

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeegok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Energy; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Joelie Kaernerck

(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee

(Uqqummiut)

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeegok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu)

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial Management Board; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Hon. Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for Seniors

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Alexander Sammurtok

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Joe Savikataaq

(Arviat South)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Craig Simailak

(Baker Lake)

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanasic

(South Baffin)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 13, 2023

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 9:59*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, can you say the opening prayer, please, Mr. Anavilok.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning, colleagues. If my family is watching in Gjoa Haven, I say “good morning” to you. I miss you. (interpretation ends) It’s just a couple of more days.

Ministers’ Statements. Item 2. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers’ Statements

Minister’s Statement 202 – 6(2): Premier Meets with US Ambassador

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to my fellow members and Nunavummiut who are listening to the proceedings this morning.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, on February 8, I had the honour of visiting the Embassy of the United States of America in Ottawa to meet with the United States Ambassador to Canada, the Hon. David Cohen.

Ambassador Cohen invited me to meet with him to establish a relationship between Nunavut and the United States. Mr. Speaker, in our meeting, I focused on the significance of arctic sovereignty and security for Canada and the United States.

Ambassador Cohen generously offered to collaborate on bipartisan issues and to connect our government with officials in his network.

Mr. Speaker, Ambassador Cohen joined me on February 10 to walk the trade show floor at the Northern Lights and Trade Show Conference, where he met Nunavut's delegates and introduced me to US businesses that do work in the Canadian Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, I have invited Ambassador Cohen to visit Iqaluit and I look forward to continuing our relationship with the US Embassy in Ottawa to build on our existing relationship with the US Consulate office in Quebec City. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister for Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 203 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Human Resource Strategy

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I say "good morning" to Nunavummiut and my colleagues.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the roadmap for the development of a comprehensive human resource strategy for the Government of Nunavut.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to a strong and sustainable public service that is representative of Nunavut's population. The development of the next human resource strategy for the period 2024-28 is underway, using a bottom-up consultations approach that engages all departments and public bodies and relevant government committees.

The purpose of the 2024-28 strategy is to identify and address challenges and opportunities related to the public service's workforce. It will set out goals, priorities, and actions to ensure there is a skilled and effective public service with the necessary capacity to deliver on government commitments to Nunavummiut. It will focus efforts on Inuit employment initiatives and actions that make a real difference and it will communicate plans and achievements to employees and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, although the new strategy should build on the previous strategies, the Department of Human Resources expects it will require more substantive adjustments to reflect and anticipate additional factors, including the *Katujjiluta* mandate, changes in government responsibilities related to implementation of a final devolution agreement, and outcomes of the negotiation of a new 10-year contract for ongoing implementation of the *Nunavut Agreement*. Further, the strategy will be impacted by an evaluation of Inuit employment programs, emerging opportunities for the government as an employer of choice, and the future of work and labour market conditions in Nunavut and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all departments and public bodies to participate and share their contributions with the Department of Human Resources in the upcoming consultations and engagements on the content of the next Human Resource Strategy. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 204 – 6(2): Unfair Business Practices

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to my colleagues and all Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as we work towards achieving our Sixth Legislative Assembly's mandate of diversifying local economies, businesses are encouraged to engage in fair and conscionable business practices.

Mr. Speaker, Community and Government Services offers consumer protection through the administration of the Nunavut *Consumer Protection Act*. This legislation strictly prohibits unethical and oppressive business practices such as deception, [misrepresentation], and fraud.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavummiut are recommended to be informed of their rights and responsibilities under the legislation. With the shift to a digital economy, online scams are rampant. The department continues to collaborate in federal-provincial-territorial meetings, such as the Consumer Measures Committee discussions, to ensure that the needs, economic state, and condition of Nunavummiut are advocated and consulted.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, Nunavummiut are advised to be acquainted with store policies and to take caution when making online purchases. It is very important to understand warranties, terms and conditions, and keep receipts of transactions. Unfair business practices must be recognized and reported to the Consumer Affairs unit by emailing consumerprotection@gov.nu.ca.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, my department is committed to promoting consumer awareness in the territory through educational resources and regular communication. The department is also working to expand consumer protection available to Nunavummiut and has launched a new initiative to review consumer protection legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 205 – 6(2): New In-Territory Surgical Services

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, Health is committed to bringing more services to the territory. Providing Nunavummiut access to care closer to home benefits both individual clients and our government as a whole.

(interpretation ends) Demonstrating our commitment to quality accessible care in Nunavut is the recent expansion of surgical procedures Qikiqtani General Hospital is able to perform.

The 2022 addition of a complete obstetrician-gynecologist program at the hospital led to the first total laparoscopic hysterectomy performed in-territory this past January. To date, the Qikiqtani General Hospital has now performed this procedure twice.

A laparoscopic hysterectomy is a minimally invasive surgical procedure to remove the uterus. Compared to a traditional abdominal hysterectomy, there is a smaller incision, resulting in less scarring and pain as well as a shorter stay in hospital and quicker recovery.

In February the Qikiqtani General Hospital met another surgical milestone was met in Nunavut when the hospital performed its first cardiac-related surgery. This procedure involved implanting a heart-monitoring device into a patient.

The small device, placed just under the skin with a minor surgery, allows doctors to monitor the heart for abnormal heartbeats 24/7 for up to three years. It detects and records abnormal heart rhythms automatically and can alert doctors if there is a problem.

Of further benefit to the patient is the fact this device is monitored remotely, meaning patients no longer have to travel as frequently out of territory to have their heart rhythms checked.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, having these procedures available in territory means shorter travel times to access treatment. For the cardiac procedure, it also means less frequent travel for testing. Please join me in recognizing the hard work and dedication from our health staff and partners to bring these specialized types of care closer to home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Minister's Statement 206 – 6(2): Child Care Parental Fee Reductions

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut and everyone here with us today.

Mr. Speaker, in January 2022 our government signed the Canada-Nunavut Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the federal government. This agreement

secured \$66.1 million over five years to support families, licensed child care centres, and child care workers.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the members that the Department of Education is working closely with our partners to implement several initiatives under this agreement, including development of Inuktitut resources, increased training for child care workers, and increasing the number of licensed child care spaces in the territory.

One of the most important initiatives under the agreement is the reduction of parental fees charged for daycare. Until December, families paid up to \$65 a day for child care in Nunavut. With funding from the agreement, we were planning to reduce child care fees by 50 percent by December 2022 and down to \$10 a day by 2024.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited to share that we implemented these parental fee reductions ahead of schedule and reduced child care fees for licenced centres to \$10 a day, beginning December 1, 2022.

>>Applause

This means that daycare fees in licensed centres have dropped significantly. For some families, this is a savings of almost \$14,000 a year for each child in care. For other families, this means that they can now afford to have their children in daycare and can enter the workforce themselves, creating opportunities to improve their family's well-being and contribute to Nunavut's economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is an historic and transformative step forward for children and families in Nunavut, and we are grateful to our federal and Inuit organization partners, including Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the three regional Inuit associations, in supporting this initiative. I look forward to updating members as we implement other important initiatives to improve child care for Nunavummiut. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Minister's Statement 207 – 6(2): Inuktitut Language Courses

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut and my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to promoting the use of Inuktitut in the workplace. I am pleased to share that in close collaboration with Pirurvik Centre, my department will be offering the Inuktitut Second Language Foundation courses again through the training calendar for Government of Nunavut employees.

Mr. Speaker, these course offerings supplement other course offerings that range from Inuktitut immersion to introductory courses. I am pleased to share that 75 employees have completed Inuktitut language training courses so far this fiscal year and that 30 employees are currently taking courses and 34 employees are registered for upcoming courses.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Government of Nunavut employees to take Inuktitut language training courses. I look forward to having more courses offered in 2023-24 and providing this House with regular updates on Inuktitut language training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Minister's Statement 208 – 6(2): Homeowner Fuel Rebate

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker and my fellow members.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to announce that the Government of Nunavut will be offering a fuel rebate to Nunavummiut that own and live in their own home in Nunavut.

>>Applause

Starting April 1, the Homeowner Fuel Rebate will provide Nunavut homeowners with a \$1,000 payment.

Mr. Speaker, the Homeowner Fuel Rebate is intended to help offset the higher price of home heating fuel caused by the cancellation of the at-the-pump fuel rebate we have offered since 2019.

Because of new federal rules, Nunavut can no longer directly subsidize the cost of fuel using carbon tax revenues. Instead, we are using these carbon revenues to provide programs that directly support Nunavummiut, like the Homeowner Fuel Rebate.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that Nunavut plays an important role in Canada's efforts to combat climate change. We must also ensure, however, that our participation in these efforts not adversely harms Nunavummiut, who already have the highest cost of living and the fewest energy alternatives in the country.

Programs such as the Homeowner Fuel Rebate or the new carbon tax credit proposed in Bill 19 help support Nunavummiut manage the increased costs resulting from higher fuel prices.

We encourage all Nunavut homeowners to apply for this fuel rebate. Application forms will be available starting April 1, 2023 through the Department of Finance by phone or on their website or at the government liaison offices in each community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Before we go to Item 3, I would like to introduce to you Mr. Glen Rutland, the Deputy Clerk from the NWT Legislative Assembly, who will be assisting us for the remainder of the sitting. Welcome to Mr. Rutland.

>>Applause

Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 255 – 6(2): Recognition of a Baker Lake Elder

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues. (interpretation ends) I hope everybody had a good weekend.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement this morning about an elder from Baker Lake whose name is Hivuraq, who is now an elder.

In 1979 he started working with the hamlet council and he has been employed there up until 2023. He has taken holidays, but he was continuously employed by the hamlet council. He worked tirelessly outside, even though there are mosquitos and everything else.

On Tuesday, I believe, he retired and he worked for 44 years with the hamlet council. I thank you very much for your continual support to the people of Baker Lake. I wish you a well-deserved retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Member's Statement 256 – 6(2): Successful Search and Rescue in Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. We had a good weekend.

I rise today to congratulate the people of Sanirajak. The hunters were out seal hunting when a walrus came to their boat and capsized the boat, but at the end, they were saved by the military and search and rescue.

I would like to congratulate the search and rescue organization in Sanirajak, the Canadian Rangers, and especially the people of Sanirajak, who worked together to save the lives of these individuals, Mr. Jonas Kirk Saqpina, Joey Saqpina, and Sandy Siakuluk. Their boat got capsized, but they're okay and back in the community of Sanirajak.

I would like to very deeply thank the search and rescue party in Sanirajak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Member's Statement 257 – 6(2): Happy Birthday to Grandson and Wife

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today for Saturday, March 11, 2023 was my grandson's birthday, Harrison Pauloosie. Happy belated birthday, *irngutaq*. Ittuq loves you and I'll see you in a few days' time.

For yesterday, March 12, 2023, it was my wife's birthday, Clara Quqqiaq. Happy birthday, dear wife. I'm pretty sure you had a great day, and (interpretation) you are one of a kind, my wife. I love you and I'm sure you had a great day. I love you and I will see you on Thursday. I will be heading back home on Wednesday. I love you, my wife. Please know that you are one of a kind and I also thank you, my wife.

I hope we all have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Member's Statement 258 – 6(2): Polar Bear Plate Hockey Tournament

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut, people of Rankin Inlet, people of Chesterfield Inlet, and my fellow members.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate, as there was a Polar Bear Hockey Tournament this weekend in Rankin Inlet. I would like to congratulate all the players and the teams that were playing at this tournament on the weekend.

I would like to congratulate the winners for the Rankin Inlet Rock winning the Polar Bear Plate. Silver medal winners were Iqalummiut and also, third-place winners were from Naujaat for winning the bronze.

I would also like to recognize the commentator, David Ningeongan, and all the volunteers that made it possible to watch the games online. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Member's Statement 259 – 6(2): Recent Death in Arviat

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

Mr. Speaker, we had a huge loss in our community of Arviat and I feel and send my condolences to the family. I'm sure that there will be community gatherings. I send my condolences and my thoughts are with you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 260 – 6(2): The Need for Health Care Delivery in Inuktitut

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address this issue. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue which has been ongoing since the Government of Nunavut was formed which is the need to offer government services in the language of its residents. I believe this is most important when it comes to delivering health care.

Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, a report by Nunavut's Languages Commissioner was tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, on the front cover of the report it states:

“IF YOU CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PATIENT, YOUR PATIENT IS NOT SAFE.”

I rise today to address an issue which has been ongoing since the Government of Nunavut was formed, which is in the need to offer government services in the language of its residents. I believe this is most important when it comes to delivering healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, seven years ago a report by the Nunavut Language Commissioner was tabled in this House.

(interpretation) “If you cannot communicate with your patient, your patient is not safe.”
“Being able to speak in one's mother tongue when it concerns health is not asking a favour of health care professionals or organizations. On the contrary, it is a basic issue of accessibility, safety, quality and equality of services.”

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, if a government service provider cannot communicate with the people they are serving, there will always be a lack of accuracy and misunderstanding.

It should be a basic right that Nunavut residents can speak in their mother tongue when accessing government services.

This is critically important when it comes to health care accessibility and quality of care. A person seeing a doctor, going to the lab, getting an x-ray or receiving medications must be able to speak in the official language of their choice. Health care professionals cannot be solely responsible to make this happen.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are none, please continue, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

(interpretation ends) There must be a clear commitment on the part of our decision-makers to implement a culture change, to ensure health care service delivery is available in all official languages in our health care facilities.

Seven years ago, Nunavut's Languages Commissioner made a number of recommendations on this topic. The Minister of Health of the day made a number of commitments in his response to these recommendations.

However, there has not been enough progress in this area. Inuktitut language speakers still struggle to receive health services in their mother tongue.

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

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Kusugak.

Member's Statement 261 – 6(2): Congratulations to the Rankin Inlet Rock Hockey Team

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I think Rankin Inlet South should be changed to "Rankin Inlet is a Hockey Town South" riding. I wanted to congratulate the Rankin Inlet Rock for winning four to nothing in their gold medal game yesterday against Iqaluit. I thank all those who

participated in the tournament, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker; the number of volunteers we have in that community is tremendous. We were going weekend after weekend with the tournament. Our under-nine team went to Thompson where they did not have a single loss but they ended up in third based on the plus/minus record.

Also, and just as important, Mr. Speaker, this weekend coming, we have another hockey tournament in Rankin; the Terrance Tootoo Memorial Tournament. This is a senior men's hockey tournament that is held every year. I invite my members and colleagues to go and watch the tournament. It will be a blast.

I thank again, the people in our community that continue to volunteer and put in a lot of effort to make sure the tournaments are held, that they are clean, and in proper order; those that bring in and have many, many people from outside our community come and stay in their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Member's Statement 262 – 6(2): Farewell to Departing Cambridge Bay Residents

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to those in Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge two particular community members who moved to the community; Jean Philippe Dupont and Juliana Fiallo, who moved to Cambridge Bay. JP, as we call him, was stationed in Cambridge Bay just over three years ago. They're moving today from the community. I know it is going to be a very heartfelt, emotional good-bye to the two wonderful members who were in our community, along with their daughter, Nina.

Mr. Speaker, when you have people from outside come to the North, and integrate themselves in your community, it is really special to see them doing wonderful things to promote different activities. I would like to highlight JP, in particular, working with the youth. He worked to start up a boy's club. There were many attenders who would go this weekly boy's club after school to hear from other community members on positive role modelling.

Mr. Speaker, JP not only ran that club, and had wonderful attenders, he also taught music in the high school. I know a lot of students were very happy to learn from him, and to learn how to play the guitar, in particular, and other musical instruments.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a heartfelt thank you to both JP and Juliana for their contributions to the community. Juliana worked at Nunavut Arctic College, as the adult educator for adult basic education, and later on moved with the hamlet, all the while being pregnant and finishing her masters in anthropology. They will surely be missed, Mr. Speaker. It is not all the time that you get people who really integrate themselves into

the community. JP and Juliana surely immersed themselves by going to drum dancing, wearing our clothes, and being a local. We'll really miss them. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 263 – 6(2): Recognition of Barry Iqalukjuak of Arctic Bay

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Before I begin, I would like to say "happy birthday" to my nephew, Etuangat. This is his birthday.

I would like to recognize an Arctic Bay resident and very hard-working volunteer, Barry Iqalukjuak, who does a lot of volunteer work collecting garbage on the ice in the spring, winter, summer and fall. He never stops working. If there is any emergency, he is always there, and always volunteering his time too at the community hall. In fact, just recently he did not go home for three days because he was so diligent in the work he was doing that he just continued working.

Now with the Nunavut Quest going on, he decided on his own to clean up the community hall. I am always impressed by him. He will not boast that I am doing this, but he is very, very active. Barry Iqalukjuak, thank you. Often, we are the ones that are directed to do something, but he does something on his own. I am very proud of him. He keeps our community clean. Anything that is thrown away outdoors, all day he is out collecting garbage.

I offer my gratitude to him. Many people volunteer as well, but I just specifically wanted to mention him here in the House. If you visit Arctic Bay, when you come upon Barry Iqalukjuak, say "thank you" to him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker for allowing me to recognize some special visitors we have in the gallery. We have some employees from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and from the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (Cyber Centre) here with us today. The purpose of their visit is that national security work requires the trust and the help of the Canadian public. That is part of their commitment to reconciliation. CSIS and the Cyber Centre want to engage with Nunavummiut to listen and to learn new and unique insights and perspectives, and to provide important security advise and

information to our partners and to inform national security investigations that support all Canadians.

The Cyber Centre aims to communicate the importance of cyber security and the threats that Canadians face, particularly in northern communities, and to talk about measures we can take to counter those threats together. The Government of Nunavut, CSIS, and the Cyber Centre shared commitment to security includes working together and active partnership to protect our political, economic, and social development interests. I would like to say, “*tunngasugissi*, welcome to Nunavut.” Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Well today is a special day here as I have two constituents who are here from Cambridge Bay and I would like to recognize them. We have Beverly Maksagak and her daughter Rosemary. I am very pleased to have them here with us. They are here for meetings on behalf of the Iqaluktuuttiaq HTO and they are here for an Inuit technology forum, so I just want to welcome them and say thank you for being here. I would like to point out that Beverly is our great interpreter, James Panioyak’s spouse, and I thank him for all his work that he does alongside our other interpreters Eva Aiyalik and Attima Hadlari.

Mr. Speaker, I just to want to recognize the members from Cambridge Bay. *Quana*.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaerner.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 393 – 6(2): Search and Rescue in Sanirajak

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did mention in my member’s statement that I will ask a question to the Minister of CGS concerning emergency services in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the minister knows this is an issue I raise often. Perhaps the minister can now give a statement concerning emergency services that an office be said to be established in Igloolik; if you can respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for Amittuq. Recently, emergency services were required in order to rescue two local individuals he represents. I also acknowledge and thank the local emergency service in Sanirajak. We did say that CGS would review this issue and look into where an emergency preparedness office could be located. For 2023-24 we are committed to a complete review of this issue and look at varying options to look into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, within this planning process, Sanirajak is located almost centrally within Nunavut convenient for search and rescue operations, with the local airport regraded as well as upgraded, and most of the required infrastructure is already there, so in my view, not requiring intensive capital investments, hence my suggestion here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the CBC provides public announcements about the searches to date, and approximately 200 annual emergencies are dealt with, and further, Mr. Speaker, I want to also highlight this number. There were 164 called searches last year, and they were able to find the subject sought for.

Now, this number seems fairly high, and in my opinion, Sanirajak should be central to the discussions related to this, as it would allow more development with our current facilities ready to house equipment. Can the minister include our community as I further urge him to review all the intangible factors when meeting with the various emergency divisions to push for locating a search and rescue hub in Sanirajak when planning future emergency preparedness strategies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, with respect to the aircraft or helicopter bases for our search and rescue operations in Nunavut is something we have discussed, but it would require a comprehensive review and further, since the member from Sanirajak has consistently advocated his community as being the most centrally located location.

Based on the facts, to make it a hub would require more research on the location, and whether it is appropriate for emergency services, even looking at the high numbers of searches amongst other things would have to be part of the study, nonetheless, I cannot say unequivocally that it would be based in Sanirajak.

