



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

Nunavut Leadership Forum

Official Report

Saturday November 17, 2001

Pages 190 - 251

Iqaluit

Chairperson: The Honourable Kevin O'Brien, M.L.A.

Nunavut Leadership Forum

Chairperson

Hon. Kevin O'Brien
(Arviat)

Ovide Alakannuark
(Akulliq)

Hunter Tootoo
(Iqaluit Centre)

Hon. Jack Anawak
(Rankin Inlet North)
Minister of Community

Enoki Iqittuq
(Amittuq)
*Deputy Chair, Committee of the
Whole*

Hon. Ed Picco
(Iqaluit East)
*Minister of Health and Social
Services; Minister Responsible for
the Nunavut Power Corporation*

Government and Transportation

Uriash Puqiqnak
(Nattilik)
Deputy Speaker

Hon. Paul Okalik
(Iqaluit West)
*Premier; Minister of Executive
and Intergovernmental Affairs;
Minister of Justice*

Hon. Manitok Thompson
(Rankin Inlet South
-Whale Cove)
*Minister Responsible for the
Nunavut Housing Corporation;
Minister of Public Works and
Services*

Glenn McLean
(Baker Lake)

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk
(South Baffin)
*Minister of Sustainable
Development*

Hon. Kelvin Ng
(Cambridge Bay)
*Deputy Premier; Minister of
Finance and Administration;
Minister of Human Resources;
Government House Leader*

Donald Havioyak
(Kugluktuk)

James Arvaluk
(Nanulik)

Jobie Nutarak
(Tunnunig)

Hon. Peter Kattuk
(Hudson Bay)
*Minister of Culture, Language,
Elders and Youth*

Hon. Peter Kilabuk
(Pangnirtung)
Minister of Education

David Iqaqrialu
(Uqqummiut)
*Deputy Chair, Committee of the
Whole*

Rebekah Williams
(Quttiktuq)

Officers

Clerk
John Quirke

Deputy Clerk
Leona Aglukkaq

Clerk of Committees
Nancy Tupik

Law Clerk
Susan Cooper

Sergeant-At-Arms
Simanuk Kilabuk

Hansard Production
Innirvik Support Services

Box 1200

Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0

Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266

Website: www.assembly.nu.ca

Table of Contents

Opening Prayer	190
Hon. Kelvin Ng.....	190
Hon. Ed. Picco	212
Closing Statement	250

**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Saturday November 17, 2001**

Members Present:

Honourable Olayuk Akesuk, Mr. Ovide Alakannuark, Honourable Jack Anawak, Mr. James Arvaluk, Mr. Donald Havioyak, Mr. David Iqaqrialu, Mr. Enoki Irqittuq, Honourable Peter Kattuk, Honourable Peter Kilabuk, Mr. Jobie Nutarak, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Glenn McLean, Honourable Kevin O'Brien, Honourable Paul Okalik, Honourable Ed Picco, Mr. Uriash Puqiqnak, Honourable Manitok Thompson, Mr. Hunter Tootoo, Ms. Rebekah Williams.

Opening Prayer

Chairperson: Good morning members. I'll ask Mr. Alakannuark to say the prayer.

>> Prayer

Chairperson: Ulluukkut. Good afternoon. Welcome back to the third day of the Nunavut Leadership Forum. The next minister to take the witness chair is Minister Ng. Mr. Ng is representing the Department of Finance, Human Resources, WCB and the Liquor Board. Mr. Ng you have 10 minutes to make your statements to the members. Please proceed.

Hon. Kelvin Ng

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Members of the Legislative Assembly. I am pleased to be here at the Nunavut Leaders Forum. I believe this is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the public and to each other the accomplishments our government has made in the first half of its mandate.

This is an opportunity to question us as ministers and a mechanism to receive feedback on how we, our departments and the government as a whole are performing, while at the same time providing us with constructive input on how we can do our jobs better.

I am very fortunate to lead two departments that are critical to the development of our young government. Solid financial management of our limited resources is important in any government but in particular in the government's formative years.

Also recruiting qualified individuals to work in the government and to serve our constituents is a challenge that I believe we are meeting. The Department of Human Resources provides recruitment, job evaluation, training, labour relations and human resource management support to all departments and agencies of the Government of Nunavut consistent with the Bathurst Mandate and in the spirit of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

Since April 1, 1999, the department has made strides in our staffing. Our public servants are competent and dedicated individuals across the government. We are now close to

85% overall capacity. As part of the government's decentralization plan, Human Resources has successfully decentralized the Qikiqtaaluk operations. The Igloolik office is fully functional and provides staffing services, job evaluation, training, and development for the Baffin region public service.

We are also committed to fulfilling our Article 23 obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. We are accomplishing this objective in a number of ways, including implementation of our priority hiring policy for Inuit beneficiaries. We also support business objectives by establishing a new interviewing process for candidates called behaviour descriptive interviewing. This new system allows the department to evaluate individuals on what skills they have to carry out a job versus what academic levels they have achieved.

The department has also taken initiatives to consult with elders to better understand what some of the barriers to the workplace are. This information along with what we have learned to date will feed into the Inuit employment implementation plan that is currently being developed. The department has also taken the view that it must look down the road and develop those talents through further training and education of beneficiaries by government if we are truly to achieve our Article 23 objectives.

The department continues to offer professional development to GN employees, to Nunavut Arctic College and other private training centres. In fact, in 2000-2001 alone over seven hundred government employees participated in professional development courses offered in all three regions including Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun language and cultural training.

Human Resources has also undertaken a GN wide training needs assessment to determine the type and magnitude of training needs required within each department. The information that is gathered from these assessments will be used in partnership with the Department of Education and Nunavut Arctic College to design pre-employment program development as well as staff development programs. We've also worked to establish a workplace wellness program and a sexual harassment policy.

The Departments of Human Resources and Finance have worked collaboratively on negotiating two collective agreements over the last two years. The first with the Federation of Nunavut Teachers was ratified in March 2000 and the second collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union was ratified this past May.

Now the Department of Finance Mr. Chairman. The Department of Finance develops and manages the annual budget process for the Government of Nunavut including a review and tabling of the main capital and supplementary estimates. And we've successfully managed this for the past three years. We've also introduced Nunavut's first five year capital plan after an extensive pre-budget consultation process that included all MLAs and communities.

And for the first time Mr. Chairman, we've introduced a fall capital plan approval. The department also provides the Financial Management Board with the necessary financial information required for sound financial management and decision making. One of our government's first successes was to ensure that the FMB was established and operational to support the financial decisions of the government.

Another area of responsibility that the department has, is to monitor the fiscal performance of the GN budget throughout the course of the year, and to report periodically to FMB and the Assembly on financial trends and developments in Nunavut and elsewhere that will influence our current financial status and long term fiscal strategy. And we've been able to successfully do that on various occasions.

In the last budget I introduced the Nunavut Fiscal Review conducted between Finance Canada and the Nunavut Department of Finance. The review is being carried out in conjunction with our own internal program review. We will use this opportunity to determine the adequacy of our Government's fiscal resources.

The Department of Finance also manages the fundamental financial accounting, audit and reporting roles of government and ensures that the government's banking, borrowing, risk management and investment programs are developed to reflect industry standards and territorial needs. Since April 1, 1999, we have returned the insurance function and risk management responsibility to the Government of Nunavut from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We've had our accounting processes accepted by the Auditor General of Canada. We implemented an accounting system, put into place our corporate banking functions. We implemented an investment strategy, ensured that our payroll system was operational. Ensured the completion of the division of assets and liabilities with the NWT. We've implemented an employee and departmental credit card program.

We've worked with the Auditor General to identify opportunities to strengthen our financial systems and functions to improve financial data integrity. We've also been responsible for preparing the interim financial statements and the final statement of public accounts. The initial public accounts for the GN for the year 1999-2000 were tabled in the Legislative Assembly this past spring. The public accounts for the 2000-2001 year are nearing completion.

Another area of responsibility is to negotiate Transfer Payment Agreements and further develop fiscal relations with the Federal Government, Provinces and Territories. To continue ongoing discussions with the Federal Government regarding our fiscal arrangement this past March I signed the new Formula Financing Agreement with the Federal Government to ensure funding for the Government of Nunavut until 2004. We are currently preparing to enter into discussions to develop a new Formula Financing Agreement.

We also worked to formulate, negotiate and implement tax and non-tax revenue generating strategies for Nunavut. For example, we've been successful in preparing a remission order from the Federal Government for the GST paid by the Office of the Interim Commissioner, a total of one and a half million dollars. We've also agreed to implement the Tax on Income Approach to Income Tax. We have signed a new reciprocal tax agreement with the Federal Government and the return of the administration of the payroll tax, tobacco tax and petroleum tax to the Government of Nunavut from the GNWT. We've begun administering the Nunavut property tax. The department is also responsible for the Nunavut Liquor Act.

Two years ago I appointed Nunavut's first liquor licensing board. Last fall I asked the board to consult extensively across Nunavut on the issues surrounding the liquor act including access to alcohol. The report and its findings will be tabled in this legislature next week. In my responsibilities for the Workers' Compensation Board, as Members of the Legislative Assembly are aware, earlier this week I signed off a renewed agreement to share the Workers' Compensation Board with the Northwest Territories government.

We consulted Nunavut stakeholders and the message is clear to us, that a shared board with the NWT is in the best interests of both employers and employees. I am pleased that this shared board will continue to serve workers well and continue to make premiums low for employers.

But while keeping this board together, both Minister Handley and I have launched a legislative review panel to take a detailed look at the existing legislation surrounding the Workers' Compensation Board. The panel has traveled extensively in both the NWT and Nunavut to hear from the public on changes that they would like to see. We anticipate this winter a final report will be forthcoming and we look forward to soliciting the opinions of the Members of the Legislative Assembly as we move to a made in Nunavut Workers' Compensations Act.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman I believe our government has accomplished a great deal since we were formed two and a half years ago. But we all know that much more needs to be accomplished to realize the full potential of our territory.

As a Member of the Executive Council, I believe I have fulfilled my duties to the best of my abilities and have done so with integrity and commitment to the people of Nunavut. I believe that I have worked collaboratively with both my cabinet colleagues and regular members in working to resolve issues.

But I think we all know that occasionally we all run into differences of opinion in some matters. But by and large we have all made significant progress. I believe I have given the political direction required and with the support of the highly dedicated and competent staff, we have been able to successfully provide services within the mandate and responsibilities of both Human Resources and Finance. I look forward to the final half of this Assembly's mandate and working with all of you to improve the standard of living for the people that we represent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Ng. We will move on to members' statements. Members' statements and/or questions. You have three minutes if you wish to make statements. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the minister's work on carrying out the finance portfolio, I that I know we get a federal budget annually that gives a certain amount of money to Nunavut. I realize that we are in competition with the provinces in regards to getting funding for the Government of Nunavut.

I realize that the minister has to get funding from the federal government and in terms of the minister's work in Human Resources, during the strike the employees asked for certain benefits and it seem like he was not responsive to the wishes of the employees. It was very tense during that time. That is my comment. I have questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Members' questions. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question in regards to the strike that was held. How could the minister have provided better leadership during the strike.

That is my question. I have a supplementary question afterwards. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well Mr. Chairman I guess if the government had given in to all of the demands that the Nunavut Employees' Union had requested, then obviously they would have been in a happy situation. But by the same token, I mean we would have been in a difficult situation in that we would have to find the resources to pay for those requests. We would have had to reduce some of our programs. I think that by and large the matter was handled well and that there was an agreement reached that was accepted by the majority of the employees. It is reflective of the fact that we have a collective agreement that we are working with.

And of course, we look forward to always trying to improve conditions, working conditions and pay and benefits to our employees but it is a matter of a balance between what is fair to them and what is fair to the public that we are trying to serve with the remaining resources for our programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' questions. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a supplementary question. How can these employment issues be resolved better in the future so that we

don't have this tension. To us it is something that we didn't like to see when there were a lot of people who were on strike.

What are we going to be doing in the future so that we can have a better handle on employees going on strike. Not only in Iqaluit but also in the other communities. What can we do and what kind of plans will we have in regards to employees' strikes. That was my last supplement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, no matter what the government does as far what we would put on the table, it doesn't seem to always be enough in respect to some of what the leadership or the union representatives would say. So there is always a difficult balance that we face in trying to reach an agreement that both sides can accept. Sometimes it can be done but from our perspective, there are too many demands or there are not enough resources to balance those out.

I think ultimately as I indicated in this past collective agreement process, the membership accepted the agreement, the amount that was put on the table by the Government of Nunavut through their ratification process. The union leadership did not accept it but they chose a vote to see whether it was acceptable or not and their members have said it was. So I can't, and not having the results of that vote, we can't determine how much of an acceptance it was by the membership as a whole. Whether it was by one member that would have qualified or whether it would have been 90 percent of the membership. So I mean you've been told I mean we have to realize, I think that without the information it is really hard to gauge how substantive the acceptance of our offer was without knowing the full results.

But having said that, there remains that a majority of members felt it was a suitable agreement and that it was ratified by the membership of the Nunavut Employees' Union. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. He didn't quite respond to my question. If there was this type of disruption in Nunavut what can we do to resolve these types of strikes sooner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is hard for us, for the government to resolve the situation like I said earlier by pretty well giving in to all the demands that might be requested from an employee representative.

I think what is important to note is that it is really up to the membership of the union themselves that dictate how their leadership strategize in dealing with the situation and

responding to the government's offers on the table. A lot of is tied to control of the Government of Nunavut and as a result of actions of the union leadership that is the representative of our employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Members' statements. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome the minister. As the minister of Finance, he has to talk with his cabinet members to ensure that the smaller communities are looked at more in terms of funding.

