traffic and Safety Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Motions. I'm sorry. First Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Business Credit Corporation, Mr. Akeegok.

#### **Bill 64 – An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act – First Reading**

**Hon. David Akeegok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 64, *An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act*, now be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Motions. I'm sorry. First Reading of Bills. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.



**Bill 65 – Apprenticeship and Certification Act – First Reading**

**Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 65, *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*, be read for the first time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. First Reading of Bills. I'm sorry. All those in favour.

I'm sorry, my colleagues. Let's listen. The motions are in order for Bills 61, 63, and 64. All those in favour. Opposed. The motions are carried.

Thank you. The motion for Bill 65 is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. Thank you.

First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes. I'm sorry. Minister of Justice.

**Bill 62 – An Act to Amend the Judicature Act – First Reading**

**Hon. George Hickes**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 62, *An Act to Amend the Judicature Act*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): I'm sorry. As I said, the day is just starting.

>>*Laughter*

The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

First Reading of Bills. I believe we're done with that item. No. 19. (interpretation ends) Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 20. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 59 with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:36 and Committee resumed at 16:02*

**Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

**Chairman** (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bill 59. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Akoak.

**Mr. Akoak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of the 2021-22 Main Estimates for the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Are we in agreement that we deal with Bill 59?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Health –  
Consideration in Committee**

**Chairman:** Thank you. Yesterday we left off and we were dealing with the Department of Health's budget, so we will go back to that today. I want to start by asking the minister if he has any officials that he would like to appear before the committee. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate that opportunity, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Does the committee agree to let the witnesses appear before you?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. For the record, Minister Kusugak, if you could please introduce your officials. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Deputy Minister Ruby Brown and to my right is Executive Director of Corporate Services Greg Babstock. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Netser, and welcome. Sorry, Minister Kusugak. Thank you and welcome. My apologies. We left off yesterday and we were on page H-4 on Health, Directorate, and I still had a few names on my list of people who had questions. The next person on my list was Mr. Netser. Do you have questions, Mr. Netser?

**Mr. Netser:** Thank you. I've got just a few. Thank you. Welcome, minister and staff, on the second day on the deliberation of the Committee of the Whole budgets, or your budget.

On page 151, (interpretation) the people staying at the isolation hubs, perhaps more so in Winnipeg, I got a few calls from the people who were isolating for 14 days. They are usually checked by the nurses to see if they have contracted COVID-19. Can the minister briefly explain the process that is in place at the isolation hubs down south, particularly in Winnipeg, and the reasons for the isolation requirement? If people had more information, they would probably have fewer questions. Some of them don't have access to the Internet, where they could find the information. I believe it's on page 151. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Netser. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to find my business plan with page 151 on it. Bear with me for a second.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the isolation hubs in the provinces, there are two sets of policies that are applied. The isolation hub in Winnipeg is under the direction of the Department of Health. It is not under contract, as we are overseeing it. The Department of Health provides any assistance they may require. That's what the funding is geared towards. The other isolation hubs are operated through an agreement and the one in Winnipeg is operated and funded by the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was for those people who are in the isolation hubs, waiting to go home for the 14-day period. Every so often the patient that is waiting is approached by staff or medical people and tested whether they have the COVID or not. How often is that carried out to this particular person or this patient that is waiting to go home, waiting in the isolation period? (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was my question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I understand, they are assessed if they request it. They don't get tested if they don't want to be. Some of the patients at the isolation hubs might have had a cold, which is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. That's the path we go through, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser:** Thank you. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) If they don't want to be tested, what happens? Are they still sent home after the 14-day period or do they have to stay there until they have been tested? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Usually the individuals that want to be tested are tested on the first day, and then a second test is repeated on the tenth day. Whether they want to be tested or not, they have to wait another 14 days. If an individual wants to stay in the isolation hub for a few extra days, they can choose to do so. Either way, we do not ever send anyone out until the required 14 days have been completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. On page 151 of the business plan it states, (interpretation ends) “Continue to work towards enhancing in-territory addictions and trauma treatment, such as the Nunavut Recovery Centre and land-based programming.” Can the minister elaborate a little bit more on that, and where is this Nunavut Recovery Centre located at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Netser. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We want to provide more of those types of services in Nunavut so that they can be treated for their addictions. There is one here in Iqaluit, Ikajuqtauvik, and we would like to gradually introduce additional programs; for example, once it opens we can concentrate on and evaluate the program and identify what types of other services we can provide in areas other than addiction. The facility we’re referring to here will be located in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My next question is about the Suicide Prevention Strategy. (interpretation) It’s very sad when somebody commits suicide, and we thank the trauma teams that are sent to the affected communities. Possibly due to a lack of programs, the young people tend to not get along with their parents and start thinking about suicide, probably because they don’t have anybody to talk to.

Mr. Speaker, those counsellors should be able to, should understand our customs, our culture and our language because it helps very much if community members can talk to people who know our culture. You don’t have to have a degree or be educated for many years to provide counselling.

I hear that there is a toll-free number either here to Iqaluit or Rankin Inlet. There’s a crisis line, but should there be an incident in a community, there should be an elder or not even an elder or an individual who is respected who can provide counselling to that individual. Is it possible or do you have any plans to make sure that there’s a contact person in the community who would be available to provide counselling and advice? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Netser. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for asking that question. During question period, I touched on that subject. I’m glad that I can speak to it because what you’re saying is very true. There are Inuit who can provide counselling who are very capable, and with just a little further training, they would be professional counsellors.

