

NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Aggu)

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(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)

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(Arviat South)

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Minister responsible for Indigenous
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(Cambridge Bay)

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(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

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(Pangnirtung)

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Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Hon. George Hickey
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

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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
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responsible for the Status of Women*

Hon. David Joanasic
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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, February 26, 2021**

Members Present:

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

>>*House commenced at 9:00*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning. Nunavummiut, I once again welcome you as your MLAs will be at work this morning.

My colleagues, before I start, I would like to tell you a short story. We had the *qulittaaq* I'm wearing made. As we are from Nunavut, we are proud to wear Nunavut clothes and there are many talented seamstresses. It's designed in Amitturmiut style and they're called *qulittaaq*. The one I'm wearing is called *qikpaujaq*. There are certain terms for different types of coats. I wanted to make that statement especially.

Further, let us use the services of the Inuit who can sew and be proud of them as Nunavummiut. I wanted to bring that out.

>>*Applause*

Let's proceed. Ministers' Statements. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 547 – 5(2): Nunavut's New Commissioner

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good morning" to the people of Arviat. Member Main, even though it's still early morning in Arviat, I'm glad that you are there.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer sincere congratulations to Nunavut's new Commissioner, Eva Aariak, who was sworn in on February 3, 2021.

As the link between Her Majesty and our government, our Commissioner works to uphold the interests of Nunavummiut, help to ensure a constituted government, and

protect the democratic freedoms of our people. This is a hugely important role for our territory and one that has always been held by proud, incredible Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, Commissioner Aariak's long, notable career is full of commitment and enthusiasm for Nunavut. As a former educator, broadcaster, Languages Commissioner, business owner, and Premier, she has shown Nunavummiut time and again that she is fiercely dedicated to our language, culture and identity.

Mr. Speaker, I am very much looking forward to working with Commissioner Aariak. I know that her dedication to our territory and her deep commitment have always benefited our territory and people. I am confident she will use that same passion now, and she will continue to show the rest of Canada and the world the very best of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our former Commissioner, Nellie Taptaqut Kusugak, for all her work and dedication for Nunavummiut, our communities and the whole territory over the last five years. It was truly a privilege to work with her. I wish her all the best in her next chapter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are proud of them as Nunavummiut. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 548 – 5(2): Core Funding Support for Iilitaqsinig – Nunavut Literacy Council

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am proud to be able to rise in the House wearing what my wife made.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as Members of this Assembly are aware, my department provides annual program partnership funding to multiple partner organizations that support economic development and capacity building priorities in our Nunavut economy. This year my department has extended this support to a very important organization: Iilitaqsinig – Nunavut Literacy Council.

Mr. Speaker, Iilitaqsinig is well known and respected in Nunavut for its delivery of a unique embedded literacy, culture-based programming approach to teaching and capacity building. Iilitaqsinig's portfolio of programs embraces a wide range of cultural practices and learning, including holistic, comprehensive content in the areas of small business development, harvesting and cultural industries - three sectors that are strongly supported by and closely aligned with my department's mandate and vision.

Iilitaqsinig is led by an all-Inuit board of directors from across Nunavut. The organization, which has offices in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit, currently employs 11 full-

time staff and contracts in excess of 40 elders and instructors per year, all of whom are from Nunavut and the vast majority of whom are Inuit.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to confirm that my department has entered into a program partnership agreement with Ilitaqsiniq in 2020-21. Under this agreement, Ilitaqsiniq is receiving much-needed operational support, giving it stability and assurance that it can deliver all of its planned programming this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Minister's Statement 549 – 5(2): Nuna School Land-based Education Program Wins National Award

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker, as well as members and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, for centuries, Inuit have maintained a close relationship to the land and the environment. It is important to nurture this relationship with our children and youth because it connects them not only to the land but also to Inuit values, knowledge, beliefs, and culture.

In our schools, the land is an important place for experiential learning. Land-based educational programs provide students with culturally relevant learning experiences that go beyond the four walls of the classroom.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Nuna School land-based program from Nanook School in Apex was nationally recognized, winning the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication's (EECOM) Award for Outstanding K-12 Schools. Congratulations.

>>Applause

The Nuna School program is the first land-based kindergarten to grade 2 school program in Canada. Students are outside learning on the land every day in all types of weather, combining a land-based approach, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, while meeting the learning outcomes from our curriculum.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, this program would not be possible without the support of the Apex District Education Authority, the Apex community, enthusiastic parents, and the passionate educators of Nanook School.

I would like to give my congratulations to all involved in the Nuna School program and look forward to seeing it continue for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends)
Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Minister's Statement 550 – 5(2): Elders' Food Hampers

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share a great initiative from our team at Nunavut Corrections.

Every December, corrections staff and clients organize a very popular elders' feast. This year, because of COVID-19 concerns, corrections staff decided to bring the feast to our elders with the delivery of Christmas hampers.

Mr. Speaker and members, staff and clients at the Baffin Correctional Centre kitchen made caribou stew, char chowder, bannock, and Christmas cookies for the hampers.

Baffin Correctional Centre staff also organized donations so each hamper could include a small gift card.

Clients and staff at the Nunavut Women's Correctional Centre made Christmas cards, and decorated and assembled the hampers.

Mr. Speaker and members, in total, 75 food hampers were assembled and delivered to elders in Iqaluit. This was a joint effort, and I am very proud of everyone who took part in this great community initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 551 – 5(2): Importance of Updating Wait-list Applications

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues and the residents of Pangnirtung.

Mr. Speaker, in a housing crisis the fair assignment of public housing is vital. That is why the Nunavut Housing Corporation regularly reminds public housing applicants to update their applications every six months. As soon as an individual turns 18 years old, they are eligible to apply for a unit. As they apply, they are prioritized on their community's wait-list according to their needs.

Key considerations in this process include if an applicant is homeless, if they are living in an overcrowded home, and if there is a lack of employment. The length of time someone is on the wait-list is a factor as well. If any of these circumstances change, it is very

important for applicants to inform their local housing organizations and update their applications.

I am also asking my colleagues in this House to remind all their constituents to apply for housing and to make sure their housing applications are updated. It is very important that everyone who needs public housing units submits applications because it helps the Nunavut Housing Corporation more precisely target which communities are most in need of new public housing units.

>>Applause

(interpretation ends) If we work together, we are better able to fulfill the government's Inuusivut priority under the *Turaaqtavut* mandate by responding to the needs of Nunavummiut for safe and affordable housing. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Ehaloak.

Minister's Statement 552 – 5(2): 2020 Sport and Recreation Award Recipients

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good morning to Nunavummiut. I, too, wear my *kaliku* proudly made by my cousin, Barb Olson of Kugluktuk.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate the recipients of the 2020 Sport and Recreation Awards, which would normally be presented at the Recreation Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN) Sport and Recreation Awards Gala.

Due to the global pandemic and travel restrictions, we will not be able to celebrate the recipients in person. Therefore I would like to take this time to congratulate and thank each of the recipients for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the sport and recreation sector in Nunavut.