For example, the terminal at our airport and our community halls are very small. As a Finance Minister, he should be able to finance expansions in the smaller communities as well. As Minister of Human Resources, he should be able to find more employment for Inuit people.

There should be a lot more people from Nunavut given jobs in business and in small communities. Also, he should be promoting a fair wage for everyone. Some people don't make much money and with the high cost of food, they just usually give up their employment. The Minister of Finance should be doing more with the federal Minister of Finance to improve the wage economy in Nunavut.

We see the Prime Minister going to Europe and other places. Say going to other places to deal with global trade. I feel that the Minister of Finance should work more with the federal Minister of Finance to promote more economic viability for Nunavut.

For example, under the Bathurst Mandate the people of Nunavut have a shortage of housing. I feel that this should be done more by the minister. Mr. Chairman I don't have that many comments or statements to make. I don't have any more questions. So these are my opening comments at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want the minister to make perhaps a response to my comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. Nice try. You have to save your questions for the House. Members' statements. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the minister's work on Finance & Administration he has shown leadership in trying to get a better financing agreement to address our needs in Nunavut, and to lobby on our behalf with the Federal Government and others that don't understand that per capita funding will not work in Nunavut.

The FFA must be looked into seriously from today and in the future. It is good that there is long term planning and the Department of Finance is listening. In terms of work on Human Resources, I am concerned about the leadership on the staff housing. I have brought this up with the Minister Responsible for Decentralization yesterday. Just because they may be able to hire locally, you can't just say that this person doesn't need a staff house.

Again, yesterday I mentioned for an example, there are 20 decentralized positions in Kugluktuk and we need to ensure there is staff housing for all of them. In terms of percentages of the Inuit working for the government, we need to continue to see leadership in this issue, so we can see it resolved. For example, we need more training on the job programs for government positions. We must have trainer-trainee positions and other initiatives at the senior management level so that we can get closer to the target in the Bathurst Mandate.

Also, the summer student program needs more publicity, not just other departments. This is an important chance for students to get work experience. There needs to be proper competition in the community and to ensure that all students in the community have an opportunity to apply.

(interpretation) That's all the comments that I have. I have questions to follow. Thank you.

Chairperson: Members' questions. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have one question about training and the Inuit Employment Plan. As I said earlier, what initiatives such as the trainer-trainee positions are currently in place to encourage a trainee to take senior management positions in the government. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Human Resources has sponsored various training initiatives to develop individuals for senior management training. There has been public service training, I can't remember the actual title, a Public Service Commission Training Program that they had.

There was the senior-middle management leadership training programs that they have operated as well. So I think by and large on a longer term scale, a lot of it comes down to having a successful Inuit Employment implementation plan that we are working towards in conjunction and partnership with other interested groups. Groups such as the Federal Government and NTI.

There are plans which we are continuing to work towards, a plan that all stakeholders would buy into and hopefully finance as well from the respect of identifying individuals and putting some specific training programs in place that are adequately financed.

One component of that actually is to have a mentorship type of role for individuals to have them work with an individual on a term basis in developing their skills. Of course, with that there are significant increased costs for a system like that for training.

So that's where the key area of finding the partnership for the resources is important for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Supplementary. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. He partially answered the question. That's good, but I guess, from what I am hearing, there is no plan on this because of the financial problems, as he said for having a trainer-trainee position.

But there has to be somewhere in the department a way to do maybe a pilot project. I don't know that may be the thing to go by. Something has to be tried here, but I guess that I am just saying you know, that if there is going to be one. Maybe I should put it another way that does the department have to come up with their own training initiatives, or does the Department of Human Resources provide leadership for the whole government.

I just want to use an example here. Is the minister's department making sure that there is a program to train Inuit social workers and community health representatives. Some things like that. It has got to be tried somewhere. So I am just saying there should be some kind of project that can work for one or two departments in the very near future. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the member knows right now through what is sponsored by Government of Nunavut and departments funding is provided to Nunavut Arctic College, there are all sorts of diploma and certificate programs out there, whether they are for teachers, social workers, community health representatives, lawyers, management. All those courses are out there, the government itself does have a senior management development program that is in the process of being finalized and implemented.

There are individuals that are identified as potential management material. They will be worked with in respect of having individuals develop succession plans for other jobs that they are working towards moving into, in order to train themselves and bring themselves up to the experience level that they can take over those positions. That is already under way but I think, the point I mentioned earlier about a broader Inuit Employment implementation plan would be on a broader scale for all facets of government requirements.

Not just government, but senior management, professional level, officer level positions throughout Nunavut that would be required. So we would want to do that in conjunction, like I said with other stakeholders, whether it is the Federal Government, NTI, municipalities, housing authorities, other designated Inuit organizations. They all have requirements for specialized positions that need to be filled and hopefully identify beneficiaries that will be able to go into those roles, or be identified for the training and being able to be a part from start to finish of having been successful in that initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Members' statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments are very brief. Mostly that since we have been here two and a half years and we have stated that especially in the Bathurst Mandate that we would look at the programs that are more suitable for the social and economic development of Nunavut.

However three budgets later, we do not seem to achieve the message that we received during the election. The message and the mandate stated to try and put our priorities on things other than education and housing. Economic development. By providing assistance financially or otherwise to small businesses who are trying to develop independence and maybe to rid themselves of financial dependency on the government. There are some viable projects being proposed by smaller communities that can run as community projects. However, this government especially the Department of Finance does not seem to recognize that you need to get away from the status quo.

To get away from what we call the usual budget preparation that we have inherited from the GNWT. I think although we have the minister's good intentioned program review, I think we will have to go further than that. We will have to look what will make Nunavut tick.

What will make Nunavut financially independent, more independent at the community level by investing not just in education but also in economic development, better economic development assistance to community projects. My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Members' questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have only two questions left and I really don't want to use up the second one. I think it is very important even with the program review initiatives that may take several years, would you in the mean time as Finance Minister start looking at where the money should be spent in economic development so that a need for income support and needs for other assistance like public housing and things like that will be lessen. As a requirement or as a need by the people from the government. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the member brings a lot of very good points. I would like to say that as members know the government announced that they are working towards a strategic economic plan with all the stakeholders and in particular members of the Assembly. All the individuals interested in economic development in Nunavut. We hope to have that in the new calendar year.

Finance does have a big role from the broader perspective of wanting to ensure that from a fiscal standpoint Nunavut is sound and maximizes its opportunities and any kind of investment that would strategically help the territory in the long run. One of those things that I mentioned and members know is a longer term initiative of devolution of our resources so that we can hopefully have opportunities in the future for whatever the policies are that the government puts in place. To maximize opportunities from mineral and resource development in our own territory, respective of trying to make sure that we have a sound fiscal base to operate existing programs, from our resources from the federal government to the formula financing agreement and to other agreements that the different departments have with our federal partners.

There are all sorts of responsibilities out there, the Department of Finance certainly recognizes our major role in a lot of those initiatives that are ongoing. We're hoping that the programs would be used, as the member indicated, hopefully set aside from the immediate priorities in consultation with members of this assembly.

What we want to do is manually shift some of our resources, where we have some control right now in the short term, in the medium term, and trying to create the foundation for some of those longer term changes that we feel if we're going in the right direction. But I think what's important to know is what we decide, let's hope that we make the right decisions. Because we don't want to waste a lot of effort and initiative trying to make change for the sake of making change, we want to make change for the sake of trying to improve the programs and the priorities to reflect the needs of our constituents. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that answer, however, when the needs are identified by the community, that they don't seem to fall under any program that government has, or something that the government did not think about for the kind of programs that the communities may want to do, that could make money, but yet, under the conditions, they don't seem to qualify.

My next question Mr. Chairman is would you consider advising the different departments especially Sustainable Development to recognize community initiatives that are not necessarily the status quo of what the DSD usually funds. For example in Chesterfield Inlet, the ground stations that they have been trying to get had very good and promising contracts from the other companies. But the proposals have never even been recognized or answered, or at least to say we have received your proposal and we are reviewing it, nothing of that because the department apparently doesn't know anything about the satellite programs or satellite dishes, or the satellites that are up in orbit.

I guess what I'm trying to say is would your leadership and the Finance Department advise the departments responsible to be a little bit more aggressive in trying to respond to the proposals that are initiated by the communities. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you Mr. Arvaluk. We'll give you the benefit of the doubt on that, sounds like an original question but we'll clear it as a supplementary. Mr. Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you Mr. Chairman. That's a good question. I think Mr. Arvaluk raises another good point. I think that there is no doubt first of all in response to his question, that if there were issues that he or any other member for that matter, brings up that I thought was good for the government I will try to work with any member or my cabinet colleagues to try to make that initiative possible. I think we have that responsibility and all of us as ministers are responsible for different programs under the mandate of our departments. We have to be able to be flexible as we see an opportunity that would work for the benefit of a community or those that we are trying to represent. It would be our responsibility to try to make amendments to policy or override policy in some circumstances that was required to have that initiative happen. If it was in the best interests of a community or constituents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Members' statements. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Inuit Employment Program is a good initiative and I think it has been fairly successful. Not working that bad. There could be improvement in it. But one of my concerns is the number of Inuit employees that have left the government. Are we showing enough leadership in helping to ensure that Inuit are going to succeed in their jobs. I know that there are some skills that are lacking in the workforce in Nunavut and we have had to recruit people from southern Canada.

Do people come to Nunavut with an understanding of how important the role is of supporting and encouraging Inuit to be able to work in their own government. Are we getting people that are bringing the old colonial attitude or superiority and the lack of sensitivity to the Inuit culture.

I am hearing some concerns here and I want to know how the government is doing to educate the new employees on their roles here. I see a lot of southern people going off on education and job training programs and then they leave sooner rather than later with all this knowledge. We should be investing the job training in the Inuit employees who are going to be here in Nunavut in the long run with this knowledge. We have so many children that are going to be coming out of our schools in the next few years. They won't be able to get jobs because they don't have the experience. I have asked three years in a row if the government is going to have a summer student hiring program for all communities.

This goes back to the Bathurst Mandate to building healthy and caring communities. We have to invest in our own employees if we are going to see the Inuit employment strategy reach the potential of 85% of the government workforce in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. McLean. Members' questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman over the last 4-5 years the Department of Human Resources have done a stellar job, I think in the circumstances that they have to work under. The present staff today has had to really work under trying circumstances of staffing this government up to the levels they've had. I think they have done an excellent job. We are at 80% now. My question is we are going to a program review and I am looking at what it costs us to run the Human Resource department. It is up to 18 million dollars a year. Would the minister responsible have a look and try to get feedback from everybody if we do need a Human Resource department in the future. For Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I think it is safe to say with the program review exercise that we are undertaking identifying and trying to do some analysis on what programs each department is delivering. That is all government departments all the government programs are up for review whether they are required. Whether or not there is a priority in respect to serving our constituents at large or serving the government. So I would say the answer to that is yes. I would be open.

I am sure all of my cabinet colleagues and Members of the Legislative Assembly want to see if what we have is the right system, the right set-up and if not, how we can work to try and improve things. Make them more efficient or try to allow us the opportunity to free up some possible funding for other priorities or initiatives of the programs that we have already have and want to enhance. Or some programs that we may want to introduce. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to give the wrong impression that I am picking on Human Resources, I am not. I like what the minister said that he was going to look at everything.

My next question in regards to looking at all programs, and I have brought this up in the House a few times, in regards to Arctic College. I know the minister is not directly responsible for Arctic College, but neither is the Minister of Education sometimes responsible for Arctic College in my experience. I am not being derogatory there.

But we talk about training, programs, and delivering and I just ran into an individual that is over here taking a course from Kugluktuk. I was saying to myself that is the equivalent of moving from Vancouver to Ottawa to take a basic course. I think the tragedy of that is it is going to cost the government, I don't know who is paying for it, but here airfare home at Christmas or back in December is around 7 or 8 thousand dollars.

It seems like we don't as an elected representative, I know Arctic College has a Board of Governors, and they are arms length and they go out for third party funding to deliver their programs. But I am really not convinced yet that the programs and the people making the decisions are making them according to the Bathurst Mandate. We are trying to keep people in school, we are trying to train them but we have to send them the equivalent of six or seven thousand miles to get a basic course.

I think we are not doing the right thing here. I think there should be an emphasis in the program review as Minister of Finance, I know you are not 100% for the program review, but I am hoping that on this program review that we will be looking at Arctic College and finding out where the great need for the employees are. I think a survey from the department and passing this on to Arctic College and saying listen, this is where we need these courses set up. I think, I am not trying to plug any one community here, that there have to be good, basic programs in each community, but also in the regional centres, there should be some good management courses in each region.

I don't think people should have to go 8 or 9 thousand miles to take a course in Nunavut. If it can be delivered in Kugluktuk or Cambridge Bay or Rankin Inlet or Baker Lake or Iqaluit or Pangnirtung or Pond or Clyde, we should look more at that and have some more input on that. Rather than letting the Board of Governors decide that we are going to make people fly three quarters of the way across the country to take a course in Iqaluit.

So would the minister commit to looking at this Arctic College scenario and see if we can be friendlier to our people that are taking these courses and try to keep them a little bit closer to their home. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. McLean. Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am sure that the Minister Responsible for Nunavut Arctic College is aware of a lot of the issues surrounding the college. But having said that, I mean as I said earlier as one of the Cabinet or Executive Council members I have no problems in taking the member's comments and all members' comments and making sure that there is a review of certainly Nunavut Arctic College, and all programs, as I indicated, as we go through this program review exercise.