However, we would also have to look at the O&M costs for operating this division. But emergency preparedness involves many sectors and different levels of government, just to use this example. Emergencies can involve ground searches, aircraft searches as right now, all air searches require equipment outside of Nunavut. There are other factors we

need to review, so this kind of preparation would require studying all aspects of search and rescue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, this matter requires an extensive and complete review in my estimation, as usually the three regional headquarter communities receive the most infrastructure and services, Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.

I want the minister to concur here, that smaller non-decentralized communities need to be included to increase their local development and beneficial services locally. As I mentioned earlier, due to the existing infrastructure required to house aircraft, Sanirajak would not require the level of investment compared to others.

There are always helicopters operating locally every year, and our community already houses the North Warning system that could easily accommodate the emergency services, the company I believe is called ATCO, and they are located in Sanirajak and with these many factors, I believe it would make the most sense to move it there.

Can the minister commit also to make Sanirajak a choice for search and rescue operations in line with increasing our smaller communities' development and to include all options when reviewing the factors of this? Not just for emergency preparedness, but also for other important matters.

As I mentioned earlier, the Canadian Rangers were included in the latest review and placed in the search and rescue charts, and I believe this can be included. Can the minister agree to this matter in this House to make Sanirajak the central capital for search and rescue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, in looking at that, we usually (interpretation ends) contract (interpretation) that type of review studying these issues. We anticipate Sanirajak being amongst the communities that can be studied to determine the feasibility of that, or which community would be most suitable along with other factors.

However, I can state this fact. Sanirajak would be included within the scope of this study. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 394 – 6(2): Repairs to Taloyoak’s Netsilik School

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this sitting, I asked the Minister of Education about the ongoing closure of Netsilik school in Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, the students of Netsilik School had never gone to Netsilik School since February 7, 2023. That’s over a month.

Mr. Speaker, while the Department of Education is responsible for delivering our education system, it is the Department of Community and Government Services which has the responsibility to maintain and repair government assets and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on the fuel spill at the Netsilik School in Taloyoak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. My department has been working closely with the Department of Education, and in consultation with the Department of Health’s environmental officers has indicated that before occupation that further air sampling testing is required. These results are not available from laboratory until the middle of this month, so we’re waiting on those results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your fist supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, our students are anxious to get back into school. Their parents and families would also like them to resume their education program.

Mr. Speaker, for clarification, can the minister indicate when he anticipates the Netsilik School in Taloyoak reopening? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In working with contractors, my department has been able to remediate the fuel spill at Netsilik School. As far as I’m concerned, the fuel smell in the school has dissipated, they were able to employ some fans and air scrubbers to clean out the smell, but further assessments and once laboratory air tests have been confirmed, we would communicate with the department of education to determine an action plan for students to return to school. I don’t have a definitive date yet, but we’re working closely to have the schools in Netsilik to resume as practicable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is often the case with fuel spills that they are leaving odours and fumes, some of which may be harmful to health of our students and school staff.

Mr. Speaker, once again, can the minister clarify, can the minister describe what steps will be taken to remediate the area around the school and the affected areas inside the school to make sure that there will be no ongoing health risks to our students and school staff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this process when the interior fuel odour smell has been reduced, as I've stated using fans exhausting out into the exterior, but it was also identified that one of the air handling units for the school located in the boiler was found to be impacted after the fuel spill. So this has been cleaned and now operable, providing ventilation to the outside and meeting the original standards in place, but Mr. Speaker, as stated, we have been working with the environmental consultants in getting assessments to make sure it's safe and healthy for not just students, but the people that work in the school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 395 – 6(2): Registering for Organ and Tissue Donation

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to all Nunavummiut, and Iqalummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Tax season is upon us and although this may give many of us a headache, I do appreciate that it is not the minister's responsibility to help us survive while we are doing our tax returns.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency has announced that beginning in 2022, Nunavut residents can indicate whether or not they want to receive information about becoming an organ or tissue donor on their tax form.

Can the minister provide an update on how his department will be working with the Canada Revenue Agency to provide Nunavut relevant information on organ and tissue donation to Nunavut tax filers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) Currently, in the department, we do not, to my knowledge, have a plan to roll out information in terms of organ and tissue donations. The initiative through the Canada Revenue Agency is one that we support. We do see value in the initiative, and we do support it.

However, due to the limited resources and facilities here in the territory, we do not have plans to harvest organs or tissue in-territory. Those would be done in the south. For example, if a Nunavut patient is receiving care in one of southern centers, say for example, Ottawa, and they are already registered through this program, it would facilitate organ donation or tissue donation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no question that one person's donation of organs or tissues, can save, or drastically improve the life of another person, and sometimes many people. In addition to the examples given just now by the minister, can the minister describe what other factors must be taken into consideration when establishing an organ and tissue donation registry for Nunavut residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of establishing a Nunavut registry, I am unaware if that is currently the plan. I do not believe it is. In terms of what would be required around something like that, we would rely heavily on the clinicians within the department to advise us. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Organ and tissue donation after death is an option that individuals may choose, and they can share this decision with their family through their last will and testament, or by establishing a personal health directive. It is also possible to save lives and greatly improve another person's health by donating blood at blood donor clinics.

Can the minister provide an update on how often his department conducts blood donor clinics, and when the next one will take place in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I know that my department is involved, in terms of the Canada-wide blood services working group. However, in terms of the detailed question, Mr. Speaker, I will have to return to

the member on that. I will take the question as notice. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The question is taken as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Question 396 – 6(2): Net Metering Issues

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions today to the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

I am very aware that the minister is very new to the chair, but due to the time-sensitive nature of the issue that I am raising, in addition my knowledge that the minister has received similar correspondence from constituents that I have, I would like to talk today about some net-metering issues.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister and all of us are aware, Qulliq Energy Corporation was hit with a ransom attack on their computer systems in January.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this attack, Qulliq Energy Corporation was unable to print and electronically circulate bills for the months of January and February.

Mr. Speaker, without updated billing, homeowners with solar energy net-metering programs have no knowledge of where their credit status actually is. Can the minister commit to providing all solar users with up-to-date billing and credit information as soon as possible and make ongoing improvements to the bills to clearly show production and usage? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for bringing a very serious issue. We understand that the cyber attack has really impacted the operations of Qulliq Energy Corporation, and I did receive correspondence that I am looking into immediately. I just want to reassure the individuals that are relying on the net-metering process, that we are looking into it, and that we are looking at what we can do provide the credit after the March 31 deadline that has been provided, and to work with the clients as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to emphasize that if there is any concern, that the members call our customer care service. I will get them the number right after, but I just want to reassure the member that we are looking into the issue from the correspondence that just came over the weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the minister. Although the minister is stating that Qulliq Energy Corporation is looking into extending credits for this year, I would like to get a commitment in light of the recent ransomware billing issues, and to give clients sufficient information to make informed decisions on using these credits. I would like to get a commitment from the minister that Qulliq Energy Corporation will extend credits for this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my colleague for bringing forward the issue. I could commit that we are providing up-to-date billing and credit information as quick as we can. I understand with the briefings I had in the last few days that the billings for the 24 communities have gone. There have been issues here in Iqaluit, specifically, and I have spoken with my officials and we are hoping to rectify that before the end of this week.

I could commit to, as a result of what I just said in terms of the issues that we have been going through, that we will honour the carrying forward of those credits of those individuals that rely on the solar net metering program. I have already instructed and had discussions with my officials to see what we could do to share the information with our clients as we move forward, but I could assure the member that the clients that do have questions in terms of whether those credits would be transferred beyond March 31 will continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment from the minister. One thing of the net-metering policy that some people may not be aware of is that at the end of March, all credits are wiped out. Here in Iqaluit, significant solar electrical production really commences in late February, March is very productive. Therefore the gains that are made each March are wiped out.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister commit to a policy review to recognize a more appropriate date to reset solar credits such as the end of darker months such as January 31 or February 29? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my colleague for bringing forward this concern that is coming from a constituent. Yes, I could agree that we are looking at making amendments to the policy to reflect the challenges that we are seeing right here in terms of the cut-off. We will continue to work with the officials at the QEC, who are working around the clock as we're still addressing the cyberattacks.

To the member's question, I will commit to reviewing the policy itself. I don't have a definitive timeline exactly, but I will start working with officials on that one immediately after the session. To that point, I just want to encourage anybody who has any concerns with the Qulliq Energy Corporation to call our customer care office at 1-866-710-4200 or email us at customer care@qec.nu.ca on any billing enquiries that they may have.

As I stated, we are hopeful to have the updated billing fees out to all our customers by the end of this week, and I really appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we are transitioning through this very difficult situation right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 397 – 6(2): Dental Care for Children

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

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I have asked a number of questions in this House regarding the status of dental care for Nunavut children. I would like to thank the minister for consistently following up his answers with written correspondence.

I note that the Department of Health is currently seeking feedback from the public on its Children's Oral Health Program. Can the minister provide an overview of how the feedback provided will be used to improve preventative dental care for children across Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking that question. Teeth and oral hygiene are extremely critical for our children and all Nunavummiut especially. Teeth diseases can impact your entire body health, and having no teeth or mouth diseases can impact your entire physical health, as we are aware of here.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the oral health program, we're looking for ways to improve it in terms of whether Nunavummiut are satisfied with the level of service that they're receiving at the community level. Currently the most common staff member that you will see at the community level is a community oral health coordinator, but in a few communities, we actually have dental hygienists and that's an approach that has been taken in the past. Decades ago, there were hygienists that were trained at the community level. They were working and some of them working in schools.

In terms of how that feedback will be brought back in, it's through the evaluation of the oral health program that we're looking at receiving feedback and if we brought in

changes, those would be following the consultation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, far too many children across Nunavut are facing serious dental issues. I understand that close to 1,200 children are currently on the wait-list for hospital dental services under general anesthetic and the only locations where they currently receive this service are in Iqaluit, Ottawa, Churchill, Winnipeg, or Edmonton.

Can the minister describe what measures are being considered to provide more general anesthetic services for child dental surgery within the territory, especially at our regional health facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member. Yes, this constitutes one of our deeply held concerns, as it is disconcerting to see the numbers of children requiring dental surgery with general anesthesia being used to make the child sleep during the procedure, and just peeking at the numbers, it is distressing to say the least. We are trying to review our options on how to resolve this problem.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the backlog, I believe the member was asking specifically about in-territory services. Mr. Speaker, right now we're taking whatever opportunities we can in territory or out of territory to get those children's needs met. We have secured days at a private surgical clinic in Winnipeg and we're looking to secure as many days as possible. We are negotiating with a private surgical facility in Ontario for additional service days. We have hired an additional part-time dentist to manage the wait-list here in territory. We're also looking at the possibility of sedation services for children at the Qikiqtani General Hospital. However, our staffing challenges, I should mention, are bringing out some unpredictability into our operating room operations in the territory.

In terms of Rankin Inlet, the private clinic that's based there is preparing to implement sedation services for children over 12 years of age, but an exact date for that to be rolled out is yet unknown. We're looking for whatever opportunity we can to bring down that backlog, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recognize that it is very important that young children receive preventative dental care, including dental check-ups, teeth cleaning, and fluoride treatment, to help reduce the risk of severe dental issues at a young age.

I extend my appreciation to the dentists and dental assistants who provide dental care in our daycares, schools, and health centres. I believe the department also has positions for oral health coordinators in every community.

Can the minister provide an update on how many oral health coordinators are currently employed by his department and what steps are being taken to recruit community residents to fill any vacant positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I don't have that level of detail here in terms of how many positions are currently filled in that specific job category. The department has roughly 1,300 positions and as such, I don't have a detailed breakdown in terms of every position within the department and whether they're filled or not.

The oral health program is an important one, though, and this is based on my memory, so I'm on shaky ground here, Mr. Speaker, but to my knowledge, most of the oral health coordinator positions are filled. Those are ones that are targeted for Nunavut Inuit, ideally long-term residents of the community that they're employed in.

We recognize the importance of offering services, including oral health education services in Inuktitut and as such, I'm really proud of all the great work that our oral health coordinators do and I can commit to getting back to the member with a detailed staffing status of those positions. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 398 – 6(2): Courses for Youth in Trapping and Fishing

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister in charge of wildlife.

Our Inuit ancestors depended on wildlife, and survived by augmenting their income by trapping foxes, and harvesting animals for their sustenance, and they subsisted on that. These ancient practices can be of great benefit to our youth, if they are taught as they can grow their capabilities and have a healthier lifestyle.

Can the minister indicate or tell us if there would be training provided by the elders on trapping and other harvesting methods? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question and I would like to thank the member. In regard to trapping and providing training, we are currently working on a program that will be initiated this year. It is going

to be in two parts. We'll have programs available at the high school and at the community-level. Foxes are still in high demand, and there are furs that are currently in demand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his answer. Especially for men, harvesting is a very healthy lifestyle, being outdoors working, and hunting. My next question; we have to provide country food, especially fish and caribou: does his department have any plans to provide financial support to harvesters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Economic Development and Transportation has that role, as do the fisheries division and economic development, in making our country food available at the community level. We would like to promote harvesting and the provision of country food because, of course, it would be a benefit to all the people of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister. He is the minister of both departments, but I would like to emphasize that these programs made under his departments could be of great benefit. I would like to make sure that the information goes out to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): I would like to thank the member and people who are listening out there. There are different programs available, and we will make sure that we get the information out there and promote these programs. Please feel free to ask our conservation officers about this program and other programs that are being made available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 399 – 6(2): Motor Vehicles Division Activities and Initiatives

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and they concern the activities and initiatives of his department's Motor Vehicles Division in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut.

I want to follow up today on issues that I raised during the recent fall sitting. As the minister will recall, I asked him to clarify the impact that the recent fire in Gjoa Haven had on the operations of his department's Motor Vehicles Division.

At that time, the minister informed the House that "For the three positions under Motor Vehicles that are in Gjoa Haven, this space that is there now and we're waiting on the furniture. While we're doing that, we repositioned them in different communities. Once that office is up and running, they are going back to Gjoa Haven as soon as possible."

However, the department's new business plan indicates that, and again I quote, "there was a re-organization of the division and relocation of divisional headquarters from Gjoa Haven to Rankin Inlet."

For the record, can the minister clarify how many Motor Vehicles Division positions remain located in Gjoa Haven? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For Gjoa Haven positions, the three that are currently there, their furniture has arrived and all three of them are fully staffed right now and they're working and helping for all of Kitikmeot and all of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, numerous concerns have been raised by Members of the Legislative Assembly concerning the length of time that it takes for residents of communities outside of the three regional centres to obtain driver's licences and general identification cards.

As of today, what is the average length of time for his department to issue a new driver's licence to applicants living in Kugluktuk and other Kitikmeot communities?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I applaud the member for questioning this. A lot of work has gone into motor vehicles in terms of getting the driver's licence and getting a timelier response. Through the reorganization and all the work that has taken place, especially for the communities, we go through the government liaison officers as our frontlines. We train them and they're able to enter and send them directly, which has made significant improvements. What used to take a while is now within a month or two that that person can get their driver's licence or general identification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Can the minister indicate what specific actions and initiatives his department is taking to improve processing times for driver's licences and general identification cards? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We train the government liaison officers on how to input the information in order for a speedier processing.

Also, I want to indicate that as part of this reorganization, we have put a huge emphasis on staffing our regional staff. In Gjoa Haven, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit, we are able to have them focus on the region. So a prime example is: we used to have one driver examiner located in Gjoa Haven and it became very difficult to try to go throughout the territory, so we now have the three driver examiners, which makes a huge difference to our communities. I applaud our staff for making efficiencies operational. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 400 – 6(2): The Need for Health Care Delivery in Inuktitut

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

Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my member's statement, seven years ago a special report by Nunavut's Languages Commissioner on her systemic investigation into the Qikiqtani General Hospital's compliance with the *Official Languages Act* was tabled in this House.

Can the minister clarify how she and her officials have followed up on the recommendations of Nunavut's Languages Commissioner with respect to the delivery of health services in the official languages of Nunavut? Have you made any directions or looked further into the comments I've just made? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for her question requesting more information.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture and Heritage provides funding to government departments to develop more regionally appropriate Inuktitut documents, and even though this initiative is already running, we have another matter which I want to highlight today, and that is curriculum development at Nunavut Arctic College for training people to become interpreters.

These programs are mostly running due to the funding we provide and which my colleague spoke to earlier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to you was about any responses on the directives, priorities, and recommendations that came forth from the language commissioner's office.

Moving on, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Health care professionals cannot be the only ones responsible for making changes in how services are delivered in our health facilities. It is up to government decision-makers to maintain and strengthen efforts to implement the delivery of health services in all official languages in health care facilities.

Can the minister describe what assistance is provided to establish policies, procedures and practices that reflect the importance of providing health services to Nunavummiut in their mother tongue of Inuktitut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Languages, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for the question. The language issue and for the services part increasing constantly; last year we in fact released Inuktitut-English translation software through Microsoft. This was recently released and is garnering more usage amongst residents, and even if the person cannot speak Inuktitut or English, this application on your cellphone can be used to increase understanding each other allowing communication to proceed.

Further, the Department of Health now provides a weeklong, daylong or all evening service for patients who require an interpreter, and, frontline staff can now receive medical terminology training, and more courses are offered to teach staff via Nunavut Arctic College. This program was initiated in fiscal year 2017 to 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me reiterate this point, while the items she referenced are specifically to meet the health services requirements, and generally in the medical field, perhaps I can ask if all requests are responded to, as I believe this was mainly for health issues.

Maybe, you should work in conjunction with the (interpretation ends) Languages Commissioner (interpretation) on that. Now, you just mentioned this, and I am trying to be concise here, Mr. Speaker, about the improvement progress made just recently to deal with this matter, personally, as I have an elder housed at the facility being cared for. There are never any interpreters available during weekends and evenings.

An emergency arose in the evening, and I had to deal with that. This requires more attention. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in order to improve the active offer of quality health care services in the official languages, a culture change must be implemented across our government, and especially within the Department of Health and at our health facilities.

Will the minister commit to looking into this issue and reporting back to this House on what efforts are being made to improve the delivery of health services in the Inuktitut language? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Languages, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for her clarification on service provision needed.

The report tabled by the commissioner recommended certain action items which we prioritized and immediately tried to implement with ongoing discussions with the commissioner. We also deal with language preservation and retention under *Uqausivut 2.0*, as this plainly tries to strengthen the Inuktitut language foundation.

At this time, there is a review of this document, and the report will most likely be tabled in this calendar year, and it will include more recommendations to strengthen the usage of Inuktitut in places where it is required to provide services, so there will be upcoming additional recommendations.

With that being the case, I also want my colleague to understand that any language related issue, lack of critical services in Inuktitut, or even any examples of mistaken or wrongly worded documents can be sent directly to the Languages commissioner. That is their mandate, to look after language issues and the process allows a complaint to be lodged by anyone and anywhere on a linguistic issue and the commissioner would look into that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 401 – 6(2): Police Oversight

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to test the memory of our recently reappointed Minister of Justice and my questions concern the issue of police oversight in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I have raised this important issue on a number of occasions in this House and I would like to state that I have been very clear in my support for the police who serve in the RCMP. I fully recognize that being an officer is one of the most difficult professions there is. However, there is a very good reason for the existence of the concept of civilian oversight.

As the minister is aware, when serious incidents occur in Nunavut involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the government's present practice has been to rely on external police forces, including the Ottawa and Calgary police services, to conduct a review of the serious incidents.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, Members of the previous Legislative Assembly, including both the minister and myself, voted unanimously in favor of passing Bill 53, *An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act*. Mr. Speaker, one of the key elements in this legislation are provisions to allow the territorial government to enter into agreements with civilian-led independent external entities to conduct investigations into serious incidents that occur in Nunavut.

I would like to ask: can the minister indicate the current timeline for bringing this legislation into force and can he update the House on the status of his department's discussions with potential partners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the member that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is very important for this territory and the wonderful work that they do for the territory.

For the civilian oversight, we are actively in discussions with a province. Those discussions are taking place and the negotiations in terms of what they will be doing. That one is in progress. Once that's complete, I'll be very happy to announce that we will be able to implement the Act that we all unanimously approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his response. I'm very grateful that the Department of Justice is currently actively in discussions with the province. I hope that it is going to be a civilian-led investigative body. I understand that the minister is unable to provide a timeline, but I hope it will be before the end of the current fiscal year or early into the next.