The Sport and Recreation Division awards were presented in the following six categories:

- Male Athlete of the Year went to Eekeeluak Avalak of Cambridge Bay;
- Female Athlete of the Year went to Shanti Dias of Rankin Inlet;
- Team of the Year for the 2019 Western Canada Summer Games Beach Volleyball Teams went to our Team Nunavut;
- Official of the Year went to Ipeelie Ootoova of Cambridge Bay;

- Coach of the Year went to Chris Crooks of Cambridge Bay; and
- The Special Recognition Award for outstanding contribution to sport went to Kimberly Walton of Baker Lake, Carol and Courtney Takkiruq of Gjoa Haven, Brandon Nartok of Gjoa Haven, and Matt Wyatt of Kugluktuk.

As well, the Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut will present three awards recognizing outstanding accomplishments and contributions to community recreation. These awards are as follows:

- the Youth Leader of the Year recipients are Dale Aola of Arctic Bay and Sarah Mina Qavvik of Sanikiluaq;
- the Recreation Leader of the Year goes to Nathan Mannilaq of Taloyoak; and
- the Canadian North Presidents Award of Excellence went to Alison Drummond of Sanikiluaq and Valerie Kogvek of Gjoa Haven.

Please help me to congratulate all the recipients of the 2020 Sport and Recreation Awards. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are proud of those who reach for success. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Minister's Statement 553 – 5(2): Food Security Partnerships and Initiatives

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. (interpretation ends) My wink today is for Joe Savikataaq Jr. Thank you for a job well done for Arviat.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker, as we know, food insecurity in Nunavut remains a widespread issue and the impacts are far reaching: increasing our risk to health problems, impacting our mental health, lowering our learning and working capacity, and placing stress on our families and communities.

In this past year we have seen even more how critical food is to our well-being and resilience in the face of added pressures like COVID-19. I wish to recognize the strength of community and families who have come together to support each other.

Through the ongoing partnership of the Nunavut Food Security Coalition, my department has worked with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to increase the funding available for community-based food security initiatives. This past year Nunavut Tunngavik

Incorporated matched the annual food security community project budget by contributing \$ 600,000 over the next three years from the tuberculosis elimination action plan funds.

In addition, through our joint advocacy, \$5.2 million has been directed to Nunavut communities through various organizations, including the Gordon Foundation, the Sprott Foundation, Food Banks Canada, Second Harvest, the Breakfast Club of Canada, and Community Food Centres Canada.

These funds have supported many projects and initiatives that have brought community members together, provided opportunities for learning and facilitated sharing of food. An example of these projects includes the Food Preservation Project delivered by the Nunavut Literacy Council in Rankin Inlet. Thirty-two participants learned how to preserve *tuktu*, *umingmak*, char, *maktaaq*, and berries using both traditional and modern methods to help families better prepare for leaner times of the year.

Additionally, in response to COVID-19, communities worked diligently to deliver food hampers to vulnerable households. For example, in Qikiqtarjuaq nearly 160 households received hampers that included country food. Similarly, in Igloodik 300 households received food hampers during this time.

The priorities of the Nunavut Food Security Coalition this coming year include a training workshop for community-based food security organizations. This workshop will help build the capacity of these organizations with sessions on project development and management, proposal writing, food procurement, use of existing materials and resources, and board governance.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the hard work and dedication of the community volunteers that make these initiatives possible, and their efforts in achieving food security in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on.

Before we proceed, I wish to inform the House that our colleague, Patterk Netser, was feeling sick this morning, so he will be absent from the House today.

Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 801 – 5(2): Recognition of Susan Savikataaq

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to the people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet. If my husband is watching the proceedings, I wish you a good day, even though there’s a blizzard.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize an Inuk who is not really considered. When I was going to Rankin Inlet, that person had me send like a blue suitcase kind of thing. It was a gift to families who no longer have a mother. It’s a small suitcase. We carried it and there were children and their aunt was there and they started crying, just sort of sobbing lightly. It was the clothing of that person who had recently passed away.

Many of us elected officials and others, we work hard and sometimes we don’t consider orphans. Sometimes we forget them and sometimes myself and that lady, we’re confused. They think we’re the same person and sometimes they think we’re sisters. Whenever we get together, we realize that we don’t really look alike. I’m very proud of that person.

Last night when we were really tired, Mr. Speaker, when you were not here, we kept going and when I went to my room, I was presented a very nice gift. I was given a very nice present. It’s called a *marriaq* and I understood right away where it came from. That person never looks for recognition. Many of us want recognition like “I did all this work and I want to be recognized,” but that person is not like that. That person does it on their own.

Premier Joe Savikataaq’s wife, Susan Savikataaq, I know the Premier would not be sitting in his seat if he did not have support. It’s the same with us too if we did not get support. The person helps orphans without looking for recognition and does things that we don’t even think about. I thank her, my fellow *marriaq*, Susan Savikataaq. Thank you, Susan, and you make me feel so big. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 802 – 5(2): The Plight of People with COVID-19

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues, as well as the residents of Arviat and Whale Cove.

Mr. Speaker, I have to address the COVID-19 situation again. As an MLA, with the COVID-19 situation, it has made me realize how connected everything is, housing and health, how connected they are. I think we are all aware of that, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps right now, if I talk about TB numbers or about mental health issues and housing issues, I would remind people that they are all connected, but this morning I will not talk about

numbers. As MLAs, perhaps I think we should look at it this morning. I believe it would be better if we did that.

Mr. Speaker, can you envision, all of my colleagues, please envision or imagine you get a phone call from a nurse or a doctor and you are told that you have COVID-19, that you're positive, that your test was positive. From that point you have to be isolated now. From this point you have to be isolated in your house and you cannot leave your house and the people who live in your house, you have to make sure you're not passing it along to fellow household members.

On top of that, imagine there are ten people living in the same house with you and you don't even have your own room. What would you do? This has created a lot more problems. The lack of housing has caused a lot more problems.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Now, if you can imagine and it can help us understand things, the lack of housing creates a lot more problems and overcrowding, having inadequate space in a home.

Mr. Speaker, with people who get COVID-19 or who are stated to be positive, they have been calling me and asking me "Where can I go sleep? I can't stay at my house. I don't want to pass on the COVID-19 to my family, so where do I go now? Where can I go sleep?" As an MLA, I have not had an answer to that, which is unfortunate.

Up to now, using Arviat as an example with COVID-19, we need more secondary accommodations. We haven't set that up yet. That question is around and those rooms have not been set up. That's unfortunate. With housing, it really affects health and COVID really reminded us of that and helped us understand that more.

At the appropriate time I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to see how the housing corporation's work has been affected by the COVID situation to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I know here in the House, we fully support and remember the residents of Arviat. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. No. 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. No. 5. (interpretation) We can't really use (interpretation ends) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. (interpretation) No. 6. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Member Qirngnuq.

Item 6: Oral Questions**Question 1161 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction Plans**

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): I say “good morning” to you all, my colleagues, as well as my fellow residents of Netsilik. Some of them get up early, so they should be awake by now.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As the minister will recall, I have raised concerns on many occasions about the lack of housing, and I have strongly supported actions to address the shortage.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Netsilik, I have voted to support the NHC’s public housing construction plans for Kugaaruk and Taloyoak. As the minister is aware, a total of 30 new units are planned for Kugaaruk and Taloyoak over the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years.