Particularly now that the member has raised it, knowing that when we come back to the regular members' caucus at some point for a briefing, the question will be, well what have you seen as a result, or what have you determined as a result of the issues that have been brought up during this leadership review. Obviously, other issues that are brought up during questions in the House, whether it is formally or during the review of the budget over the course of our term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought you were going to call the person beside me first. Mr. Chairman, when this minister is asked questions in

this House, he sometimes gives out short answers, but the public doesn't always know about his department.

Perhaps, if he could give longer answers so that people could understand better the matters of finance and human resources. He has an important department and he can help educate people about these processes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the budget process, the Standing Committees review each department's budget in detail and prepare very thoughtful recommendations to the departments, which are written up in the Standing Committee reports.

Does the Standing Committee report on the review of the budget formally get tabled at the FMB and considered item by item. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all in answer to the member's earlier comments about short answers, or longer answers. My style has always been to try to be as direct as possible in responding to members. Maybe I will take some lessons from my colleague, Minister Picco, in trying to extend the answers.

But in all honesty, I do try to provide as much information as I have available. In respect to the member's question about the response to the Standing Committee recommendations, it goes through the Financial Management Board as a budgetary item, the summaries of the response to all the departments which are compiled, are approved and then they are tabled in the legislature. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Supplementary question. It seems as if the members don't actually vote any changes to the actual estimates. The budget goes ahead and the departments just carry on and ignore the Standing Committee recommendations.

What direction is given by the Minister of Finance, or FMB to the departments to implement the recommendations of the Standing Committees with respect to the budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, all Standing Committee recommendations are reviewed by the appropriate ministers responsible and their departments to try to see whether or not the recommendations can be incorporated into

the future, the current or the future business plans or projects, whatever the recommendations might be referring to.

Of course, as members know, it is not possible to do 100% of the recommendations, but obviously we try to carry out as many as we think are practical and possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps if you could give me five minutes because I won't be asking any questions. Mr. Chairman, I do have a concern with the Department of Human Resources, because it seems like the minister is not encouraging the Inuit people to work in the government.

Also, he is not encouraging Inuit to be in senior levels. The senior level Inuit employees have been let go. Sometimes the department seems to forget this. The Minister of Finance should work harder to provide more funding for the Culture, Language, Elders and Youth department and be supportive.

Last year, the Finance Minister during his budget address, I felt that he was not in support of the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, and that it is provided only with small funding. He should work closely with the liquor licensing board because the Nunavut residents have never requested a liquor outlet in Nunavut. It seems like alcohol was just introduced without any input from Inuit and I am sure that you should reconsider this. Some communities I am sure are dry and they are all Nunavut communities, and the restrictions vary from community to community.

In some communities you can't even bring in alcohol and Iqaluit is the capital city of Nunavut. In view of all Nunavut residents I am sure it is time to start selecting, all Nunavut residents should have a plebiscite to see if we want to have alcohol in Nunavut or whether we want to be dry. So therefore, we need to have appropriate acts in the future so that it is Nunavut friendly. Acts should be clear so that Nunavut residents have the same level of understanding so that we can find out what residents want.

I know that we use liquor and we make money out of the taxes, but Nunavut residents should reconsider this very carefully. We should consider if it is time to have a plebiscite about whether we want to have alcohol or not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' statements. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my comments for the minister are for both his departments that he holds. I will start off with, as a result of the minister's comments about government employees, saying that we don't have a problem, they ratified the agreement. That concerns me because I know that the majority of people out there probably ratified it because they didn't have a choice. They couldn't afford to go on strike.

I think the leadership that he is showing here needs to change, his view on that. I know there are civil servants out there that are busting their butts and trying to make our Executive Council look good. That is the kind of attitude that goes out there. I think that he should really re-think his view on that.

Another concern I have is that as the Minister Responsible for Finance, he is dealing with the budget. I think we all remember an incident where I feel that the budget wasn't as clear and transparent as it could have been. I think as the Minister Responsible for Finance that he has to ensure that it is as transparent and clear as possible.

I would also like to see Nunavut as a whole enjoy more things like some of the things that we see, and I congratulate the minister and his community on some of the recent things that have been announced over there. I would like to see those kinds of announcement on a territorial basis as well. I encourage him to work harder on that.

I think going back to the union stuff, I don't think the Minister of Human Resources showed us good leadership when he brought forward that email that he had to retract in Cambridge Bay.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Point of Order

Chairperson: Mr. Ng, just before you proceed, it may not be necessary. Mr. Tootoo, the comments that are made in reference to an issue that hasn't been dealt with yet in regards to the documents that were brought forward. That is still under review and the results of that will be brought forward in the next week or so. So I would suggest that it wouldn't be appropriate for you to make any comments in reference to that issue that was brought up here during the last session.

So, I would strongly recommend that you stay clear of any comments or references to that situation until it is settled before the House. Mr. Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was the same point that I wanted to raise. I have given the member some flexibility when he is referring to my attitude. In all fairness, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how he can interpret my attitude in this House, whether it is in formal sitting or not. I have given him some liberty and if he continues along that line then I will raise it as a formal point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Ng. Proceed, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your advice. I guess instead of using attitude, I will just use leadership, because that's what this is all about. I apologize to the member if I seem to have upset him. This is looking at the leadership that in my view, and the views that I have heard about the leadership you have shown throughout the last two and a half years that I am bringing forward here.

I would just refer to the way in which the Department of Human Resources seemed to deal with some of the issues during the labour negotiations and disputes that were held over the last year. I think as my colleague at the end of the table here had indicated, it is not the way that we would like to see things happen and we would really like to try and find alternative solutions to deal with these kinds of problems and issues.

As another one of my colleagues mentioned, I think as the government announced that it is planning to conduct a program review under the leadership of this minister, I think we are rapidly coming to a point where we have to ask ourselves if we can afford to operate the way that we operate.

We have in place business plans and organizational charts in the departments but I think we have to really take a good, hard look at whether we are being as effective and efficient as possible. I trust that the comments, not only by myself but by my other colleagues, and I am not going to belabour it any more, I am happy with the comments that the minister has made, that they are willing to take a look at everything and I think that's important.

I think that's what we need to do. We have to develop a government that is as effective and efficient as possible and that serves the needs of Nunavummiut as much as possible. These are my comments Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Members' questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for the last three years we have projected deficits in our budget. One of the departments that I think has done that every year, and I don't know if it is the fault of the department, is the Department of Health. I think as we were told when we took on our first budget, is the reason for this is that the original Nunavut budget was based on the GNWT budget which didn't include the deficits that were built up in the past.

I understand that it takes some time to get accurate Nunavut numbers for our budgets. But we continue to being our budgeting process each year with a deficit in the department. It is very frustrating for us as members and I think even for the public and our employees to be told that there is going to be a surplus, more so for us, you know you hear there is this great big surplus out there and all of a sudden half of it is gone on the deficit of one department.

I would like to ask the minister, when will he be tabling a budget that actually reflects the base costs of our departments and particularly the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Well Mr. Chairman, I would say as soon as there is reliable, accurate, historical information that's available. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you. Further questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask the minister. As the Minister of Finance he probably has a better idea than any of us, when can we expect to see some reliable, accurate information on numbers. I would have thought that these were the kinds of things that we would have been looking at in our budget.

So I would like to ask him when can we expect to see those kinds of numbers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons why we don't have whole information, is because some of the boards before they were dissolved, had their own separate financial systems. They weren't reporting in a manner to the Department of Health as would have been ideal to make the forecasts so that they could make projections, see where the trends were.

It is just that a lot of the financial information wasn't readily available. Now since the department has taken over responsibility for all the financial functions of the boards and incorporated the staff available at the regional operations within the department, it has gotten a lot better. But it is a matter of compiling the information, assessing the information, and being able to use that information to develop budgets. That's where the work has been.

There has been also, as you know, finance involvement with the Department of Health, in trying to formalize and review that same information so that we can have as accurate numbers as possible to base budgeting and projections on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Ng. Further questions. Members' statements. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please smile once in a while, we are happy sitting around here in the House.

I have a very brief comment Mr. Chairman. As Inuit, we didn't quite know how the financial system worked and there are a lot of people out there who aren't quite sure how it works even today. I am sure that it takes a lot of work to put all that information together. I believe that our financial system within the government is working quite well. But I have a comment to make in regards to a request I made about the terms of reference for the liquor licensing board.

I asked for terms of reference for this board and he was also going to give us reports on the toll free number that I could call. I believe that was between 700 thousand and 1 million dollars. It would help a lot of us and it would help a lot of the people out there if

he gave us the information and reports and other things that he promised us. I will have no questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' statements and/or questions. Mr. Irgittuq.

Mr. Irgittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments to the Minister of Finance and Human Resources. I have no problems with the finance department but I do have some concerns about human resources.

At the very first day we were elected when we elected the cabinet, the first question that I asked was that if Inuit people applying for jobs would be hired on the basis of experience as opposed to only if they had a diploma or certificate. That was the very first question that I asked when we started out as a new government. I wanted to know from the minister if they would be willing to hire people based on their experience and not because they had to have a diploma or certificate.

There are a lot of people out there who are in my age bracket who are unilingual but have a vast amount of experience. It is extremely sad when they can't get any jobs in the government. I believe that is the cancer of the government. We have to remove that tumour if we are going to fix it up again. We would like to be given support and assistance by this government and we would like the Inuit out there to be given support.

In reference to Mr. Arvaluk's comments, there are some people out there who should be recognized for the work that they have done. They should be recognized by the government. When we are talking about Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, it is a very popular phrase that is constantly used by the government. We would like to see Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit actually implemented within the workings of the government.

I will just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't be asking any questions because I only have two left. I believe he got the tone of my comments.

Chairperson: Members' statements. Members' questions. If there are no further questions, I would assume that the minister is finished. Question. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one last question. I was thinking about one of the questions that one of my colleagues raised earlier about dealing with the union on future negotiations. I would like to ask the minister if he has any plans to look at alternative way of dealing with the union on this.

Granted, I fully understand that there are two sides and we can't afford to give them everything that they want. But I think we have to try and find a method more suited to our territory and our people to deal with these kinds of issues. I would just like to ask the minister if he has any ideas to explore new ways of dealing with these issues to avoid the types of actions that we saw during the last round in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Mr. Chairman, I could say that I think with the exception of the strike of course, which members know was fairly high profile and initiated by the union leaders and that. It wasn't all across Nunavut and it was a couple of selected communities, I think by and large the relationship with the union has been very positive.

Even leading up to when they decided to recommend a strike for their membership, there was a lot of progress made, a lot of issues were resolved and it came down to the nitty gritty of you know, monetary issues, we were too far apart and that led to the walking away from the table to go to the strike. So I think that given the new fiscal reality right now that all unions across the country are starting to recognize that there is more movement towards longer-term agreements recognizing different financial situations.

I think that the Nunavut Territory will be no different than other jurisdictions across the country with recessionary, or sorry, the downturn of the economy. The whole nature of trying to reach suitable agreements that are fair to both sides seems to be, versus walking away and being more confrontational, seems to be the standard and more of a norm than the confrontational method. So I would say, given that trend, that we will try to get to the table earlier possibly, try to get more of the outstanding issues out of the way as much as possible and really just try to continue to develop a good spirit of co-operation and collaboration which we have always tried to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman one thing in particular I would like to ask the minister. Would they consider looking at using or going back to what our civil servants used to have is binding arbitration. I was wondering if that would be one method that he would consider looking at to deal with some of the things that you weren't able to resolve between the two parties.

Mr. Chairman just to comment on that. I think given what the minister just stated and the fact that both sides see the realities, having something like binding arbitration there I think it would encourage both sides to try and resolve their problems without going to arbitration. I know the arguments from both sides for that. It usually comes out more one side or the other. And I think might be an incentive for both sides to mutually agree so that it won't go into arbitration.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I think people have to recognize that binding arbitration is more of a confrontational win/lose environment. In that the government or the employer puts forward their final positions and the employees' bargaining team their final position and then the arbitration board goes with this one or

with that one. Whereas the collective agreement process is more trying to get it to a mediated resolution of the differences between the two parties.

But having said that, if the employees through their representation, the union leadership want to take look at that certainly we would be receptive to that. I have said that in the past and yet by the same token you have to recognize. You can't have a cake and eat it too. You have the right to strike if it was a trade off of binding arbitration. So if you want to go to a binding arbitration process. If they chose to do that and the right to strike has to be removed as well. I know that it was as situation, where I think nobody was comfortable in. When there was the work action to strike. Action that took place. I think hopefully we've all learnt from that lesson and it won't go to that situation again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one more sup question. I might as well use it and not leave things unused. I appreciate and thank the minister for his comments and look forward to seeing some direction that he has indicated here. I guess it is more of a comment. I might try to throw a question there. But I look at arbitration and I think anyone would recognize when that when you have two sides negotiating they are not always going to agree on everything. And I think by looking at arbitration it might be kind of like to agree to disagree on some things and it would be like seeking the advice of an elder.

It is trying to put a bit of an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit component into the negotiations. If we agree to disagree. We can agree on this. It would go to a third party like an elder or someone who is an expert. Has expertise in this area. And ask them for advice. And I guess that is the way that I see it. It could be used and I am not saying Mr. Chairman you go to an elder and ask them for advice. The process of arbitration would be kind of you know it could be looked at that like that. I think that would be a good process to use and I know no one liked it on either side what was happening during that last dispute.