During my term here with this department, I would like to make sure that we tighten up mental health services. There are people that can respond or answer the phone who can speak Inuktitut, but proper mental health counselling, I believe, would help greatly if it was provided by a group of Inuit. I will make sure that I work hard to see this become a reality.

Having discussions, having contact people, some mental health workers are very young. Usually the people who commit suicide are very young. I believe we have all been affected. They have bright futures ahead of them, and we don't want to see the status quo. I understand your comments and I agree with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, a lot of us have been affected by suicide, and it's something very hurtful to talk about. We would like to have a close working relationship with the minister so that there will be a contact person in every Nunavut community. I would like to work closely with the minister.

Possibly my last question is in regard to the home care workers who go to the elders' homes, do the clean-up, prepare meals, do their laundry, and provide general cleaning services. Today I got a phone call from an elder in Coral Harbour who hasn't been provided those services for a very long time. They are tenants of the housing corporation's houses. They were provided cleaning services before COVID-19, and they're not provided services anymore, probably because of COVID-19.

When are those home care workers going to start going back into the private homes?  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are many facilities that are closed during the COVID pandemic, and towards the end of COVID pandemic measures, we will likely see improvements in this area as we move forward. While we are discussing this issue with the health department, and along with the home care providers, these are part of the discussions. We have not forgotten them. We just haven't identified which date full service will return. It's one of the priorities to gradually increase home care in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. I want to remind the member that we're still on Directorate and he has moved on to asking questions on the other pages, but Mr. Netser.

**Mr. Netser** (interpretation): Thank you. My apologies, as I thought that the question that I asked was part of the directorate. Perhaps I'll ask a final question to the minister.

Many communities that have not experienced COVID-19, for those communities that have not been affected to date, can we not see these home care services being opened up or revamped? That is my last question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The decision to say who closes and who starts again... Since the beginning when it was established by our health department, we are going by his decision when he will decide which community will open. This is just part of the ongoing stages. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Next person on my list: Ms. Towtongie.

**Ms. Towtongie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My question to the minister; concerns have been raised regarding the lack of midwifery services in the territory. What are the department's plans to provide more birthing services within Nunavut, and specifically what plans are there to train and certify Inuit midwives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The hope and wish of our department is to have as many midwives in Nunavut as possible that are Nunavut residents, and that is still the drive. I can't remember exactly when the last time, a couple years ago anyway, I tried to see if there was any interest in midwifery training and there wasn't a very high uptake. Having said that, our department is always looking and seeing how we can support a midwifery program, and if there is an interest in that, we would definitely be working with the college to see if we can bring forward a midwifery program.

Having said that, we do work with midwifery programs outside our territory and encourage Nunavummiut who want to participate in the midwifery program to partake in that, and we would be very happy and supportive of that happening. We understand there is a need for more midwifery programs, that's from prenatal to postnatal care and everything in between, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at the draft 2021-24 business plan, it again indicates that the Department of Health will continue with the legislative process to develop and introduce health privacy legislation. What is the current status of this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately we don't have the updated information on that very topic. I would be more than happy to share it with my colleagues as soon as we have that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The draft 2021 again indicates that the department's priorities for the 2022-23 year will be to review the health insurance legislation. Will the department be making changes to the types of health care services that are covered under the current territorial health insurance plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going over that and there may be some changes or additions to that documentation. Mr. Chairman, if I could get maybe a bit more detail on that, if you would allow my deputy minister to respond further. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown, please go ahead.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for that question. The plan is to review the health insurance process and what we do cover under the health insurance, as it should be on a regular basis, so it might require adjustment because there are certain areas that we are not keeping up with in the rest of Canada in terms of what we insure. Also, it will allow us to make sure that we're able to have an opportunity, when we provide services to people who are not residents of Nunavut and they are receiving services here, to be able to then charge back those fees like it's done in other provinces. That will be part of the new process. We will take it to considerations and bring it up to date so it's up to par with the other jurisdictions. Thank you for the question.

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

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you. I hope one of the considerations will be the meal vouchers. They are not up to par with First Nations. Most Inuit patients under the territorial health care plan pay out of their own pockets, which they can't really afford.

My question is the previous Minister of Health committed to building long-term care facilities in Nunavut's three regional centres in addition to these infrastructure projects. We're getting petitions from Kinngait and I heard John Main saying that like nine beds in the NWT for elders.

Does the department have a long-term strategy for providing elder care across all of Nunavut's communities? I know that you're providing for Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Iqaluit, but I don't see a lot of elders wanting to go to...they would prefer to stay in their communities if there's a place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that we are working on and we will be bringing forward in the very near future is a plan to build an elder care strategy for Nunavut. It will go well beyond the need for elder care facilities like the ones that are going to be built in the three regions.

I think that what Nunavummiut and our regular MLAs are asking for is something that is beyond that, an all-encompassing elder care strategy, and it would include in the strategy not just elder care facilities for elders who need care, to be in elder care homes, but also care for elders who are just growing old healthily but needing a healthy place in which to live, which is what the facility Mr. Main referred to yesterday in the NWT is not an elder care facility; it actually is a building that was built by the NWT Housing Corporation and the housing corporation hires somebody to live in the same unit and it's a housing corporation project there.

There's nothing stopping us from planning for things such as that where we could have elders living in a retirement home, if I may use the term very loosely. I think that's where we want to head and you hear comments in the House about some elders having to be able to get a fuel subsidy, for example, and they have to go to this department and that department, and it gets very confusing, I think, for Nunavummiut elders.