Earlier this month the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a tender for two new five-plexes to be constructed in Kugaaruk. The tender document indicated that the Inuit labour requirements for this project is 30 percent. Can the minister clarify how these amounts were determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. If I understood the question, in terms of the Inuit labour content, this is based on the housing corporation’s negotiations with the construction bidders. Based on their percentage, their commitment is constantly being monitored whether they have met their original targets of percentage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your response, minister. As we all know, I represent two communities. I will ask about my other constituency community.

(interpretation ends) Earlier this month the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a tender for two new five-plexes to be constructed in Taloyoak. The tender document indicates that the Inuit labour requirement for this project is also 30 percent. Can the minister clarify how this amount was determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once I will look into the question further, I would be able to respond. I don't have the details at this time on the contracts that are arranged by the housing corporation and the people who will be working. They negotiate beforehand as to how their employment targets will be set up, but once I get more information, I can provide a response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you. As it will clarify the matter, we will wait patiently.

(interpretation ends) The Nunavut Housing Corporation's most recent public housing construction allocation and methodology document was released in February 2020, over a year ago. This document contained important information about community wait-lists. Will the minister commit to tabling an updated version of this document before the end of the current winter sitting? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. As I said in my minister's statement, it is important to renovate houses in Nunavut. In particular, people who are 18 years old and over are encouraged to apply for housing on an annual basis. The ranking of a community's housing needs can be placed higher if there are more people on the wait-list and the community is then prioritized. The communities have different housing needs that are determined following the wait-lists. This will be reviewed continually.

With regard to the document that was mentioned, I don't know exactly when it will be tabled, but it would be identified prior to it being tabled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1162 – 5(2): Nunavut Essential Worker Wage Program

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

(interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit the issue of the Nunavut Essential Workers Wage Premium Program. This was introduced as part of our COVID - 19 pandemic response.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the minister about the program earlier this week, he stated that it is "still active." However, information published by the government indicates that the

program “ended on September 30, 2020” and that “applications received after this date will not be processed.”

Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the minister could please clear up this confusion and clarify the exact status of the Nunavut Essential Workers Wage Premium Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member has a tendency to try to make me steal my own thunder.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, although the application-based portion of that program did expire in September, as we talked about the other day, there are monies left over in the allocation that we received from the federal government, so I will be an announcement during this sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s good to know, but maybe he can spill the beans a little bit because he indicated that the government is looking at an 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 the fiscal year-end. That’s what the minister said earlier last week. Can the minister clarify how much funding remains available, and can he elaborate on what specific enhancements are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To date we have expended about \$2.6 million, assisting 65 eligible businesses and almost 1,800 eligible employees. Mr. Speaker, I’m not going to get into the details. Like I mentioned, I will have an announcement this sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the minister doesn’t want to make announcements or anything prior to his minister’s statement, but can the minister confirm how many... ? He said that there were nearly 1,800 employees working for 65 organizations that have benefited, but can the minister confirm how many of these workers were residents of Iqaluit and once he comes out with his announcement, can he commit to tabling a breakdown by community of program recipients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Businesses apply for this program. They may have employees in multiple communities, so I'll have to check with my officials, but I doubt very much that we would have that level of tracking. We may have the home community of the businesses that were supported that in turn supported their employees, but I doubt we would have that level of detail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1163 – 5(2): Public Housing Tenants and COVID-19

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the housing corporation minister. Minister Nakashuk, good morning.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I did make comments on the connections between housing and health. First of all, let me state that I'm not saying that housing is a problem or asking that housing is a problem, and I know how things have their reasons, but I would like to ask based on what we have experienced in Nunavut to date.

The first question I have to the minister, if I would say it in English. (interpretation ends) My first question for the minister is: have public housing tenants been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 based on the experience in Nunavut to date? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you, Mr. Main. Good morning. We constantly reflect on the residents of Arviat while we are in our meetings.

(interpretation ends) Public housing does appear to be more impacted, but this needs further analysis. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I hope that further analysis will happen and I hope that after the analysis, the minister will be able to provide whatever lessons learned to the House or share them with the House.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the housing organizations have many responsibilities. (interpretation ends) My second question, I'll switch to English: what has the impact been

on housing activities, such as maintenance, M&I work, renovation work to existing units, and construction activities? What has the impact on these activities been from the COVID-19 outbreak? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Fortunately the impact has been minimal in terms of work in the community. The staff has been very vigilant about safe practising as well as we have Kivalliq communities that are on call and ready for emergency calls if needed. Also, the construction and M&I work, there have been no impacts in that area as well. (interpretation) 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) It was my impression that the M&I work here in Arviat had been directly impacted, so perhaps I'll look into that a bit further.

I would like to give credit to the dedicated housing employees who have continued their essential work of maintaining units, even through COVID outbreaks here in Arviat and in Whale Cove. They're very dedicated and they're very important.

My last question for the minister is about the Rapid Housing Initiative application. This was mentioned in the minister's statement on Monday, a \$79 million application, and that sounds very exciting. Can the minister elaborate a bit further on what the plans are for the \$79 million if and should, hopefully it will be approved, from the federal government? What are the plans for those funds? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. I will look into the M&I work. From what I heard, they haven't been impacted much, but I will have this looked into more closely and I'll make sure that you're updated.

We are looking forward to getting a response to the request we made to the federal government and should that amount be approved, we are looking at building some houses for the elders. Also, we look forward to building new housing. At this time we're not sure if it's going to be approved because we didn't get a response yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1164 – 5(2): Canada Post Indigenous and Northern Reconciliation Strategy

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues and to the people of Baker Lake.

Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. This one's got a bit of moving parts, so it's going to be a little bit different, I must say.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, the Canada Post Corporation recently announced its new Indigenous and Northern Reconciliation Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I fully understand and recognize that the territorial government does not deliver the mail. However, I do believe that we should make our voices heard when it comes to the operations of federal institutions whose work impacts all residents in our communities.

Can the minister clarify which member of the cabinet has been assigned lead responsibility for communicating with Canada Post on its Indigenous and Northern Reconciliation Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the member that Canada Post is vital for all of us Nunavummiut. It's the main source of how we get our products. The minister that will be responsible will be the Minister of Justice that will be the voice for us. 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. I am glad that the Minister of Justice has been assigned the duty.

Mr. Speaker, one of the specific pillars in Canada Post's new Indigenous and Northern Reconciliation Strategy is a commitment to work with northern communities by reducing the volume of alcohol and illegal drugs that enter these communities.

Mr. Speaker, our territorial Department of Justice has been working to address bootlegging through such initiatives as the new civil forfeiture office, and our Liquor and Cannabis Commission also has responsibilities in this area.

Will the Premier ensure that our Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance work with Canada Post on this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice nodded his head, so therefore I can assure the member that yes, he will work diligently in that. 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 and I'm glad that the minister of the two portfolios, I'm sure they will duke it out quite a bit there regarding the two departments.

Mr. Speaker, one of the specific pillars in Canada Post's new indigenous... . Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

There are often concerns about lengthy delays in delivering mail, packages, and other cargo to our remote communities, and I recognize that Canada Post is responsible for entering into contracts with the airlines for the transportation of cargo.