Mr. Speaker, information published by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission indicates that its systemic investigation will be reviewing "the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's accountability framework in relation to the public complaint process and conduct research into the awareness of and confidence in the public complaint process in Nunavut."

For my next question, I would like to ask: can the minister clarify how the Department of Justice, in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, ensures that Nunavummiut are aware of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission's role in police oversight in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a federally led review in terms of what improvements will be made. Our department is involved through that and to see what's going to take place. I'm pleased that the civilian oversight was over here and allowed the members an opportunity to learn more about what their roles are and I applaud the department for doing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate the minister's response. Mr. Speaker, the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission is a federal agency which has the statutory authority to conduct reviews of specific Royal Canadian Mounted Police policies, procedures, and guidelines.

On August 4, 2022 the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission announced it would be undertaking a systemic investigation regarding the "Royal Canadian Mounted Police's handling of the public complaints process in Nunavut."

For my last question, I would like to ask the minister if he can clarify or maybe elaborate a little bit further the extent to which his department has been involved in this review and can he clarify the current timeline for its completion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department is directly involved in part of the federal review for this particular one. While the review is still there, they still do take and accept complaints and that is available on our website, with the Department of Justice website. For the actual review, as it is a federal review, I'll leave the timeline for them to determine, but it is part of our top priority to be a part of that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 402 – 6(2): Training Opportunities

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say "good morning" to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the Minister of HR on a minister's statement.

The minister's statement was back on November 22, 2023, Nunavut 3000 training agreement, and near the bottom it states, "Trainees recruitment and community outreach is expected to occur this spring and will create training opportunities for up to 80 Nunavut Inuit in 2023."

Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that spring is not for another eight days, so...

>>*Laughter*

...I know it hasn't started yet, but I would just like to ask the minister which communities will be selected and who selects them. Is it the government selecting? Is the contractor selecting it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for the question. The plans were developed under the Nunavut 3000 housing plan, and the allocation process for the communities is still under review, and staff from my other portfolio of Family Services are also planning towards employment options and how this matter will be completed. I still cannot make an announcement yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This coming summer, Arviat is expecting 20 NHC (interpretation ends) public housing units (interpretation) that will be constructed, so 20 units, with another 20 (interpretation ends) affordable housing units (interpretation) also scheduled, so altogether there are 40 units identified for this summer.

Now, the minister just noted that some of the allocations have not been finalized, but what will be the model for this work? Which community will be chosen for the training to construct the units? What model or system will be used here?

Arviat is going to experience 40 homes being built this summer and I wanted clarification about the numbers and if any apprentices will be used to build these units in Arviat. I would like to see some apprentices get trained there out of the eighty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. With respect to that question, it would seem more appropriate to direct it to the Department of Family Services.

The reason is due to the agreement we negotiated as part of the Nunavut 3000 plan. The units the member alluded to, will continue through the Department of Family Services, adhering to the agreement between the contractors and the apprenticeship program and this will continue the way it has been followed, is an agreement between the parties is ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for explaining that clearly. I know this hasn't been asked to the Minister of Family Services, but I think she heard it too. So please make sure you have Arviat in your thoughts in the 80 apprentices for the 40 units that are going to be built in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking those questions. I will talk to the Minister of Family Services about the matter, and to ensure that we're aware of the people of Arviat wanting to work. We want to rely on local people to build those units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Nutarak.

Question 403 – 6(2): Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Education.

On February 27, 2023 the minister rose in the House to speak on a symposium recently attended by the Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit. The minister mentioned that there are 45 Inuusilirijiit in Nunavut. Can the minister clarify whether there are 45 employees filling the Inuusilirijiit positions, or whether there are 45 Inuusilirijiit positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker *Quana* to the member for the question. There are 45 student councillors, Inuusilirijiit in Nunavut. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister. (interpretation) I have been informed that the Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit at the Nasivik School in Pond Inlet has been vacant for almost four years, while the same position at the Ulaajuk Elementary School have been filled on a yearly casual basis with no indeterminate hire. Can the minister provide an update on what steps has been taken to ensure that the schools in Pond Inlet have the positions of Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit filled on a permanent basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member. So there are 45 positions that are not filled, and we have many that we need to fill in our schools, and I will commit to looking into Pond Inlet specifically for the member's constituency for the

school in question as four years is a long time to have a vacant position. We do want to have more people filled in those positions, and we do value them in our schools and I will work with the department to address that question. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for committing to looking into it, minister. Mr. Speaker, in her statement, the minister stated Ilinniarvimmit Inuusilirijiit pay a role key ensuring the wellbeing the students and that they feel safe. Encourage, valued and supported. They help students navigate life changes and provide insight to education staff, and I could not agree more. Will the minister commit to hiring staff to fill the Ilinniarvimmit Inuusilirijiit positions in Pond Inlet schools as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* to the member. Yes, there are 45 positions for the *Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit* and not all of them are filled. In the member's constituency of Pond Inlet, we will work to ensure that the district education authority is able to recruit and hire, and that the position is put out within the department at the departmental level on our website and through all the other means where we do put those positions out. We commit to working to fill that position. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Question 404 – 6(2): Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Population Management

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. I welcome Mr. Kurt to the Assembly in Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, I am very proud of Sanikiluaq's hunters. As the Member of the Legislative Assembly representing the constituency of Hudson Bay, I am firmly committed to advocating for them in the House.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is also aware, Sanikiluaq's hunters and trappers organization is committed to the responsible and sustainable harvest of the southern Hudson Bay polar bear population. The harvest has important economic and cultural benefits for my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, concerns have recently been brought to my attention that the federal government has recently made an arbitrary decision to stop issuing export permits for hides that have been harvested from the southern Hudson Bay polar bear population. Can the minister confirm if his department is aware of this situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we were made aware in February that the federal government made that arbitrary decision not to export the beautiful polar bear skins from Sanikiluaq. I am working very closely with the federal government to raise this and also at our departmental level, because it is not acceptable they ban the export. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree. Mr. Speaker, as the minister will understand, I am very concerned about this federal decision that was clearly taken without adequate consultation with either my community's hunters and trappers organization or the territorial government.

Can the minister outline what specific actions he has taken to date to address this situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once I became aware, I went to the federal minister right away and discussed my disappointment that they had made this decision. He is coming this week, so I am going to raise it again. It is not acceptable for making those unilateral decisions. It is a co-management effort that we need to make sure that we all work together from the hunters and trappers, all the way to the federal minister, in terms of making sure that our management plans work.

I am very proud of *Sanikiluarmiut*. Their subpopulation is very complex, with three jurisdictions. The community has been phenomenal in doing their role as management, and it is not acceptable for them to be punished like this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't agree more, minister.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that the community be provided with clear and timely information about this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm when he will next be meeting with his federal counterpart to raise this issue and will the minister commit to ensuring that the Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Organization and my office are advised of the outcome of the meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very timely question because the federal minister is set to come here this week and I have arranged to set up meetings with him, and I will reraise this issue and hopefully they will do the right thing. Through

all this, our hunters and trappers are always the cornerstone of our management plans and we will definitely keep you and the community informed and hopefully they reverse the decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 405 – 6(2): Energy Portfolio Activities and Initiatives

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Energy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is the first question to have been asked to the minister during our current Assembly concerning his portfolio responsibilities in this area.

As the minister is aware, a number of his cabinet colleagues have certain responsibilities that include energy-related matters and I'll name just a few:

- The Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation is responsible for our territory's publicly-owned electricity provider.
- The Minister of Finance is responsible for matters related to carbon tax revenues and administration of the government's Electricity Subsidy Program for residential and commercial customers.
- The Minister of Family Services is responsible for administration of the government's Seniors Fuel Subsidy Program.
- The Ministers responsible for Environment and the Nunavut Housing Corporation are jointly responsible for administration of the government's Renewable Energy Rebate for Cabin and Homeowners Program.

I think I have made my point. I'm a little out of breath.

Can the Minister responsible for Energy clearly explain how his role and responsibilities differ from those of his cabinet colleagues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Energy, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have held this portfolio for a number of years now and have not been able to stand up and explain what our role is for the energy file. There are two components to it, which the main one is to promote and to try to find alternative energy and work throughout the country is to sort of seek and do that. We're not there to make the power, but we're also there to sort of help shape and develop the legislation and policies around energy. Also, discussions like the small modular nuclear is being introduced through Canada. As the minister, we look at those and try to

see how those fit in within the territory where it's non-existent in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. I'm very interested in the work that you're doing.

Earlier in our sitting, one of my fellow Iqaluit MLAs asked a number of questions concerning the proposed Chidliak diamond mine project near this community. My colleague pointed out that the Nunavut Impact Review Board has published information concerning the potential use of a small modular nuclear reactor at the mine.

For the record, can the Minister of Energy clearly confirm what the Government of Nunavut's position is respecting nuclear power and uranium mining in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Energy, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the modular power plants that are being introduced in Canada, it's very preliminary right now and one is being built in Ontario and there are two organizations that are in conversations with us and I have had meetings with both of them from the national level and at the indigenous level that they're very eager to see whether we would accept those, but it's so preliminary that I haven't had a fulsome discussion. I think it requires us to have discussions publicly about this whether we accept it or not.

As for the uranium mining under our Parnautit, as long as it's done sustainably, it's an acceptable mine or mineral extraction. That strategy is in the review stage and I encourage the public to provide input into this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I do look forward to a definitive response on what the Government of Nunavut's position is respecting nuclear power. I think many Nunavummiut really would like to hear what the government is committing to and I look forward to that.

As the Minister of Energy is well aware, the government's Climate Change Secretariat falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Environment. Can the Minister of Energy indicate which department of the government is formally responsible for matters that fall under this portfolio? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Energy, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It falls under as part of where it fits within the department is the energy file rests with the Department of Environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members, be aware... . Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend the time allotted for oral questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There is a nay. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 with Mr. Malliki in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 11:59 and Committee resumed at 13:28*

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

Chairman (Mr. Malliki): I would like to call this committee back to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Savikataaq.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Savikataaq: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of the main estimates and business plan for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Legislative Assembly, and then proceed to review the three supplementary bills along with the budgetary details, Bills 16, 17, and 21, followed by Bill 19. If time permits, we can proceed to the review of Bills 12, 14, and 20. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement to first deal with Bill 18?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: I would like to ask the minister: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, if it's okay with you. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

For the record, Minister Pauloosie Akeegok, please introduce your officials and then proceed to your opening comments.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I say "good afternoon" to my fellow members. I'm happy to be meeting here again this afternoon.

To my left is Ms. Anna Fowler, (interpretation ends) Associate Deputy Minister; (interpretation) to my right is Mr. Onalik, Deputy Minister. Joining us is our Director of Corporate Services, Mr. Atienza. I would like to welcome him to this Chamber.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to present the 2023-24 Main Estimates and the 2023-26 Business Plan for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (EIA).

As I mentioned, accompanying me today are Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Jimi Onalik, as well as Associate Deputy Minister Ms. Anna Fowler, as well as the Director of Corporate Services, Ariel Atienza.

Mr. Chairman, EIA provides overall management and support to the Premier and cabinet in order to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of our government. Accordingly, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs leads the coordination of policy and legislative development with Government of Nunavut departments and agencies to ensure that the *Katujjiluta* mandate is effectively implemented.

Mr. Chairman, to that point, I would like to spend a quick moment outlining some of the differences that members will have noted in the format and content of the government's business plan. The most obvious change is that business planning is no longer being done on a three-year rolling basis. This change has been made to recognize the fact that, outside of operational functions, the government can only plan for its term in office. This means that *Katujjiluta* will drive our priorities and that our business planning is being undertaken to support *Katujjiluta*.

In order to emphasize the collaborative nature of our *Katujjiluta* actions, each department and corporation with a role to play in a mandate activity has included that activity in their business plan organized by “lead” or “support.” This will ensure that all of the necessary partners are actively engaged and prioritizing their work and that a lead is identified for accountability.

Mr. Chairman, the department is continuing its work to increase the relevance of business planning by focusing on transparency and accountability. There may be further changes to the presentation of the business plan in future years.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to managing the government’s priorities, EIA also ensures the government’s priorities and interests are represented and promoted both nationally and internationally.

Mr. Chairman, the department’s current main estimates for the 2023-24 fiscal year total \$21,971,000. The breakdown of this budget allows for \$17.2 million allocated for salaries and benefits, \$335,000 for grants and contributions, and \$4.2 million for departmental operations and maintenance.

EIA will have a total of 119 PYs in 2023-24, which is up from 118 just last year. Twenty-two of these positions are dedicated staff for cabinet and the Commissioner of Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, EIA has four lines of cores business: the Directorate, Strategic Planning, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Devolution.

1. The Directorate provides overall management and coordination of activities for the executive branch of government, as well as broad communications advice and support across government.
2. The Strategic Management Branch provides comprehensive policy advice on priorities, strategies, policies, and legislation to the Premier and cabinet. The branch also participates in the collection of statistical data and ensures availability of current and accurate statistical information about Nunavut. Additionally, the branch provides advisory services regarding access to information and privacy protection issues.
3. The Intergovernmental Affairs Branch leads the management and development of strategies, policies, and initiatives relating to international, federal, provincial and territorial relations. It liaises with indigenous and circumpolar organizations and also provides support to each of Nunavut’s communities via the government liaison officers’ network.
4. Finally, the Devolution Secretariat is responsible for the devolution process to transfer control over Crown lands and resources to the Government of Nunavut.

Members will have noted that EIA's business plan reflects a reorganization to increase resources to support policy development across the government, our obligations under Article 32 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and our *Katujjiluta* priorities:

- To support Inuit employment in senior positions, we are carving out a Senior Personnel Secretariat with one dedicated employee to focus on recruiting, staffing, onboarding, learning plans, training, mentoring, performance management, and administrative support for these key positions.
- To maintain support to cabinet, while allowing adequate oversight during policy development, we have created a Cabinet Secretariat. This will allow the policy development role to be separate from the Cabinet Secretariat role for increased collaboration with departments, and emphasis on policy development that aligns with priorities.
- To increase centralized support for compliance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, we have created a new ATIPP Division that will be led by the director of ATIPP.
- Also, in an effort to recruit into historically hard-to-fill positions at Nunavut Kiglisiniaqtiit, we are moving five of the six positions from Pangnirtung to Iqaluit.
- Finally, in recognition of the need for policies and support for immigration, we are creating an immigration office.

To achieve this, EIA requires nine new positions.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present EIA's main estimates and business plan. I welcome comments from my fellow members and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you, *Issivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Premier Akeeagok. (interpretation ends) Does the [chair] of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, the department's proposed 2023-24 operations and maintenance budget is \$21,971,000. This represents a 1.5 percent increase from the 2022-23 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department has increased from 118.0 to 119.0.

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

Mr. Chairman, ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' Mandate Letter, which he wrote to himself, indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "restructure the department." The standing committee notes that a new Immigration Division is being established within the department's Intergovernmental Affairs Branch. A number of members have raised concerns regarding the extent to which the government is addressing such issues as recruiting foreign-trained health professionals, and the standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the work of this new division.

The department's 2021-22 main estimates included funding for the creation of a new COVID-19 Secretariat. On April 6, 2022 the Government of Nunavut announced that the state of public health emergency under the *Public Health Act* would be lifted as of April 11, 2022. The secretariat was subsequently wound up. Mr. Chairman, on October 21, 2022 the government issued a request for proposals to produce a "COVID Pandemic Response Review and Recommendations." Mr. Chairman, the request for proposals indicated that "the COVID-19 Secretariat is conducting an evaluation of the government-wide approach to COVID-19." The standing committee looks forward to the tabling of these reviews and evaluations.

The Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' Mandate Letter also indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "coordinate the development of a comprehensive Elder and senior care strategy...including options for establishing an Elders secretariat." Mr. Chairman, members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work.

The Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' Mandate Letter also indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "review the current status of decentralization...and develop an updated decentralization action plan with the support of the Department of Human Resources." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee notes that a number of departments continue to face significant challenges in filling highly technical positions in decentralized communities. The standing committee also notes the importance of the decentralization review being undertaken in coordination with the Department of Human Resources' development of a new "flexible/remote work policy."

Mr. Chairman, section 8 of the territorial *Statistics Act* requires that the annual report of the Bureau of Statistics be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The 2018-19 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2019. The 2019-2020, 2020-21 and 2021-22 annual reports have not yet been tabled. The standing committee notes the continued high vacancy rate in the department's decentralized Pangnirtung office.

The standing committee held a televised hearing from September 26 to 27, 2022 on the 2020-221 and 2021-22 annual reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Mr. Chairman, the department's draft 2023-24 main estimates and 2023-26 business plan indicate that the budget for the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office is projected to increase from \$293,000 in the '22-23 fiscal year to \$781,000 in the 2023-24

fiscal year. This represents an increase of 166.6 percent. The number of positions in the division is projected to increase from 2.0 PYs in the 2022-23 fiscal year to 5.0 PYs in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

On March 25, 2022 the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced the signing of a “Nunavut Partnership Declaration.” The department’s draft 2022-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to “co-ordinate the development of a government-wide workplan to implement shared priorities as outlined in the Partnership Declaration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.” Mr. Chairman, the standing committee looks forward to the Nunavut Partnership Declaration and accompanying work plan being tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The department’s draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that it “coordinates and participates in Nunavut Implementation Panel meetings.” Mr. Chairman, the Nunavut Implementation Panel’s 2012-13 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 5, 2019. Given the infrequency with which the panel produces annual reports, the standing committee encourages the minister to provide periodic updates to the Legislative Assembly on its activities and initiatives.

On August 15, 2019 the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced the signing of a devolution agreement in principle. The announcement indicated that “...the next step is a Final Agreement, which is expected within five years.” Mr. Chairman, the standing committee continues to urge the government to publicly clarify the number of federal positions that are envisioned to be transferred to the territorial public service as part of the devolution process.

Mr. Chairman, the department’s draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that one of its ongoing priorities is to “continue to actively participate on the Implementation Committees of the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* and *Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement*, and in the finalization of Denesuline overlap treaties in the Kivalliq, their implementation plans, and subsequent *Nunavut Agreement* amendments.” The standing committee continues to encourage the government to provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly and impacted communities on the status of transboundary issues with neighbouring jurisdictions.

Mr. Chairman and members, that concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickee. (interpretation ends) Does anybody else have general comments? Mr. Lightstone.

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

Over the last five years, I have received correspondence from constituents who are having issues or concerns over the immigration process in Nunavut. I would like to extend my appreciation to the minister and the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, who are taking the initiative to address this matter by creating an immigration office.

I know that this will have long-term benefits to Iqalumiut and Nunavummiut, as well as increasing the Government of Nunavut's ability to attract and retain foreign workers to assist with our capacity challenges. I'm sure that we will get into some discussion on the topic of the immigration office, but I would like to start off by stating that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. (interpretation ends) Any more general comments? I don't have any more names on my list. We will start the page-by-page review starting on page E-4 in your budget booklet. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,828,000. Any questions? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions are in relation to the Utility Rates Review Council, which I believe falls under this branch.

There has been much discussion energy in the recent years here in the Assembly and the role of the Utility Rates Review Council is that of an advisory board when territorial energy rates are being set, the minister responsible makes a submission to the utility rates review council who conducts a very thorough review and then provides advice and makes a recommendation which is not always followed.

When I was doing a cross-jurisdictional scan it did come to my attention that most jurisdictions in Canada have regulatory body to deal with utility matters. However, in Nunavut, we don't have a regulatory body, we have an advisory body.

So my first question to the Premier, the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs is why was Nunavut setup that way? Why were we setup with an advisory body as opposed to a utility regulatory body that is provided with decision-making powers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank the member for a really good question. I didn't really understand, just my recent announcement, I actually had to provide the URRC in the interim to Minister Kusugak as I am now holding the QEC portfolio at this point, and I think we understand we can't hold those two portfolios together. So if the Chair allows, maybe if I could scan the room and be able to provide a response to that. I too am very proud of the URRC and again, I was very proud to announce the first Inuk Chair, Ms. Monica Ell, who is no stranger to this House as well through that, but intricacies outside the response I think would be responded to by the Minister responsible for URRC right now, which I don't know if it does fall under my

department, we did ensure that there's safeguards and protections for any questions that do come falls to the appropriate minister and I've asked Minister Kusugak to lead that space for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you'll allow.