What I would like to see our department do is to build a long-term elder care strategy which encompasses all of the above so that when you become an elder, you get a package that would say, "Here is a booklet to help you. If you're in your own home, these are some of the helps you could get," and maybe make it a one-stop window.

The strategy is something that we will be putting out and getting some interest on and getting as much input as we can because elders do need care. Some of it is not medical care they're looking for; they're just looking for a safe place in which to grow old and/or a place where they could get support to get some physical activity and so on and so forth. Yes, we will put a plan together for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. I would hope that such a plan includes all communities. It's needed in smaller communities as much as it's needed in larger communities. Mr. Kusugak, you wanted to comment on that? Please go ahead.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's what I was trying to stipulate too is that it's not restricted to a community. Not all communities want the same things. There are some communities that have infrastructure they could use for elders and so on and so forth. This all-encompassing elder care would take a look at those. Different communities have different needs and different elders and so yes, we would take a very close look at the communities and see what they need and see how we could build that in.

I think that this is something that our department could work with other departments and hopefully the regional Inuit associations or Tunngavik to say, "Let's take care of our



elders together, and how could we make this work?” It should not just be a dream of people; it should be something that could become a reality, and I don’t see why we can’t do that together and sooner than later. It’s something we need really badly and yes, in those communities that are up to putting those in the community, I think we should be a support service, “we” being government and non-government entities out there that do care and say they do care for our elders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. I’m sure it’s something that all members will be eager to see and move forward. Ms. Towtongie, do you have another question? Please go ahead.

**Ms. Towtongie:** It’s my second-last question. As the minister is aware...and thank you for that response. That’s a very positive, proactive response. In reading the business plan on page 156, colorectal, I might not say it properly, but cancer screening pilot program, I’m very happy about that. Has there been any consideration for a dialysis machine to be in Nunavut?

I know patients in Manitoba, one of whom you know quite well has been in Manitoba for a year and over, and she just was on the news asking if the Government of Nunavut could push for a dialysis machine. What’s the situation of that? Is it too expensive? Are there [fewer] patients? I would like to know if we can do a pilot program; I’m curious. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate the question. Sometimes our “proactiveness” creates these news stories.

Shortly after my appointment to this portfolio, we’ve had meetings and one of the very first things we talked about when we talked about dealing with colorectal cancer care to Nunavut, it was also bringing much of the care back home that we can and one of the very first things we discussed was bringing in dialysis machines to Nunavut.

My approach and our approach was that I don’t want to sit here to find out why we can’t do it; I want to find out how we can make it happen. With that in mind, that’s where the discussion came forward from and our department is taking a look at how we can support, where it’s possible, to have home dialysis done in Nunavut for Nunavummiut. In some cases it may not be possible, but we will find the ways around that to make it possible.

We are on that path. We’ve had that discussion. We have staff looking into that very possibility to take care home so that we have elders growing old at home with dialysis machines and whatever support we could give them. We’re working on that very thing and I’m glad you brought that up, Ms. Towtongie. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Ms. Towtongie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. I'm on the go here, but my final question is that the federal government and NTI have both committed funding towards the building of Nunavut's recovery centre. A number of communities have also requested additional addictions and mental health services and supports, thinking of Tony. What is the current status of the department's Addictions and Trauma Treatment Strategy? I'm talking about the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my final question.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this particular one, if I could have my deputy respond to that through your chairmanship, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown, please.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for the question. An update on the Nunavut Recovery Centre is that a memorandum of understanding has been signed by the federal government, the GN, and NTI and so we're well on the road in terms of planning.

There's considerable work identified to find a location in Iqaluit for the centre. We are in the process of also signing off a contribution agreement with the federal government. All the pieces are in place. Planning is underway. There should be announcements in the next while around giving specific information.

One pillar of the addictions strategy is the recovery centre and that recovery centre will not only have beds, but it will also have a huge outpatient component to it.

The second pillar of the strategy is to have on-the-land programming and that programming has been started already and people are being trained and more and more communities will be enlisted to go forward on the on-the-land programming.

The third pillar is about the employment part of it and so there have been discussions with Arctic College and others to try to get enrolment up in terms of paraprofessional positions and social workers. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. Next we're going to go to Mr. Main in Arviat. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for recognizing me again. I was not clear yesterday that I did have more questions, so I apologize for that.

I guess my first question will be on the elder strategy that was just discussed. What is the timeline to have that strategy developed and finalized? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're looking at having that ready within the next six months, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I guess my last question on that would be: will this be developed internally or is the department planning to consult with communities, consult with individuals and maybe Inuit organizations on the strategy? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan is to get a consultant to come in with fresh eyes and work and consult with people like the Members of this Legislative Assembly who want to participate, some stakeholders and the regional Inuit associations, some elders in different parts of Nunavut, and get a good grasp of what people out there think is needed, and we will give an opportunity for those who want to have input, probably through the media, multimedia things out there, to have input into that discussion, Mr. Chairman. We will try to get as much input into it as possible.