As the minister is aware, an independent advisory board was established pursuant to subsection 6(a) of the Schedule to Order in Council 2019-0805 in relation to the merger of First Air and Canadian North. It is my understanding that a senior Government of Nunavut official sits on the board. Subsection 3(b) of the Schedule requires the merged airline to "apply minimum standards of service that shall include a set list of priority by type of cargo and a maximum number of days to reach final destination."

Will the Premier ensure that our government's representative on the advisory board raises this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I want to again remind members that if you are going to be asking questions, please keep your questions to the same minister.

(interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can assure the member again that our voices will be heard because we want to make sure that the mail comes in a timely manner. Mr. Speaker, I think we have all noticed that due to COVID, everything has slowed down. I think we have all personally seen that when we order stuff, it takes a little longer than normal now to get it and it's just that the volumes are there and the airline schedules are not what they used to be due to the travel restrictions. Mr. Speaker, I assure

the member that we will make sure that the Nunavut voice is heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1165 – 5(2): Action on Homelessness

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues and my community of Gjoa Haven.

My question this morning is for the Minister of Family Services.

We have all heard about a lot of homelessness within our communities; shortage of housing, as mentioned by some of my colleagues. Back in 2017 there was a survey done by Family Services due to hidden homelessness, and one of the communities was my community of Gjoa Haven which was mentioned.

I'm just wondering: has there been anything done to improve the issue of homelessness in Nunavut, especially in the smaller communities, like Gjoa Haven? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) Yes, there were several surveys done, a couple, actually, and to my understanding, they're finalizing and compiling that. I will certainly be more than happy to provide it once it's compiled. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When there is a lot of homelessness within a small community, people with a house who are renting the home usually bring people in to help them out. They are homeless and they're helping the government to look after your homeless people.

There was a project done back between Family Services and the Nunavut Housing Corporation where you had rents being paid through family services to the Nunavut Housing Corporation in that sense.

When you look after someone that is coming in and is not within the household and you have to feed them, sometimes in the house there are 11 to 16 people due to homelessness and they have to feed them.

With the same idea between Family Services and the Nunavut Housing Corporation, would there be a way to help the lessee to get food on the table for the homeless people that they are looking after? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking about that. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, we have had several housing ministers change, but I certainly continue to have dialogue with each housing minister.

Also, our staff have been trying to get to your community to meet with stakeholders to talk about the results of the hidden homelessness in our communities. Unfortunately COVID, weather, and lack of hotel have delayed that, but they are continuing to try to get to the community to first engage with your community as to the results of the survey. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the report between the department and my community.

I liked your member's statement this morning and I quote, it says, "Mr. Speaker, as we know, food insecurity in Nunavut remains a widespread issue and the impacts are far reaching: increasing our risk to health problems, impacting our mental health, lowering our learning and working capacity, and placing stress on our families and communities." It's a very good statement and you understand that we have a lot of people who really need help.

With this program that you have just mentioned, would you ensure that our communities or every smaller community is able to get that funding that you have mentioned and use it towards homelessness or people who are renting a home and providing homes on your behalf to get help? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We use these questions as we move forward.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, sometimes it's up to every one of us when it comes to food insecurity as well. I myself have family members that struggle as well. I have food in my cupboard that is not perishable that I will go and deliver to my family, so I very much understand food insecurity.

Partnership is really important and we should not be creating partnerships only during hard times. *Qujannamiik* for that question and I look forward to having maybe a dialogue with you on some ideas on how to move forward as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1166 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction Plans

Ms. Towntongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

As the minister is well aware, housing shortages continue to plague all of our Nunavut communities.

As the MLA representing Rankin Inlet North, I am pleased that the Nunavut Housing Corporation plans to construct 20 new public housing units in the community during the upcoming 2021-22 fiscal year.

Can the minister confirm when the tender for the units will be issued and can she confirm what the Inuit labour requirement will be for the project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question, but I can't respond to those questions at this time, (interpretation ends) so I'll take this as notice. (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Please note that (interpretation ends) the minister has taken the question as notice and I'll move to the next member on my list.

(interpretation) Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Member Kaernerck.

Question 1167 – 5(2): School Closure during Inclement Weather

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the residents of Amittuq.

Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

This morning in Sanirajak the temperature is at minus 43 with a wind chill of minus 60. Igloolik schools are closed because of the cold temperature, but the schools are open in Sanirajak. Can the minister elaborate? It seems like something was in place before that

where, if it's too cold, if it's minus 50, schools were required to close. Can the minister explain to the House on what the process is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opening and closing of schools is decided by the district education authority. If there is a weather issue, such as with a blizzard or if the visibility is not good and it becomes unsafe for children, then the DEA will work with the school principals to decide if the schools should be closed or remain open. Mr. Speaker, the opening and closing of schools due to weather is the district education authority's responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Member...I'm sorry. Let me take that back. Member for Hudson Bay, Member Rumbolt.

Question 1168 – 5(2): Applying for Public Housing

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and my questions revolve around her minister's statement earlier today.

In her statement she mentioned that individuals turning 18 years old are eligible to apply for a unit, and it goes on to say that "...they are prioritized on the community's wait-list according to their needs. Key considerations in this process include if an applicant is homeless."

In cases where an applicant is homeless or couch surfing, which is homelessness as known in some of our communities, and the individual is in arrears with the local housing organization, are they still permitted to apply for public housing and be on the wait-list? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. Anybody over 18 years old can apply, but if they have arrears, then there have to be arrangements made to address the arrears. This can involve making payment plans and looking at what they can pay within the year. This is always under review of the applicants. The local housing corporations want to strategize when the arrears are too high. When you make smaller payments, you can start paying it off. As I stated earlier, once you are 18 years and over, please apply and if you have arrears, make even small payments. That's all I can state. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her explanation. Also in your statement it states, “It is very important that everyone who needs public housing units submit applications because it helps the Nunavut Housing Corporation more precisely target which communities are most in need of new public housing units.

Mr. Speaker, to get an accurate account of the need for housing in communities, you should include those who apply for housing but are denied for various reasons. Do the local housing organizations track applicants who are not on the wait-list due to whether it’s arrears or various other reasons? 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. Those who apply for housing, they keep the name even if they have arrears according to the application. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my next question, I think the minister may have touched on it a bit, but I’ll see if she can provide some more information.

What efforts are made by local housing organizations to work with tenants whose applications are turned down in order to get the applicant back in good standing with the local housing organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. 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 local housing organizations can always talk to those who have applied before and if they have difficulties, they provide help through the justice committee or family services and work together and consider what problems they are having.

For example, if they have too much arrears, they can be provided assistance by family services on how to manage their money and make payments. If it’s an emergency, they can go through the Justice of the Peace or justice committee so that they don’t have to write the application alone. It’s the local housing organizations that talk to the applicants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. To be correct this time, Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 1169 – 5(2): Petroleum Products Division

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning and happy Friday to everybody.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services and the topic is the Petroleum Products Division.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, the Government of Nunavut's Petroleum Products Division is a public entity which is shrouded in mystery.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that the Petroleum Products Division website is very informative, but it tells nothing of the operational performance of this essential utility.