Chairman: Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately I do not know why they went with the layout and the setup of the Utility Rates Review Council instead of the board as my colleague is asking about. That kind of information I do not have that historic information in terms of what kind of board, it was setup and the reasons behind that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my names is Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the past, there was always an informal approach that if a community loses a decentralized position, new positions would be moved back to that community to compensate and have a balance. In addition to that, the Government of Nunavut through legislation or at least through regulation and policy of keeping the 60/40 split of employees within the capital city and outlying communities.

So I would just like to get some confirmation from the minister, one, if that policy is replacing positions in a community that are moved is still in place, and two, what level are we at right now as far as government employees in the capital city versus the rest of the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. (interpretation ends) Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. I thank the member for asking a very good question. I think we all understand and we hear the priorities around this House and the importance of creating employment opportunities.

In this coming year, if the members do approve this budget, we are focused on doing a full extensive review of what decentralization could look like. I know I'm working with my colleague, the Minister responsible for Human Resources, to look at the extent of that and to continue to see what we could do to support employment opportunities in the communities.

With that, the question of moving those positions from Pangnirtung to here, I think we all understand the importance of having statistical information. That's really at the core of a lot of the business planning issues that we've had and through that, we've had a very difficult time, pre-dating my time, of filling those hard-to-fill positions. I understand that we've looked at all the options to see what we could do to fill those positions.

Through our reorganization, it was imperative that we provide strong supports of providing that central role, that central function. To that, I have reorganized the department to centralize those positions here, really, to provide core service to all the departments, whether it's housing or whether it's the health issue.

With that, the policy is something that we are still following through in terms of creating positions. I know right now we're looking at other options that have been debated in this House, whether it's flexible work or the remote work policies, to see how we could strengthen more opportunities. Although there is that policy, we are exploring further and that's something that I have indicated in the mandate letters and that's something I'm committing as well.

I hope I answered the member's questions. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister answered most of it. The minister still hasn't told me the numbers of what percent of the civil service is employed in Iqaluit versus the rest of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, can you respond to that question? Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. I apologize I didn't respond to that question early on. I'm going through my material. I don't have the information right now, but I could commit to, through you, Chair, provide that information through written correspondence, if you will allow. Thank you, *Issivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We will be expecting the correspondence so that we have the information. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have the Minister of Human Resources in the room here right now. I was wondering if the Premier would be willing to delegate that question to the Minister of Human Resources. I'm sure the minister has that information at her fingertips. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. Again, thanks to the member. I have committed to report that back to the House. If the member has that information, I'm sure we could entertain that, but I have already committed to getting back to the member on getting the exact number. Through you, I will follow your judgment on that one. We do have the member here as well, but I have committed to get back to the member at the quickest convenience on my end. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Is it adequate for you, George, that he can provide a response through correspondence? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do recognize that oftentimes we ask for detailed information here that is best suited for written correspondence. To me, Mr. Chairman, this is quite a basic piece of information from employability across the territory.

As regular members, we're here approving budgets and we need to know one, how closely the government is following their mandate of decentralization as it is currently. I recognize that there is a review forthcoming, but this is not a complicated, big chart; this is a fixed number. Is it 60-40 or is it a little bit different? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq. (interpretation) I apologize. Mr. Akeeagok. (interpretation ends) My apologies.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. Again, thank you for the member. I agree that decentralization is a very important issue and that's why, in this business plan, we have committed to do a very comprehensive and thorough review of how effective it is, what's working and what's not working. I agree with you that it is very important and that I think especially the smaller communities really want to see opportunities, so I just wanted to reference that.

With that, I would relay the numbers if the Minister for Human Resources has that material readily available, but I did commit to providing that through a written format. Again, I go through you, *Issivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave it alone for now. To me, it's quite a readily available number that I don't understand why it's not being released today.

Mr. Chairman, one thing that I didn't see in the opening comments was reference to the new cabinet committees that the recently tabled mandate letters addressed. There are a number of different committees: the Cabinet Committee on Priorities, Planning and Partnerships, Enabling Health, Healing and Aging, Diversifying the Economy, and a few others. Can the minister elaborate on the roles of these cabinet subcommittees and any activities to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. Again, I thank my colleague for asking about the exciting cabinet committees we have laid out. The member is right; there are five cabinet committees and I have shared those.

- The first is the Priorities, Planning and Partnership Committee, which provides oversight for the implementation of the mandate priorities and cross-government plans.
- The second is the Diversifying the Economy Committee, which provides oversight for sustainable economic development, climate change, and preparations for devolution.
- The Reinvesting in Education and Training Committee is the next one, which provides oversight for early learning and child care, K to 12 education, post-secondary education, training and capacity building, and Inuit employment in the public service.
- The fourth one is the Enabling Health, Healing and Aging Committee, which provides oversight for the health, mental health, suicide prevention, postvention, and elder and senior care.
- Finally, the Expanding Housing and Infrastructure Committee provides oversight for infrastructure, transportation, and expanding the housing continuum.

The member asked what role those committees play, so it's really exciting to put the elected officials in the forefront, as we heard when we were in Cambridge Bay as we were going through the mandate development that it's very important to be accountable and to be transparent throughout these processes. With that in mind, we created these cabinet committees to guide the government as we move forward.

I could report that three of those five committees have met for their inaugural meeting and as we move forward, I very much look forward to the engagement and involvement of those committees that really shape what the government will do, but it's through those committees that we're hoping to empower the mandate implementation through *Katujjiluta*. Thank you, *Issivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for that response. I do look forward to seeing regular updates on activities of those subcommittees.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to go down into the Premier's minister's statement and public service announcement that the Premier had made a couple of weeks ago on the associate deputy minister positions. I'm sure the Premier was paying attention to some of the earlier lines of questions that I and some of my colleagues have had through other departmental appearances on the creation of these positions.

As I have stated in the past, this is nothing new for a government to do. In fact, Mr. Onalik sitting beside you is a participant in an opportunity starting off as an associate deputy minister and look where he is now. We can see the benefit of programs like that.

What concerns me with making it such a formal process through a formal announcement, and yet there's been differing feedback, I'm going to say from the cabinet members that have appeared before the committee, some are funding internally, some have already identified people, one minister has stated that he will not be participating in that program.

My first question, Mr. Chairman, where is the funding for these positions going to come from? Is it from Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs? As the Premier is the one that has put this formal announcement forward, or is it going to be on the individual departments that hire and create these positions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for bringing forward a really exciting initiative we have just laid out, that we have just announced and I couldn't agree more that the footprint and the foundation of that position long exceeded my time and I would like to thank my predecessors, one who is here as well, really of seeing investments of associate positions and a good example you used obviously is my deputy right now who was brought in through that, and the one we've seen in Education was brought in through that, and just the other day we have seen the new associate for Environment.

So we really see a strong, very capable Inuit take on these very exciting but very difficult positions.

So with that, I'm very excited to see the announcement and to push for that through obviously through the channels of going through cabinet and going through the mechanisms of Human Resources.

To answer the member's question, the funding comes directly from internal through the departments, and the process of selecting the individuals obviously is something I said in this House, it's through ITAs or direct appointments, and it's really up to the department lead ministers to see how they see fit on that, but we've pushed to create these positions to ensure that it's systematically across as we implement *Katuujiluta* mandate items that we know are very bold and transformative.

So with that, we need every individual to be able to really pull and help see the implementation of that. I hope I covered the internal question that was brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate that response from the Premier. When we look at, and I raised this during the Minister of Finance's appearance when we spoke of the associate deputy minister positions and the Department of Finance is not alone in needing a very technical background that as through the position of the senior personnel secretariat division being added chose the complexity involved in hiring high

executive level positions in Nunavut, and one of the issues that seems to be at the forefront is finding Inuit that have that professional technical background that want to work for the government. We have many very capable people in the territory and whether they work in the private sector, public sector or self-employed opportunities, there's a limited pool of people that we're talking about for some of the very technical positions, you're looking at the Department of Health, the Department of Finance, just to name a couple of easy obvious ones, and it concerns me when a formal announcement like this comes forward that there's an... let me take a step back.

When the minister of human resources was at the appearance the other day, we have talked about the Sivuliqtiksat program, which is currently, if I recall the members correctly, only six people registered in. Which is we spoke at length in here what a great program it is and how it was a potential and has had the history of promoting Inuit to higher level positions through those learning opportunities.

What concerns me is when we make a formal announcement, kind of like a blanket, we are creating these associate deputy minister positions, you can't have a blanket job description for these positions. Each one has to be individual. I know there have been concerns raised that are we just created another level of bureaucracy, or are we setting people up for failure without being given the right resources? It takes a very special person to be able to be a qualified mentor. It's not something you can just tap someone on the shoulder to do without some type of succession planning put in place so that the mentors are given the full opportunity and support to be able to provide the leadership, in addition to job security as well.

It's one thing if a deputy minister has a planned retirement date and an associate deputy minister comes in line to backfill that position in an appropriate succession plan manner.

I would just like to get a little bit more information on how these positions are going to be structured. Normally when there is a formal announcement, there is a formal process, like the Sivuliqtiksat program. Is it going to start off like 70 percent of the salary and as more responsibilities are undertaken by the intern or the associate deputy minister, their salary would increase up to an appropriate level within the pay scale?

I some more information on how these positions are going to be created for different departments with different needs, and how are the salaries expectations going to be communicated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. I again thank the member and congratulate him for having gone through that program. I think we've seen every time we invest in Inuit, that education as soon as you obtain, really builds a strong foundation. He has been a great role model for a lot of people to follow through as well. So I just want to congratulate him. I know you've said you've gone through that program, but it really does open the doors.

With that in mind, really the associate piece, as broad as it sounds, is actually very specific to the departments and we've really left it to the departments to find what that could look like. As in the case, when my colleagues were appearing before Committee of the Whole, some departments are bringing in someone really to look at and specialize on a focused project. So there are some associates that will be very targeted in terms of a review of, let's say, CGS with EDT, with the direction that I gave. So as EIA, we did provide a blanket job description that departments could follow through on, but it was really up to the departments to decide what they see fit within that space.

Our primary objective was really, how can we bring in more resources? I think we have heard many times in this House the challenge we see with a lack of employees that we see across government, especially looking at the TRPS report, where we see very low numbers of Inuit employment. I believe, if my memory serves me, it's at 38 percent at the executive level. So looking at those numbers, it really justified that we need to provide more support and really an opportunity for Inuit to take these positions and to really excel, and to provide a service as we implement Katujjiluta.

So with that, on the salary front, they are all on pay band 14, and really the responsibility and the flexibility is there by the departments. With the salary, to your point, it's on pay band 14. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. For the translators, please don't use acronyms as much as possible. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For people that don't know the different salary ranges within pay bands, maybe the Premier can give the salary range of pay band 14. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok, can you explain that?

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. Again, I apologize to the incredible interpreters for using acronyms. I try hard, so I apologize.

The pay band 14, which ranges from \$143,730 to \$205,327, and obviously each associate falls within that space, as it is an associate deputy minister, so it is very executive in that sense. It is just above the ADM pay range but below the deputy minister, just to give the member the range in terms of that pay band. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I do understand the desire to have these associate deputy minister positions created and their intent, yet there is very little responsibility. Once you come in the door, according to the description that was provided, it's basically job shadowing for up to three years where you have an assistant deputy minister that actually has day-to-day responsibilities, so many reports, and so

many responsibilities budget-wise, and program delivery-wise, and they will be making less money than these associate deputy minister positions.

I was just wondering why the Premier chose to go with this route under this strategy that is outlined. If Mr. Onalik doesn't mind, I'll use him as an example. Within his department that worked in before, he showed a keen ability and an ability to be able to go to that next level where there were responsibilities from what I understand, where he started pretty much from day one. It was just job shadowing. So, when we are looking at people's performance or what they are entailed to do, I do have some concerns on the morale when you're talking about assistant deputy ministers who, especially in the last few years, have put in unbelievable time and effort to maintain the level of service that we have been able to accomplish. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you so much, *iksivautaq*. I again thank my member for bringing that question. I couldn't agree more. The assistant deputy ministers, the deputy ministers, the directors, and the managers really in the past two years, as we've fought through Covid, have put hours and hours and I am so thankful for how hard our public service worked, especially as we are transitioning post-Covid.

So with that, specifically to the member's question, we did consult the Department of Human Resources and gone through the review of the job descriptions to determine the pay band, to determine the salary range where it fits best.

So it has gone through the proper procedures to get to that space. I just want to assure the member on that front, and again, I just want to reemphasize that they aren't just shadowing. I think in the case of some associate deputy ministers, they will have a specific duty to be directly involved. As it is different for every department, I just wanted to highlight that and every department is leading that space of what their departments are doing, but I just wanted to reassure the member that it's not just shadowing. It is really providing more reinforcement to the senior executive team of every department to have extra eyes, to have extra ears, to really have that extra support come to them.

Just really, the incredible public service we have, who have survived a very difficult time when we went through Covid in particular, is really something we are seeing wear off as we move forward. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. I've used up a lot of my clock with my preamble, so I'll try to make this last little bit short and sweet.

Can the Premier describe the job duties of the new position in the Premier's office and confirm whether it is filled or not? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq* and thanks again to the member. For the new position, as the director of strategic operations, we did reprofile from within to be able to fill the very crucial and important position. So we reprofiled and have filled that position. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping for a little bit more detail on the responsibilities of that position.

When we sit in the Assembly here as regular members approving budgets, we cannot add money to budgets but we can take money away. What I get concerned about is the presumption, and it has come up in the House a number of different times; of budgets being approved, and positions being approved, and that type of nature. Where, in a circumstance that we are in right now, it makes it very difficult to have that conversation because we can put a face to that position now. There is actually something on there.

When we are looking at approving things in this House, its usually prior to positions being filled, typically prior to even the job evaluation process being done. So, it puts us all in a very awkward position, that we are being asked to approve a budget on a position that, although it might have been funded internally for now, is being added to, and there are increased budget requests for compensation and benefits. I understand that the majority of that is probably coming from the new bargaining agreement, but there are monies associated with this position within that budget.

So, it concerns me directly that I find again, the respective of our legislative process and the approval process that we are here to do and undertake here right now is compromised; it puts an unfair burden, I find, on us, to approve this. Because again, Iqaluit is a small town, and we can put a face to this position.

So, I am going to leave it as a comment. I am sure my colleagues have other questions, and I have eaten up more than my fair share of time on this page, but I would appreciate some type of a description from the Premier on how it felt it was justified to fill that position before any formal approval process was made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok. Response?

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaaq*, and again, I thank my member colleague for that question. We did follow all the processes to look at reprofiling and finding the funding internally. I fully respect the wish of, really, the process we are in right now, to get the blessing of my colleagues here, to get their departments to pass really, the direction of where we are hoping to go. I feel the business case is really strong to justify that reason.

To your point though; we did follow all processes of reprofiling and creating that very crucial position as we were going through the processes. With that in mind, that position really plays a key role and a crucial role of information flow through the floor, as we start looking at strategic partnerships with our partners, with NTI, or Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (interpretation) I apologize for the use of an abbreviation. (interpretation ends) and our partners, the federal government, as we embark on implementing *Katujjiluta*.

So, looking at the resources that were available in the Premier's office, I really felt it was important, and we did go through the proper channels to create the position. Now, I am hoping to get the blessings of my colleagues with the budget request of EIA to move forward on that front. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Next person on my list, Mr. Savikataaq

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will continue where Mr. Hickes left off, as he was kind of left hanging. In the business plan here, under senior personnel secretary requesting, there was no funding before, but now the funding is for \$169,000. Is that the position that the Premier is talking about, that he has already hired a person in that position? Thank you.

Mr. Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*, and I thank the member for asking about the senior personnel secretary, which is really, no. I think we are talking two different things.

To the member's question, we looked at reorganizing the department to see where we could provide more support, to provide onboarding as an example, to provide support for training opportunities for deputies.

To the member's question, no, I was referring to something else and I am seeking an increase of \$169,000 specifically to the Senior Personnel Secretariat as presented here. Thank you, *Issivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Staying on the same topic there, that new position that was reprofiled and put in there, some of the job description, a little bit, was about working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the federal government. Aren't those the duties of the principal secretary? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaaq*. (interpretation) I thank my colleague for that question. With our multiple responsibilities, we deduced through a careful

examination that if we wanted to provide more help with the growing list of responsibilities, then we had to revise it.

The northern governments like NWT and Yukon had their own setup, so we checked out how their governments set their systems up, to see if we couldn't find a better system to deal with them. During our planning process, it became obvious that our office could use more help, and that is why I tasked staff to look up the differences between the three and see how we could evolve.

Yes, this too, what he mentioned really provides support to our business plans, so the new position is primarily to handle our internal affairs, to iron out some of the options to better support our planning process on programs and services. I can point out some of the differences, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like an explanation on page 2 there, on the Premier's Office. The previous year it was \$1,261,000 and this year it is \$1,640,000, which represents a 30 percent increase. If we can just get an explanation why. He's only got four staff. Why is there an increase of \$400,000 for the four staff? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank the member for that question about the inner operations within my office. The increase in the budget totals \$380,000, the actual amount has increased due to different justifications.

This mainly deals with the wages and salaries after the newest public service agreement, and this is part of the reason for this increase. (interpretation ends) The Nunavut Employees Union collective bargaining agreement (interpretation) governs these increases for our employees. That is one reason, and the other part we mentioned earlier for the new position is included.

We also had a decrease in service contracts, due to that. After our detailed analysis, we noted the need for this \$380,000 increase and is our request for those reasons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm confused now. The position was a reprofile. If it was reprofiled, why did the Premier just stated that it's part of this \$380,000 increase? Is this \$380,000 increase for four staff or five staff? The business plan clearly states four; I'll quote. The Premier's Office "has a budget to cover four staff and relevant operational expenses." Explanation, please. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok, please explain. Thank you.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for that question, and we added this new position so there are now five positions in our office. We are requesting this now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we doing the Minister of Justice, there was a misprint in the mains there. Is this a misprint or actual omission that there are going to be five staff instead of four? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member. The intended the number is five. We have an addition of one, from four to five.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a pretty serious misprint. I can understand that if you have hundreds of employees, that you might miss one, but when you only have four, and I believe that person's already hired, how can you write four? Explanation. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok. Can you please clarify? Thank you.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to apologize for the misprint, it is unfortunate that this was not already printed as five, as it was supposed to be. I apologize for the error in our proposed estimates, our request has always been for five. Looking at our responsibilities, we also looked at where and what means would get us more support. This occurred as an error, and I once again apologize that it is not written as five. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I beg to differ; this might have been put forth to deceive the committee members, but okay.

How much is the new employee making? As he said, this is for the new employee, plus the increases in the collective agreement. In total, this is a 30 percent increase, \$380,000 so, explanation again? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok. Can you please clarify?

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make it very clear that it was absolutely not our intention to mislead the committee. I do not want to be accused of that at all. That was not our intention.

The proposed increase total for PYs \$184,000 and the total budget for our office, including the increase \$121,000 and to travel to communities is \$95,000 and we decreased it by \$20,000 and that is where the numbers come from. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the position was, that's currently filled already, was from being reprofiled, why is the request to fund this position on this year's budget? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason for that is, within EIA we reprofiled a position to put it there and that is why we are asking for approval from my colleagues. Just to affirm that position is there now. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Either I am confused or it seems like you reprofiled a position to put a person in place to do a job, and then you are going to ask for new funding. It just seems like a way to go around getting the approval process from the committee.

Was there something so urgent that this person had to be hired, and do all the work of reprofiling, and then, if this budget is approved, that money would go back to EIA for the reprofile, and the new position would be paid out of this new budget. Is that sort of, correct? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I thank my colleague again for asking the question.