Understanding what the parameters that we have to work in, with the current COVID situation, I don't want to make that an excuse for not doing things and we won't, but I'm just saying that we will try to get as much input on it as we can from a wide variety as possible and that we have ample opportunity for any members in this House who would like to have input to have that input, and we look forward to that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I will move on to human resources issues. On page 148 and 149 of the business plan it mentions the new departmental human resources plan in this current fiscal year and it's also in a priority for 2021-22 to finalize a new departmental human resources plan that includes non-clinical roles within the health system. I wonder if we could get a little explanation as to what the reference is to non-clinical roles. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that Ms. Brown would have a clearer understanding of that role. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for the question. It primarily centres around the paraprofessional group, which is quite a broad group of people in the health care system. It also refers to the fact that these programs will be organized as such that it is a laddering program where people can move from one position to the next if they wish to do so and enhance their skills in the health care system. The outreach workers in mental health is a good example of that. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the response. I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that this is so strange. I feel like I'm sitting in Iqaluit right now. I know I'm in Arviat, my body is in Arviat, but I'm having a very strange experience. I feel like I'm in the Assembly, so thank you.

On the paraprofessional positions that were mentioned, I'm flipping to page 160 of the business plan, which is the Inuit Employment Plan, I look at the paraprofessional positions and it looks like the department is more successful at hiring Inuit into the paraprofessional positions than to the professional or middle management or senior management positions.

Is it the department's anticipation that this new human resources plan is going to see or is going to allow more Inuit to work within the department? Is that one of the anticipated outcomes of the new plan? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. It's nice that you feel that you are here with us and sitting here in the Assembly. We are only allowed to have water, so I hope you are having water as well.

>> *Laughter*

Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If he is having something different than water, I would sure like it if he could share it with me.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Chairman, I think, yes, our department is looking at increasing our Inuit employment within Health and through the paraprofessional area is one good avenue to bring people in and get them into the department full time and maybe work their way up or sideways in the ladder, but yes, our goal is to increase and retain Inuit employment within our department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I was drinking coffee earlier and I apologize. I'll make sure it's water only in the future.

On page 161 of the business plan, again under Inuit employment, it mentions in the second bullet on page 161, the status update mentions that Nunavut Arctic College and Health met to discuss possible programs. It says, "Health continues to identify opportunities for health-related training." Why haven't we seen any new programs being rolled out or announced? What is the barrier or the reason that we're not seeing any of these move forward yet? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan is to roll them out as soon as we can, but we have to work with the college in terms of setting up guidelines and training criteria for the different positions that may be out there, for example, the paraprofessional programs or different kinds of opportunities out there.

One of the programs we're looking at is also, if we're bringing on elder care facilities, for example, we will need to go through the college to train people to be able to execute those jobs and those positions. We're working with the business case with Nunavut Arctic College right now on doing social workers and nurses, which we're doing right now. We do have some in, we do have some coming online, but they take time to prepare in order to ensure that you have the proper learning materials, instructors, and also intake in terms of those who want to participate in those programs. They are on the roll and I'm hopeful that in the coming years that they will become something that goes through our college. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) On the same page, on the Inuit Employment Plan, the very first bullet mentions, it says, "Health will carry out all targets and commitments as outlined in the separate Inuit Employment Plan Strategy Plan." I'm just curious about the separate Inuit employment plan strategy. Has the copy of this been provided to committee members and, if not, is it possible to have the department provide us a copy, or is it an internal document and not for distribution? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan within the plan, if it's sharable, I would be more than happy to share it with you or with the committee, Mr. Chairman. I believe that's the plan that is within human resources, but let me look into the matter and if we can share it with the committee, I would be more than happy to share that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I know there are other members waiting to ask questions, so I'll move on.

On page 151, this is under Inuusivut, which I believe is under Directorate, correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Chairman, page 151 of the business plan, the third bullet under COVID-19 actions mentions that beginning March 2020, the Inuusivut group "coordinated and provided oversight for the management of out-of-territory isolation hubs." Is this still the case? Is the Inuusivut Branch still managing the out-of-territory isolation hubs as of today? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, they're not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Where would be the appropriate time to ask questions about the isolation hubs? Would it be on this page or would it be a later page, public health or health service delivery? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Main. I'll let you continue to ask questions on that under Directorate. Mr. Main.

**Mr. Main:** Okay. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The minister knows that the isolation hubs have not been popular, but they have been in place for a while now, close to a year, and I think many Nunavummiut are used to going through the isolation hub now. In the early days we saw a lot of different concerns being brought forward; capacity, substance use, and behaviour in the hubs.

As of today, February 2021, does the department have a good handle on the issues that are being encountered in the hubs? Have the operations been streamlined or smoothed out so that you are seeing less complaints coming in about the isolation hubs? I'm just curious what the department is hearing. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have seen a significant change. I think that if those that went into the isolation hub in week 1 a year ago were to go back today, they would see a very big change in attitude and in communication and the whole, overall intake and outtake of people going into the isolation hubs. I think that both the people going into the hubs, those that are running the hubs, and the department itself have learned a lot and learned a lot of good habits and removed themselves from a lot of bad habits. It has been a very steep learning curve for everybody.

In the most part, like anything else, there are still concerns from different people. They have different needs, but overall, generally speaking, we used to have a lot of concerns with abuse of drunkenness and that and I think that that has been curbed a lot. We had issues with some of the food and that has been dealt with through working with the managers of the isolation hubs, and we've had issues with smoke breaks or earth breaks, outdoor breaks. I believe we're dealing with those.

Overall, I think we're as good as we're going to get for a while. I think we have curbed a lot of the issues. Are there still issues? There are, but I think they're a lot more manageable now than they were early in the isolation days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I'll ask a question that constituents keep asking me or maybe other MLAs and, that is, how much longer are we going to have these things in place?