Since 1999, when the responsibility for the Petroleum Products Division was transferred to the Government of Nunavut, only one annual report has been tabled in this House when the 2016-17 Annual Report for the Petroleum Products Division was tabled in November 2019.

My first question to the minister is: why is it that the Petroleum Products Division's annual reports, which include their financial statements and more importantly the details on the operational performance of this essential utility, not made public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. The member is correct; the standing committee did call for more transparency into the PPD operations, or the Petroleum Products Division. As a result, in the fall of 2019, the Petroleum Products Division tabled its first annual report.

Currently the Petroleum Products Division is working on the 2018-19 and the 2019-2020 annual reports and will continue through the winter sitting. Hopefully after this winter sitting, hopefully in the spring of this year an annual report can be submitted to this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister's response. I look forward to one day having the opportunity to review those outstanding annual reports.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the operational performance of the Petroleum Products Division is not transparent at all. For my next question, I would like to ask: how many

times have the improper fuel purchases or unaligned fuel sales prices led to the Petroleum Products Division to be in a deficit position and more specifically, how many times has the Petroleum Products Division been required to put forward a supplementary appropriation request due to these deficit positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Again I thank the member for his question. All I can say is that in the first sitting in our Leadership Forum, as minister, I had promised that I would always be transparent and I would always be open and provide information to members in this House. The detail of information that you're looking for, unfortunately I do not have right now, but I can find the information for the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I just want to remind the members before we go to Mr. Lightstone that we have to follow the rules of decorum in the House. Yes, we have to be dressed properly here and make sure our buttons are buttoned up because we have rules about that. I am just reminding the members. Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my final question...before I get into that, I would like to express my appreciation to the minister. I truly do feel as though the minister is always open, transparent, fair, and respectful to members and committees, so I would like to express my gratitude.

Now, for my last question, I have recently been informed that jet fuel has very similar properties to other kerosene-based fuels, such as diesel, and can actually be used in cars as well as to heat homes. For my last question, I would like to ask the minister: how often has the Petroleum Products Division been in a situation where it has been required to utilize the flexibility amongst its inventory of products? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question, very complex and very detailed question. Unfortunately I'm not a petroleum products expert, so the information you're asking, as I would say, I'm not the expert in petroleum products, but I can assure the member that I can get the information for him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1170 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction Plans

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

Now, as an MLA for Chesterfield Inlet, I was not happy to see that they don't have any home care workers. Chesterfield Inlet is one of the smallest communities. It's just a little bit larger than Grise Fiord or it's about the same as Grise Fiord. When I was there and I went to visit people's houses, some of them live in really old houses. Some of them don't have proper heating and proper stairs.

There was an elder who had a home that had no other exit, no back door, and there was another elder that when she washed her clothing, the lights would go out and whenever she did the laundry, the lights would go out and she doesn't have a porch.

I know that money that has been set aside by the Nunavut Housing Corporation, there should be money set aside for the older units for Chesterfield Inlet. There have not been any allocations for Chesterfield Inlet for new homes.

Can the minister commit to have the ancient homes be considered in repairs and let the House know in the spring session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. 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 problems that the member talked about, these different problems, I hope that the local housing association is informed about these things. It's better if the tenants inform the housing association about the needs. The housing corporation is always trying to find ways to build less expensive homes in the communities.

With regard to what was said about allocations, the question about allocations, we're always reviewing to see which community has the most needs and that is followed to date. 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 your adequate response, but the old homes in Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet have what I can term as ancient homes.

(interpretation ends) There are a number of aging housing stocks in both communities and these aging housing stocks have to be reviewed, but the problem is with renovations, the more they are renovated, the more there is no room because the renovations are on top of renovations. It has to be looked at.

I recognize that an independent review of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, according to this allocation methodology, is currently in progress. I would like to see a review on the aging housing stock across Nunavut. Some of these houses are old. I look forward to the report being tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Can the minister clarify how this review... ? I'm talking about the current methodology allocation, and hopefully there will be a review of the aging housing stock. ...how this review is taking into account the needs of our smallest communities, including Chesterfield Inlet? The more population you have, the more applicants there are, and the more applicants there are, the more housing methodology will apply to it. How about the smaller communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking that question. The housing corporation does not always have a big pot of money available, and I understand that there are over 5,000 public housing units in Nunavut. If we're going to try to get new allocations of housing units to make sure that all the people of Nunavut have proper homes, we would need to build over 3,000 housing units. The money that is received by the housing corporation is not a high enough amount to meet that need.

We have requested money from the federal government. It would help us a great deal if we were approved. It would also be used to renovate the older houses. That's the response I can give right now. The plans that are being made for later years, there are plans set aside for those other years. On top of that, for renovations, we get funding contributions from the federal government, and we expect that to come if we get approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. No. 7. Written Questions. No. 8. Returns to Written Questions. No. 9. Replies to Opening Address. No. 10. Replies to Budget Address. No. 11. Petitions. 12. Responses to Petitions. No. 13. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 13: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 033 – 5(2): Bill 58, An Act to Amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 58, *An Act to Amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that Bill 58 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you. Bill 58 will be placed on the order paper for March 1.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) No. 15. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 15: Notices of Motions

Motion 105 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 57, Tobacco and Smoking Act – Notice

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 1, 2021, I will move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 57 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Motion 106 – 5(2): Legislative Assembly Appointment – Notice

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 1, 2021, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, that Mr. Calvin Pedersen, Member for Kugluktuk, be appointed to the Management and Services Board.

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 103 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 55, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act

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

WHEREAS Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation 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 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 55 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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the mover of the motion and because I am the co-chair and our chair is in Arviat, John Main... (interpretation) We miss you, John Main. (interpretation ends) ...Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to speak briefly to the motion that is before the House today.

Bill 55 (interpretation) is another complex piece of proposed legislation that requires careful consideration, and the standing committee has been doing its work in a responsible manner.

I also wish to take this opportunity to note that the standing committee plans to hold a hearing in April on this bill, at which a number of witnesses will be invited to appear to present their views. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. (interpretation) To the motion. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

(interpretation ends) Motions. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

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

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

WHEREAS Bill 56, *Liquor Tax 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 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 (interpretation ends) Bill 56 (interpretation) back to the House be extended by a further 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm getting to be an expert on this.

>>*Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the mover of the motion and the Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation... John Main is the real Chair. I wish to speak briefly to the motion that is before the House.

Bill 56 is another complex piece of proposed legislation that requires careful consideration, and the standing committee has been doing its work in a responsible manner.

(interpretation) The standing committee has been exchanging correspondence with the sponsoring minister, and looks forward to reviewing his most recent letter to us, which I note was received last week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each member in this Assembly knows the negative impacts liquor has on our territory. There is no single solution or easy answer. There's no one path forward to solving these issues.

Mr. Speaker and members, this is why we as a government are taking different approaches. We offer in-community counselling for those needing help. We are working to make it easier to choose lower alcohol products over harder alcohol. We have started to review our outdated *Liquor Act* in preparation for the next government's consideration. We are currently working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Canada towards an addictions and treatment facility here in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that we still have lots more to do on these and other initiatives. However, it's not just a matter of doing more; we also need to do different. As a small government with scarce resources, we need to give ourselves new tools to work with. This is why I introduced Bill 56, the *Liquor Tax Act*, last November.