There have been changes made like that and it was done before I came here with the assistant or associate deputy ministers, but because of the fact that it needs to be done as soon as possible. I had mentioned the federal government and that is why we are asking for funding here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we are going to have to look at this. This is a going about way to fill a position that has not been approved, fill a position with a budget where the budget has not been approved for that position. It's just a way of going around and I may come back to that, but this is just to circumvent the authority of the committee to approve budgets. A person is already in there, with monies that were reprofiled, yet if we pass this budget, that will go back and this new position will be funded here, in a round about way, because if the Premier knew that and his staff, they would have clearly stated this is for five positions, not four. I'll leave it at that for now.

The Premier said there is an increase from compensation and benefits. I would like to go to B-4 of the mains here. Compensation and benefits; just an explanation. There is a 29 percent decrease in compensation and benefits, so just an explanation. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the member repeat what page the member was asking about? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It's on B-4. Compensation and Benefits on the Branch Directorate.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you for that clarification. The decrease has to do with the former Covid Secretariat. It will no longer exist, so we have to plan for that. The responsibility will no longer be there and I can explain to the member that 9 PYs were there, and they are no longer going to be there. The main reason for the decrease are for the reasons I just stated, but that is the main reason for the decrease. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Another decrease, in the business plan, under Communications, I'm just curious why the budget, which was \$1,732,000, is now \$1,074,000. That is a decrease because communications, in my opinion, are important. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. That is also an impact of the Covid Secretariat as well, which had a really important role of communicating. The decrease is involved with the compensation and benefits due to three positions, as well as one that was reprofiled. So the net decrease is \$547,000 specific to the member's questions. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to a different matter; going back to the news release about the associate deputy minister, it talked about "Cabinet has

approved a policy enabling all departments and agencies to assign an associate deputy minister for up to three years.”

Is this a new policy that was approved recently, or when was this policy approved? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. I also thank the member. We already have a policy on that. It just shows we did what we had to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Cabinet has approved a policy enabling all departments to assign an associate minister. (interpretation) Is it a new policy? Has it just been approved by cabinet? When was the policy approved by cabinet? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok, can you explain that.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for asking a happy question.

We had spoken about this matter as discussed, and this was identified last year as something we ought to be reviewing in light of the essential importance of these positions and my executive colleagues deliberated on this issue, and it is written but I do not have it in front of me, so the exact date of the decision I will have to return with, but the idea for this came from that approval.

It just identifies that these are our reasons for laying the groundwork towards this, but it was from the point forward we started developing our plans towards that and what we have spoken about today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Premier admitted that cabinet approved this policy. He doesn't know when it was approved, but will the Premier commit to providing it to the Chair for us so this committee can see the policy? Will the Premier commit to give all members the policy through the Chair? Thank you.

Chairman: Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I said it already. The decision was made in November last year by cabinet, so we have been following it since then. We were given an address in November and the work has proceeded since. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): The member is asking to responded to by correspondence. Can you commit to that? Thank you.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I can commit to that. Our communications person already communicated that out there, but I can do that through the Chair here. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): So we will be expecting that letter. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm curious. What is the title of the policy? Most policies have a title. What is the title of the policy? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): My apologies. Please wait a moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The motion came from cabinet. Discussions started in cabinet, and there are so many Inuit that don't have jobs and we have heard the statistics, so we have been putting those positions using that address. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Mr. Chairman, now the Premier is saying it was a directive, and a directive and a policy are quite different. His news release on February 27, which is not that long ago, "cabinet has approved a policy enabling all departments and agencies to assign associate deputy ministers for up to three years.

Now the Premier is saying it is a directive that cabinet came up with in November. Can we get a clear explanation whether there is a policy or it was just a directive? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P. J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I also thank the member again for his brilliant question. The Government of Nunavut has a policy that addresses called the (interpretation ends) organizational policy (interpretation) which we follow, and it is due to this policy that is the reason why.

We also, as the Executive Council can make directives towards the direction we want to move towards, and this is where our targeted approach is heading towards with this particular document. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is still not clear. The Premier stated in November that this policy was approved, and then it seems to be changed to a directive was approved back in November by cabinet.

Can we get a clear answer whether is there a policy for these associate deputy ministers in the press release or is this based on a directive? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P. J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The directive was to use a policy, as I indicated in my response, so that directive allowed us to be able to then use that policy. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All policies have titles. What is the title of that policy that the directive was told to use? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P. J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*, and I thank the member. It's to use existing human resource policies that are in place as well as the organizational policy that I had referenced. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then how is this? Can the Premier just explain how this is accurate that cabinet has approved the policy. This news release implies that cabinet approved a new policy to hire all of these associate deputy ministers, of which I do not have a problem or issue with hiring associate deputy ministers.

That is not the point. The point is there is a policy, and the news release states... . It sounds like they just approved it. Was there a policy by the current cabinet that is there, about this policy, whatever the policy name is? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier Akeeagok, can you please explain in further detail?

Hon. P. J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*, and I thank the member for that question. I believe we could have been clearer in terms of our communication, but that directive was there to use existing policies that are there to create positions.

Really, the clear purpose of it is to bring in more resources of bringing Inuit into the executive and I know that the member said that's not the question, but that is really the target of why we created this position. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just confused again. The Premier just said that is why we created this position, when I was asking about policy. Can I get an explanation of what position, because I did not question any position, it was about the policy. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P. J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the member once again. I indicated that I think we would have had a better understanding, and I know exactly where you are coming from. We had an agreement among the cabinet to utilize the policy that has been created already. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you Mr. Chairman. If I could just get a clearer picture here. Was there a new policy enabled by the current cabinet to hire these associate deputy ministers, as in the public release, cabinet has approved the policy, or were they using existing policies from previous governments to hire associate DMs?

The news release implies that the cabinet just approved the policy though. Can we just get an explanation? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. That was already explained by the Premier earlier, but if you can provide more detail, Mr. Premier?

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I already answered that question. We used an existing policy to lay the groundwork to create the associate positions, as we received a directive from cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Going on to different matters. The mandate letters were issued to all the ministers from the Premier; normally mandate letters are a way to gauge the progress, or whether the mandate is being fulfilled.

When a mandate review comes up in the halfway point of this Assembly and the expectation letters for the ministers are not met, will there be any repercussions? Like, will there be any stripped of portfolios, any reassignments? If we could get an idea what the purpose of the mandate letter is. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was very pleased to be able to table the mandate letters, to show my openness and my transparency right to this House. I do

not think that is a practice that was used before. For me to be able to bring that forward is something that I was really proud of; to show my colleagues here around the room, as well as Nunavummiut, in terms of the expectations I have of my ministers. I think that is something that I wanted to mention.

The progress report, right in the *Katujjiluta* mandate, touches upon our commitment to do a mid-check, mid-point, and I understand now that it has gone through full caucus. We know what the time is in terms of the successional planning; it is October, November. That will allow us to be able to see what progress we have been making on all the mandate items outlined in *Katujjiluta*. It is one way of being accountable to Nunavummiut on the work that we are doing.

So, through that process, with the first installment of showcasing publicly, the mandate letters, I hope to continue to show progress right through this House in terms of what advancements we have made so far, but that midpoint is going to be crucial. I do not want to hypothetically get to that space yet, because that is something we are starting to formulate from this point on; to see what the midpoint report will look like here to the House.

It allows us to be accountable to this House and to Nunavummiut on what progress and what transformative changes we have been able to make. Just as an example: The housing file we have really pushed hard on, and the early childhood agreement, which are right in our mandate in terms of those targets, so it is really a gauging point to see how far we have been able to push that stick to see those transformative changes that we all left when we left Cambridge Bay during our mandate retreat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes, cabinet is accountable to the House here but with a mandate letter, all the ministers are accountable to the Premier because of the mandate letter, and that is why I asked; are there going to be any repercussions if the mandates are not met? The ministers are accountable to the Premier through the mandate letters. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Again, thank you *Iksivautaaq*, and my colleague. He's absolutely right, I have very regular conversations with my ministers to see what progress we've made. Every day I walk and I am in their offices to talk about how far we have been able to push some of the mandate items that are very bold and transformative.

Really, it allows us to be able to reflect where we are wanting to go. With that in mind I check in regularly with each minister to see how far we have been able to accomplish the directives and mandate letters that I tabled here in the House. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was not answered. The mandate letters make it that ministers are accountable to the Premier because of the mandate letters. It's nice he talks to them, but what are the repercussions if the ministers do not meet the mandate letter? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Could you clarify your response please? Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also wish to thank our colleague for his question about (interpretation ends) the mandate letters, we'll use them to ensure that it's really a tool for assessing where we are and how the ministers are doing. The forward thinking, if nobody reaches it, is something we are not in yet in terms of where we are, but I think the member is aware as well that as a Premier, I am responsible for certain things, with assignment of portfolios and others.

Obviously, those are tools that are there, and I am not implying, I am using them. With that in mind, the letters really allow us to be able to assess where we are and how the ministers are doing, so that's really the yardstick, and we'll be able to see how far we've been able to push ourselves as we move forward. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, the Premier has stated that there could be repercussions from the mandate letter if the mandates are not met. Some of the tools are reassignment of portfolios. I'm curious, I've never seen where a mandate letter is written to yourself, but just curious what would happen about the mandate letter to the Premier that the Premier wrote to himself. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*. I thank the member. I am actually only accountable to the House here. That is why I feel very honoured to have received the confidence when we went through this, so the accountability really rests with here, for us to be able to serve here, but Mr. Chair, the precedent I look at is my friends down south; the federal government actually does their mandate letters as well, so it is not precedent-setting to send to myself, but with that in mind there is precedence there, where other jurisdictions provide those letters to themselves as well.

Those letters really originated from the mandate, and I just want to say thank you again for everybody's contribution. I think it was really historic to have the voices of all of us around the room here to have influence where the mandate goes. So with that in mind that is really something I want to mention as well. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Premier Akeegok and your most excellent team. If the Premier would... . Somewhere in this discussion I lost the name of

a new position that we have been discussing, and if the Premier would indulge me with the title of that position, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I believe the member's referencing the new position in the Premier's office. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my member for asking that question. The PY, the position is the chief of strategic operations. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that, I appreciate that. I would also like to get a little bit more information on the responsibilities here. I wrote down onboarding and training opportunities for deputies. However, I may have missed more information.

So if I could get some more information on the key responsibilities as well as whether or not there are any direct or indirect reports, including reporting that we know comes with a dotted line sometimes; so it's not a direct report, however there responsibility to oversee other employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again I thank my colleague for asking a really good question. We're talking two different things now, I just want to be very clear. The member's asking about the Senior Personnel Secretariat, with reference to onboarding and the training piece.

So I just want to be very clear then, I think the first question and then this question are different. With that, with the Senior Personnel Secretariat will be responsible for the oversight of the deputies, as well associate DM recruitment and staffing, the onboarding, learning plans, training, mentoring, the performance management and the administrative support, as outlined. So I just want to be very clear on that front. That request of the \$169,000 is for one individual, so to the members questions, it's for one staff member. Thank you, *iksivautaaq*.

Chairman: Thank you. I believe the member was directing her question towards the position in your office that is being created. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you. Just for clarity as well, the position at the Senior Personnel Secretariat, that position after the re-org is the chief administrator. Just so we're clear.

The other position of the chief of strategic operations is, I believe, the question the member's asking now. So with that, I can provide more detail through written but it's really to provide oversight and strategic direction in terms of the incredible work before

us. As we partner, especially with our federal counterparts, that really allows us to be able to work to look at processes and procedures specific to that. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you premier for that response. The second part of my question was whether or not there are any reporting relationships with any team members, including reporting relationships that use the dotted line, where it's not direct it's indirect. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you. Again, thank you, *iksivautaq* and the member. They don't report directly but they work very closely with the political advisors. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my mind, as we know, political advisors are at the pleasure of their ministers and should only be accountable to those ministers to ensure that they are giving ministers good and unbiased- or not just unbiased- but advice that is not hindered by anybody else's wants and needs.

So that concerns me, that there might be some kind of influence on those very important political advisors and I would like confirmation that those political advisors will still be at the minister's pleasure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*, and I again thank my member for asking a really question. Absolutely, the political appointments are still at the discretion of the ministers and we've reassured that.

As further to that as well, as I indicated, the new position really provides support to the floor as well, but the reporting structure doesn't change. We looked at other jurisdictions who have similar positions where the position in other jurisdictions does have that authority, but we purposefully left that out and it's really directly with the minister and their political staff, political appointed positions. Thank you, *Issivautaa*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Premier would just elaborate some more on how we can be reassured that even though this chief of strategic, and I'm not sure if it's planning or operations because I heard both, will if this position has even an idea of authority over those ministerial political advisors, how can we rest assured that no

authority on that position's behalf will impact those ministerial political advisors to give unfettered and unbiased advice to those ministers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Issivautaa*. And again thank the member. They report directly right now to the ministers, so that assurance is there in terms of being accountable where the political appointees' responsibility lie.

It really allows us to be able to liaise between the floor, but just for certainty, the member just wanted that assurance, and the assurance is there, then all the political appointments directly are at the pleasure of each minister, and that is really where the final line is where that dotted line is that the member had referenced. Just I could reassure the member that authority rests with each and every minister. Thank you, *Issivautaa*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier for that response. I don't want to hang on words, however you did say they report to the ministers right now, so I would like some more reassurance that at no point will those directly or at pleasure appointments be changed in any way that could impact that very important advice. Is there any action right now to look at changing reporting relationships or contracts that reflect that new position? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I want to remind the people in this House, please have your cellphone on mute. Mr. Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Issivautaa*. No, there's no contemplation whatsoever, the position's very secure. It's really the responsibility of the ministers, so I said in that role is really to work with the political advisors and really not to direct them, and there is no intention to change that whatsoever. Thank you, *Issivautaa*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. I appreciate that, I'm interested in process and wonder, I know that there is a ministerial process manual that all ministers can refer to in knowing and learning their responsibility, and I wonder whether or not this manual currently includes the new job description for instance as well as how that job description relates to ministers and their advisors, and as well as importantly whether or not that manual currently includes the other job descriptions for the Premier's direct staff. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank my member colleague. Right now, where the ministerial handbook is under review, I have indicated in this house

that we are reviewing it. We have consulted with the Integrity Commissioner on some positions, not to this, per se but to truly reflect an update on that procedural manual.

So, with that right now, there is no reflections of that job description in the manual, but I commit to updating that manual as we move forward. Maybe through you, if I could get my deputy to provide a further response to that. Thank you, *Iksivauta*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The ministerial procedures manual is pretty silent on most job descriptions, so we want to make sure that, because as we are looking at all the comprehensive changes that originally starting with the Integrity Commissioner, that we are able to clearly define and better define roles and responsibilities. Currently, there is no detailed job description for anyone in that office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Onalik. Just one last question on that position: does, and again, it is the chief of strategic planning, or is it the chief of strategic operations? Does that position come with housing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, ahh, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. Mr. Chairman

>>*Laughter*

I again thank my member colleague. It is the Chief of Strategic Operations: Add to your point on that front, I can get back to the member. I do not have that level of detail right now, with me. I can commit getting back to the member on that final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We look forward to receiving that. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Onalik. Just moving on to some questions about those associate deputy minister positions: Do they come with housing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Iksivauta*. I again thank the member. If the request came, we would go to the housing allocation committee, as outlined in the process. Thank you, *Iksivauta*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, one of the... I said this earlier last week, one of the key components to leadership development is human resource management. So I am a little bit surprised that the associate deputy ministers positions do not come with direct reports.

So, I wonder if through, if the Premier could tell us a little bit more about how these associate deputy ministers will be developing leadership in that specific area if they do not have already human resource management experience. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *Iksivauta*. I again thank the member for that excellent question, and the interest in the associates. So, the associate deputy minister positions are structured to assume senior level responsibilities over time and gain the experiences that are necessary and essential. The essential skills through the program of mentorship, structured teamwork and focussed preparation. The position would report directly to, and work very closely with, the deputy minister but with no direct reports as the member was correct to say.

This will allow time to receive the leadership training over the term to take on the increased responsibilities until the individuals are ready to fulfill the responsibilities as potentially senior positions.

Maybe through you, Mr. Chairman I can get my deputy, who is responsible for the deputies to elaborate a bit further in terms of what supports and what opportunities are going to be there to ensure that the associate deputy ministers are successful and that they're a strong member of the executive team of their departments.

So through you, if you'll allow, I'll get my deputy to be able to elaborate a little bit further on that what that would look like. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Onalik.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think one of the reasons why most associate positions do not have those direct reporting relationships is you end up doing a reorganization of the entire department underneath that associate position. These are not at most times intended to be permanent positions so to reorganize the whole department to include direct reports would cause more chaos than perhaps necessary.

Just from personal experience, when I was an associate deputy minister working with a deputy, a lot of the experience comes from being in the room as you're making those sorts of judgement calls and dealing with managing human resources within your department.

So this, I think in many ways, and I've heard statements in the past about how Inuit often are not able to gain that experience because we haven't been in that room, and just simply being in that room as those decisions are made allows for the realizations that and the understanding of how these processes work, how this decision-making is made.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Onalik for that response. I wonder if we could hear a little bit more about how flexible these appointments will be and learning plans will be given that there are so many Nunavut Inuit who have excellent experience and track records for not only fiscal management, but also human resource management, and I hang on words, being in the room as decisions are being made. I know that that's really important.

However, what's more important is actively making those, being part of making those decisions, and I know from experience of being also coming up through the Hivuliqtikhanut Leadership Development Program that there is a stigma that comes with being part of a program that's targeted towards Nunavut Inuit to move up into senior management and executive positions and that being part of that program such as this can actually work against you in your career for a number of years if there isn't 100 percent buy-in, and if you do not actually have any authority because if you don't have any authority, you might as well go in the corner and trim your toenails because nobody's going to give you respect.

So I would like to hear how the approach is going to be different. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Issivautaa*. And again thank my colleague for asking a really good question, and I think from experience as well, it really... . Do we really gave the departments a flexibility on how they see that program, but really into the member's point, we really saw the true benefit of making this a group versus individual, and I think we've seen successes around that, and adding the program that we talked about really when you can share the experience, the workload, to be able to come as a group is something we really saw right from the beginning.

We've seen the successes from the COVID Secretariat where we saw had an associate deputy minister, we've seen one in education, we've seen right here at EIA as well, among others. But really to bring that group together is something we saw to truly try to get that success around that, and to the training opportunity that it presents itself, and that's why in our budget we are seeking to get a senior personnel secretary to ensure they have the supports necessary to look at training opportunities, to look at securing the opportunities that are before them. Just some of the training opportunities that are there right now are the Executive Career Development Program, the Sivuliqtiksat Leadership

Development program, so the associates will be able to, if they choose to within that structure, access these programs on top of taking on these roles as well.

So it is really taking it from a wholistic approach in terms of providing them the support, giving them the experiences, but also allowing us to implement the Katujjiluta mandate, which is really a big undertaking, and I know we can do it, but we need the people to do it. So I am really excited to see the associates come through as this and we'll provide as much support from our office through the senior personnel secretary to ensure that it succeeds. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for referencing toe nails. Just on the pay scale, is there flexibility to ensure that potential ADMs are able to start above step 1 so that they are compensated fairly for their existing experience? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. I again thank the member.

To the best of my knowledge, there is that flexibility to look at what range that they're in, so there is that flexibility in terms of the member's question. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to the first priority for 2022-23 to provide to "Provide government-wide coordination on the implementation of Katujjiluta priorities and develop an outcome-based performance plan to show progress towards achieving mandate objectives."

I wonder if the Premier can talk to us about those key performance indicators and which mandate objectives are further behind others and need a lot more work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq* and I again thank the member for that excellent question.

On that point, you beat me to it. I'm hoping to table the first report while we are here in sitting. I had to get it approved through cabinet as well. So with that I very much look forward to being able to table that in the House. It's something I'm hoping to table tomorrow. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for that commitment, however, just for the purposes of our discussions today, I really would like to hear about some of the key performance indicators, and of course, to hear specifically about which aspects of the mandate are not progressing as quickly as other parts, and of course, what is being done to address those issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I thank the member. That was an excellent question. I really have seen some huge progress on some big files that we all agreed would be our top priority areas. I think housing really comes to mind about how far we've come and that is really transformative. That is really bold.