I look forward to hearing over the next year or so some movement in that direction over the next term. Would the minister be willing to be the one to put, I don't know if you want to call it an olive branch, but put a hand out to the other side to ask them if they would be willing to sit down and discuss this. Or is this something that he would want to wait and hear from the union. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the process that the member alludes to in respect to possible bringing in an elder is really more applicable towards the mediation process than an arbitration process. That's why you bring in a mediator, you have a difference of opinion between two sides, that mediator or mediators, depending on what mechanism the two parties agreed to, tries to make some recommendations to bring the two parties together to make an agreement that both sides would find acceptable.

I can't say right now in respect to arbitration if we would put it forward. I said that we would certainly be receptive if it comes to the table along with the union's proposal. I don't know right now, I couldn't tell you and I would have to get the sanction of the Financial Management Board before we could put it into our opening position.

So right now I couldn't say one way or another whether it would be a part of a future government's opening position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Ng. Members' statements. Members' questions. If there are no further questions, I would assume that we are finished with the minister. Thank you, Minister.

>>*Applause*

Before we proceed with the next Minister, Mr. Picco, I think we will break now until 3.30 to be back in the chamber and there is coffee in the members' lounge. Thank you.

>>*Leadership Forum recessed at 3.07 p.m. and resumed at 3.34 p.m.*

Chairperson: Members we will continue on with the Leadership Forum. Member's Statements. Minister Picco would you please take the witness chair. Mr. Picco you have ten minutes, ten minutes exactly for your statement. Proceed.

Hon. Ed. Picco

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to be here at the Leadership Forum. I welcome this opportunity to discuss with you my tenure as minister in our government. Two and a half years ago when I asked you to consider my nomination for cabinet I stated at that time that I would work hard with you to create and build kinder systems and policies that meet the needs of all Nunavummiut. I also said that I would gladly welcome any assignments that the Premier felt that he would entrust to me and I'm proud that I was chosen to be the Minister of Health and Social Services as well as being responsible for the Nunavut Power and Corporation.

I'm well aware that there are many challenges to overcome as we seek to build an effective, efficient health care system in Nunavut. Mr. Chairman I think that since April 1, 1999 we've been able to bring forward many positive changes within the Department of Health and Social Services while maintaining, Mr. Chairman, a difficult balance between the delivery of programs and services, tight budgets and the shortages of community nursing staff and social workers.

We also have been working to invigorate the health care system to incorporate a Nunavut first attitude, to integrate the Health Board and also deal with outdated infrastructure as well as incorporate the principles of our Bathurst Mandate.

Shortly after April 1, 1999, Mr. Chairman I sat down with all of the senior management teams to compile and to completely re-examine all of the departmental plans. These were later rewritten to reflect the Bathurst Mandate. We also included elders in the review of our business plan to incorporate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

With the Premier's support, I announced the integration of the three regional health boards. Following the integration of the three health boards, we began the process of setting up twenty six health committees in each of our communities. These committees of council are in the early stages and will take time and support for them to develop a clear picture of the roles that they want to play. I also believe strongly in the importance of education and training. So it was very important to me to be able to join Minister Arvaluk to announce the beginning of the first Nunavut Nursing program.

We have also been working to provide regular training sessions for a variety of community health care providers like X-ray Technicians and CHRs. We are now examining our Social Worker training program to find ways to improve the link between graduate and the entry level positions.

Mr. Chairman we have taken an important step towards ensuring consistent quality health care across Nunavut by setting up the best practices division of headquarters situated and located in Kugluktuk. This operation is headed by our Assistant Deputy Minister Dr. Keith Best. I recognized that one of the biggest obstacles to ensuring consistency in our health care system is a shortage of health care professionals. That is why I struck a working group made up of health professionals from different Nunavut communities to give me practical recommendations for dealing with recruitment as well as retention problems.

Mr. Chairman their report included twenty three recommendations, which I accepted and began to implement immediately. I've been a strong advocate for the development of the telehealth network. I believe this technology has great potential to improve support and access to our community health care professionals and thus to the people we serve. We continue to expand the telehealth network and train more people to work with the system with the goal of bringing good valuable tools to as many communities as possible.

We were also successful Mr. Chairman as you know to receive an extra three million dollars from the Federal Government to begin to hook up more communities. As you're all aware, we spend many millions of dollars on medical travel every year. In the past, different regions had different rules for medical travel but as part of our effort to provide fair and consistent care to all Nunavummiut, we introduced a standardized travel and escort policy for all of Nunavut for the first time.

Then last spring I directed the department to review the government's practice of contracting air ambulance services and also identifying options to improve efficiency and also to achieve economies of scale. At the same time with the support of the cabinet, I mandated a departmental team to negotiate with the Federal Government to improve our Non-Insured Health Benefits Agreement. Mr. Chairman the ongoing government

program review and the health expenditures may also I believe, reveal that the Department of Health and Social Services is under funded.

On the public health side, we started several multi-year anti-smoking and anti-suicide programs. We have increased influenza, diabetes, and TB surveillance programs. The department has been an active participant in the government decentralization plan. In addition to establishing the Headquarter operation and best practice division in Kugluktuk, we have completed re-location of the Baffin regional health and services offices in Pang.

Mr. Chairman on the infrastructure side of the department we have moved aggressively which includes a new health centre in Pang, Pond and Igloolik and also to replace other aging infrastructure. We have also moved ahead with the functional planning and program design for the Baffin hospital and the Kitikmeot and the Kivalliq expanded health facilities.

We have formed a capital interdepartmental team to expedite these projects. Mr. Speaker in the remaining term of this government I believe the Department of Health and Social Services needs to move forward aggressively on preventative programs. So we need to address and strengthen our family planning and teenage pregnancy programs. Mr. Chairman we need to communicate to all Nunavut residents about healthy lifestyles and healthy choices. We need to increase funding in the areas of family violence, sexually transmitted disease and we need to look hard at the area of child welfare and family support programs.

Mr. Chairman we need to redouble our efforts in the areas of mental health programs and services as well as alcohol and drug counselling and we also Mr. Chairman most importantly need to be able to train more people from Nunavut to work in Nunavut for the Department of Health and Social Services.

As minister of your Health and Social Services Department, I want to begin now to shift the department to these specific areas. Now Mr. Chairman this will be an extremely delicate and stressful balancing act given the budget restrictions and the human resource issues. But we have no choice Mr. Chairman. The staggering social and health issues in Nunavut demand that this government lay the ground work now. I have said many times in this House and in Committee and in the public that the shift from a treatment mind set to a preventative approach will not happen over night.

It will take time, initiative, and willingness to make hard choices from the members of this House and your department. Finally as a minister, I've also had the pleasure of being responsible for your Nunavut Power Corporation.

The process of dividing the NWT Power Corporation and setting up the power corporation was challenging and I believe it was very successful. We are now ready to take the next important step for Nunavut, which is to identify opportunities for alternative energy technologies for our communities. We will be making an announcement on that

next week. Mr. Chairman I would like to thank the members of this committee, the health committee as well as the standing committees in the House for their support on several controversial issues that we have taken on.

Including the integration of the health boards and yes Mr. Chairperson the creation of our own power corporation. I have tried to the best of my abilities to fulfil my duties as your minister in our government. I look forward to answering your questions this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

>>*Applause*

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak briefly in terms of the minister's portfolio. This minister has been very capable and has worked very hard to try to help those of our Inuit with needs. I appreciate the minister working with me in terms of Kugluktuk's initiatives. On the other hand, there has to be programs that need to be in place to help people in the health field. I know it is hard when you are trying to help people with limited resources of revenues or money.

We will have to encourage the nurses that come up to stay on the job on a long term basis. It is very stressful to the residents of the communities when there is a need for nurses. And that deteriorates the people who are in need. And it is very stressful when there is no help in the communities. And as well, we have to encourage people to train as social workers. Because the Inuit social workers will definitely help their fellow Inuit because they understand the culture and they also understand the needs of the Inuit. As well, I want to lastly say in terms of the budget it is very limited as we know.

I want to ask why we have deficits in the departments. When you look at your budget, you have to review very closely what areas are priorities and work harder to try and focus on those priorities rather getting into deficits every year. When you have deficits in the departments, it deteriorates the programs that we want to work on. And we know the programs will not be in place when you have no funding to use. I have no questions. But if the minister understands my comments, I would like the minister to respond to my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you. As per past practice, the minister will not be responding to statements unless you have a question. I am sure you'll have the opportunity in the House with the same set of questions and statements to the minister. Nice try. Members' statements. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman drug and alcohol abuse continue to be a problem for many individuals in Nunavut. Substance abuse is connected to family violence and other crime, poor job and academic performance, suicide and other social problems affecting our youth and adult population.

The government stated in the Bathurst mandate that it will acknowledge and will respond to the challenges of substance abuse. Members have been asking since the government closed down the only treatment centre that we had. What is the government response. This is two and a half years into our five year mandate and we still haven't heard any response on this.

I think there is something is missing other than money. The minister indicated in his opening comments, and it was a buzzword that was used by the department just before division and just after division. And it was the holistic approach. That word like the one I mentioned earlier seems to have disappeared and healing and treatment seem to have been forgotten. The Bathurst Mandate says it will enhance the abilities to help communities to serve Nunavummiut in the spirit of healthy interconnection of mind and body and spirit and environment. On support for the community health committees, a mere 5 thousand dollars a year doesn't seem to be a whole lot of support in this area. Those are my comments, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you. Members' questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in my statement, the government, through the Bathurst Mandate, said that it will address those challenges that I stated and I don't need to repeat them for the minister.

I would like to ask the minister what plans he has, those were things that were supposed to be addressed in the first five years, and we are already half way through. I would like to hear, through his leadership through the department, how he plans on acknowledging and dealing with those problems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments. I think as I just said in my opening statement that the Department of Health and Social Services needs to move towards the preventive side of medicine as well as review our alcohol and drug programs set up.

In that context, as many of the members of this House know, we have placed eight psychiatric nurses in communities where we have had some situations with abuse, dependency, psychological misfortune. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I think it is important to say that the Government of Nunavut didn't close the treatment centre. That was closed in 1998, before the government was even set up. It was closed by the Baffin Health Board and it was closed at that time because there last expenditure was 750 thousand dollars.

It may be interesting to point out that on the alcohol and drug programs, there is a point Mr. Chairman, when alcohol becomes a disease. I believe the World Health Organization's publications on what a disease is, alcoholism is a disease. When it becomes a disease and is assessed as such, you require treatment like any other disease.

Now that treatment may be a residential treatment program. In that case Mr. Chairman, we can send people out and we have done that. In the past year, all over Nunavut, we have sent out 16 adults and 4 youth for residential treatment programs.

Now that could have been alcohol abuse or it could have been a chemical dependency or sniffing and solvents and so on. I think Mr. Chairman, last week, here in Iqaluit we have people from all over Nunavut, specialists, mental health workers and so on, working on a mental health plan strategy to deal with exactly the member has asked about in the Bathurst Mandate.

But it is going to take some time to implement that strategy. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Picco. Further statements. Further comments. Questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear the minister say that they had a group working on the strategy. I would like to ask him, if he would be willing, or when he anticipated being able to bring forward and make the members aware of what this strategy is for input from members and the Standing Committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This past week, Mr. Chairman, we were laying the groundwork for the mental health strategy for Nunavut. We hope to incorporate it in our business plan, we will have it in our business plan. At that time we would be of course going to the Standing Committee to discuss it with them. So we would hope that over the next eight to twelve weeks that we would be in a position as a department to present it to the members and to the House in the business plan for the upcoming budget cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Further questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the minister also indicated that, and I am sorry if I said that our government shut down the treatment centre, but we don't have one. There were reports through the media, the RCMP are saying that the majority of the calls that they get called out to are alcohol related. I think it was anywhere from 80 to 90 percent or higher that were alcohol related calls.

People that you talk to out there that have this higher incidence of alcoholism or alcohol abuse throughout the territory, why don't they have something to treat those people. I would like to ask the minister, has he given any direction to his department to look at the establishment centre, whether it is for alcohol or other substance abuse, some type of a centre where Nunavummiut can access these programs in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The issue surrounding alcohol and drug abuse and that is quite, there's been a big push on over the last seven or eight years to look at different approaches. One approach that was made in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories, now known as Nunavut, was setting up a residential treatment program and it was situated in Apex and it followed the southern based model.

It was revamped and revisited in 1992 and I believe again in 1994 and 1995. Based on the government of the day and the money being spent, it wasn't working. When someone has a physical addiction Mr. Chairperson and needs to be sent out. For example, if they need the injection, that's a different type of problem with alcohol than the person who binge drinks, who may come to Iqaluit for a meeting or something or may be outside their home community, and gets drunk for two or three days in a row and when they go home it's not a problem.

That's a different type of issue to deal with. When we have done consultations with our communities, the majority of communities, the majority of times we have asked, 80% of the respondents continue to tell us that they want to continue to treat people at their home community level. Taking someone from Iqaluit, from Gjoa Haven and putting them in Apex for the treatment centre or sending them to Yellowknife or Edmonton and curing them from their physical addiction to alcohol as an example, doesn't fix the problem.

When the person goes back home, they still have to deal with the problems of why they were drinking. It may be physical abuse, sexual abuse, it may have something to do with residential schools and so on. So what we have tried to do and the model that we have tried to put in place, Mr. Chairman, is to develop more skills for our alcohol and drug counsellors and our counsellors on the ground at the community level.