Mr. Speaker, through this bill, we propose to create a new tax on liquor products sold or imported into Nunavut. The tax will be simple and reasonable, in line or less than what Canadians and nearly every other jurisdiction already pays. The tax would allow us to collect public revenues from the sale and import of liquor.

Mr. Speaker and members, we do not expect this to be a major money-maker, but in Nunavut's situation, as Members in this Assembly have pointed out to me before, every little bit of our own-source revenue counts. This would be the first new tax in Nunavut's history as a public government.

Mr. Speaker and members, we won't see these revenues in the life of this Assembly. That's not the point. The point is to create a legal foundation now that will provide future MLAs with new revenues they will be able to decide how to invest.

As proposed, Bill 56 would also provide new tools to combat bootlegging by allowing us to go after bootleggers through the tax system, in addition to provisions in place through the *Liquor Act*.

Mr. Speaker, do I expect that all Nunavummiut love the idea of a new tax on liquor? No, but nothing unites Canadians more than grumbling about taxes.

>>*Laughter*

However, I think most Nunavummiut recognize that taxing liquor products just like taxing tobacco products is a reasonable step for our government to take.

Do I think creating a new liquor tax will solve liquor issues? Not at all, but as I just mentioned, I think Nunavummiut want us to take every step forward we can to improve our liquor system. Is deferring this bill the end of the world? No, but it does further delay consideration of what my colleagues and I think is a reasonable proposal to leave a new set of tools to the next government.

Mr. Speaker, although I was looking forward to discussing this bill with members during this sitting of the Assembly, I respect the committee's desire for more time to review this

bill and will therefore support the motion to defer, and I do look forward to debating this bill in the spring sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

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

Motions. (interpretation) Continuing on. First Reading of Bills. 19. Second Reading of Bills. 20. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 59, 60, *ammalu* 61 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 10:43 and Committee resumed at 11:01*

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

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good morning, members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 59, 60, and 61. 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 and, if time permits, we will commence the review of the Department of Community and Government Services. 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. I would now like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have witnesses that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. 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 witnesses. Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Thank you and welcome. We left yesterday and we were on page H-6 with Health Care Service Delivery, and I will now open the floor to questions, and then I lost my pencil. I will start with Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The questions that I would like to ask under this section, I'm interested in the model of care. I know there were a few versions that the department had contracted somebody to come up with the best model of care for Nunavut. I guess I would like to know if you have the latest version. Is this still work in progress or is this something that's now being completed, the model of care strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that topic, if I could have my deputy respond to the details on that particular question, Mr. Chairman, through you. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question on the model of care. It was developed a number of years ago. It is posted on the website. For your information, it was a concept. Just so you know, it was a concept about allocating resources. It only focused on the health care centres. It didn't connect with out-of-territory physician services or with the regional centres, so it was really incomplete. Nevertheless, the concept is good in terms of the model of care and work has been going on to try to adjust our services so that it meets the needs of the communities. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on your response, am I to understand then that it's kind of divided up? Are you going to have one model, one strategy that kind of encompasses all of Nunavut's health care needs and how they're going to be met, Mr. Chairman?

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the goal at the end of the day is to have an all-encompassing health care strategy and plan that includes all of the care at

home care within the territory and care that is shared between in and out of territory.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have often heard the phrase “closer to home,” and I’m wondering which areas under health care delivery... . For example, I know cancer treatment in some of the cancers are a priority, but what are the other areas, when we talk about delivery of health services closer to home, is the department looking at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As this moves forward, it’s very exciting to be able to announce, as we have in this House, some of the cancer care that will be able to be conducted in Nunavut at home, which is exciting. As we continue to grow and over this summer, for example, we had some plastic surgery, if I could use that term, done in Rankin Inlet, it was never done before. There was some carpal tunnel and minor surgeries done in Rankin Inlet. That’s a lot better than having to go south to leave your family for extended periods of time.

We’re working on those avenues. Right now we’re in the discussions to take a look at things such as dialysis and see what kind of dialysis we can do at home for those that could have it at home. As we grow and expand and if we’re able to get more funding, we would like to take a look at building some infrastructure within the communities where we can to continue to expand health care closer to home, and it includes elders and others with disabilities or issues that can’t be dealt with in Nunavut, to come home and to be dealt with at home in terms of home like in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response, minister. I would like to I guess ask in a different area and it’s to do with the Qikiqtani General Hospital. (interpretation) I was told by an elder that couldn’t receive visitors and that she couldn’t go out to make visits. She indicated that they have no TVs and there are no radios in the rooms. I would like to ask the minister if he is aware of that situation. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are aware of the situation. Not all rooms have televisions. Some of the TVs might be broken and some of them don’t have TVs at all. When they make a request, if possible, they can be moved to a room with a TV or they can install one in their room. That’s the way it is set up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The elder who I had discussions with was there for quite some time and she couldn't receive visitors. She did request to have a TV, but she was told that there was none available. She was incredibly bored, and since her phone wasn't working either, she felt very alone. She told me to tell the Minister of Health about her situation, so I'm going that now. As you indicated, elders are a priority. That's just a statement. (interpretation ends) That's it for me.

Chairman: Thank you for your comments. Moving on, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 157 of your business plan, 2021-22, (interpretation ends) second bullet; continue to work towards enhancing appropriate in-territory medical infrastructure and clinical care for elders.

(interpretation) With that, I would like to ask the minister about an elder from Sanirajak who approached me and indicated that there is no elders' facility in our community. Is it possible to build elders facility in Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck. Today we're dealing with the O&M budget, not the capital budget of the Department of Health. If you could ask your question in a different way or a different question please. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was trying to stick with my question on the business plan for the medical infrastructure and critical care for elders. That's where I was going, leading my question to that so it can be answered. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck. As I stated the other day, if you can state from the business plan, were you talking about capital, then the question will be allowed. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to an elders' facility; they are under the responsibility of the Nunavut Housing Corporation in collaboration with the local housing authority. It's usually these two entities that deal with that matter, and I believe that it was two days ago that I stated that we would be looking at elders and their needs in general in Nunavut.

There is going to be a long-term care facility built in the Kivalliq, and then we will look at Baffin and Kitikmeot. We will look at elder care facilities, and it's going to be under discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for elaborating. Moving onto another subject in regard to mental health; again, on page 157, 2022-23, you indicated that you are going to be finalizing training materials and delivery of training as

part of the implementation of the *Mental Health Act*. Do you have any training in the plans? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaernek. That question, I do believe, was asked yesterday, and I know you weren't here, but maybe you could review the *Blues* and you will get your answer to that question. Do you have another question, Mr. Kaernek?

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you. I wonder where to turn to now.