I know the minister can't predict when the global pandemic is going to end, but in terms of Nunavut and our needs as a territory, looking at the vaccination rates and other things that are going on nationally, variants and how the different jurisdictions are doing, are we looking at isolation hubs are going to be in place until the end of this year?

Is there any possible time frame that the minister can give us when these isolation hubs would not be needed anymore or there would be alternatives established? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a very good question, Mr. Chairman. I think the isolation hubs will be around for a long while. Having said that, though, we have to understand that as we move forward and we go through the vaccination and everybody in Nunavut who wants to be vaccinated had the opportunity to be vaccinated and as we move forward to see that and we get to that time, I assume sometime in late March or early April by the time we go through the second round of vaccinations and second doses of the second round of vaccinations, we're looking at April, maybe, or early May. By the time we get to that, that will help, I believe, make some decisions for the chief public health officer and other officials to take a look at where we are and what implications those will bring forward, Mr. Chairman.

We understand that there are people who will not be vaccinated because they don't want to be. We understand that there are people who cannot be vaccinated but who wish they could be. We know that. We know that we're not going to get 100 percent of Nunavummiut vaccinated, and even knowing that with the different variants out there and the ever-evolving COVID variants, keeping all those in perspective, there is... I believe, in the coming months, I would like to say in mid to late spring, maybe May somewhere in there, don't quote me for this as saying you said May, but somewhere in there, I

believe we will have enough information where we could start to make decisions such as what you're asking.

Would it mean that maybe some travel would be loosened up out of territory of Nunavummiut? That's a very real possibility, but I think the isolation hubs would still have to be there for people who are coming from the south because, as of right now, there is nobody down south, really, vaccinated twice yet. We're still going through the very first stage of vaccinations in southern Canada, so we have a lot of people coming from the south to come and work or to explore or do things in Nunavut. They would still really need to have isolation. In that sense you couldn't and there might be instances where some people from Nunavut may have to be.

I'm not evading the question at all, Mr. Chairman. It's just that there are so many different variables that are in play on this, but the goal is to loosen travel and loosen the restrictions in Nunavut. That is our goal and sooner than later, but we always have to be cautious of that. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chairman, and I hope it clarifies it a little more than mud, but I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I believe that this is my last question under this page. What is the government's position on asking travellers who are travelling for leisure to pay for some of their isolation?

I support 100 percent the isolation hubs and I like that they provided some protection for Nunavut residents in the territory, but I don't like the fact that they're incredibly expensive and I'm not terribly keen on the idea of the taxpayers paying for isolation for somebody who went down for non-essential reasons. I'll just say non-essential, you know, personal leisure travel.

What is the department's position on this? Do you have any plans to introduce a fee of sorts so to discourage non-essential travel or is it the plan just status quo and government will pay all costs for all isolation stays? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's not my call, Mr. Chairman, and it's not for me to have an opinion on that. It deals with a lot more parameters than I can speak to at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. For the record, Mr. Main, your time did run out, so that was your last question.

Before we move on, I'll just ask a quick question while we're on the isolation hubs and travel. In my community we went from three flights to two a week and it is Sundays and Tuesdays, and I'm getting complaints that it's too long a span between the Tuesday and



the next Sunday's flight. People are wondering if it's possible if you could look at staggering the flights a bit more apart or look at bringing the third flight back to the community. If you could comment on that, Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know why I was waiting for interpretation.

Mr. Chairman, it's something we could look at and we will see what happens, but definitely we could take a look at that, if it would be beneficial for one or the other. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Next on my list: Mr. Kaernerk.

**Mr. Kaernerk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and your officials.

(interpretation ends) I'll try to stick with our Chairman's line of questions here. When it comes to medical travel, on page 149 of the business plan it says, in the second bullet, "Monitor Medical Travel to ensure the effectiveness of health care services." On the status part, "Ongoing monitoring is taking place by Medical Travel Programs." How is the Department of Health having ongoing monitoring? Is it due to COVID-19, or what's taking place with this medical travel? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Many things deal with medical travel and keeping an eye on it, especially now with COVID, we've had to take a look at pulling back on non-essential medical travel, if I could call it that, selective surgeries and travel south, if it can wait because of COVID, where we try to have those wait. If there is some care that could be done within the community, we will look at that or if we can bring them to have it done in Iqaluit.

We're constantly monitoring the medical travel to ensure that medical travel that is being done is necessary and essential and that we use the resources we can best, especially in terms of travelling in and out of the territory. We're constantly monitoring that part of it, Mr. Chairman. It sometimes happens, when you have travel into Iqaluit, you have two dozen communities sending medical patients to and from Iqaluit and it could create some tight spaces in places here, so all that has to be monitored constantly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Kaernerk.

**Mr. Kaernerk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Let me follow up with Mr. Main's. It's kind of weird too that you're not here but you're here. Just to follow up on Mr. Main's question under the isolation

costs, why did Health first decide to cover the isolation costs for non-essential travels? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kaernek. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Brown respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for that question. All the decisions that are made around isolation hubs and how they are arranged and what we can or cannot do within the Department of Health is a GN-wide consultation process as well because the CPHO can only have limits to his authority and his orders.

As far as the charges go, it is with consultation with a number of other departments and especially a legal opinion on what we're allowed to do or not and so the decisions stem from that. They're not solely made by the Department of Health. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. Mr. Kaernek.

**Mr. Kaernek:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to my next question, when it comes to an isolation hub, these Nunavut travellers have to isolate themselves for 14 days. Is the department at least planning to decrease the isolation hub from 14 to whatever days, maybe seven days, due to an expensive hub? Is the department planning to at least decrease or are they going to stand at 14 days?