That's what we have been doing. As I said earlier through the Department of Health and Social Services, we have put more psychiatric nurses in the communities, as well as deliver other types of mental health strategies. I believe you will see Mr. Chairman, in the coming days as we move forward with the mental health strategy that we mentioned earlier, that will encompass some of those programs.

One of the other initiatives Mr. Chairman that we are working on is the review of alcohol and drug programs. To see if in the upcoming year or two years, is there a need for a residential treatment centre. As I said in the past year sixteen people from Nunavut, adults were sent out for treatment and four youth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the minister I believe and I am sure that he will correct me if I am wrong, just indicated that they are just now taking a look at planning to review the alcohol and drug treatment programs. It is two and a half

years into our mandate and they are just now looking at this problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Picco, that's a new question.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I mean, and I think it is important to point out that in the last two and a half years, since April 1, 1999, as I explained in my opening comments the department has done a lot.

We had to shift away from the focus of what the GNWT was doing and put a Nunavut first approach to what the Department of Health and Social Services was trying to do for Nunavut. Part of that is to have a mental health strategy that deals with addiction. Whether they are addictions to alcohol or to other types of chemical abuse or it could be addiction to gambling. Those types of mental health strategies need to be put in place.

And we are beginning that review right now Mr. Chairman. We had looked at some areas around mental health a little over a year ago and that is how we brought forward the suicide program. Now we want to focus on the addiction issues under the mental health strategy that includes alcohol and drug abuse. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess what the minister is saying as far as looking at alcohol and drug addictions they are starting to look at that now. I think. I guess I am kind of disappointed and I understand that the department had a lot on its plate to deal with. This always seems to be or seems to be one of the bigger issues that we face in all our communities.

I am a little disappointed that he had waited two and half years in to be looked at. I think we have to find ways to deal with these things. Like the minister indicated that it be more Nunavut based and sensitive to needs and circumstances that we have. I just wonder it has taken two and a half year to look at it. When does the minister anticipate that he'll have something solid as far as a way of program. I am kind of worried that it has taken us that long just to take a look at the addiction part of it. How long is it going to be before we actually see something that will come into provisions that can be used for the people that need it out there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reality since April 1, 1999, and before the Government of Nunavut was set up, the government of the day and the Baffin health board and now the Government of Nunavut have been delivering alcohol and drug programs. As an example last year, we trained over 20 community drug and alcohol counsellors just in the Baffin alone, with reality and choice therapy to help people with addictions. Tomorrow we are expecting to go to Clyde River to help a successful program there that deals with addictions with social workers and counsellors.

Mr. Chairman I think the point is that we have been working on our alcohol and drug programs and we have been running programs. What I am trying to say as a minister is that we need to step back now and because of questions in the House and from the member and other people have been asking on residential treatment programs. Do we need a residential treatment program today.

By the referrals that we are seeing right now we don't. We only referred 20 people out like I said earlier, last year. And the year before that it was less. We don't see the numbers being extrapolated and going up. Because those types of resident treatment program as I said before you are treating 95% of the cases are physical additions. What we need to be able to do Mr. Chairman as the member knows. Here in Iqaluit seven months ago we opened the first mental health drop in program centre in Nunavut.

So we have been working on these types of things. We haven't waited for 2 and a half years. All I am saying is that we need to step back after two and a half years and see where have been and where there have been failures. And maybe there have been some missteps and that is what we are attempting to do. I don't want to give the impression that nothing has been happening. That would be unfair to many people who are working right now in drug and alcohol program and treatment programs and wellness centre.

For example, we have a wellness and counselling program centre here in Iqaluit. We have an active AA program, you find AA programs in I believe 11 of 26 communities in Nunavut today. Those types of programs are going on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try and do this properly. I would like to welcome the minister to the witness table. His portfolio has a great impact on our lives. His department is very important. Mr. Chairman, the main concern that I have with this minister is that there is a large deficit in his department.

Health is very important and social services are very important too. The minister has said that he wants to build facilities in several communities in Nunavut. Lots have been surveyed already but where are they going to get the money to pay for these three regional hospitals. For example, in the Kitikmeot, if he is going to build one in Cambridge Bay, I think it was just last July that I heard through Nunatsiaq News that in 2005 these buildings will be built.

But I have a bit of a concern. Although I have seen in Nunatsiaq News that they are slotted for 2005, I am concerned that there are no boarding facilities slated. If we were to build three regional hospitals, we require boarding facilities. I am quite concerned that as the Nunavut Government if we are building hospitals we need boarding facilities. I am sure the minister is aware of this already.

I was wondering where he is going to get the nurses and where will the funding be coming from. We have to have fully operational hospitals and we need the whole picture. We have heard there is always a shortage of nurses. Mr. Chairman, my allotted time has run out. But if the minister wants to respond to my comments, he can, but I don't have any more questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. Nice try again. Members' statements. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was anticipating my turn. Welcome Mr. Minister. I have quite a few concerns with the minister because the management of important health and social issues are affecting Nunavut and we know that his department is very important to us.

(interpretation ends) We have a crisis in Nunavut because we don't always have social workers in place in all the communities in Nunavut. Who is at risk when this happens. The children are at risk. Ninety percent of our inmates in our institutions committed offences due to alcohol related problems and this needs to be looked at. We have seen many changes in staff at the senior level of this department and this creates some instability for people. There needs to be more Inuit in the senior levels in management who know more about what is happening in communities and who will live in Nunavut. Otherwise, we are not going to see solutions that will meet the needs of Nunavut communities.

Thinking of how we are going to help the communities and individuals that deal with family violence, alcohol and mental health issues, the Bathurst clearly anticipates new ways to encourage healthy living but we haven't seen the leadership for this department, in this department or the government.

I like to quote from the business plan. The children and the family services act mandates programs addressing the needs of children at risk, as well as for families. Investigation of child abuse and neglect requires court work intervention. Placement of children and case management of children in care. These services are provided to address the needs of children when parents are unwilling or unable to provide adequate care. Contained in the spectrum of programs for children and families at risk are suicide and abuse prevention, support groups.

How is this going to be achieved when there are no social workers in the communities or child protection offices in the communities. After reviewing the minister's statements in the House since I was elected in December 2001, there has not been a statement pertaining to social services. This indicates social services are being neglected which means that the communities of Nunavut are neglected.

Would this minister exercise his leadership to initiate discussions and consideration of whether to put social services into its own department so that the mandate of social services can be carried out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Williams. Members' statements. Ms. Williams. Questions.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question. I would like to hear what your plans are for senior Inuit workers in your department. I know that you are planning on that. I know that it is very important so that we can have senior officials who know Nunavut. So what is the position now. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to speak briefly to the member's comments and I think in most cases she was correct. I think the Department of Health and Social Services has focused too much on health and not on the social services area.

Two weeks ago, I was in Yellowknife and spoke to the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon Social Services Associations and I said that. She is right. That is why this past summer in August the focus of the senior management retreat was specifically on social services and social workers and some of the strategies that we are trying to put in place to increase community social workers. And she is correct again in saying we don't have enough. I believe we have 30 now out of 50 positions or 70% who are in place actually working on the job, social workers. That's not acceptable and we need to have more.

On the specific question on the integration of social services into its own department, we would have to look at how the program review itself goes, and recommendations from the House. I guess we would want to see what the financial implications and so on would be on the human resource side. I forgot the question, maybe the member could repeat the specific question. I am just being sure of the statement. If she could repeat her question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked the question, I think I had three. So I am going to repeat the same question. I don't want to waste questions. What are your plans to staff your positions in the senior levels with Inuit, who are from up here, will stay here and who know what is going on in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first thing I should point out and as the member knows, the staffing is done through Human Resources. When positions are advertised, they are advertised through the Human Resources policies, the Department of Personnel policy of the Government of Nunavut.

The senior managers are interviewed by the Premier and the Executive Council, for example the Deputy Ministers' positions. What I have tried to impress Mr. Chairman, on my staff on the department, as well as the Premier and the Human Resource minister is that we need to get more Inuit involved in working with the Government of Nunavut.

The government through Human Resources has put different programs and policies in place to try to expedite that. At the same time within the Department of Health and Social Services, I have not been successful in bringing forward as many Inuit employees and senior positions that I would like to see as minister. We would be willing to look at recommendations from this Assembly to help us expedite that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we already know your response for quite some time, but I would like to ask another question. How hard are you working to encourage Inuit senior staff that know the communities and Nunavut.

You used to have many Inuit staff, but they are no longer there. Perhaps we need to rectify this. Do you feel that having Inuit employees is very important to your department.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Minister. Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I should say that I think any person in public life, myself included of course, when I ran for office, I categorically stated that I wanted to see more Inuit involved in all levels of government.

Not just at the senior levels. I have tried through the Department of Health and Social Services to implement that type of program and policy. We have been successful in areas. A lot of the positions for example, in the Department of Health are professionals. It is hard to get Inuit who are qualified. For example we are running the Nunavut nursing program right now to be able to increase nurses who are Inuk to work in Nunavut.

So we are trying to move forward on that. On the senior management side, the positions are advertised by the department. I don't specifically go to the Human Resources Minister and say, whoever applies make sure that person is an Inuk and hire them. That would be irresponsible. That would be circumventing the Public Service Act that is in place. But I would say to you Mr. Chairman, where there is an opportunity to hire Inuit then that should be the case within my department and within the government.

That is what the Premier has asked of us. That is what you have asked of us. I don't try to politically interfere in the hiring of the department. I want to have more Inuit working in the Department of Health and Social Services. As the member knows, there can be at times better places to work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand where you are coming from but I think your department should be a little bit more aggressive in getting Inuit employees. You do know what it is like in Nunavut. And I think it is very important to hire more Inuit. You do know when you hire those types of people. It touches into the employment and they know the people and the communities.

There are communities that have no social service workers. How often do the people from the headquarters to go to the communities to talk to their employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just further on this staffing issue. I am in agreement with the member. I think we have to re-double our efforts to increase our Inuit hires not just in the Department of Health and Social Services but government wide.

I think the success that I had as a minister, which is what the question is about. With the power corporation in Baker Lake where they said that we couldn't hire Inuit, I hired 15 out of 16 employees, 95% of my employees in Baker Lake at the power corporation are Inuit. This is because Arctic College ran the training program and now 60% of the hires for the regional office for health in Pang come from Pang.

So we've had some success. The staff in Kugluktuk I believe are four out of the nine positions now are from Kugluktuk. I haven't been able to work that through with senior positions in my department. That is something that we need to work on not only me as a minister. I think the government as a whole and I think the member is correct on that.

On the social workers and the staff out in the field, that is a good point. My understanding is that when we have set up the regional office for example in Pang, one of the reasons for the decentralization is actually to have more contacts at a community base. For the social workers themselves anywhere between 12-15 weeks there is usually a visit on site by a supervisor if requested.

My understanding to, is that almost on a daily and weekly bases there is contact between the regional headquarters with the person in the field. If a visit is warranted, then that is carried out. But I don't have with me the actual times and schedules. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister stated that he has been an MLA for a long time and he use to live in Hall Beach also. He knows exactly what Nunavut is trying to do. And he knows what the needs are at the community level.

Following this experience, I am sure that he was disappointed because the GNWT wasn't focussing enough on our Inuit communities. He is quite aware of the local social workers.

My question Mr. Chairman. My third question. As a minister and his colleagues, can the minister tell me if he is planning to have social services and the department of health become separate departments because we are neglecting social services. (interpretation ends) Seriously, they need to look at having a social services department, maybe combining it with a smaller department. But not with health any more because I think we are exhausting nurses also in the communities because they are doing counselling right now because there is no social worker.

We need the nurses in there to do health, but they shouldn't be doing social work any more. (interpretation) Can the minister tell me then, if he would seriously consider setting up a social services department separate from the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think the member makes some excellent points. The member has had many years of experience as a social worker and knows first hand the concerns at the social worker level and at the community level. I think I mentioned to Member Williams once before, I remember when I went to Hall Beach almost 20 years ago now, there was an Inuk social worker there.

When I went to Clyde River there was an Inuk social worker, when I lived in Broughton Island there was an Inuk social worker. That's not the case today in many of our communities. Something has changed in the past X number of years. So we need to redouble our efforts to get more Inuit involved. For example the successful social worker program that we ran in Igloolik, we had I believe ten graduates, but the majority of them didn't want to leave Igloolik to go to another community.

So we are running another social work program now in Cambridge Bay to get more Inuit social workers involved in the field. The reason why this past summer Mr. Chairman, that we had a senior management retreat in Pang, focused on social services because I felt as the minister, through discussions in this House and talking to the members that we had been leaving social services behind.

So we have strengthened that area. We have put a stronger management team on the social services side in place, we have hired some new staff and I think that will help us. But at the same time I don't know at this point if breaking social services away from health would complement the services being delivered at the ground or at the community level. Right now we try to do a team approach where we have mental health workers, community health nurses, social workers, drug and alcohol workers, community wellness workers, they all work as a team.

Where possible we have been trying to relocate those positions in one central location. In most cases that being the health centre. So if you go to the nurse as a woman because you have a black eye on your face, the nurse can then refer you to the social worker, the community wellness worker or someone for all that type of counselling so that you are working in concert. I guess that was the real reason why health was joined with social services in the early 90's. So to strategically position the department away from the social services side and have it set up with a smaller department or independently, I think the focus is that maybe through the policy review, suggestions from the House and the Standing Committee, that's something that we could review.