I'm not sure exactly... (interpretation ends) I think there's a good Inuktitut term when it comes to COVID-19. *Nuvarjuarnaq*, I mean, (interpretation) people have died from it. I'm not exactly sure how to phrase it, but my question is: with COVID-19, are we going to be focusing more on using Zoom to hold meetings? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Using telehealth within the health department, there are ongoing improvements made and with COVID-19, we have accelerated the use of telehealth when it comes to medical care, mental health care, and exchanging information. Yes, we will be using it more and more because I think COVID-19 might be around for quite some time and the rest of the world is starting to focus more and more on telehealth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Medical travel is very important and it takes a lot of money. This is not a question. The smaller communities seem to be falling behind in those areas. This is for your suggestion. Iqaluit has everything. Can we be caught up to them? It's not a question, but I want my constituents to be considered and respected with equality in Nunavut. This is not a question; just a comment. Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for your comment. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just daydreaming when my name was called.

I would like to ask about COVID-19. I know there will be a response. With COVID-19 in this day, there seems to be three categories. There's regular cold and flu and it's not COVID-19 but another form of cold in the higher category and the highest category seems to be COVID-19.

When COVID-19 first started, people with flu or having chest pains or chest problems and not a real disease and with medicine being used today, even with medication available, if it's not COVID-19 and in my home community with information being made

available, what's the current status to date? I would like to know what the current status is to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Different types of colds and flus occur every fall and winter that are separate from COVID-19, as you're saying. This has been taken into consideration and reviewed by the Department of Health. The incidence of the common colds and flus, separate from COVID-19 have decreased in Nunavut. This is perhaps due to the wearing of masks, social distancing measures and not spending much time in public places.

Other types of flus and diseases have decreased, and although this is the case, flu shots are still provided every fall, and that practice has carried on to date, separate from COVID-19. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With COVID-19 being transmitted, if somebody goes to the health centre, we aren't able to know that same day whether that person has COVID or not. With the smaller communities, are there any guidelines or instructions as to whether a person has COVID-19 or not; with regards to the symptoms? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that you were not here yesterday when we discussed this issue.

In all of the communities, when there is a person with the flu or a cold, which have similar symptoms of COVID-19; such as a fever or other symptoms of a cold; in all of the communities in Nunavut, including your fellow residents, there are tests that are available and performed.

The samples are then sent out to Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. These samples are tested to determine if the patient has COVID-19 or not.

This is the protocol in all of the communities, and will continue to be the protocol, since COVID-19 remains a danger. All patients with symptoms are tested. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What's the status to date on COVID-19, as well as with the other common illnesses? There appear to be two different

scenarios, and I would like to understand properly. That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood his question properly, we are continuing to operate as we usually do for those who are suffering from non-COVID illnesses.

However, if people want to visit the health centre, they have to call first and talk to the nurses and explain their symptoms; and if they can be seen, they are seen. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are always following the recommended guidelines and moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. I still have several names on my list and I'm going to use my discretion as Chair, and only allow three questions each in order to get through the department. We have been on this department now... this is our fourth day of deliberations. I'll ask members if they could keep their preambles short and their questions precise. I'll ask the minister to do the same in their replies, to keep the replies to the point and as short as possible.

Next on my list: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and your staff. I just have a couple of questions myself. On the subject of your health strategy, you touched a bit on... I'm sorry if it's a little too detailed. When was the last time a review was done to ensure the level of service provided is sufficient to the community that it's being provided to? In particular Baker Lake, just because of the forced growth that's happened there the last ten years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our departmental staff are constantly reviewing the situations in each community. They track how many patients are coming in and out, and what the issues are in the communities.

That is done on an ongoing basis to ensure that we don't have staff overworking and we don't create staff shortages. That's ongoing throughout the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response, minister. It's reassuring. The other part I wanted to touch on; when we had the Martha Talirug Centre, we had about 45 local people working, trained to give community support services. Ever

since the building was shut down, I do know the department did bring back five employees to help with the local home visits to the elders and the disabled.

Same thing there, is that reviewed as well regularly to ensure that the service provided is adequate to ensure that there are enough PYs looking after that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that file, we work closely with Family Services and other departments to deal with that file. Yes, it's something that's constantly monitored. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You can let me know if I am not allowed to ask this question, or if it has already been asked.

Here on page 154, the services provided in Nunavut are outlined. There are physician and specialist services and rehabilitation services. Since they are tasked with helping people, how do you keep close eyes on the employees; as to whether they have real certificates or do not have a criminal history? Sometimes people might be coming in with false credentials. Does the Department of Health keep a close eye on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those who need certification papers have to be approved by the Health Canada, whether they can work in Canada or not. They have to fill out forms to show their credentials and their abilities, and that's the only time they can work. We don't hire staff from just out there, the physicians, nurses; dentists are tested on whether they are able to work in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you. This is my last question seeing that we're running out of time.

They are quite capable now and they use false papers and that's present today. What they say, where they got their degrees from, does your staff check whether their degrees are real? Within their identification, do they look into that carefully?

I have heard from one of my constituents who went to Ottawa for medical reasons and were told by a doctor that they are present in Nunavut and be careful on whether they are really qualified and she was told to keep an eye on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): If you are aware of something like that, we would want to be notified. We have not heard of anybody working like that. Our office has to be notified right away if there is a person like that. The workers that need to be certified like dentists or other professions, even for eye doctors, there is an eye doctors association that they have to be a part of and they have to go through that. They check to make sure that the credentials are good. They are all checked, but if there is someone like that that we do not know about, we want to know about them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and staff.

I want to ask questions in the mental health area where we seem to be having a hard time keeping indeterminate people within the communities. Why I'm asking this is because a specialist does come into the community and they will get to know the client and the client will get to know the specialist.

Is there any way that you can keep them later than three months? I think that's when they're leaving. Every three months we get a different person and just as soon as they're getting used to the client or vice versa, they get to know each other and they start working, and then after three months it's another new person. That's why I'm asking. Can you extend the stays of the specialists in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, mental health workers like that have a very challenging job when they get into the communities and we're able to work with some of them through agreements as to how long they will stay in Nunavut or in a particular community, and then they get transferred. We're trying to see how we can extend the periods that they spend in town. Through training as well, we want to try to get workers that can stay up there longer. We are working on them, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one more. Although I know when the marijuana cigarettes became legally taken, it had become an issue where people are not getting well in their head, as well as I know my community is supposed to be a "dry" community and there's a lot of liquid flowing through that. I could say that even in these cold weathers, we need rubber boots to walk on the streets. That's how bad it is. Saying that, how bad would it have to be to have a psychiatrist within the community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if we could answer that here today in terms of the level of stress or distress that needs to be in the community to get that level of care, but I would be more than happy, at an appropriate time, to look into that kind of a response and share it with my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll keep my questions very limited.

First, I would like to refer back to the minister's statement earlier this week about the "Heal by Talking" program, which is collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada and the Government of Nunavut to provide Nunavummiut with access to counsellors remotely by phone.

I had previously indicated that the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, a federal program, does provide excellent coverage for all Inuit under mental health, and it's something that is very rarely publicized and something that I'm trying to change. I'm hoping that we will help to change and spread the knowledge of this essential program.

My first question is: can you clarify why this is only available via phone as opposed to other virtual methods? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time that's where we are on it. It's something that we will be working to evolve and create, but at this time it's available only by phone. We're working with some of the people that are available to it to try to see if there are other ways we could improve it at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. In a previous response to one of my colleague's questions, the minister had indicated the increased usage of telehealth, which I think is an excellent way of providing medical health care, given our limited resources and abilities.