Since Canada has issued for the international travellers, they have to be in the hotel for three days and get tested and, if they get negative results, they get to go out. Is the department planning to decrease or are they going to stay on the 14-day isolation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The majority of the people who go into the isolation hubs have to be there for 14 days for obvious reasons, but there are some intakes that are done where the medical client would go into an isolation hub, stay isolated, go to and from their appointment, and then return home without going through 14-day isolation. That's all prearranged through the proper authorities. That does happen. There's not a lot of it, but it does happen and it's all done properly and scrutinized very carefully.

In terms of lessening the 14-day isolation, as I stated earlier to Mr. Main, that's something we will be looking at down the road to see if we're going to reduce isolation times, but not at this point, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, it's something that we will look at once we get to that position where we could look at it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Kaernerck.

**Mr. Kaernerck:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad that the department will look into it.

Moving on to my next question, for the priorities of 2021-22 in the business plan on page 141, the third bullet on the priorities for 2021-22 is to "Expand the use of telehealth and virtual care solutions, by both capacity and utilization in all regions." Will this lead to reduced access in person in providing health care services across Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a tool that the health centres across Nunavut could use to be able to communicate and exchange support from medical services that are not available within their community or within the territory. It's another very important tool in taking care of our patients closer to home. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Kaernerck.

**Mr. Kaernerck:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. Alright, I'll just leave it at that for now.

Now, the first bullet for 2021-22 is to "Finalize a new departmental human resources plan..." It was already at that today is non-critical. Under this priority, what new efforts or strategies will be made to recruit and retain these staff, such as nurses, mental health trainee, or mental health worker, doctors, not to mention the midwives too? What new efforts will there be put in place when it comes to the Inuit Employment Plan under Health? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those details are a part of the plan that we are currently discussing. We are looking at and into the various ways, and the different services and recruitment plans that can be used to retain nurses. We are looking at many different ideas and once we have identified what is required, we can start having discussions in the recruitment area. We would also like to see growth in our department, especially within the hiring and retention of indigenous personnel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Kaernerck.

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification. The Member for Aivilik was asking questions about mental health, and you indicated that there are Inuit who are not formally trained but are very capable counsellors. In the coming years, would it be possible for the Department of Health to

recognize these Inuit workers that would only require very little training and support them into occupying jobs as mental health workers? Is it possible to have that same type of a laddering program where you would use Inuit who would require very little training? That's my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some are easy to do depending on the ability and they experience of a traditional counsellor and there are different levels of certificates and so on, and they are certified to whatever degree of training they have acquired.

It is obvious that this will continue to move forward, especially in the areas we want people trained in, such as the sector of life skills counselling, and many of these items would be included in the requirements, and that have to be passed prior to the certification to becoming a recognized family or mental health worker. These are the identified levels they are required to surpass, and that is what we are envisioning, much like my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Kaernerck, you are done? Thank you. Moving on. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. My first line of questions is going to be in relation to Inuusivut and specifically the Addictions and Trauma Treatment Division, which is on page 151 of the business plan, which is responsible for providing enhanced community-based service and Inuit workforce development.

Looking back at the letter that the previous minister provided to the standing committee last year, dated February 19, 2020, the letter gave much detail about the community-based mental health and addictions worker program, and it is definitely something to celebrate. That is a great initiative that the department and the minister are working towards. Last year's letter gave a lot of detail, as I mentioned; the three core positions, a health and addictions assistance, youth program facilitator, a mental health and addictions outreach workers, and it went as far as providing a detailed breakdown of all the mental health and addictions staff per community.

My first question is going to be a follow-up since these positions were created last year and I'm looking at the table. There were 5 mental health and addictions assistants, 24 youth program facilitators, and 22 mental health and addictions outreach workers evenly distributed throughout all of the communities. That's where I'm going to start first with asking for an update on those community-based mental health and addictions worker positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Brown respond to that outbreak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown, please.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for the question. I don't have the numbers in front of me, but we can provide you with an update and considerable progress has been made, just to assure you of that. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Brown, for committing to provide that information. My next question is: how have these positions been filled? Through casual or through job competitions or through direct appointments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Brown respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Brown:** Thank you for the question. We're utilizing all of that to get positions into place and then filled. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for identifying that, Ms. Brown. As I said, this is an excellent initiative and something that I really look forward to hearing more about in the coming months and years going forward.

Another issue that I have been raising over the last few years is the inequitable distribution of staff housing between non-Inuit employees and Inuit employees, and I have been submitting detailed written questions to get the statistical information over the years and I did identify that the GN average, 25 percent of staff housing is allocated to Inuit employees. However, the Department of Health has one of the lowest rates of Inuit participation of staff housing. Most recently it was 18 percent of Health's employees in staff housing were Inuit employees.

My next question is: has the Department of Health put in some effort to try to address this inequity in the distribution of staff housing amongst its own employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. This is one challenge, I believe, that is very hard for the department to deal with.

Let me put it this way: when you have 25 communities and of those communities, almost all the nurses that are in those communities are in staff housing, so you start at a minimum 100 percent of the nurses in any community are fly-in nurses and they have to be in staff housing; they don't have their own housing; a very small amount at that. In terms of the nursing station staff that are there, I believe the regional hubs have more nursing staff that are local that would be requiring housing. The challenge is there in finding housing for those employees.