For years, I look back and the struggle to even be able to build houses outside of our control was something I think we all understood was a concern coming forward. I know my member talked about getting no houses for seven years and how frustrated the community members are. So for us to be able to really, in just a year and to be able to move swiftly and boldly with the leadership of my key Minister for Housing and to lay out a transformative plan that we just went through here as well to build close to three times more than what we were doing on an annual basis is really transformative and Nunavummiut expect it because housing, we know, is suicide prevention; housing, we know, is the social determinants that we see are directly tied into it; and I know you have been a champion in this House for those. I just wanted to really zone in on that particular one where we have seen huge successes, but we have really put a lot of our energy to that one.

At every opportunity I had to meet with the Prime Minister, which were numerous, housing was the number one issue I brought up each and every time, and in my last meeting with him, I even brought our partners, Nunavut Tunngavik, the president and vice-president, to my bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister, just to show how serious we are and that was the first. That was historic in itself. I think we have really made some headway there.

Elder care, I think, is another very important piece which we know requires a lot of investment and a lot of time, and we're seeing a few prongs to that and I've got to thank the minister for how hard they're working to show progress because it does take time. I think, as elected members, we want to move as quickly as we can, but government takes time and there's a reason for that. I'm very thankful to do the checks and balances to ensure we're being accountable.

For those reasons, I'm really excited about elder care. I wish I had made more progress to date, but we're doing everything that we can right now. We've just finished doing consultations in Rankin Inlet, where we saw elders from every Kivalliq community come and share their experiences, the challenges and the opportunities that they had. I understand we just came from Cambridge Bay just last week. We brought elders there into Cambridge Bay from every community there.

That just requires time. I really had hoped we could move that one very quickly and I know we're moving as fast as we can, but it has to be done right and we have to hear directly from the elders, from their experiences, their lived experiences and their lived experiences to access programs or lack thereof. That's so important and that takes time.

With the comprehensive elder care strategy, which falls under my space, I'm really hopeful that the community consultations will kick-start it and that we will be able to have a very strong comprehensive report and a direction that I very much can't wait to table here in this House so that we could just stop talking about it and start acting on it. I think it's something that I'm really taking.

I hope there's a lot more I could talk about, but really those are the two core areas that I thought we had made huge strides and then one I think we're making as big strides as we can right now with the time that we do have. I hope I answered the member's question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm going to use my discretion to have a 20-minute break before I go on to the next person.

>>*Committee recessed at 15:28 and resumed at 15:52*

Chairman: I would like to call this committee back to order. I recognize Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to get back to a question I said I would get back to, I believe, from my colleague from Iqaluit-Tasiluk, who asked about the percentages of decentralization. I was able to get the statistics from our human resource department.

Currently there is 42 percent that is in Iqaluit and 58 percent outside of Iqaluit, across. To put it into perspective, we have 3,289 positions outside of Iqaluit and there are 2,332 positions in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you for that information. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list is Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did neglect to include something in my reply to the opening comments that I just wanted to make mention of now.

The minister's Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs was scheduled to appear before the committee on Friday and we weren't able to get to the department, but I had a note. At a little after 5 on Friday, we received the response to the standing committee from our January 19 meeting and I will say that I was quite disappointed at the last minute that the committee received that information. I know there are some details, but there is not a lot of information in there to wait for over a month, nearly two months,

to get that information to the committee and then it's provided to us mere moments before the minister's appearance. I just want to express my unhappiness with that.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to go into earlier, something that Mr. Savikataaq brought up from the business plan and the Premier's Office where it states the four staff. During the recent Department of Justice appearance, there was a typo that was noticed and at the time, both the then minister and the deputy minister had stated that they had submitted edits to the business plan that were supposed to have fixed that typo. The Premier stated during one of his responses to Mr. Savikataaq that the "four staff" was supposed to have been listed as "five staff," so again, we're dealing with another typo.

I would just like to get confirmation as to which minister signs off on the business plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member's questions again while we're on this topic. To my understanding it's the deputy ministers that sign-off on the content, and then it goes through to cabinet, which approves them. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We all realize that to err is human, as they say. I don't think it is totally fair even for the committee here to expect perfection in documents that we see, but like I did state the other day, we have to deal with the information that we are provided to, so when there are inaccuracies, it raises more flags. So then we put more scrutiny to information, but we have to rely upon the information that is in front of us. I just had to make mention of that, that again, a simple typo that could have and should have been caught, wasn't, and it misleads the committee on the information that is in front of us.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to talk a little bit about the Utility Rates Review Council on the budget, on page 2 of the business plan, where it speaks to the budget of \$339,000. The Premier had mentioned earlier that he had given the portfolio of the Utility Rates Review Council to Minister Kusugak to oversee, as he didn't want to conflict with the Premier holding the responsibility of the Qulliq Energy Corporation under his portfolio load.

Mr. Chairman, I have an issue with the perception of conflict here. My first question is: did the Premier touch base with the Integrity Commissioner about these appointments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. The appointment, or interim, until such time, so I will ensure that we reach out to the Integrity Commissioner. We will. We intended to, as we move forward in terms of that, but we did also seek the legal opinion from the Department of Justice to ensure this is within the space. So we did go through the proper channels through that. Moving forward, I will seek the opinion of the Integrity Commissioner thereafter. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We all have already learned our lesson on even interim appointments and how the perceptions can be construed.

Mr. Chairman, under the Premier's department, the Utility Rates Review Council budget is listed in the Directorate, so any reporting requirements of that division would report ultimately, up to the Premier, who is responsible for that budget.

Having the responsibility given to another minister, to me, even if it's a perception of authority, or conflict, or confusion, if the Minister of Qulliq Energy Corporation, being the Premier, wanted to move an initiative forward, what confidence do we have on the unbiased nature of a Utility Rates Review Council when their budget is reported through the Premier's office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank the member. I can assure the member that when we sought the legal opinion, that there are safeguards there in terms of any issue that will come forward. On that note, past precedent has been set before this experience. From our recollection there have been 2, to be exact, where the Premier at the time didn't hold the URRC, but Mr. Chairman, the perception is obviously, we did seek Legal's advice to ensure that in the interim, that is safe as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although I do appreciate the steps the Premier did take, the legal advice is just following the law. There is nothing against the law to say that the Premier must hold the Utility Rates Review Council profile, and it has happened in the past, but those Premiers did not have Qulliq Energy Corporation as a part of their portfolio. So to me, they are showing quite a clear conflict, or even a perceived conflict. Even if it is within the boundaries of the law, having that reporting chain with budget responsibility, that ultimately does fall to the Premier because he is defending the budget right now for Utility Rates Review Council.

To me there is a perception of conflict. Now that is up to the Integrity Commissioner to make that judgement. Obviously, that is far beyond scope of my responsibility, other than

bringing attention to it. I would just like to get further clarification from the Premier on how soon the Integrity Commissioner will be contacted on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. I again thank the member for the question. The recent resignation was just recent, so that is something that we obviously had to quickly deal with. Through that process we did go through the Department of Justice. To the member's question; any shuffle I've worked and communicated directly with the ministers, that any new assignments, once we get to that space, for them to get directly involved with the Integrity Commissioner.

I do intend to get a hold of the Integrity Commissioner in short order to get the opinion, but again, I just have got to mention that we did seek legal advice as we were in the interim making that appointment. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I don't want to belabour the point, and legal advice is legal advice to make sure the law is being followed. The Integrity Commissioner is there to ensure that the integrity of this House is being upheld. So I would strongly recommend the Premier contact the Integrity Commissioner sooner, rather than later. I request that that correspondence be shared with the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have any comments, Mr. Premier.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. Yes, absolutely. I have the utmost respect for our incredible Integrity Commissioner, Ms. Peterson. Yes, through you, Mr. Chairman, I can ensure that the opinion is there. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that commitment and I have another thing to add to the list that you might want to speak to the Integrity Commissioner about as well, too.

Earlier in responses to Ms. Brewster, the Premier had said that there was some oversight of the chief of strategic operations of the political advisor positions. When I hear that, again, it raised a bit of a flag, as I think it did with Ms. Brewster.

When we look at the reporting structure of a political advisor, it starts and ends with the minister that they work for, with some assistance of the principal secretary, obviously through the contract discussions and to make sure all the boxes are ticked. Yet, when we've got a position such as this that is directly reporting to the Premier, there is again,

that perception, and rightfully so in most cases, that the Premier's office staff on occasion speak for the Premier.

So if that person in that positions were to bring forward an issue or a concern or a direction to the political advisor to advise their ministers on something, that would be perceived as coming from the Premier's office.

I do have a question on the authority under which that position would have oversight to the political advisor positions that would satisfy any type of integrity purview. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that, I just want to correct the member. It is not oversight; it's a coordination role that the position plays. So the position provides the coordination of flow, but as I have indicated many times here, the political advisors report directly to their ministers, so this position provides that coordination role. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pretty sure I heard in one of the Premier's responses was that there was some oversight. I will have to check the *Blues* to see if I'm correct or not.

I think maybe what would help matters of understanding the full role and scope of this position, the Premier has given a few little tidbits of the some of the roles and responsibilities, and even just from the coordination of political advisors being done under the authority of the Premier's Office, still... I held that position in the past so I know to some level on how the intent is for responsibility and I do understand the principal secretary can get involved in certain circumstances with political advisors, they used to be called executive assistants, and to me there is still that perception...

Maybe I'm just being unclear in my own head of what the full scope of responsibility of this role is and if the Premier could take more than just a couple sentences and really, or maybe one of his staff can really in detail describe the role of that position and, specifically, the role of that position in relation to the political advisor positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member. The job specifically reports directly, as the member is right, to the premier and is responsible for providing strategic operations advice and expertise to the Premier as well as cabinet. The principal secretary along with the cabinet communicate on the establishment and the implementation of strategic operations processes that enable the executive council office

to meet and achieve the policy directions and the commitments of the Government of Nunavut.

So in response as well, the positions were split, looking at the principle secretary's position to allow us to really put a laser focus on the relationships and the processes that we could build.

So with that in mind, I could provide some deeper responses as well but that this is really a function that exists in other premiers' offices, I indicated as well that strategic operations well. So with that, (interpretation) I think I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. I still have a little twinkle of a concern on this, there's just that perception of Premier's influence and with the political advisors kind of conflict in my head. Out of the \$380,000 increase under the Premier's Office budget, how much of that increase is from the Nunavut Employee's Union agreement escalation in salaries and how much is for the position of the chief of strategic operations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again I thank the member for that question. I believe I had provided the response to an earlier question, but the chief of strategic operations is \$184,000, and then the salary increases with the resulting of the new collective agreement is \$121,000. Thank you.

Chairman: What was that? Wrong channel. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm feeling a little uncomfortable approving this without getting a little bit more feedback from the Integrity Commissioner to make sure that there isn't any real or perceived integrity on this position of having that involvement with the political advisors. I'm unsure where to go from here, Mr. Chairman. I'll end it there.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok do you have a comment to this? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do realize that the Statistics Bureau is under strategic management, however on the business plan, the department's business plan on page 4 there is a priority to review the organizational structure of Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to ensure capacity to support implementation of our priorities, and this will include a review of the Nunavut statistics bureau.

Mr. Chairman, with the cancellation of the long form census in the early 2000s and then the reinstatement of that long form census with only going to one in four households and

the rest reporting on a short form census, I see that stats Canada's information on the population of Nunavut in 2016 was 35,944 people and the 2021 stats tell us that there are 36,858 people in Nunavut.

With a difference of only 914 people in terms of population growth from 2016-2021, and just taking a glance at more of the data, for example children from 0-4 years, which is within that having been born between 2016 and 2021, there are 4,385 children, unless those 914 people have really big families, it doesn't really tell us a true story I think of the population growth in Nunavut.

The reason that's concerning to me is because we get so much funding, federal transfer of funding that's population based, what we need to do is ensure that we are able to demonstrate true numbers of what our population is.

So I would like to hear from the Premier about what that review of the Nunavut statistic bureau entails and whether or not the Premier does feel that stats Canada does have a true understanding of what our population is, is it only 36,858 people? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again thank the member for asking again. While we're on this page, I do realize that I think there's two questions I got, just looking at the results that came from the long form, I could confirm that we are looking at them and it was really concerning in terms of when the review did occur, which was right after or before COVID, the timeline really impacted that, and whether some communities were undercounted, so I think there's some concerns that we have, but we're reviewing that as well.

The other part is I think the operations you've mentioned as well, in terms of our ability of have a functioning, well-machined, it's really a central role of having that stats bureau operating. On paper it looks great to have, but you need people to be in those positions so that's part of the reorganization that we looked at to ensure we provide a critical service to the departments, as well as for EIA as well to build strong business cases that are factual, that have a strong base, and that's why we pushed so hard to ensure that as a central agency function that we bring that here and then to be able to provide that service to all the departments.

So I hope I answered the two points that the member had brought forward. Thank you, *Issivautaa*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that that review has begun and I may have more questions when we come to that section.

However, I would just like to hear from the Premier about that very issue of the fact that during the most recent census, people were socially distancing probably less likely to be willing to open their door the people who were doing that census. I would like to hear from the Premier what steps have been taken to mitigate the risk of that perhaps maybe lower population count and whether or not that is the work that's being done to do ensure that the federal government is aware that their numbers may be much lower than what we see in their reporting.

How is Premier and government addressing that issue to ensure that we are getting federal transfers that truly reflect our population? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the question. This is a concerning issue, I have been concerned as well. I discussed that with my aides, and I think my associate deputy minister who has done a lot of work in this area, perhaps if you don't mind Ms. Fowler is in the best position to respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Fowler.

Ms. Fowler: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank the member for the question. We've had numerous conversations with Statistics Canada who are aware that we had some initial concerns when the numbers came out from the 2021 population census. Some initial conversations with them indicated that the timing of the census may have been a big contributor to getting lower counts. The census started in May 2021 and ended in September of the same year.

The other speculation is the influence that the pandemic had and the ability to get the information, knocking on doors or by phone, so we have been working with Statistics Canada and have agreements in place to look at other ways where we can find where the differences were in the population, and we continue to have those conversations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. I feel like I can rest a little bit better tonight knowing that there is some work advancing this issue.

I would just like to go back to that discussion about, back to the discussion about, and I can't find my notes here, but the new positions, the chief strategic operations position. I also have some concerns that perhaps I should be put to the Integrity Commissioner.

I am worried that there could be undue influence put on the political aides to the ministers, and that to me it's very important that the ministers are ensured that their team member that is there to advice them, keep them out of hot water, let them know when

they step into some hot water and give them really good uninfluenced advice about how they should be acting with integrity in their roles, and given that we are a consensus government and we don't have a party system under which ministers can go to in terms of coming forward with some sort of a platform. We know that political advisors are there to keep their pulse, not just on the wants and needs of the population, but also to ensure that they are allowing ministers to be introspective and to consider what they can and must bring to the public, and sometimes when you have leadership that has their own way forward, or a way forward where a minister might necessarily agree with it, knowing that those political advisors can help steer the ministers in the right direction for the good of the people, regardless of what mandate may be coming down to them, is extremely important to me. I've seen it in my own lived experience working for different organizations. That advice from a political advisor is what helps keep everyone on track.

Again, I don't want to take up too much time on this issue, however I don't think that it would be right not to take up more time to say once again, that the assurance that those political advisors are completely, completely at the will of the ministers as appointees without any influence outside of those ministers is extremely important. It's not just important to me, I think it's important to this entire government and I just wanted to stress that again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Would you like to respond to the comment? (interpretation ends) Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to provide a comment to that comment. I just want to reassure again, that none of the responsibilities of the Premier's office have changed, even with the position that we're talking about. The change is really in who in the Premier's office really performs that duty and none of the MPAs' contracts were changed. So the reflection is still there, certainty is still there to the member's concern. I just want to, again, reassure the member on that very important note. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Directorate. \$3,826,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Okay. Go to page B-5. Strategic Planning. Total operations and maintenance to be Voted. \$3,909,000. Any questions. I'll give the members a few moments. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Apologies, I had my questions marked. Your department's draft 2023-2026 Main Estimates and 2023-2026 Business Plan indicate that the budget for the Bureau of Statistics is projected to decrease from \$608,000 in 2022-2023 to \$291,000 in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which represents a decrease of 52.1 percent. However, the number of positions is projected to remain unchanged at 6 PYs.

What accounts for the budget decrease? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again I thank the member for that question. I've been advised, I think the member is using an outdated number. We did send the corrected numbers on that particular one, so I just want to confirm it should be 683 to that point. I understand that the corrected number was sent to the staff.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that update. I did not receive that. I apologize. Or if I did, I missed it.

The government's most recent quarterly employment reports indicate that five out of seven of the department's positions in Pangnirtung are vacant. What accounts for the five vacancies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. I again, thank the member. To my understanding, the challenge of filling that director position has been the issue, so the other positions that were in Pangnirtung, I think housing has been something that has been brought up to me being the barrier as well. Really, we haven't had a director, I believe, since 2020, to my understanding and we currently have one staff member in Pangnirtung in that division. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the absence of having a director for that very important division, what steps have been taken to cover that role and responsibilities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. Again, the challenge of filling that very crucial role to build a team has been the priority focus to fill for us. To my understanding we haven't been successful in securing that and the lack of housing has been noted as really being the key issue of not filling that director position.

That is really at the forefront before we staff the team underneath. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just be clear. Is there anybody acting in that position, and if not, who is fulfilling the responsibilities of that position in the absence of anybody acting, if there is nobody acting? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again, thank the member. Currently, the person to my left has assumed the role and responsibility to continue with that bureau as we move forward, but we are putting a lot of emphasis, in terms of filling that director position, because it is such a crucial position with the business plan that we've laid out and the reorganization that we have laid out really allows us to be able to really focus on getting that director, who then starts building their team. So I think that is very important, so that is where our focus has been. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Can the Premier tell us what specific actions are being taken to fill these positions, including that director position? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the really excellent question. We focus heavily on the reorganization, which has been something we initiated very swiftly. Right now, I understand the job advertisements will be coming out in the very near future. I don't have a definitive date, but there in queue, obviously, subject to approval with my colleagues here. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Premier mentioned a reorganization of that division, can the Premier tell us what that reorganization entails? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again, thank the member for that question. The reorganization of EIA is something that we undertook, and in that, the relocation of these positions specifically to that, but there are other areas where it does touch on policy and planning where we're hoping to create a whole division of ATIPP, which I know is the top of mind, with my members around, to be able to provide services as a government on that. The cabinet secretariat is another area, among other areas, and I can highlight a bit more of the new positions if the member wishes, but specifically to the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, the relocation was the core in that reorganization. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I may have missed it. Did the Premier indicate that all seven of the department's positions are going to be relocated, and to where? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The one position in Pangnirtung will remain there and then the rest are coming here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Premier, (interpretation ends) can you put numbers into how many you are sending in to Iqaluit? Thank you.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you. I'm just going through the list and there are five. I think I had indicated that, but there are five positions that are being relocated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that we have been hearing a lot about the development of a new remote work policy and I'm wondering if any of these positions are being considered as possible remote positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank the member for that very good question. I know my colleague at Human Resources has been working extremely hard to see what we could bring in terms of a policy, but the five positions that we've talked about; really without that policy, it's too early to say in terms of that, and I want to respect the space as we go through the proper channels to go through that policy. That is a discussion I think we could have in the future. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those positions that are being moved; the Premier had mentioned that housing was an issue. Are there housing units available here where the positions are being moved to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member. We are looking at pushing for housing, especially for the director position, immediately, but it will go through the housing allocation committee. Obviously, there are processes there.

We are pushing to ensure that there is housing for that very crucial position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that a number of staff housing units in Iqaluit have been rendered unlivable by the most recent water freeze-ups and crisis here in Iqaluit, and I'm wondering if the Premier can let us know how a new position to Iqaluit would have priority over re-homing those staff members who can no longer live in their current staff housing in Iqaluit due to those units being unlivable at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and again, I thank the member for that question.

I just want to commend how swiftly the government moved when we saw the crisis that was going on with the lines being frozen to their units, and I know it really took a whole-of-government approach, and every minister that was responsible, acted swiftly. I know that there are a few that are still in our units that had to be accommodated. So this wouldn't take precedent over any member that is currently in there, but it is really pending on the approval of the members here first.