I had written a letter to your predecessor, the previous Minister of Health, identifying the NIHB coverage for mental health services available to Inuit and Nunavummiut especially, and how easily it is to access it virtually, specifically through a medium such as Zoom.

My next question, with this "Heal by Talking" program with the Department of Health and Indigenous Services Canada, would you, the Department of Health, potentially make

telehealth available for any Inuit in Nunavut to access this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate those questions because they are important. I think we need to try to make as many facets of health care, mental health and otherwise, accessible to the public, especially now while we're in this shutdown pandemic and people do need help. As we grow in terms of having more and more access to the Internet and different mediums other than the telephone, we are constantly looking at ways to improve that access, and yes, we are looking at how we can make more of our health care services available through more than appearing at the health service centre. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickee. Your final question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to my final line of questioning, it's in relation to the mental health and addictions, but more focused on the addictions side of things. I believe I have previously brought up the managed alcohol programs last year and very recently it has come to my attention that the managed alcohol programs in Yellowknife and Ottawa have been very successful and had a high success rate with their Inuit clients.

My final question for the minister is: in advance of our own mental health and addictions treatment facility opening, has the department researched managed alcohol programs and is it being considered as one of the programs that could potentially be provided in this new facility? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. I apologize for calling you Mr. Hickee and I apologize to Mr. Hickee for misusing your names. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, you thanked me as "Thank you, Minister Hickee." It's okay. I'll consider that a compliment, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, yes, we consider all best practices in terms of giving service delivery to Nunavummiut and definitely we will be looking at that and are looking at that and see what facets of that we could deliver through our programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Again I apologize. It goes to show we're not all perfect. I'm going to Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If I'm correct, we have three questions to ask on approximately \$387 million, which represents roughly 15 to 20 percent of the O&M budget, so I would just like that on the record.

Before I get to my first question, the line item that has been allocated or the budget that has been allocated for community health centres, I must say that I'm happy to see an increase to the community health centres line item, but it's my understanding that the increase is specifically for security. It's both good to see this increase, but it's also concerning.

My first question is on the medical transportation budget line. It has been reduced by \$20 million from the previous year and I think full credit should be given to the previous Minister of Health, Minister Hickee, for working very hard to get that increased support from the federal government. We can see the benefits of this in the budget where it appears there's almost a dollar-for-dollar increase in other areas such as mental health and addictions, so I think it's great to see that we stand to pay less of the cost.

The \$89 million amount that has been budgeted for medical transportation, with the COVID restrictions, my understanding is that medical travel volumes have been down somewhat. I would like the minister to maybe explain to what degree medical travel volumes have been different than what we will call a normal year. How much less medical travel are we seeing in the year to date due to COVID? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have seen significantly less, I believe, in medical travel. Our staff has been taking a look at what travel south for medical purposes is required immediately and what could be delayed. Those that could be delayed on a case-by-case basis have been delayed, so we have seen a significant amount that way that are not travelling south or not so much south but also to Nunavut. We have also taken some of the travellers that are travelling south that we can also now do within Nunavut.

It's a complex mixture of that and if I could, through you, have Mr. Babstock elaborate a bit on those details. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the current fiscal year the travel programs budget is approximately \$109 million. As of our January variance, we're forecasting approximately a \$95 million expenditure for the year, which equates to about a \$14 million surplus, and that is completely attributable to a reduced volume, largely of scheduled medical travel, medevacs remain pretty much at par, if not slightly above prior year frequency. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would love to ask more questions on this, but I'll move on.

The business plan mentions on page 157, the second bullet, the second priority references the planning for enhanced and appropriate in-territory medical infrastructure and clinical care for elders. It's my understanding that the government has reached out to Inuit organizations in Nunavut under the Katujjiqatigiinni Protocol and asking for their input on plans for the infrastructure side. I'm not specifically asking about the infrastructure; I'm asking about the planning process.

It's my understanding that the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation have responded to the request for input. Has the department received a response from either the Kivalliq Inuit Association or the Kitikmeot Inuit Association on that item? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not aware of any responses from them, but let me look into that and get back to my colleagues on any kind of responses we have received on that matter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister, for looking into that and I look forward to hearing back.

The last question I wanted to ask is on the topic of systemic racism in the health care system. This is something that has been discussed nationally. It has been acknowledged nationally. We have our federal Minister of Health, who has been quoted in the media as saying that racism is not an accident and that the system is not broken, that the system is created this way in terms of systemic racism. It's very troubling, but it's also encouraging to see this discussion beginning.

My question for the minister is: what has the Department of Health's involvement been on the national discussions on systemic racism in the health care system, and what are the next steps in terms of working to identify the issues and address them as they affect Nunavummiut in the health care system? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's comforting to know that all levels of government are dealing with systemic racism and our department has been working and been participating in all levels of government, with our federal and provincial counterparts in dealing with this very issue at all levels within our department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Just before we move on, I'll have one quick question of my own.

With the completion of the new health centre in Sanikiluaq, will there be any new positions created in the foreseeable future to go along with the new health centre?
Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will be taking a look at that in the near future, Mr. Chairman, as we see how the system goes and availability of staff housing and everything else. It will be all-encompassing. I'll get back to you on that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on page H-6. Health. Health Care Service Delivery. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$386,669. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Go back to page H-3. Health. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$471,117,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have concluded the Department of Health?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Closing comments, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) First of all, I would like to thank all health department staff, from the administration to the receptionists and specialists. During this very difficult time for us as Nunavummiut, they are always there and they are always welcoming, so I give them a big thank you.

(interpretation ends) I also want to thank my colleagues for the tremendous support that they're giving their residents and our medical caregivers. We have a very strong medical team and, as I said in Inuktitut, from the receptionists, to the cleaners, to the security, to the doctors and nurses out there all within Health, they have been very patient, very understanding, and sometimes I'm sure it's not the best comments given towards them, but they have been working very hard. I really appreciate them and appreciate the hard work they are doing, Mr. Chairman.

I hope our discussions on health care doesn't stop after COW, that we continue to have that discussion and that I would be more than happy to discuss these and other matters outside of COW that we are not able to discuss today and I thank you for your chairmanship. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your staff for being here the past four days to answer questions as best you could, and to members, if you do have other questions that you feel that need to be asked, they can be asked in other forums, whether it be within the Assembly, written letters, or go see the minister himself in his office. His door has always been open.

With that, Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This being a Friday, I just got a white slip.

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

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. At least you didn't get a pink slip.

>>*Laughter*

We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): I believe it's midday now. Good day. It's almost noon. Thank you. (interpretation ends) 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. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Emiliano. I'm sorry. Mr. Qirngnuq. (interpretation ends) All those in favour. (interpretation) All those opposed. The motion is carried.

Continuing on. Third Reading of Bills. No. 23. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that there's a meeting of the Regular Caucus at half past one in the Nanuq Boardroom, and there's a special meeting of the Full Caucus here in the Chambers at three o'clock.

Orders of the Day for March 1:

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 105 – 5(2)
 - Motion 106 – 5(2)
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 58
 - Bill 59
 - Bill 60
 - Bill 61
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 1, at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 11:58*