I understand where you're coming from in that and I totally support that we need to work towards increasing housing for Nunavummiut in all aspects. Now that I'm Minister of Health, it's one that I take seriously and I will look to see where we can make those improvements when we can, but it's hard to improve housing for our Inuit staff if there are no Inuit staff that require it, and I understand where you're coming from, that it's for those that do require it.

Let me take a look at that and see where we can make those improvements, but it is a real challenge to make those changes. I'll take a look with my team to see where we are on that, see what the challenges are, and see if there isn't a way we could improve those numbers that Mr. Lightstone is referring to. It will always be hard to increase...not increase them, but the numbers will always be against the Inuit in housing because 100 percent of the nurses outside Iqaluit are probably in staff housing, so I appreciate you understand that also. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's response. I'm happy to hear that. I brought up the two separate issues for the same reason, the community-based mental health and addictions workers are mainly paraprofessional and meant to be career laddering for potential Inuit employees, and as well as I have identified that the Inuit employees in the Department of Health have significantly low rates of staff housing.

After receiving my most recent staff housing figures, I did a little further digging this time around and identified that this inequity is at every single job category, from senior managers, middle managers, professionals and paraprofessionals, even at the administrative level. In each job category, non-Inuit have a higher ratio of staff housing than their Inuit counterparts.

Administrative support, for example, 15 percent of Inuit administrative support employees are in staff housing whereas 27 percent of their non-Inuit administrative support co-workers are in staff housing. The same is even more so for paraprofessional: 20 percent of Inuit working in paraprofessional positions are in staff housing whereas 67 of non-Inuit in paraprofessional positions are in staff housing. Looking at the same job,

same qualifications, and same requirements, there is still serious inequity of Inuit versus non-Inuit in staff housing there.

Given these significant amounts of paraprofessional positions created in the mental health and addictions community-based positions, I would like to ask next: of all those new positions, how many have been provided or advertised with staff housing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have that detail with us on that. I would be more than happy to share that with you at an appropriate time. Unfortunately we didn't anticipate that and we don't have that kind of detail with us.

Having said that, we will look further into a lot of the jobs that are advertised that are advertised without housing and some of the jobs that are advertised with housing. We have to take a look at those. I believe you did some of your research in terms of some are provided housing and some are not, to take a look further and maybe you did, Mr. Lightstone, is to see, of the jobs that are advertised with housing, how many of them are Nunavummiut and in those positions. It would be interesting to see and I will look into that.

I know, though, that over the last year, two years now, I guess, a year, almost two years now, when Human Resources was created in the life of this Assembly, the human resources department took over the role of housing and housing allocations and allotments. Some of the criteria for being able to apply for housing units and that have all been changing and evolving, and I think that as that evolves and changes and it streamlines itself out, we will begin to see changes in those things, Mr. Lightstone, that you're concerned about because I believe those are the same concerns we have throughout government is housing allocation and who they are allocated to.

I believe that the human resources department, along with the housing committee group that's there, have been doing a tremendous job in taking a rethink on housing allocation in terms of staff housing and its allocation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Next on my list: Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you. I have a few questions here that I would like to ask. First of all, I do want to go back to long-term care. I guess I would like to have a better idea on how the department is going to be dealing with dementia care. Right now we don't have a facility here and the department is continuing to send more and more Nunavummiut down south, my mother is one of them, and the numbers are growing.

I guess I would like to have a better understanding of why the decision to build a level 3 first instead of a dementia care or why it wasn't done at the same time and how long. I don't have a clear understanding of how long the wait is going to be. Are we expecting

five years, ten years, one year, like some kind of a reference to how long we're going to be waiting for a dementia care facility to be built? If you can comment on that as a start. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. I want to remind you that it's a capital question. I know where you're getting at, trying to get people repatriated back from the south to the north. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because it is a capital question, I'm not prepared at this time to give a response to it, but I would be more than happy; give me a couple of days to put something together and give you a proper response. I'm just not prepared at this time to respond to you adequately with the kind of response you're looking for. I apologize for that, but I'll do it at an appropriate time, if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you. Yes, I guess I was just looking at elder care as a whole and how we're going to care for elders who have dementia. I appreciate your response and I really do look forward to hearing... I think there are a lot of families out there that want to know this too. When can we bring our loved ones back home? Many haven't seen them. I mean, I haven't seen my parents in over a year and there are a lot of people the same as me and as you all know, when you have dementia, it doesn't get better; it only gets worse. That's why.

Anyhow, I would like to go on and ask for information under Inuusivut. I don't know if I should start with this. I guess I'll start with Resilience Within: An action plan for suicide prevention. It's from 2016 to 2017. You're looking at all the priorities that various entities have in carrying out the Suicide Prevention Action Plan. I wonder if the minister can tell us if there has been a progress report since 2015. I know there was one in 2015, but then you came out with a new action plan and I'm just wondering if you can let us know if there has been a progress report or not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a progress report since the last one and it will be ready this spring and if it's ready before this session is done, then I would be more than happy to share it with you. If not, I'll share it with my colleagues at the earliest opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the business plan I see that on 150, when I look at the Embrace Life Council, the funding is the same and I think it hasn't altered very much. When you fund the Embrace Life Council that's sort of at arm's length, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of having this council in place? I'm sure they do very



good work, but when you're talking about public dollars, how do you know that the work is being carried out as per agreements? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have the gentleman to my right respond to that question, Mr. Chairman, through you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Babstock.