If we do secure the funding, that would be the next step that we would start working towards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Premier for that response. I think that there are many current employees who live in Iqaluit who are in a crisis right now, and having reassurance that somebody else wouldn't take precedent over them, and their ability to come to work is important.

Premier, section 8 of the *Territorial Statistics Act*, requires that the annual report of the Bureau of Statistics be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The 2018-19 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2019 and I'm wondering: when will the 2019-2020, 2020-21, '21-22 annual reports be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member. I am hoping to be able to table those this coming spring. I have directed the department to do what we can to consolidate all of the reports that are outstanding, but I think the member would be aware that we have had challenges with very few resources, staff, around that, but we are doing everything that we can. I am really hopeful to get the blessing to be able to table that in the spring sitting. So that is the target right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope the Premier can reassure members that even in the absence of having those very important positions filled, that the Government of Nunavut is collecting important data and consolidating it to inform the decisions that are made, especially decisions related to population health and planning that have a long-term impact on Nunavummiut.

I'll move on. Your department's 2020-2023 business plan indicated that one of the priorities of the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics during 2020-21 fiscal year was to liaise with the Nunavut Poverty Reduction Secretariat and use the market-based measure approach to assess levels of poverty in the territory.

In Sept 2020, the Government of Nunavut issued a request for proposals for a feasibility for a guaranteed basic income from Nunavut. To what extent has your department's bureau of statistics been able to be involved in this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe, through you, if I could get Deputy Onalik to provide a response to that, if you will allow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Deputy Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As before, we recognize there is a lot of hard work taking place at the Department of Family Services and we are standing by to support, recognizing we are limited in terms of capacity to be able to do that, but at this point, I don't think there is anything outstanding from us in order to inform those conversation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The 2022-23 priorities listed on page 9 has a priority listed to renew the Government of Nunavut's business plan format to incorporate a performance-based system designed to improve transparency and show progress towards achieving objectives.

If the Premier could talk to us a little bit about what that new format is, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member for that question.

That is exactly the work that we're hoping to entail right now, once we get the blessing for this fiscal year. So there is no predetermined process right now in terms of what those key indicators are, but I know there is an environmental scan, as an example, in areas where the members wanted improvements. That is where we are very open and look forward to incorporating a lot of the questions or suggestions that are coming from the regular members to incorporate that, but right now we don't have a set key indicator at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. When it comes to asking questions of this government regarding specific actions and priorities that have come from the mandate, it can be extremely difficult for members to parse out who is responsible for what, whether it's emergency shelters related adverse weather events, or emergency shelters related to emergency protection orders, and it's really important for us to have a clear understanding of exactly who is responsible for what.

I would like to hear from the Premier how this new business plan format will tie all of the various mandates together and make it really clear who is responsible for what. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Again, I thank the member for that question.

In the direction, we have been very clear that it separates between who is taking the lead, as well as who is playing a supporting role. We've highlighted other departments and I know there has been some interest around that, but really, to demonstrate a clear understanding of who's, from a whole-of-government, playing a role in implementing the mandate item that has been identified throughout. I just want to further extend that there are other tools, such as the mandate letters, that I've identified and tabled here in this House that identify the key ministers to lead that space.

So those are the two different areas that I do see. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 10 of the priorities for 2023-24, the first priority is to "Maintain and ensure implementation of a government-wide workplan to implement shared priorities as outlined in the Partnership Declaration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated."

This is of interest to me. For example, specifically around the recent agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to share community-based data on tuberculosis rates, with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and it is not clear to me, for example, in an

agreement like that how to hold either entity accountable for implementation of action plans, especially where there are partnership agreements.

So if the Premier could expand on that, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member for that good question.

The relationship we have with NTI is very important, and I value the relationship I have with Nunavut Tunngavik as well as the regional Inuit associations. So to have signed the *Nunavut Partnership Committee Agreement* was something I was very much looking forward to, just really to allow us to be able to laser focus our priority areas that are of mutual interest, and really put together work plans to address the core issues that we see affecting our communities.

So with that, I could provide an update to the House that we are in discussions with NTI and finalizing the work plans. Right now, it is still at the officials level of really identifying the key areas that are both of mutual interest. Upon getting to that space, we will provide detailed work plans to outline who is pushing what files in a very constructive way, but again, I really value the relationship I do have with Nunavut Tunngavik and the Inuit Associations.

Again, just to show our openness, we did have them at the historic mandate development to have their voices there as well. So those are huge headways I think we have been able to build upon. There is a lot more work to be done as we move forward. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The next person on my list is Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my understanding, the Strategic Planning Branch provides broad advice on government business planning, strategies, policies and legislation, as well, provides support for reviews of programs and services, and ensures that the government has current and accurate statistical information on Nunavut and its communities.

It also provides advisory services regarding access to information and protection of privacy issues.

Mr. Chairman, ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities is to "Restructure the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to provide improved support for cabinet decision making and centralized support for cabinet committees."

What specific changes are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank my colleague here for asking a really good question.

You're absolutely right; we looked at reorganizing the department to truly reflect the bold *Katujjiluta* mandate that we collectively brought forward, and as such, that we've proposed internally and it has gone through cabinet. Now we are hoping to get the blessing here to get the funding, but in the Policy and Planning Division we are looking at... I don't know if I should just mention the new positions, but the net increase of \$1,013,000 budget was mainly the result of the reorganization that has happened.

There are two new PYs created under the Policy and Planning Division; four new person years were created under the new Cabinet Secretariat Division. There are three new person years in the Access to Information Division, and then the overall budget increase for the PYs that are working on the Elder Care Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to oral question time, during oral question period, a lot of have more questions to ask, but then when the cabinet says "nay" our constituent's voices are not being heard. To fulfill the *Katujjiluta* mandate, I think it would be wise to continue the oral question period because we do have issues and concerns that Nunavummiut need to be heard.

Maybe in some areas the *Katujjiluta* mandate is already fulfilled, but when it comes to smaller communities, like the communities I represent of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk, and when their voices are not being heard, it makes it more difficult on us regular members. We want to give them answers, but then when it comes to more time to ask for the questions, it is very difficult to give them answers.

Chairman: That's out of topic, so do you have any questions to this budget? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: My question is, will the department make better decisions on when it comes time for the cabinet committees and for the cabinet decision making? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if I could get a clarification specifically what that question is? If it's pertaining to the rules of oral questions and whatnot, I think there's a rules committee so suggestions can be made through that proper

venue that govern that, but maybe through you, Chair, if I could get a clarification of the question so I could provide more detailed response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Quqqiaq, do you have questions regarding this budget? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to another question. Your department's draft 2023-24 main estimates indicate that number of positions in the cabinet secretariat division is increasing from \$2.0 million in the 2022-23 fiscal year to \$7.0 million in the 2023-24 fiscal year. What specific positions are being created? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank my colleague for asking a very good question. With the business plan before you, that we're seeking your blessings and your support, and with that the four new positions are the director responsible for cabinet secretariat, there's a cabinet advisor on social, cabinet advisor on economy, and cabinet advisor on board appointments, so those are the new positions being proposed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities, it is to and I quote "Coordinate the development of a comprehensive elder and senior care strategy, including options for establishing an elders' secretariat."

However, your department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 1 that this responsibility is an interim basis. Which department will have the lead responsibility for elders and senior care strategy after your department's rule has ended? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then again, thank the member for the really good question. That's the whole purpose of the exercise that we're going through. Right now we're doing community consultations, we've done internal reviews as well in terms of government programs and services and to look at what gaps might be there for elders, but really once we determine in here and see the final report of that consultation that's taking place right now, and I believe the member's communities that elders were just recently in Cambridge Bay as part of that as well.

So once we have that report, we will determine moving forward the exact question, so right now I can't quite answer that, but will rely heavily on what we hear from our elders in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to move on to decentralization. Ministerial mandate letters will table in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities is to "Review the current status of decentralization. Establish key goals and objectives for improving decentralization and develop an updated decentralization action plan with the support of the Department of Human Resources." Your department's 2023-26 Business Plan indicates on page 4 that "A report will be developed... ." on this initiative. What is the timeline for tabling this report in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I again thank my member colleague for asking a very good question. I am hoping with the blessing of the budget that's been present that that very important work that hasn't been done in many, many years will look at the effectiveness, the efficiency of decentralization and whether we've reached the original purpose and intent of decentralization.

To the member's question of when, I'm hopeful by end of this fiscal year that that very important work would be concluded by, but once I get the approval I will start immediately in terms of that review.

As I've indicated, I will work very closely with my Minister of Human Resources to ensure that we capture the issues that people see and that I'm seeking the support from the regular members to play a real, key role because I know that's something that's been brought up in this House before our government and during our government now of how important that is, including from the smaller communities especially as well to your point that you brought up as well. So I very much support initiating that work upon getting the blessing of our business plan here. Thank you, *iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to apologize, earlier I want a little bit overboard. (interpretation) My apologies, but these are areas that people in Nunavut have to hear about. (Interpretation ends) So I'll end it from here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names under Strategic Planning. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,909,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page B-6. Nunavut Cabinet. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,680,000. Questions. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. Go to page 70. Commissioner of Nunavut. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$351,000. Any questions. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. Go to page B-8. Intergovernmental Affairs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,493,000. Questions? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Premier, I was happy to see that there is a new immigration office being pulled together. As you recall, I had questions on this in November last year. Those questions were specifically about removing barriers to ensuring that citizens of Nunavut who have foreign degrees may be able to work in areas such as health and other professional areas.

I recall, in the response from Premier, he did state we would like to place individuals but due to artificial barriers there were a number of issues around that. I wonder if the Premier can talk about what the role of this new immigration office will be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my member colleague for being a true champion on this very important issue. I believe my first question, if I recall, was on this very important issue, and from that moment on, we've started working extremely when we were going through the reorganization. So I just want to commend your leadership around this.

I've actually had the opportunity just recently to meet with Black History Society, as well as the African and the Caribbean Association as well, who have really flagged this being a barrier as well in terms of not having that program here in the territory. I might be corrected; I think we are the only jurisdiction that didn't have any program of anything that allows and provides supports for immigration. So I just wanted to compliment my member colleague.

Right now, the office will obviously lead and support the creation and the delivery of related programs. Right now, I don't have an individual to start formulating that. So as soon as we are able to, with the blessing of the members here, that work will be top of mind immediately.

With that, I couldn't agree more, especially with the shortage of nurses, as an example, not just in Nunavut, but right across this country, many of jurisdictions of our friends

down south are tapping into skilled, educated, members from around the world to fill very critical positions. Since we didn't have an office that provided these programs, we were never really able to look into that option just because we don't have the resources or the program set in place, but with the blessing here from this House, and with the creation of the new immigration section, I very much look forward to looking at what programs that we could provide moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my knowledge from spending time with the folks at the Nunavut Black History Society and the African and Caribbean Association of Nunavut, what I've learned is that what they know is that black people in Nunavut are amongst the most highly educated people in our territory, and any barriers that we can remove to embracing their skills and abilities in providing much needed programming and professional support, I think is extremely important.

Having said that, though Premier just talked a little bit about the priorities of this new immigration office, I would like to hear from the Premier what are the office's specific priorities for 2023-24 in terms of getting that branch up and running, how many people might be employed, and where that office will be situated?

I'm sorry that is a number of questions in one, but I'm trying to help move things along here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Member, those are excellent questions. Right now, I couldn't agree more that the immigrants that are here really enrich our communities, and especially in Iqaluit, you really see the vibrancy that is there. I know that the barriers that they talked about being there are issues I really took to heart in terms of the areas where we could improve.

Right now, our primary focus will really be to establish that office, to establish the programs. Although I did reference the nurses as an example, that is not a priority of this of this office because first we have to establish it, and once we have that establishment, I very much look forward to having that office provide cabinet with options and opportunities of areas where we could focus.

So upon establishing that office, that is really the next phase. With the blessing of this House, I really can't wait to, I believe, be the first one that brings in immigration programming right into Nunavut. I know there are a lot of people listening to us that are relying on our supports through this. So I just want to again, thank the member for pushing and being such a strong advocate in this area. With the blessing and passing this budget we will be right away our priority on establishing this office.

I believe the third question was: where is this going to be? It's going here. It is a central function, so it will be situated right here at EIA in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Okay. Thank you. I have no more names. (Interpretation ends) Intergovernmental Affairs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,493,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Go to page B-9. Devolution Secretariate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$2,712,000. Questions? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I won't have many questions here under... . Did you say we are under Devolution? Okay.

In the business plan it states that there are 10 employees for devolution. Currently, how many are filled? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, *iksivautaq*. I also thank the member for that question. Right now, overall, there are 10 positions, and I'm just trying to do my math quickly; there eight positions that are filled and two are currently vacant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many of those positions are located in Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member. The most up-to-date information I have, currently there are two that are outside of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are these two positions permanently located out of the territory? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you'll allow, I would like my deputy to be able to provide a response to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's my understanding that one of these positions is permanently located outside of the territory. The second position is a temporary accommodation that is soon about to end, and will be within Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was this to accommodate the Nunavut government or accommodate the employee? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, through you, if I could get my deputy to provide a response to that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Please proceed, Mr. Onalik.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The request, I understand, came from the employee and we responded to that request. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The request was granted and shortly to end. Can we get a date on when that request of accommodating the employee will end and this employee will be back within Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Onalik.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I do not have that information in front of me, but we can get that to you. It is within the realm of the policy that allows for period of time where employees can apply for accommodation to work outside, but we can get that information back to you. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We'll expect that letter through me. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this part of the remote working policy? Or, there is no policy. I'm aware it's being worked on but this is part of the working remotely? Or is this different? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just going to see if through you I could get deputy to continue the line of questions, because the level of detail I think he is best situated to respond to. So if you'll allow, if we could get deputy Onalik to respond to that again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No, this is not related to a remote work policy. This is utilizing previous human resources policies and practices that have been in place for some time, where an employee can make such a request.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there any one of these eight filled employees that are working remotely, either within Nunavut or outside of Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just as the member mentioned, just the one is out and the others obviously permanently outside of the territory as Mr. Onalik already indicated. So that's currently the only right now of the eight positions that we have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Okay, thank you. I have no more names on my list. Anybody else have a question? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On August 15, 2019, the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced the signing of a devolution agreement in principle. The announcement indicated that "The next step is a final agreement which is expected within five years." As of today, what is the status of these negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you to my colleague for the question. This is a very important matter where we can get devolution for Nunavut. I would like to thank our previous Premier, Mr. Savikataaq because he was able to initiate this so that August 15, 2019 we could come up with an agreement in principle. I thank the former Premier for that. I can't really get into the details right now, but we have been negotiating with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Canada up until now and we have hope that they will continue as good as they have been. We expect this final agreement to come and we know that people in Nunavut can make their own decisions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On November 27, 2020 your department issued a request for proposals for “Implementation service provider for the transitional human resources development strategy.” The request for proposal on January 8, 2021. The request for proposal indicated that “Devolution will see the Government of Canada transfer of responsibility to Nunavut’s public Crown lands, freshwater and resources to the Government of Nunavut.”

Taking on this jurisdiction will require that the Government of Nunavut to create new programs and staff new positions to manage these responsibilities to support the staffing of new positions created within the GN as the result of devolution, as well as existing vacant positions within the Government of Canada that will be devolved. The GN, NTI and the Government of Canada developed a five-year transitional human resources development strategy that will be in place leading up to the date when responsibility for Nunavut’s public crown lands, fresh water and resources is devolved. As of today, what is the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and again I thank my colleague for asking the very good question. The partnership we have with Nunavut Tunngavik as well as the federal government is paramount and I know the negotiations have been going very positively and have been continuing with the trajectory that the agreement in principle laid out for us. Again, I thank my member colleague Mr. Savikataaq for his leadership there.

In terms of the exact positions, I can’t discuss or bring that forward right now because those under negotiations. Those might change at the final part of the agreement, but we are starting to prepare and plan as outlined in the AIP in terms of the human resource strategy and what it will entail in terms of the training opportunities.

So I have instructed my officials to see what we could do to provide more technical training opportunities in particular to Inuit as well in the field of land management. You’re absolutely right, it will not only change programming, but we’ll have to look at legislation being a top priority in terms of taking on these responsibilities as a territory. So there will be a huge undertaking of work that I have confidence in our ability to pull through, as we embark on the devolution negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to get information on AIP, that acronym you used. Can you explain that please? (interpretation) Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you. My apologies again, I tried hard not to use acronyms, but it’s agreement in principle, the AIP that I referenced. Again, I apologize to the interpreters for using that acronym. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: To follow, approximately how many federal positions are expected to be devolved to the Government of Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my member colleague. As I stated, due to the sensitive nature of these negotiations, I'm currently unable to comment on any of the specifics of those positions, as the final agreement might differ, but I very much look forward to providing a briefing to the regular members in camera as we move forward. I could commit to providing that because it is a big undertaking that will require a lot good discussions moving forward so I just wanted to highlight those as well.

At the appropriate time I very much would love to share not only the human resource pieces, but the other very important pieces of what's being negotiated in the devolution file. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess this can be a follow up question and maybe you can answer the questions through my next question when you follow up.

How many of these positions are currently filled Inuit, and the next one is: to what extent are the devolution negotiations considering the transfer of federal staff housing units to the Government of Nunavut? My last questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank my member colleague for showing a very good interest on this very topic. I will answer them in two sections. I think I've been clear that I can't divulge the information of the positions that are being negotiated as we speak right now.

Immediately, upon signing the agreement I would be able to be in a position to share how many are Inuit and how many are non-Inuit, but just to elaborate a little bit further, currently under the department under the devolution secretariat of the 10 PYs, 4 are Nunavut and non-Inuit. So I know it wasn't asked, but I think it's important that I can share that information for the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The next person on my list is Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr., Savikataaq: Thank you Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me again. I just, I should have asked this earlier when I had my time slot.

We are here to go through the budgets and I am just curious, this is about remote working of one of the employees from devolution. Its going to stop soon as the official stated. We are not sure when it started.

Since this position was in Nunavut when he started working remotely out of Nunavut, if there were any benefits like housing allowance, and there would have been northern allowance; were those ceased when this employee started working remotely outside of Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Premier Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the member for following up on that, a very important issue. Maybe through you, if I can get Deputy Onalik to continue with the responses to this line of questioning. Thank you, Mr., Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik: *Qujannamii Iksivauta.* That is correct; we do not pay those benefits to people who are not living or working within the territory, so that is their Northern Allowance would have been cutback during that period of time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Ok. Thank you. There are no more names on my list. (interpretation ends)

Devolution Secretariat. Total operations and maintenance to be voted on, \$2,712,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 3. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Total operations and maintenance to be voted on, \$21,971,000. Agreed? Do members agree that we have settled Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Premier Akeeagok, do you have closing remarks?

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I really want to thank the members' questions today, I really look forward to providing through correspondence, all the issues that we promised to bring through you as Chairman.

I could not do it without the incredible people that are beside me here. I am just, how proud I am to really have a, especially an all-Inuit team on the table. The capabilities and

the hard work that these two individuals do, as well as Mr. Atienza who is here with us as well.

So, with that in mind, I just want to thank all the staff, that many are not here. Just the hard work and the incredible work that they do; I very much look forward to progressing with the projects, and I am so thankful of the blessings of my colleagues here around the room, and look forward to providing updates as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman: *Qujannamii*. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the officials out of the witness table.

Members, please stay in your seats. We will have the Speaker at the witness table as soon as possible.

Qujannamii. I would like the Speaker of the house, Mr. Akoak: do you have issues that you would like to have appear before the committee?

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Legislative Assembly – Consideration in Committee

Hon. Tony Akoak: Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the officials in.

Do committees agree to let the Speaker's officials to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in. Does the committee agree to let the Speaker's officials appear before you?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in. (interpretation) I apologize. (interpretation ends) For the record, Mr. Speaker, please introduce your officials and then proceed to your opening comments.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is the Director of Finance, Mark Rose.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to appear before you today to present the 2023-24 main estimates of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

The Legislative Assembly's proposed 2023-24 main estimates reflect the financial and human resources required for the operation of the institution, as well as the offices of its independent officers.