But at this point in time, as the Minister of Health and Social Services I am not contemplating looking at that unless it is something that came forward from the members. I believe having a complement of professionals and semi-professionals working in the same field, at the community level, like we are doing right now, is probably the best approach. And I believe, Mr. Chairman, strongly that we will get to the point where we have more social workers hired. We have increased our levels with new hires, but we have also lost people around the same time.

The attrition seems to be quite high. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Any further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a good response when he said he went to Hall Beach, Clyde River and Broughton Island and they were all Inuit social workers. At that time health and social services were separate departments. And when they were amalgamated or put together, I was in that position at that time. There was no more support given to the social workers and now we don't have any left anymore.

In the days to come I will be talking about those issues representing my communities. This is up to the minister because you are going to have to seriously consider whether we should keep these two in one department. We have to look at child protection services and so on. If there is more support given to the social workers there would be more support given to all the people who work as these types of service providers. There are too many problems today and I am urging the minister to seriously consider this issue and we do have to hire social workers that are Inuit who understand the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, again I don't disagree with the member. I agree with the member. The area of social services I believe as the Minister of Department of Health and Social Services over the last few years have been neglected.

And we have tried this year to re-focus on social workers for the delivery of the services at the community level. But the hiring is one thing it has been problematic not only for this department but for some of the other jurisdictions when I had an opportunity to speak with the other ministers.

So that is a recommendation that comes from the Standing Committee on health, which the member is a member of. To look at and that is something that we would take into consideration. Look at what the opportunities are there for the department. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Could the minister tell me. Do I have three questions or do I have any supplementary. I lost count.

Chairperson: Question. You have one more original question and you have two sups on that.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): You notice that we can ask more questions and supplementaries when we are asking questions. So I would like to ask the minister on the issue of social workers. Why is it that the nurses provide social support or counselling to people with social problems. We are having a very hard time retaining our nurses and they can move anywhere they want outside of Nunavut.

Why is it that they have to do double duties as counsellors also. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a good question. Earlier I stated a bit quickly I guess in my opening comments. In some communities, for example, ten in the past year, almost half of all Nunavut communities, we placed psychiatric nurses in those communities to counsel people because of the psychological mental health mode specifically that had been identified.

So in those cases for example the nurses would be providing counselling. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another question because of course the minister is well aware that most of the people who are incarcerated are in the cells because, 95% of it is because of alcohol. There are usually repeat offenders if they don't have any support from their families. As the Minister of Social Services, you are well aware that they shouldn't be in the cells.

Some of them are sleeping on the floor. You did mention a little bit about alcohol, but there has to be a drug and alcohol rehab centre here because we send them out to Yellowknife or to the southern institutions. They don't belong in the cells. You said that they were alcohol & drug counsellors, you said I think there were 20, but they are resigning from their positions because they are not getting any help from the management.

There are some community who have no social workers, who have no alcohol & drug counsellors. How are you going to replace the people who have resigned or what kind of plans do you have so that all of these positions are filled at the community level. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the retention as well as the recruitment of certain staffing areas within the Department of Health and Social Services, as I said earlier has been problematic. Social workers and nurses come to mind because of the pandemic shortage across Canada.

But at the same time, the member is correct, trying to get alcohol & drug workers at the community level has also been problematic with the department. In most communities right now I have a list of where we have alcohol & drug workers as well as wellness workers which are funded in most cases, through the Hamlets, in place. When a person leaves their position we immediately try to action that position to find a replacement.

That's an ongoing process within our department but also within other departments within the government so that's not unique. As the member knows when it comes to hiring, I have control of the ability to hire nurses directly from our department, I still have that in my department. Every other position is handled through human resources, social workers, mental health workers, alcohol & drug counsellors. All those positions would be advertised for a community under Health and Social Services, are maintained under Human Resources.

When a person leaves then the process is in place to recruit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Ms. Williams. Further questions.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question. My question to the minister, supplementary to the minister. Alcohol & drug counsellors do they get support or visits. The Department of Health and Social Services budget is very big. So do they go to the communities to support their that are in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Wellness workers and alcohol & drug staff provide non-statutory services like interventions, alcohol & drug counselling and so on, mental health services and general counselling.

What we have put in place is an aggressive program of training in reality therapy for example. That's part of why we are going to Clyde tomorrow with the MLA, Mr. Iqaqrialu, where some of the staff have actually graduated from one of those programs. So that ongoing support and training is there. Each community has a contact person where they can call for counselling, for advice, for support through programs, through grief counselling and so on. So those support mechanisms are in place through regional offices.

The employees themselves know who their contacts are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Ms. Williams. Members' statements. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After listening to this for most of the day, this minister is under a tremendous amount of pressure to deliver programs within budget and he has to deal with some very, very difficult issues. I think he is genuinely trying to improve the health system in Nunavut. He is under tremendous financial pressure like all Health Ministers across the country.

He has good people in place now in his department. The hospitals are a major step. His program to retain health care professionals is good. I think his department needs to put more emphasis on prevention. Now when I say that Mr. Picco, I hate statistics, but the fat of the matter is, I don't think we should start burying our heads in the sand with the issues up here.

The issues up here, we have the highest rate of drinking per capita. We have the highest rate of drug use per capita. We have the highest suicide rate. We have the highest infant mortality rate. We have the highest violent crime rate per capita. I could go on and on and on. I don't want to put that on your shoulders because you as Health Minister shouldn't have to bear that. But as you said earlier, we have to concentrate on prevention.

Healthy eating, alcohol. Again, this can't be done by your department alone. It needs to work in partnership with all the departments in government. I said this all weekend that this government has to work together. Education should be involved in a lot of it. And so should health.

I mentioned the DARE program which brought RCMP into the schools to talk about alcohol & drugs. This was a good program delivered a couple of afternoons a week, and it really didn't cost your department that much money. The RCMP were proactive and they got very little recognition on this. We need more leadership on issues like this and bringing departments and the government and then again, we have to get the communities

involved because they have the solutions. And that's who should be working on these, the communities and the departments.

We do have a alcohol & drug treatment centre in Nunavut. It's called the BCC. But other than that there is probably no other jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't have a treatment centre. Mr. Picco, I have heard from my constituents that we need one, and I am hearing it from inside this House that we need a alcohol & drug treatment centre. The one in Apex and I want to make an analogy to that, a alcohol & drug treatment centre in Apex is like trying to put a box of chocolate doughnuts in front of me and telling me not to eat them.

I know it's, for some reason you seem to be resisting this. I don't know if it is genuinely you or your department that doesn't think that we need a alcohol & drug treatment centre. Yes you are talking about we are doing it at the community level, but there are incidences where we are shipping people out of communities. You say there were only 15 people sent out last year, you have the figures but we probably could have sent more and done more prevention. Have we asked NTI, ITC, Pauktuutit, to help us with this issue. They just gave 1.5 million dollars to the Arctic Winter Games.

The Aboriginal Healing Fund. You said earlier that maybe some of this alcohol & drug problems were a result of what happened in residential schools. Has anybody approached them about helping us build a treatment centre. That's it for my statement and I have some questions. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. McLean. Members' questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Mr. Picco, it was brought to my attention that there are terminal illnesses and I have experienced numerous friends of mine that I have known over the last fifteen or twenty years not numerous, but over the last ten or fifteen there have been numerous that have died because of cancer.

In most cases they are younger people and now it's starting to happen to the unilingual older people. We have these facilities in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Montreal and Ottawa. I myself am terrified to go and see a physician if there is something wrong with me or a doctor or a specialist. I haven't had to experience too much in regards to that. But for a lot of people up here, going to see a specialist about a terminal illness like cancer, is a horrifying experience for them. Because they are sat down in a room and they are told that they have a terminal illness and they only have so many months to live.

I don't know how they do it down there, like I say I haven't been around. But I have seen people come back after they have been told this, and their life is devastated, it's very, very devastating for the family and the people.

Is there any way we can help these people that have terminal illnesses deal with this a bit more easily. Rather than you know they head down after they complain about an ache or a pain for the last year and a half, two years and they figure it's flu or a cyst or something

like that. Then they are told that they have six months to live or three months to live because they have cancer or something. Has your department got somebody maybe counselling down there in Winnipeg or Montreal or Toronto and help them deal with their grief.

Does your department have anybody in place to do this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just quickly on the member's opening comments. I think as the member has pointed out, we have gone from corrections to social workers to now we are dealing with grief issues and cancer. So you can see the range of issues that are within the department. One of the things that we have just completed and set up is a cancer registry.

The cancer registry has been set up and we are working with Stats Canada on recording the instances of cancer and the types of cancer and so on. As well as the fatalities from cancer. We are also looking at trying to get national accreditation from the National Cancer Registry Association. With this program we just had two Inuit go down and actually do a program of training on how to be able to record this information.

Anyone, Mr. Chairman, who is informed of needing chemotherapy, radiation therapy, maybe a radical mastectomy or whatever the case may be, usually the diagnoses is made at the community level or by a doctor and then programs are put in place as a result of that person with that diagnoses. In the cases of chemo or radiation therapy and so on, counselling services are available and to my understanding are being provided.

I do know personally of a few cases where it has been provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplemental to that. I am glad to hear that Mr. Minister, but it brings to mind that these facilities now are being run by private contractors and I hate to say that they are profit motivated, but they have to be I guess because they are run like businesses. But on the humanistic side, we have people, and I supposedly think we should have Inuit people working in them, because 100% of the clientele are Inuit people. So it is not a major step to try and get them to take some courses on counselling.

It is like I said earlier, there is a front line and maybe they could start talking to the elders and people that really are not familiar with terminal illnesses to help soften the blow. So would you commit to informing the people that are running these places to work with the Canadian Cancer Society or some organization like that to help bilingual people in a bit of counselling for terminal illnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't think we should stop there, as the member said people with terminal illnesses need that type of support almost immediately, not just our unilingual constituents and residents. So I would be willing Mr. Chairman, to looking at the resources that we have in place and ramp up the resources where necessary if we don't have those resources in place.

And to undertake to review what type of counselling services and what types of programs are there in place for terminally ill patients, as well as people going through intrusive operations or procedures like chemotherapy or even radiation therapy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of my colleagues brought up the fact about Inuit employees in middle management and senior positions. As the minister responsible for one of the largest departments, it is probably difficult to attract people when there are other departments they can go work for, the work is a bit easier and maybe not as stressful and demanding.

The minister responsible, and I am talking about middle managers and people like that. How many have you direct appointed in the last year. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what the question is. Is the member asking how many direct appointments by the government, or just the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Mr. McLean can you clarify your question.

Mr. McLean: Health.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure, I don't have those numbers with me so it would just be a guess but maybe two or three. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Supplementary to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there reluctance to appoint them on your behalf or is your department not identifying people in other departments or looking for people to get into this field to help the department out. Maybe because it is one of the busiest and more stressful or are you out there actively recruiting people from other departments and saying listen would you like to consider a career in

health and not have to go through the rigmarole of job advertisements through human resources or things like that.

You as a minister, do you have the flexibility if you see people in a community, and there are a lot of CHRs in communities, or office people, or even people in Iqaluit, do you have the flexibility and the power or the leadership to direct appoint more Inuit employees to your department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the member knows there is a protocol and a procedure in place for the direct appointments. That procedure and protocol dictates that direct appointments have to be approved by the Cabinet. And they have to be approved, they can only be approved if you can demonstrate that's the only way you can get a certain position filled at any given time.

So the Cabinet likes to avoid directly appointing people where possible. People should win positions through the open competition process. But after saying that Mr. Chairman, if there is an opportunity for recruitment and the member makes a good point that indeed different departments are stealing from other departments and recruiting away. I have lost several employees to other departments. It looks like I might even lose some of my own minister's staff to other departments over the next couple of weeks.

So that's an ongoing situation that you have to deal with as a minister. But if there is a position that comes open or vacant and there is an opportunity to appoint someone to that position then by all means that is what I would try to accomplish. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to phrase this final supplemental on the question on hiring but it is very difficult to ask the minister if he is sitting around in a Cabinet and you have seven or eight cabinet ministers and you are going to direct appoint somebody from another department, that cabinet minister, it would just be human nature to say no I need that key individual.

When you are talking in most cabinet meetings, they are all secret meetings, they are not like Standing Committee meetings where we discuss everything, but in your experience as a minister, this is my final supplement on this. In your experience as a minister, if there is an employee that is another department that you feel could improve your department, is there any hesitancy from cabinet to appoint someone from another department to your department to help your department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have never run across that situation yet where there were other employees in other departments who wanted to work for my department. So it is a hypothetical question, but in all seriousness, there is a procedure and a policy in place. If there is a position that is outstanding and has been advertised and so on, usually the Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister or Senior Director within that department would recommend the direct appointment of an individual who has usually been doing that ongoing job.

Any direct appointment to the government has to go to the cabinet for approval. And it has to go first to Human Resources that indeed there is an opportunity here to directly appoint a person. Those come before cabinet and they are discussed and then that's it. If there were an indication of an individual that wanted to apply for a position within my department, and I did not want it to go to open competition because I wanted to directly appoint someone, then there may be a tougher sell on that.

Because you know, you can't circumvent the Public Service Act and so on because we need an open competition. There may be another Inuk on the ground that would like to apply for that position. So that's the quandary that you get into with the direct appointments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to comment more on that answer. If we are ever going to get to our employment targets then we have to be a bit more flexible than that. Given that the Department of Health and Social Services only has eighteen percent of Nunavut's budget, compared to other provinces which spend about 30% of their budget on health, will the cost of the three major health facilities be affordable in Nunavut.

Are we going to be able to fund them in the current fiscal regime. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification for the question. Is the member talking about the O&M budget for the three new facilities once they are constructed or is he actually talking about the construction costs of the facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Mr. McLean, can you clarify the question for the minister.