**Mr. Babstock:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of any contribution agreement that we engage in with any proponent, there are going to be certain reporting requirements that are part of that, of which activity reporting would be one, financial reporting would be another, and then that will go back to the program administrators to be looked at and engagement happens with the proponent through the year, getting updates as to what's happening, progress on their proposed initiatives, and the process is quite consultative throughout the entirety of the year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Babstock. Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you. Thank you for your response, but I just wonder, for example, if I had a contract with the Department of Health and I said to the department, "I'm going to do this, A, B, and C," and you agree, "Yes, A, B, and C, it will be great to do" in order to achieve these goals that we would have agreed on, but sometimes I think that that doesn't go far enough because what about the actual results?

For example, if you have contracts with people to deliver addictions, let's look at addictions, counselling and that, do you look at how many people have recovered? Do you know what I'm trying to get at? What are the impacts of having that agreement? I'm picking on Embrace; it could be anybody that you have.

I'm really getting down to how evaluations are really done because I can evaluate something and say, "Well, you said that you were going to this. Oh, I could tick you did that," but what about because you did that, what were the results? Are we in a better state now? That's kind of what I'm getting at and I would just like to know more if the department does that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe our department does all of those at different degrees. It depends on what program you're talking about. If you're going to evaluate an addiction one like you used as an example, do you evaluate it by how many people take it? Do you evaluate it by how many people finished it or do you evaluate it by how many people are still sober?

It's a very complex thing to try to give a detailed evaluation on whether something is successful or not. Our main goal is to ensure that the program that they said they will deliver is delivered and that there are participants, or that it's all-encompassing and go from there. Usually when there are those kinds of programs, in a very short order you start getting responses from the public in terms of its validity or its success. It's very hard to put exactly, these buttons have to turn green in order for it to be successful, or one of three have to be successful.

Yes, we do evaluate them and there are different components and different evaluation guiding lines, I guess, depending on what they are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you. I was wondering if the department has anything that they can share with us in terms of evaluations. I mean, we sit here and we approve budgets for certain things; one is for addictions. I'm going to use that as an example. The goal of providing that kind of a program is to try to help people with their addictions so that they can have a better lifestyle without that.

If I were giving somebody money to say to them, "We need you to help people to get off of their addictions, we need you to help counsel and that," I would want to know, "How did it go? How many people are off now because of the programming that you've done?" I would want to know if... I would say bang for the buck. What am I paying for?

Does the department have anything at all to go on for these kinds of money over the years that they have been providing to non-profits and other entities to carry out some of this very important work? I'm not trying to say it's not being done; I'm trying to say just about the evaluation part to ensure that we're on the right path, that we're going the direction that we're trying to go with this money that we provide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I understand where Ms. Angnakak is trying to go with this and maybe I don't, but at the end of the day the goal is to help people through these different programs and funds. It's very hard to say your addictions program didn't help because you only helped one out of the ten people who participated, although the one person would say yes, it was successful.

I don't believe we have a detailed outline of whether we gauge something whether it's successful or not, but we do evaluate them on occasion to see if there is more intake on them. There's a lot of intake on the different programs that are out there, but it's something that's very hard to do, and we will take a look within the department to see if there are any forms or see if there are any checks and balances for the things that Ms. Angnakak is referring to.

It becomes very hard to exactly evaluate something. Is it successful because you stayed sober or is it not successful? It's hard to evaluate things like that, but I'm sure we have checks and balances that we do go through, and I'll ask the department to take a look at to see what we have out there in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Ms. Angnakak.

**Ms. Angnakak:** Thank you. I do appreciate your response. I know what I'm asking is a little bit complicated and that, but I can't help but feel that unless you have proper evaluations, you don't know if you're going down the right path in what you're trying to do, and how the department is choosing to carry out this work. You contract this entity or you do the work yourself or you have an arm's-length doing something. The only way to know if you're doing the right thing is to evaluate it. I guess that's where I'm coming at.

(interpretation) That's just a comment. It's okay if you don't respond to me, but I have been concerned about this. We expend large amounts of money, but we haven't really heard about the benefits. That has been a concern of mine. That's it. It's just a comment. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Mr. Akoak.

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

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

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good afternoon, my colleagues. (interpretation ends) Before we proceed with Item 21, I apologize for the omission of one of our procedural steps.

Under Item 18, the Minister of Finance moved that Bill 60, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021*, be read for the first time, and the motion was in order but was not subject to a required vote, which we will do now. (interpretation) Is that understandable?

**Some Members** (interpretation): Yes.

**Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 60 has received first reading. (interpretation) Thank you, my colleagues.

(interpretation ends) We will now proceed to Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

### Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

**Mr. Rumbolt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 59 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**An Hon. Member** (interpretation): Question.

**Speaker:** I'm sorry. The motion... (interpretation) I keep making mistakes today. (interpretation ends) The motion is on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Hickee. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**An Hon. Member** (interpretation): Question.

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

(interpretation ends) Third Reading of Bills. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

### Item 23: Orders of the Day

**Clerk** (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that the Standing Committee on Legislation meets at nine o'clock tomorrow morning, followed by a meeting of the Regular Members' Caucus. Both meetings take place in the Nanuq Boardroom.

*Orders of the Day* for February 25:

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. Replies to Budget Address

11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
  - Motion 101 – 5(2)
  - Motion 102 – 5(2)
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 60
  - Bill 61
  - Bill 62
  - Bill 63
  - Bill 64
  - Bill 65
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 59
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 25, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:48*