For this fiscal year, we are requesting \$29,728,000 in funding. This represents an increase of \$683,000 or 2.4 percent from the previous 2022-23 fiscal year. The majority of this increase, \$488,000, is related to increases in compensation and benefits costs as a result of the recently ratified collective agreement.

A further \$145,000 is provided to fund an additional position at the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, a transfer of \$50,000 from the Department of Community and Government Services to the Office of the Legislative Assembly for administration of the snow clearing contract.

I will be pleased to answer any questions members may have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do members have any general comments? Please go to page A-4. Assembly Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$9,401,000. Any questions?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to Page A-5. Expenditures on Behalf of Members. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$14,173,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page A-6. Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,154,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page A-3. Office of the Legislative Assembly. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$29,728,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree we have concluded the Office of the Legislative Assembly?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Mr. Speaker, do you have closing comments?

Speaker: I just want to say “thank you” to my colleagues. This is your budget and I’m glad you passed it. If you have any questions on anything, you have people in my office upstairs that can always help you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out.

**Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 –
Consideration in Committee**

I ask members to go to Bill 18 in your legislative binders. Bill 18. *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to Schedule on page 3. Schedule. Total appropriation is \$2,022,106,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do member agree to Bill 18.

Some members: Agreed.

Do members agree to put Bill 18 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: We will take a short break to deal with the supplementary appropriation.

>>*Committee recessed at 17:32 and resumed at 17:37*

**Bill 16 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 1,
2022-2023 – Consideration in Committee**

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *Ii.* Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: The officials may enter. I would like to remind the members we are dealing with Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2022-23, No. 1.*

For the record, Minister Kusugak, please introduce your officials, then proceed to your opening comments.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right, is Deputy Minister of Finance, Jeff Chown, and to my left is Deputy Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Jimmy Onalik. I also have other support staff in the gallery. I may need to switch at an appropriate time, if necessary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appear before you today to present Bill 16 – *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2022-23, No. 1.*

Through this bill, the Government is seeking to increase its overall appropriation by \$27,989,000 in 2022-23 for three departments; Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Health and Community and Government Services.

The Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs requires \$1.95 million to cover costs of the air service contract between Iqaluit and Sanikiluaq, wage increases in the new collective agreement, and consulting services for the comprehensive Elders Strategy.

The Department of Health is requesting \$20 million in additional appropriations for 2022-23. Of this, \$10 million will cover the department's agency nursing contract and \$10 million will be used to cover costs of paramedic services.

The Department of Community Government is seeking \$6.039 million. Of this amount, \$2.25 million is needed to offset increased utilities costs and other inflationary pressures and \$3.789 million to address increased costs resulting from higher fuel prices.

Mr. Chairman, this is the only operations and maintenance supplementary funding request submitted for the 2022-23 fiscal year. Departments have shown prudent fiscal planning to operate within their appropriated budgets. This concludes my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any general comments from the members? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one general comment. This being March 13, we only have a few days remaining of the current fiscal year and I would like to point out that this is supplementary appropriation O&M No. 1.

Mr. Chairman, I would like congratulate the Minister of Finance and the senior officials and ministers that we have here today for making it through 95 percent of the year before requiring additional supplementary appropriations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any more general comments? It's a good start. Page by page, on page four. *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2022-23, No. 1*. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Operations and Maintenance. Not Previously Authorized. \$1,950,000. Questions. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as we were talking earlier on the comprehensive elders' strategy, the Premier had mentioned that one of the consultations has occurred in Rankin Inlet and there is additional consultations that are still planned and I understand, from the information we have received, looking to fund \$620,000 of work.

I'm just wondering, what is the expected overall cost for this strategy and secondly, Mr. Chairman, out of this \$620,000 how many consultations are scheduled to occur out of that budget being appropriated in this current fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are anticipating a \$1.2 million budget and three consultations, Mr. Chairman, but the consultations will include people from across the Nunavut communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the response. Just to confirm, so there's three consultations that are scheduled to occur to help provide some substance to the strategy. Are all those consultations scheduled to occur within this current fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe three have taken place, and the if there is additional ones maybe I'll have Mr. Onalik respond through you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Onalik, please proceed.

Mr. Onalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) The work done to date has included the jurisdictional scan and examining GN existing policies and procedures. Within this, we've completed two rounds of regional consultations that included representation from every community in those regions.

I believe we have a third scheduled for within this fiscal year, and then the remainder of the two consultation rounds will take place next fiscal year. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Are there any more general comments? It appears not. (interpretation ends) Total department expenditure, \$1,950,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agree.

Chairman: Next one, page 5. Health. Operations and Maintenance, not previously authorized. Total Department. \$20 million. Questions? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Both of these appropriations are related to staffing and providing services to our health centres that are seriously understaffed, especially during some of the holiday relief periods so I do not have an issue with covering; its just I am a little curious as to why this much money would be needed when they are so short-staffed, that their salaries and benefits category of their budget should be able to cover more of this I would have thought. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that. The compensation benefits agreement, has a big impact on this number, Mr. Chairman. If I can, substitute one deputy minister with the deputy minister of health would be great to follow up on that response Mr. Chairman, through you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee agree to let other officials in?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: For the record, please introduce the official who is sitting at the witness table please, Mr. Kusugak

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Meghan Hunt the Deputy Minister of Health.

Further to the comments or question by Mr. Hickes. So far, the existing budget has absorbed \$14.6 million of the collective bargaining agreement as per Hickes question. This money over and above that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends). Hickes, do you have any more questions?

Mr. Hickes (interpretation): That's it. Sorry.

Chairman (interpretation): My apologies. (interpretation ends) Is there any more questions? Total department appropriation, \$20 million. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 6. Supplementary appropriation operations and maintenance No.1 , 2022-23, community and government services operation not previously authorized. Total local government services \$3,789,000. Questions?

Total infrastructure, \$2,250,000. Questions? Total Department. \$6,390,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): My apologies. (interpretation ends) apologies. \$6,039,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 2. Schedule 1. Operations and Maintenance. Operations and Maintenance Appropriation \$27,989,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak, do you have any brief closing comments?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the questions, Mr. Chairman, and (interpretation) that's it. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Members, go to Bill 16 in your legislation binder. Bill 16. I'll give the members a few minutes or a few seconds. Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2022-2023*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to the Schedule on page 2. Schedule. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$27,989,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 16? Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 16 on the orders of the day for third reading?
Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 17 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024 –
Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: We're going to proceed to do Bill 17. Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*. Please turn to page... . Minister Kusugak, please proceed to your opening comments on Bill 17.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here today to present Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*.

Bill 17 seeks a supplementary appropriation of \$2,613,000 for capital projects in 2023-24 for two departments: the Department of Health and the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Chairman, we are seeking \$2,513,000 for the Department of Health for an unanticipated expense related to environmental remediation at the Taloyoak Health Centre. A fuel spill was identified at the facility in August 2022. Staff from Health and the Department of Community and Government Services responded appropriately to contain the spill and prepare for remediation.

The estimated cost of full remediation is \$2,513,000: \$858,000 in 2022-23 and \$1,655,000 million in 2023-24. However, since the 2022-23 funds were taken from lifecycle projects, some of the lifecycle project works have to be deferred to 2023-24. Keeping lifecycle projects current requires maintenance so that the assets remain in working order.

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation is seeking \$100,000 in 2023-24. This will allow contracts to be awarded for the construction of air terminal buildings in five communities: Chesterfield Inlet, Naujaat, Whale Cove, Kugluktuk, and Kimmirut, and allow mobilization to begin in 2023. The department has requested additional funds from Transport Canada, but a response is not expected before the cut-off date for these contract awards.

This ends my opening comments. I am available to answer your questions relating to the two projects. However, if I am unable to answer your questions, I will relay the questions to the appropriate ministers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any general comments from the members? Go to page 4 on Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation*

(Capital) No. 1, 2023-24. Health. Not Previously Authorized. Total department. \$2,513,000. Questions? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask a fairly general, I guess. We've seen a number of instances now where fuel spills have impacted the usage of far too many pieces of infrastructure across this territory, costing in the millions of dollars to mitigate and clear it out.

The member brought up about a school, that students haven't been in school for over a month now. A health centre has been compromised by fuel. What are some of the ideas, or what are some of the things that the Community and Government Services staff are overseeing, the oversight of fuel tank filling or water in some circumstances as well too. What can we put in place to make sure that these occurrences don't happen?

It just seems like there has been an influx of them lately, and these are millions and millions and millions of dollars to mitigate these repairs that could go to new infrastructure or maybe hire somebody in town to oversee the tank when it's being filled or something, I don't know.

What type of mitigation measures is Community and Government Services or the Departments of Health or Education doing to help make sure that these types of incidents don't happen anymore or at least less frequently? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate the questions, those are some of the questions we were asking as well, Mr. Chairman. I could assure my colleagues that in conversation with the minister and senior staff of Community and Government Services there has been some measures, I believe, that have been made stricter. My colleague was sitting earlier and mentioned that to err is human. These all were created by human error.

What some of the things that the Community and Government Services has done is they took a look at their current policies and procedures in things like filling water tanks, or in this case fuel tanks, to make sure that when you're transferring fuel from one tank to another, that the human there are following proper procedures.

Also that the fuel filling has an automatic flow switch that triggers when the fuel level is reaching its peak. There has been adjustments made to these particular ones and other ones to ensure that that level is lowered so we don't run into this, the alarm goes off and it's already flowing. So they've made adjustments to their peak level sensors and some other programs to ensure that there are no future problems that can be prevented, but these were cause by human error and I assure my colleague that there has been a lot of tightening of policies and procedures to ensure that this does not happen again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any more general comments? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank my colleague, George. It's the second time, the first time it happened to the health centre, and just recently to our Netsilik School. Did we learn from the first fuel spill? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. My apologies. (interpretation ends) I made a mistake. Questions? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's a very costly mistake, Mr. Chairman, and one that we don't want to see repeated. The department and the staff who were there couldn't fuel any worse than anybody. There is a lot of regret, but I believe it's a real eye opener for everybody within government that works in these sectors to ensure that their safety and the safety of people in those buildings are priority and hopefully, Mr. Chairman, that we've learned from these mistakes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do you have any more questions Mr. Quqqiaq? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you Minister Kusugak. Yes, my hope is that these types of things do not happen anywhere in Nunavut. We are talking millions of dollars, and my colleague has a great point: they can be used for projects like, let us say for example, more housing or more contribution agreement funding, so I think its time for new policies to be put in place so that these types of things will not happen anywhere in Nunavut. It is a lot, it is in the millions of dollars, so my hope is that it will not happen again in Nunavut. Its more of a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Any more questions? (interpretation) It appears not. (interpretation ends) Total department expenditure. \$2,513,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 5. Economic Development and Transportation. Not previously authorized. Total departments \$100,000. Questions? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been an ongoing project, about the five air terminal buildings. I know there have been previous budgets, and another \$100,000 has been requested for 2023-2024. What is the total amount that has been budgeted to this that they need another \$100,000 to go to tender? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just a moment, Mr. Chairman.

Am I on now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry for all the whispering. Besides the \$100,000 increase in the capital appropriations for 2023-2024, this request also entails an increase to the capital plan of \$12,890,000 in 2024-2025. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was: how much was, there has been no money spent on this yet, the \$100,000 is to get it to tender. Is it just to do the documents? I am just curious.

I am not against the \$100,000, I would just like to know what it entails, because I know there were monies that were allocated. There has been no money spent to date on this project, and they are asking for another \$100,000 to wherever its allocated. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Chown on to that through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Chown.

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These projects have not been awarded as of yet. The bulk of the additional funding for these projects is actually not required until 2024-2025. The purpose of the \$100,000 in this current year is simply so we can bring this back before the Assembly to have the Assembly vote on these projects before they are awarded.

We do not want to move forward and award them and then come back after award to the Assembly for \$13,000,000, when we would have known at the time that we awarded it, we did not have the approval.

So, the \$100,000 is simply to get this before the Assembly this year, so that you are aware that in addition to the \$100,000, you are approving a project that includes another \$13 million next year and, if you pass this, then we will award the tenders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Any more questions? (interpretation) I don't think there are any more questions. (interpretation ends) Economic Development and Transportation. Total Department. \$100,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 2. Schedule 1: Capital. Capital Appropriation. \$2,613,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to Bill 17 in your legislation binder. Bill 17. I'll give you a few moments.

Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*. Clause 1.
Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 2. Schedule. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$2,613,000.
Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 1. Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 17?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 17 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Any closing comments, Minister Kusugak?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: No, Mr. Chairman, but I would like to thank Ms. Hunt for sitting with us today, and thank you for passing this bill, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Would you like to have another official sitting with you? Minister Kusugak.

**Bill 21 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023 –
Consideration in Committee**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here to present Bill 21... .

Chairman (interpretation): I'm sorry. Please wait a moment, Lorne.

I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) We're going to move on to Bill 21, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023*. Please proceed to your opening comments, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry about that.

I am here to present Bill 21, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023*, which seeks \$5,024,000 in additional capital funds in 2022-23 for the Department of Community and Government Services.

The funding is needed to address costs associated with the Qulliq Energy Corporation's cyber security incident. As you are already aware, on January 15, 2023, the corporation's business network was compromised by a cyber-attack.

The attack crippled the Qulliq Energy Corporation's business network and shut down the corporation's access to critical applications, such as email, project files, and other applications related to procurement, payroll, accounts receivables and payables, and client information. Community and Government Services is leading the recovery effort with collaboration from Qulliq Energy Corporation staff.

Due to the urgency of the data recovery, a special warrant was issued to approve funding so that the Department of Community and Government Services could start work immediately to rebuild the Qulliq Energy Corporation's networks and restore full services.

I am available to answer questions from members about Bill 21. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Any general comments? We will go to page 4. Government of Nunavut Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) No. 3,

2022-2023. Community and Government Services. Not Previously Authorized. Total Department. \$5,024,000. Questions? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to put a little perspective on this, the Government of Nunavut also fell victim to a ransomware attack a few years ago. What was the end cost of that ransomware attack? If the minister has that information available, just so we can kind of compare the cost to this instance versus the government-wide network attack. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: It's not on this budget, but Minister Kusugak, are you able to answer that question?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If memory serves me correct, it was a lot more than \$5 million. It was spanned across the territory and so many other departments it was a lot more than this amount. I'm sorry I can't recall the exact number at the time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do realize that it might seem like a weird question, but at the same time, it's a similar attack on a much smaller scale of Qulliq Energy versus the whole Government of Nunavut network. I was just trying to get a sense of the complexity of it.

With the Government of Nunavut attack, there were so many computers that had to be replaced, there was different software licensing expenses, and I would have thought that some of those expenses wouldn't need to be duplicated after the Qulliq Energy Corporation ransomware attack, but some of those software licensing and access to different mitigation measures would have been put in place already. I'm a little surprised at the cost of this. There are not as many computers involved at Qulliq Energy. They don't have as many employees. I know there is still some identifying of how deep the attack went, but I was a little surprised that it was over \$5 million already just on that.

I don't know if the minister would have some type of a breakdown of how much of these expenses are equipment, how much were contracted out with entities such as Microsoft and Google that helped the Qulliq Energy Corporation get through this attack that we're still not through, as there were questions raised today on some of the spinoff impacts that maybe we didn't even realize, such as the net metering cut-off point. We're still going to be feeling the effects of this for a little while. I wonder if there's kind of a breakdown version, equipment versus contractors versus network software, that type of thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the line of questioning that Mr. Hickes is giving on this. The reality is that this isn't the end of it, that they will be going forward with more costs related to this.

In terms of a breakdown of costs for equipment, services, licences, travel, and all those things, I don't have that detail of a breakdown, but I assure my colleagues that we will have that breakdown and be more than happy to share it with you.

This number that we have right now before you that we are seeking for is to get us into the curve and I assure my colleagues that it will go up from here. I don't know how much more substantially it will go up, but the Qulliq Energy Corporation's computer software and programming is not tied in with the Government of Nunavut. In one sense, it's good because then we would be doing this all over again.

They are an independent corporation. They have independent computer software and services. Therefore when we say "we," the government's equipment can't work within theirs, so that's probably some of the cost factors in it, but I would be more than happy to commit the Qulliq Energy Corporation to share those details when they are available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We will be expecting those details. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I appreciate that not all that information is readily available and I do look forward to getting it.

I'll just close off with a comment that I just want to applaud the Government of Nunavut for taking over this unforeseen expense so that the ratepayers across the territory don't get burdened with the expenses related to this ransomware attack. Any increase in expenditures on behalf of the Qulliq Energy Corporation ultimately falls on the ratepayers. I do want to commend the Government of Nunavut into taking this responsibility on and I hope my colleagues support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq. Oh, I'm sorry. Wait a moment, please.

I apologize. (interpretation ends) Minister Kusugak wants to respond to the comment. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to prolong the discussion, but I couldn't agree more. I think the work that Qulliq is doing and the Community and Government Services and the other departments involved in working on this shows that we are working together and there's a lot of commitment from Community and Government Services computer staff and senior staff that are making sure that... This could have been a lot worse than it is, but it shows our government is working together with our corporations to ensure that this is done in a timely manner and that it does not

have an adverse effect on the clients of the Qulliq Energy Corporation and that your comments are felt, Mr. Hickes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank my colleague, George.

Due to the urgency of data recovery, a special warrant was issued and to pass this bill, will the Department of CGS get a warrant so they...? If we approve this funding, will the department get a special warrant so they can restore their networks and the services will be back? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This funding will go a long way to ensuring that the computer programming software and hardware are back and fully restored and running for the Qulliq Energy Corporation. As I said, we might be coming back for more funding, but this is a very good start, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. To prevent future attacks, are you going to come up with another bill and can the bill come a lot quicker, just in case, so there won't be any attacks?

It's the technology; the computer. I guess the hackers or something are very smart when they want to get into your computers. There are a lot all over the world. There might even be some in Nunavut. They can be anywhere. When you've got access to a laptop, when you've got access to the Internet, it's very easy to access all kinds of information.

So this won't happen to the government, can the government come up with a bill a lot quicker so this type of stuff won't happen and the data won't be stolen? It's just more of a comment. It would be great to hear the minister's response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last one.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, do you want to comment on that?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are hackers trying to hack the government and government computers and our department computers all the time. Thousands of them every hour from all over the world are trying to get into our equipment and we have the best equipment to ensure that doesn't happen, but unfortunately, every once in a while, one breaks through. I would like to assure all colleagues and Nunavummiut that we have the latest of technology to ensure that the thousands and thousands of hackers that are trying to get into our computers every hour are not successful.

Computer staff at CGS are constantly working to stay ahead of the game and probably during our discussion of this very topic, we've had thousands already trying to hack through, Mr. Chairman. I commend the staff and I assure everybody that they will continue to ensure that we don't get hacked. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I've got no more names on the list. Does the committee agree, Total Department, \$5,024,000? Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 2. Schedule 1: Capital. Capital Appropriation. \$5,024,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to Bill 21 in your legislation binder. I'll wait a few moments. Regular members, are you on the right page? Bill 21, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 2. Schedule. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$5,024,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 21?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 21 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister, do you have closing comments to this bill?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the support for this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairman: We're going to deal with Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*. Do you have officials that you want to appear before the committee? Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Officials, please go to the witness table. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to put forward a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: There is a motion on the floor and it's un-debatable. All those in favour of the motion. All those opposed. Motion defeated...motion carried. (interpretation) I apologize.

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation ends) I will now rise to report progress. Officials can go out of the witness table.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Malliki.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18 and would like to report that Bills 16, 17, 18, and 21 are immediately ready for third reading, pursuant to Rule 73. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Savikataaq.

>>*Laughter*

The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

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

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 18, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 18 is ready for assent.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Mr. Kusugak.

Bill 16 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2022-2023 – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2022-2023*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 16 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Mr. Kusugak.

Bill 17 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024 – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 17 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Mr. Kusugak.

Bill 21 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023 – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 21, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 21 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. Mr. Kusugak. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Rutland.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Rutland: *Orders of the Day* for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 10 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions

17. First Reading of Bills

18. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Bill 12
- Bill 14
- Bill 19
- Bill 20

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 14, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:31*