Mr. McLean: In a favourable quote, the whole enchilada. O&M and I know the construction costs are going to be done through birthright corporations, you are going to have long term leases that are going to add up to be millions and millions of dollars. You are going to have O&M and you are also going to have the issue that I think we have missed, is the staffing of these facilities.

So are we going to be able to afford these in the current fiscal regime that we are operating in, in the future. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are two questions there. On the long term costs, as the member knows there are three options on the table there. Once the development corporations complete the projects and they are the developers of choice, the government has an option of a buyback program.

So for example, if the Federal Government comes to the table in the next six to twelve months after the facilities are completed let's say, the Government of Nunavut would have the opportunity to buy the facilities back and buying ourselves out of the lease.

There are other options available to us as a government, Mr. Chairman, to lower those leasing costs so that the extended costs amortized over a period of years can be lessened to the Nunavut taxpayer. On the O&M costs Mr. Chairman, if I increase my staffing levels by 60 people at an average of 100 thousand dollars per person, it comes out to be about 2% of my total budget. So the O&M themselves are not a detriment to the facilities going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplementary to that. You were talking about a buyback. Was the government considering leasing these facilities on a long term lease and not having ownership after the long term lease, and why would the government even get into a trap like that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. McLean. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what I said was, that there are different financing options available to the Government of Nunavut to cost these facilities over a larger period of time. It may be for example, a twenty year lease. As the member knows you can have an open lease, you can have a dry lease, a wet lease, there are different variations on leases.

All I am saying is that there are different options available to the Government. We may say for example, that five years after the project, if the Government of Nunavut has the money available to it, it can buy the lease out or buy down on the lease to save the Nunavut taxpayer some money.

We are developing these projects Mr. Chairman, in conjunction with the three birthright development corporations. At the end of the day they want to make sure that they are going to have the maximum return to their corporation. But at the same time making sure that the people that the facilities that the people are serving, which are the people of

Nunavut, which are also the beneficiaries of their organizations, their shareholders are getting a fair deal.

We believe that those options are available in the leases. At the same time that type of negotiation Mr. Chairman, is being carried out by the Department of Finance under the capable leadership of Mr. Ng. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Are there any further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Supplemental to that. I think it is my last supplemental to that question. I would hope, I would hope that the minister, and I know that he is no slouch when it comes to financing and looking at leases, because we discussed this other stuff. That the best interests of the beneficiaries that are going to be using that facility and also be paying for it, are taken into consideration and that, if there is some kind of long term lease, at least we have ownership of the building or these facilities at the end of the leases.

The last thing we want to do is get into twenty year leases and at the end of the twenty year lease we don't own the facility and then we have to lease it for another twenty years because that's just not the way it should work on health facilities. So I am pressing you as the minister to make sure that whatever leasing arrangements are made, we at least have some kind of ownership after the ten, fifteen, or twenty year agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. McLean. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I can say, for the record, that the discussions have taken place between myself and the Premier and the Finance Minister on these leased facilities. We have always stated with the development corporations and I have been as the member knows in the committee, that the number one option for us that we would love to have, is an opportunity to own the facilities at the end of the lease or before the end of the lease.

And that of course is in any standard negotiations with a design build program. And that's what we are moving forwards towards. So I can assure the member that if there is an option for having that in the negotiated contracts with those development corporations, then that's what we would be doing. We would make sure that we would exercise the options that would give the best return at the end of the day for the Government of Nunavut and for the people of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Mr. McLean. You have one original question left with two supplementaries. Proceed.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to make this one shorter. Ed is fidgeting. Travel in the health department last year was 17 million 827 thousand dollars

and I suspect that travel in Health and Social Services was in the 20 million dollar range in Nunavut.

Is the minister working with medivac contractors and the airlines to try and get the best value that we can. I know a lot of medivacs are emergencies and I know that a lot of medical travel is full fare, and I want to point out one instance. When I was in Churchill at the Mayors' meeting in July, there were five individuals from the Kivalliq down there to see a physiotherapist and they were stranded for four days. There were complaining heavily that they just went down, one guy broke his finger six months ago, another guy twisted his ankle six weeks ago.

They were really complaining about being stranded down there because there were too many tourists flying up north and they were a priority over medical travel. Rather than fly six individuals to Churchill to see a physiotherapist, wouldn't it be easier to fly the physiotherapist to the north and make scheduled stops. Am I missing something here. Are we getting the best value for our medical travel that we possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's the reason why in this past spring I initiated an RFP to review how we handle our medical travel as well as our medical air ambulance services to make sure at the end of the day that we are getting value for the dollar being spent. At the same time for example, here in the Baffin region, First Air had been awarded the contract by the Baffin Regional Health and Social Services Board where they provided the ticketing and other costs and saved us about 25% on air travel.

Is there an opportunity Mr. Chairman, to put that type of contract in place in the Keewatin or the Kitikmeot of a scheduled airline. That's part of the review that we are doing right now to maximize those costs. At the end of the day Mr. Chairman, we need to be able to make sure that the customer which are our patients are served and that the proponent, the person spending the money, the government is getting value for the money. So we are in the process of doing that.

On the cost recovery of having a physiotherapist come forward to Nunavut to do those services, it depends. Because some types of physiotherapy, and I don't know the exact cases that the member is talking about. In some cases you actually have to go to the facility to get your therapy done, where you have the walking equipment for example, for that type of physiotherapy.

We have the other type of equipment for occupational physical therapy. And that is done at a facility. I don't know for example, in the cases that the member is talking about, if those facilities were available in Rankin or could it be done through the other hospitals. In most cases when someone is sent for physio, it is because of the specialized care that they need at that location. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Supplementary to that. I am hoping when we spent all of this time and money and effort on the functional whatever it is, capability of these hospitals or health centres we are building in the three regional centres, which I support, which incidentally do support, that we won't have to fly half a dozen individuals down to Churchill to see a physiotherapist. By the way when we do get that facility built in the Kivalliq 85% of the people that use the Churchill facility are from the Kivalliq, they may end up downsizing it where that function will not be provided.

So I am hoping when these health centres do open up like the one in Rankin Inlet, if it ever, probably over the next three or four years, that people won't have to travel all the way to Winnipeg to see a physiotherapist. For something, which I call minor if it is just a finger or a foot or a toenail or something like that, could be provided in Rankin Inlet.

Can you assure me that will happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the plan for Rankin is to have an extended health facility there which would be able to offer some services now that are not available in the current facility. Now what those services will be, will they entail, audiology, will they entail elective surgeries, will they entail more deliveries, those are some of the things that we have completed in the functional program planning that we are talking about and I think that is what the member mentioned.

So I can commit that once the facility is in place that the facility will be maximized on the services that it is being designed to deliver. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. McLean. Question.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, this is my final supplementary, which I was trying to fold into the original question. Like I said, I support that health facility in the Kivalliq, but the fact of the matter is, you will probably have a couple of specialists in there or something like that. But it means a couple of communities like Baker and Arviat which in the next couple of years will probably have a combined population of 3,500 to 4,000 people. A lot of young children and things like that.

Is there any plan that in this facility that there may be an opportunity for you to station a general practitioner half time in Baker Lake and half time in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Good question. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the things that I said to the Standing Committee on Health is that I would like to be in a position as the Minister of Health and Social Services for Nunavut to place more doctors in communities outside the three regional centres. That's something that we have to be able to look at in context with the budget expenditures that we have in place.

As communities grow like Mr. McLean is saying there is an opportunity to look at what type of physician needs are warranted and can be brought forward for that community. I also want to point out that I think that was Mr. McLean's last question and there weren't any questions today on the Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am asking the rest of the members not to laugh because we are working on very serious issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Nunavut, the population is not as much as down south. I think the population is about 27 thousand. We here on the radio and news media that Nunavut has the highest rates of problems and crimes and they use Nunavut as an example.

When Inuit people get cancer and the doctors diagnose the patients they just give up and lose hope. Although in Nunavut we do have unique ways of doing things, when a patient is told right away about their cancer, when they hear about it they just give up right away. So I don't know how we can go about informing the patients of their predicament.

I know that everyone in Nunavut is susceptible to illness whether it is a doctor or another professional. We have to look at ways to approach the patient when they have cancer. I know that our population is 27 thousand in Nunavut and when you look at the percentage of anything in Nunavut as compared to the other jurisdictions the majority of the problems we face are in Nunavut. Our population is just 27 thousand and sometimes when they use us as an example or compare us with other jurisdictions it is usually up to 100% and we should look at this carefully.

I know that we are not the only jurisdiction with these problems. Other countries and other areas in Canada do have the same problems and it seems like Nunavut is denigrated and looked down upon when we hear about these negative facts. We know that health programs are very important to us. We should get a person who we can understand in Inuktitut and who we can talk to so that we can be 100% sure about it. I am out of time now, perhaps I will ask more questions sometime in the future, I don't know when. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really pleased with the minister's comments and opening remarks. Mr. Chairman, in regards to health, the department should be more proactive for the people with cancer. They should be more proactive in preventing cancer and dealing with it right away if diagnosed.

Someone from Repulse Bay was diagnosed with cancer and I asked if there could be funding to diagnose people in the communities with cancer, but they always have to go down south for treatment. Some people get diagnosed too late, especially with cancer. I asked about it but I am not sure what the minister said. I also wanted more testing of the water and the food to find out more about where the cancer is coming from.

The department should be testing the quality of the environment to find out about causes of cancer. This is an area that could have better leadership. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have questions.

Chairperson: Minister Picco. Or rather. Questions. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the environmental quality and cancer. What leadership is the government providing in testing the quality of the environment to see about the cause of cancer whether it is pollution or contaminants. I was wondering if you have any plans in the future for those kinds of things.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have been approached by some of the individual MLAs and Mayors. Four in particular. Coral, Repulse, Igloolik and Hall Beach concerning diet and if there was a linkage with the types of cancers and the frequency of cancers that these communities seem to be experiencing.

So in consultation with our Chief Medical Health Officer for Nunavut, we have reviewed the data that was available and examined the cases of identifiable cancers in those four communities through a trace back. We couldn't see anything in the environment to account for the cancers. What I can say, Mr. Chairperson, as an example, of the 38 cancers recorded in 1998, 20 were of lung cancer and they are still the most prevalent types of cancers that we see in Nunavut.

In many cases, Inuit, especially older Inuit, had TB in the 50's and 60's. They don't have TB now but the TB left a scar on the lung and in many cases that manifested itself through the years, through increased smoking and so on, to cancer. That's what we are finding out. So 37% of all cancers in Nunavut could be prevented if people stopped smoking. That has been proven through public health.

So to the member's question, we had looked environmentally at the factors that had caused the cancers in those four communities because we thought it might be something in the diet. We did not have any indication from our preliminary results that we had done or findings or studies, to indicate that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Supplementary. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplementary to my question. I am not too sure whether it is going to be a new question. In the communities of Nunavut, if funding could be made available in the future, could there be a study done on the causes of cancer. Have you considered doing that study in all the communities if you were provided with more funding. That is my question. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In response to a question by Mr. McLean earlier, I mentioned that we now have in place the cancer registry in Nunavut which records the types of cancers that have been diagnosed. So from that information itself we could extrapolate numbers and figures and information to ascertain if there is some type of cancers that are more prevalent or increasing than others.

So the money is there right now, we had the budget for that and that is something that at some point in the Assembly we would be able to share that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if you responded to my question properly, but this is a supplementary. My question is, for example in a community, whether it is Iqaluit or another, the dump is always emitting smoke, when it is being burned. Whether it is water if there was pollution in the water.

My question was, would that cause cancer within the community itself. Sometime in the future could you look into that and do that type of planning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes that is something that we have been looking in to. Just quickly we know that from information provided to us, not just in Nunavut but across the world of course, that when you burn plastics at low temperatures, dioxins and toxins are released into the atmosphere. That's something that we need to take a serious look at under the Public Health Act, and the burning of municipal waste and so on in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because the minister is not a doctor and he doesn't have full knowledge of being a medical person, he sometimes confuses the members when he answers their questions. For example, if he knew more about telehealth when we were dealing with it in previous sessions, then he should have given better answers to the Standing Committee.

Answers such as why it is good, he would say it is good. He doesn't explain where the problems could arise. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are you in support of the community health representatives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all on the member's comments on the telehealth network, I don't profess to be an expert in telehealth, I try to answer your questions to the best of my ability. I know that at times the members have called me a professor of health.

Mr. Chairman, on the specific question I believe the question the member was asking about CHRs, the member might be aware that we just started a training program for CHRs a few weeks ago. So it is an important role within the department. Again it is one of those positions in the Department of Health in which we have had problems at the local level in filling. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been many years that the health committees have been saying that the CHRs are very important and they are very useful in their community. Do all Nunavut communities have CHRs. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the CHR position in Pond has been vacant for about two years. We advertised for the position I believe twice in 1999 and my understanding is that we advertised again in 2000. We had no qualified applicant for the position. The Department provided money to Nunavut Arctic College to run a CHR training program in September.

We advertised it in Pond through the Health Centre and as well through the Nunavut Arctic College in Pond. We didn't have any applicant from Pond for that position. When the CHR right now is needed, we have been using money to hire casual staff to help out with some of the community health messages or some of the work that a CHR would have been doing.

We are looking at different models of types of training for CHRs so that we could actually attract more local interest in the area. One of the concerns that we have had with the CHR, is the actual wages that we are paying. There seems to be some reluctance in the salary portion of the job and maybe that's one of the reasons why we haven't been

successful in hiring CHRs. Not just in Pond, there are four vacant positions for example in the Baffin out of 13 communities for CHR positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Further questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you. Supplementary. You said that it is because of the low wages. Are you considering increasing the wages of these CHRs. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the CHR position like most positions could be reviewed through Human Resources, through the classification section of Human Resources. One of the concerns that we have heard, not just in the communities that are short of CHRs, but in other communities, was that the wages that were attached to the positions was causing some people not to apply for those positions.

So that is something that we need to take into consideration. That we need to consider as a department. That is the wages and the package, maybe to look at it through the Human Resource department to see if there is an opportunity for reclassification like the member has suggested. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): My next question. I am just asking this question while the members are listening. I have not yet seen as the minister has said, you mentioned Pond Inlet when you said that some of the health centres are aging. When is the Pond Inlet Health Centre going to be built. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct. The plan is in place right now to construct a new health centre in Pond Inlet. I want to add Mr. Chairman, very quickly that the member for Pond is also the Chair of the Health Committee and I appreciate the work that he has done with me in my role as Minister of Health and Social Services. So I can confirm that the Pond Inlet Health Centre is moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Since the plans are underway, when are you going to start the actual construction of this health centre.

Chairperson: Just before we proceed, just to caution members to try to refrain from asking budgetary questions. We will have an opportunity in the next few weeks to do that. Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I think we are aware of the implications of the budget that has not come out or indeed the capital planning projects. But I would suggest to you Mr. Chairman, that the member will be quite pleased next week when that information is provided to him with the dates and so on for the new facility in Pond Inlet. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Members' statements. Mr. Iqittuq.

Mr. Iqittuq (interpretation): Thank you very much for putting me before Mr. Arvaluk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had excellent remarks to make to this particular minister and I am sure that it would help during this leadership review and I am sure that the minister will improve in his workings.

He is an excellent minister or he tries to be one, we do know that he works extremely hard so that he can be the first among the Cabinet. But at times he tends to let us know about things that don't go ahead and it ends up increasing the number of question that we have to ask this minister. We end up having more questions when he responds.

But I do hope that he will do all his homework first before he makes any comments to the members about projects and so on. It has been more than once that I have put information out to the people in my constituency, I told the people in my riding that we were going to be getting a particular thing but at the end of the day, we later find that whatever that information was that I put out to the people in my riding was not going to go ahead.

I like to work with the minister and I don't intentionally try to beat him but at times I seem to end up focusing on this minister. But it is unintentional, I don't do it on purpose. I just wanted to tell this minister that he should do all his homework first so that we can get accurate information out there to the people in our ridings. I will be asking some questions later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' questions. Mr. Iqittuq.

Mr. Iqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know exactly how I should phrase my question. The number of counsellor are starting to increase in the communities but at this point in time Hall Beach does not have a counsellor and I am sure that there are other vacant positions in the communities. I think there is a problem there in retaining counsellors at the community level.

What qualifications does a counsellor need, is it adequate education or is it traditional counselling or what qualifications does a counsellor need. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the member's comments and I want to thank him on this leadership review, because of course the member was the one that nominated me to this Cabinet position. So I want to thank him.

Mr. Chairman, on the counsellors' positions themselves and the type of skill set that we would like to have that person bring to that position, of course there is an empathy with the clients that they are working with. I think it is very important that the person have good listening skills and good ability to communicate with the people they are counselling.

I think that is what Ms. Williams was pointing out earlier, is that we need to have more Inuit in those positions so that they can actually converse in Inuktitut with someone. I think that's essential and that's why we need to be able to strengthen our hiring in those areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further question. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I didn't come across. I will re-phrase my question. What kind of lifestyle does a counsellor need or what type of education does a counsellor need and can we also recognize Inuit as counsellors if they have all the traditional Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit expertise.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let's say in the role of a social worker, there are different pieces of legislation and Acts that the worker is mandated under those Acts. It could be the Family and Children's Services Act, the Corrections Act, the Adoptions Act, the Guardianship and Trustee Act. So there is formal education needed in some regards in the position of social worker.

What we are trying to do for example, with our wellness workers and our social workers is to go back and look at what skills need to be in place and can they be for example, learned on the job, through OTJ, On the Job Training. Maybe there is an opportunity to have an entry level position. We have gone for example to social workers to CSW III. We were at I's and II's and now every entry level position is a III. That was changed about a year and a half ago.

So we are back now reviewing that. The lifestyle, if I understood the member correctly, the lifestyle and the background of a person to be a counsellor or a social worker, I think is key, in that any person is a product of their environment and they bring that skill set to the job. I think that is important when you are looking at counselling services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a difference between a social worker and a counsellor. Maybe that is where we are getting our lines crossed here. I am asking questions in regards to a counsellor that I would approach if I needed help or

if I had social problems or if I wanted to be counselled. That's what I am focusing on, I am talking about a counsellor.

We know that our elders are more experienced about life through their daily lives. My mind is half empty if you look at an elder's brain which is quite full. My question is in regards to a counsellor, people that counsel people in trouble. What qualifications or education do they need. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister.

Hon. Ed Picco: Mr. Chairman, I don't have one of those job descriptions with me so what the department is actually asking for on a formal basis. I think what the member is trying to say is that there are a group of skills that are formal and informal that can be brought to bear as a counsellor. For example, a social worker could be considered a counsellor.

But you are talking about like a mental health worker or a community wellness worker at the community level. We provide courses in counselling for those people. As an example over 20 community counsellors including the counsellor in Hall Beach received the choice therapy and the reality therapy certification this past summer, late spring.

The Premier and I attended the celebration. In the Keewatin for example, the alcohol & drug counsellors all attended the Northern Community Alcohol and Drug Counsellors Program through Nunavut Arctic College. In the Kitikmeot we had addiction counsellors complete at least three separate modules of the same program.

So there is that formal programming in place. On the skill sets, or the lifestyle skill sets, I think a counsellor can be an older person, indeed some of the people being trained in the Clyde River program for example, I know one person in particular who is unilingual who is in that program and is a counsellor and doesn't bring formal education to the job. So I think that is what you are saying is that we should be able to bring more people like that on stream. Where there is an opportunity to do that Mr. Chairman, that is what we are attempting to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Mr. Iqittuq.

Mr. Iqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question, I think I will just go ahead with this question. The counsellors who are schooled in a classroom are perfectly fine, but there is a difference between the ways an Inuk counsellor counsels and a southern import counsels people. There is a big difference between the ways they counsel their clients.

Is it possible to review the counselling issue or maybe I should re-phrase my question. We wanted to open a job that would be filled by an Inuk. This person did not have to be bilingual. That's what we wanted to see in Hall Beach, but I don't even know if this went to the public because of all the rules and regulations that have to be adhered to.

We do want to see more older, experienced unilingual people in these positions because they are professionals. The elders are professionals, they only thing they don't have is the diplomas or the certificates. How can we open the door more for these types of people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think the member makes a good point. We are in Nunavut so we should be thinking outside the box. I think everyone has said over the past couple of days that we need to be able to do things differently that being able to bring in people that don't have a formal education, but probably be the best type of counsellor on the ground, is something that we need to be able to do.

The community wellness counsellors in most cases Mr. Chairman, are chosen or nominated through the Hamlet Councils themselves. Because the money for community wellness is brought through the Hamlets. So in some cases I know some Hamlets do have older people do have older people working in that position for the Hamlet Council. But it is something Mr. Chairman, that I will commit to the member that this department will try to take an active interest in trying to bring forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Further questions. Supplementary. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a very interesting response. Something that I am very pleased with. If I make a mistake please let me know Mr. Chairman. The job that I was referring to in Hall Beach, is it going to be open to the residents of Hall Beach now. Are you going to be opening that position in Hall Beach now, is there going to be funding provided for that position. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Picco, we are just trying to determine if that is a new question or if it is related to his former question. Is that a new question Mr. Irqittuq. Supplementary. Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to take one of Mr. Irqittuq's questions away. I am not aware if that position has an incumbent in the position so can the member clarify if there is an incumbent in the position. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Irqittuq, maybe you can clarify your question a bit. If it is not related to training, the previous question that you had, or counselling then it would be a new question.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not asking about training I am talking about counsellors. The minister said earlier that the older, experienced traditional counsellors would be given more opportunity while you are here in this

department. I can tell you that the job that we will be opening in our community can be filled by very experienced people and I will talk to you after this meeting. Thank you.

Chairperson: That was fairly closely related to the original comments, so Mr. Picco, if you want to respond.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to speaking to the member about that outside the session this afternoon. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whether he is a leader or whether he is just following his Cabinet colleagues, perhaps I will talk about this first and then I will ask questions. I received a letter that the government ministers and the regular members, NTI's President, NSDC Mary Wilman, I guess they were talking about a conference that was held and the minister knows what I am talking about.

This correspondence said that this certain thing happened and it's not very good if it happened this way. I am hopeful that the minister will be able to respond to the questions that I am going to be asking him. This could be a dangerous precedent because it speaks about the NNI policy. It would be a precedent and a copy of the letter is directed to Kivalliq News, CBC News and it is an open letter. So that's why I am talking about it.

The minister as a leader and a minister I just wondered whether he dealt with this in a proper manner and as a leader, as a good leader, how he dealt with this. Also if he can't respond to my questions today I will be tabling this document in the House. I know we have to find out whether he dealt with this incident in a proper manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Members' questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my comments I would like to ask the minister for the purpose of the leadership review, what has he done with this open letter. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: I believe Mr. Chairman, that the open letter that the member is referring to is not before the House and it hasn't been tabled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson: Just before we proceed any further I guess I am not concerned that this whole thing did not come before the House yet because it is an open letter and this is the leadership forum so there is some flexibility. But I am concerned about the fact that most of the members may not be aware of the contents of that letter, including the minister.

So if he could be a little more precise as to the contents and to your questions to the minister. Thank you.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be very happy to table this document in the House later in the session if the minister wants me to which would be a lot more intense. I am using it as an example of how he hasn't dealt with it. The letter is dated August 24 to the Premier, Honourable Picco, Cabinet and regular members, NSDC President Mary Wilman, Chairman Nunavut Social Development Council, copies to Kivalliq News, Nunatsiaq News, News North, etcetera, etcetera.

This letter is about a staff meeting, a very expensive staff meeting that the minister's staff had in Rankin Inlet, meeting on prime health care on August 22 to 24, 2001, with not one Inuk in this meeting when they are dealing with the primary health care of Nunavut. This person became concerned that when you are dealing with Inuit health and planning how to deal with it then you have missed out on Article 32 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. That the Inuit have the right as set out in this article to participate in the development of social and cultural policies and in the design of social and cultural programs and services including the method of delivery within the Nunavut Settlement Area.

This is a three page, four page letter and it has some serious accusations by the writer and if he has not seen this letter that we have all seen, then I could table the document. But if he has seen the letter, if he can remember it, I would remember it very much, because it is pretty serious, that if he has dealt with it. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Picco. Before you answer the question that was put forward, this particular question and letter poses somewhat of a difficulty here. There were comments and certain accusations made in this letter and it may not be prudent for us to deal with it right now. But if you feel comfortable, please proceed, if not, maybe it is the type of document that should be tabled in the House, if members wish to do so.

Just another point Minister Picco, that we did state in the guidelines to the forum that if a member wishes not to answer that's his choice. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am prepared to sit here and take questions from the members on my role in this government in the last thirty months, what I have done, what I have tried to do, what I have not done, what I said I was going to do.

It is very difficult for me to answer a letter written by an individual, widely distributed to all the media outlets and so on and so forth on a particular case, before it has been reviewed by Human Resources and so on. So I would prefer to leave that discussion for formal session with the members' concurrence. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Picco. Is there agreement on that.

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: There are no further supplementaries and I believe that we are at the end of the line as far as questions go. Given the fact that there are no further questions, Minister Picco, your presentation is complete. The next item on the agenda is closing statements by the Chair of the Regular Members' Caucus.

Mr. Irqittuq do you care to make a closing statement. Proceed.

Closing Statement

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We just had a very good exercise, reviewing the ministers for the past couple of days. I have a time limit and there is quite a bit that I have to say in my closing remarks.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard a lot over these last two and a half days about the leadership of the Cabinet in Nunavut for the work they have done for the first two and a half years of the government. It has been a frank discussion, which has raised a number of leadership and policy issues to the government.

The Regular Members will now review the comments of the ministers and prepare a report to the House for the last two days of discussions with the ministers. In our follow up work we may have a few further questions of the ministers one by one, and we will pursue them with the individual ministers. We look forward to tabling our report in the very near future.

On behalf of the Regular Members I thank all of the ministers for their dedication and hard work and for participating in the first Nunavut Leadership Review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Irqittuq. Members, ministers this brings us to the end of the Nunavut Leadership Forum. I thank all the members for their questions and statements and also the ministers for their statements and answers. I would also like to thank the pages who have stayed by us through this whole process, I am sure it has been very long and a very enlightening process for them.

Special thanks to our interpreters that stayed by and our staff, and in my case to Mr. Clerk and our Deputy Clerk for their very official counting of the questions and responses and keeping me on my toes, keeping me awake at times. Also of course our Sergeant-At-Arms.

I have an announcement here that there will be a meeting of the regular caucus in ten minutes upstairs in the Natsiq Room. Also in reference to the Clyde River trip, the charter is set for the morning at ten o'clock. Members that are travelling, should be there by 9.30.

That's it. Thank you very much.

>>*Applause*

>>*Leadership Forum adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*

